

The State Port

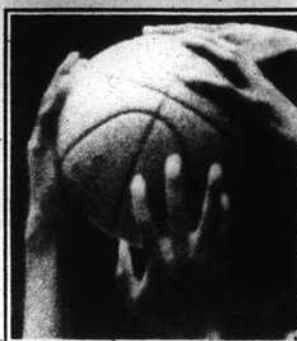
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Photo by Ed Harper

South Brunswick's Kevin Smith, a sophomore, passes off in championship game action against Wilmington Laney. The Cougars, who earlier had beaten 4A schools Athens Drive of Raleigh and Wilmington New Hanover, were tied with Laney's Buccaneers with 21 seconds left, but Laney converted

two free throws and South Brunswick failed on two attempts to respond before the final buzzer. More on the UCB Holiday Classic and a look ahead to Friday's game with 4A Wilmington Hoggard on page 14.

'Revenues didn't pan out...'

Cost cuts, efficiency key to Southport '92

By Richard Nubel
Municipal Editor

The destiny of Southport in 1992 may well be outlined at a planned retreat of aldermen, the mayor and city staff members on January 25.

Aldermen have planned a wide-ranging agenda of goals for 1992 and the first critical elements of a city budget may begin to take shape during retreat discussions.

Mayor Norman Holden said Friday much of the discussion may focus on responsibilities of departments of city government and of citizen volunteers who serve boards and committees.

"We're going to look at the overall city," Holden said. "We're going to look at where we can cut back and where we can make government more efficient."

'From a revenue standpoint, two things will be helpful: Release of the library, and the fire and rescue tax district.'

Rob Hites
City manager

Efficiency may be critical to Southport in 1992. City manager Rob Hites said this week that revenue projections for the current

fiscal year, which ends June 30, 1992, have not panned out in a lagging economy.

"The (fiscal) problems Wilmington and New Hanover County are having aren't any different than those in Southport or any other city," Hites said. "Revenues didn't pan out the way we wanted this year because of the down-turn in the economy."

Sales taxes, beer and wine taxes and ABC revenue are directly tied to the amount of money people spend in Southport. Electric and water revenues also tend to reflect the economic upset felt all over the country.

But, two modifications in the way local government will do business in Brunswick County next year will work to Southport's advantage.

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Long Beach:

Cooperation with neighbors, consensus anticipated in '92

By Richard Nubel
Municipal Editor

1992 ushers in a new political era in local government for Long Beach as a result of the last election and the new year heralds a time of increased cooperation with neighboring governments.

Those were the observations of Long Beach town manager David Poston on Monday.

"Everything's working, falling into place," Poston said. "The new board's in place. They're asking questions. When citizens have a concern, they come in. It's working very well right now."

Poston speaks of the immediate post-election time. On November 5 the voters of Long Beach apparently opted for change. Six-year mayor John W. Vereen, III, was ousted from office in an October primary race. He was replaced by planning board member Joan Altman as the town's new political leader.

Alman and Vereen have no similarities.

More change came in the November election which will impact the town politically in 1992.

Former commissioners David Drummond and Jean Gray, known for their conservatism, were also replaced. Commissioner Kevin Bell

chose not to run, paving the way for a third new commissioner.

Joining mayor Altman on the new governing board will be newly-enfranchised commissioners David

Durr, William Easley and Horace Collier, all said to feel relatively compatible with the progressive incumbents Danny Leonard and Jeff

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Fiscally-fit Brunswick the challenge for 1992

By Holly Edwards
County Editor

The major challenge for Brunswick County in 1992 will be to remain fiscally responsible and, at the same time, ensure that the level of services provided by the county satisfies the needs of the people, according to county manager/attorney David Clegg. But, he said, the county's broad goals are complicated and are composed of thousands of smaller issues.

