

COUNTY BRIEFS

Redwine helped with tax cut

State Rep. David Redwine of Ocean Isle Beach was one of two legislators who earned praise last week from state officials.

He and state senator John Kerr of Goldsboro helped pass legislation to provide some tax relief for North Carolina employers.

The bill passed by the General Assembly will cut the state's unemployment insurance tax rate by 30 percent, putting an estimated \$171 million back into the local economy over the next two years.

More than 80 percent of the more than 144,000 employers currently paying unemployment insurance taxes will receive a tax cut.

The law is effective for wages paid after April 1. Redwine, a Democrat, serves a majority of Brunswick County residents in the two-member 14th District, along with state Rep. Dewey Hill.

"Their leadership will mean more money back into the hands of a lot of North Carolina employers," said Ann Duncan, chairman of the Employment Security Commission of North Carolina. "This move will provide a boost to an economy which right now seems to be stuck in neutral."

An employer paying the average unemployment insurance tax rate will save an estimated \$37.50 in taxes for each worker, said Ms. Duncan.

Jobless rate down, still third

Brunswick County's unemployment rate dropped again in April but the current figure is still the third highest in the state.

The seasonally unadjusted rate fell from 15.9 percent in March to 13.7 percent in April, according to the Employment Security Commission of North Carolina. It stood at 12.6 percent in April, 1992.

Unadjusted unemployment rates do not take into account seasonal fluctuations which normally occur at about the same time and in about the same magnitude each year.

An estimated 2,800 residents were actively seeking jobs in April compared to 3,300 in March.

The rate was 16.2 percent in February.

Brunswick County still has the third highest unemployment rate in the state, behind Graham County, 22.6 percent, and Swain County, 14.6 percent.

Storm relief is still available

Residents who suffered damage from the March 13 winter storm can still apply for Small Business Administration loans.

The SBA outreach office at Bolivia closed Friday, but property owners can apply by telephone or in writing until July 12.

Homeowners can get loans up to \$100,000 to repair disaster-damaged homes and up to \$20,000 to replace personal property such as furniture, appliances and clothing.

Renters are eligible for loans up to \$20,000 to replace personal belongings.

Loans to businesses and non-profit organizations of up to \$500,000 are available to repair damage to real estate, machinery and equipment, inventory and leasehold improvements.

The county was hit by hurricane-force winds that knocked out electricity to an estimated 80 percent of homes when the storm moved up the coast.

Persons can apply by calling the SBA, 1-800-359-2227. The number for deaf and speech-impaired persons is 404-347-3751.

Or, for an application write: SBA Area 2 Disaster Assistance Office, One Baltimore Place, Suite 300, Atlanta, GA, 30308.

When calling or writing, refer to disaster number 2645 to speed the process.

U. S. 74-76 has bright look

Motorists in Brunswick County and across North Carolina can enjoy a spectacular view during the next few weeks as spring wildflowers planted by the N. C. Department of Transportation reach their peak.

On U. S. 74-76 near Maco, shimmering white ox-eye daisy and sunny yellow lance-leaved coreopsis brighten the landscape.

The DOT wildflower program's principal source of funding is from the sale of personalized license plates and private donations.

DOT secretary Sam Hunt said the statewide program is coordinated by the Roadside Environmental Unit, which installs and maintains flower beds in each of the 14 highway divisions. More than 300 acres of new beds are planted each year and North Carolina now has more than 2,000 acres of wildflowers planted on its roadsides.



State inspectors say they are pleased with clean-up efforts at the Brunswick County landfill near Supply. Trash is contained to a smaller working area to comply with an order issued last year.

Landfill getting better reports

By Terry Pope
County Editor

Brunswick County's solid waste landfill at Supply, hit with fines and cited for major violations in the past, is in better shape now than it has been in years, according to state inspectors.

"I have been there twice since I began monitoring it, and they are really bringing it around," said John Crowder, landfill inspector for the N. C. Department of Environment, Health and Natural Resources office in Wilmington.

Brunswick County landfill director Leo Hewett was fired from his job in March and his duties assigned to operation services director Darryl Somerset.

Most of the recent clean-up activities have taken place since the state hit the county with a strict compliance order in late February.

"We're very pleased so far," said Terry Dover, eastern area supervisor of the Solid Waste Management Division. "There have been several inspections since that time, and there's nothing that throws up a red flag."

Last week, chairman Don Warren of the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners instructed interim county manager John Harvey to advertise for a new landfill director.

That move surprised some commissioners who claim Somerset's staff has done a good job and that the county doesn't need to hire another person.

"Things are running very smoothly at the landfill right now," added county engineer Robert Tucker.

Before he resigned March 15, former county manager David Clegg suspended Hewett from his job and recommended that the position not be filled, turning all landfill operations over to Somerset.

The solid waste department was a one-man division with the director obtaining his needed manpower and equipment from operation services. In the 1993-94 proposed budget, Harvey recommended the county follow Clegg's plan.

Warren's action sparked some controversy amid rumors that three Democrats on the board want to hire Pearly Vereen, a former county

'It looks a whole lot better than before. If you had seen it in January, you would have seen a significant difference.'

John Crowder
State inspector

commissioner whose job in operation services was cut from the budget in 1991.

The landfill has twice been cited by the state for major violations dating back to February, 1990.

Inspectors noted there was no erosion control to prevent silt from leaving the dumpsite; not enough sloped areas to allow surface water runoff; no vegetation growing to help stabilize and to control erosion; trash was being spread out over too large an area; and that leachate was not contained on the dumpsite.

County workers corrected the problems only to be hit with more bad news.

"Within a period of two years, it got out of compliance again," said Tucker.

Inspectors soon found major violations again and notified the county on March 13, 1992.

The report cited the county for: not covering trash with at least six inches of soil at the end of each workday; not containing leachate on the dumpsite; not covering with at least a foot of soil areas that are not in use; allowing garbage to spread out over too large an area; and allowing the wind to spread debris over the site.

The same violations were again found following an inspection on November 3, 1992, and the county was given six months to clean up the landfill.

Workers were busy handling the usual loads of garbage last week. Most of the corrections have been made. A large pile of appliances has been moved off the dumpsite to an

another location while covered mounds are now seeded and sprouting grass.

Seagulls that hunt for food are having a more difficult time now because work areas are smaller and are not left uncovered at night.

"I don't know if this operation would be any more efficient if you had anyone else here," said Tucker. "As far as I can tell, he's (Somerset) been able to manage the situation."

State inspectors say they have carefully monitored developments at the landfill since the compliance order was issued. An unannounced official inspection will be made soon, said Crowder.

"It looks a whole lot better than before," said Crowder. "If you had seen it in January, you would have seen a significant difference."

Dover said the county shouldn't have any problems in getting a favorable inspection. So far, the county is complying with the order.

"They continue to make good progress," he said. "I do not anticipate any problems at this point."

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Sales tax report

Collection of the local-option sales and use tax in Brunswick County totaled \$634,034 during the month of April, a report from the N. C. Department of Revenue indicates.

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