"Brunswick County is a unique place to live and govern and administer. You cannot grow as much

as we have and expect everything to be 'textbook.' If Brunswick County hadn't been innovative, it would have collapsed. And, it's this innovation that makes Brunswick County unique and makes it a challenge," said Clegg.

Examples of Brunswick County's innovation include the largest non-municipal water system in the state; one of the largest parks and recreation departments; an industrial park; a 911 system in the works; and the provision of services for rich people, poor people, retirees and young people who need schools and colleges.

"The dichotomies present here are unlike many other places," said Clegg. "We have agriculture and golf, small businesses and nuclear power plants, fishing boats and fleets."

The challenge is to provide a variety of services and remain financially conservative, according to commissioner Donald Shaw. "The main thing is to give more people more services for less tax money," he said. "We want more work per taxpayer dollar."

Shaw said he would like to see the quality and efficiency of each

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Countywide offices

Filing period to open Monday

Those wishing to become candidates for countywide offices may begin filing notices of candidacy with the Brunswick County Board of Elections on Monday, January 6.

But those seeking election to the General Assembly or the U. S. Congress will have to wait. The U. S. Justice Department recently rejected North Carolina's new redistricting plan, claiming it did not create enough minority-dominated districts.

The General Assembly was called into session this week to redraw district lines acceptable to the Justice Department. At least one more minority-dominated House seat, one more minority-dominated Senate seat and an altered Congressional seat are expected.

Under the terms of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, electoral districts must be redrawn every ten years to reflect changes in the census. The latest redistricting effort reflects population movement noted in the 1990 census.

Among the countywide offices for which candidates may begin filing January 6 are board of commissioners and board of education seats from District 1 and District 3. The offices of register of deeds and coroner are also to be decided this year.

Although the General Assembly may delay the filing period for statewide

offices, local elections officials will likely accept candidate notices from January 6 at noon until February 3 at noon. Voter registration rolls will be open until April 6 and a primary election -- at which Democrats and Republicans will narrow their fields of candidates -- will be held May 5. If a run-off election is needed it will be held June 2.

Current officials whose terms of office expire this year include District 1 county commissioner Kelly Holden and District 3 county commissioner Gene Pinkerton, both of whom have said publicly they will not seek re-election. The terms of office currently held by board of education members Doug Baxley in District 1 and Bob Slockett in District 3 are set to expire in December.

Register of deeds Robert J. Robinson, a three-term incumbent, and coroner Greg White, a two-term incumbent, also face a decision of whether or not to seek re-election.

On November 7, Brunswick County adopted its own redistricting plan at public referendum. The plan is considered valid and in compliance with the Voting Rights Act at this time. Electoral districts in Brunswick County are established for candidate residency only. All county officials are elected at-large.

Armed robbery at Sawdust Trail UCB

By Richard Nubel
Municipal Editor

Sheriff's detectives and FBI agents had no firm clues Monday as to the identity of a man who committed the armed robbery of the United Carolina Bank branch at Sawdust Trail Friday afternoon.

A man entered the UCB building near Southport about 4:05 p.m., said he had a weapon and demanded money, investigators say.

"A white male entered the bank and gave the teller a note demanding money in higher bills, no small bills," sheriff's detective Larry Joyner said. "After that he ran out the door in the direction of Hardee's restaurant."

The robber is further described as between 24 and 30 years of age, about six feet tall, weighing about 160 pounds. He had medium-length brown hair and had a heavy mustache at the time of the robbery. He was last seen wearing a light-colored baseball cap, a blue plaid shirt, blue jeans and tennis shoes.

The Sawdust Trail UCB branch has a traffic exit adjoining one that accesses Hardee's. Witnesses said they believe the man fled on foot through a wooded area just behind the Hardee's parking lot, where he may have had a car standing by.

Although sheriff's deputies within minutes set up roadblocks on N. C. 87 and 133 near the Sunny Point intersection and at another point on N.

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Video surveillance equipment caught the robber of UCB's Sawdust Trail branch in the act Friday afternoon.