

The State Port

P.I.L.O.

INSIDE

Sports, page 6B

Classifieds, p. 1C

Southport, N.C. Island's most complete listing of available real estate properties



June 23, 1993/50 cents



A whopping explosion and fireball punctuated filming of "Birds II" at the Southport yacht basin last Thursday. The crew took shelter during the episode and firefighters stood by to make sure the stunning pyrotechnics did not get out of hand. Local filming is now completed.

County adopts rate, 'borrows' from water fee

By Terry Pope
County Editor

Residents can expect to pay the same in taxes next year, but most water customers will notice an increase.

The annual budget approved by Brunswick County commissioners Monday night holds taxes at 68 cents per \$100 of property value.

However, wholesale water rates to area towns and industries will jump ten cents, from \$1.25 to \$1.35, per 1,000 gallons.

That is expected to generate about \$500,000 in additional revenues for the estimated \$46 million 1993-94 budget.

"It represents about a penny on the tax rate," said Don Warren, chairman of the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners. "If we hadn't done that it would have been 69 cents."

Depending on how the money will be spent or transferred, raising water rates to support general revenues is viewed by some as a violation of state law.

Finance director Luthia Hahn said the increase will appear as an item in the water department and used to "offset the general budget." Fees are normally used to pay for operation and maintenance on the system.

Many of the budget details were still up in the air following adoption

North Carolina General Statutes state no appropriation may be made from a utility or public enterprise fund to any other county fund until all capital outlay costs and debt service is paid in full

by a 4-0 vote Monday with officials unable to quote a bottom-line figure. Final copies had not been printed.

The water fee increase is for wholesale users and not for the county's roughly 4,000 individual rural customers, but towns must charge more to their residents to recover the cost. Towns are viewed as one customer by the county and buy water through one wholesale meter.

The average monthly residential water bill is expected to increase from around \$10 per month to \$11.90. The

See Rates page 6

Back pay, new job

County settles with worker for \$90,000

By Terry Pope
County Editor

A former county employee fired from her job in 1991 will begin work as a prisoner transporter and relief jailer at the sheriff's department July 1.

Brunswick County commissioners Monday approved a tentative settlement with former animal control supervisor Zelma Babson, an agreement that will award her back pay and attorney fees worth more than \$90,000.

In a related move, commissioners also approved an amendment to the county personnel policy that makes failure to follow proper procedure "gross negligence, resulting in termination" for department heads.

Chairman Don Warren's motion states no employee is to be suspended, demoted or dismissed without prior approval by the personnel officer, county attorney and county manager.

The State Personnel Commission recommended in April that Ms. Babson be reinstated to her job and receive back pay plus reasonable at-

Commissioners approved an amendment to the county personnel policy that makes failure to follow proper procedure "gross negligence, resulting in termination" for department heads

orney fees. The county erred, it said, in following its own personnel policy.

The commission upheld an administrative law judge's findings that her firing was "erroneous as a matter of law under the Brunswick County Personnel Manual and should be reversed."

Ms. Babson was employed by the Brunswick County Health Department in the animal control division from September, 1980, to June, 1991, serving most of that time as supervisor. She was fired by health director Michael Rhodes, a decision that was appealed and upheld by the Brunswick County Board of Health.

The commission ruled that one of three required warnings given to Ms. Babson prior to her dismissal wasn't proper and struck it from the record.

Monday's amendment to the policy states that all oral, written and final warnings of disciplinary action be documented, with copies sent to the personnel officer, effective July 1.

Although the county manager has the final say, the intent is to allow the attorney to "offer advice and consent" about a possible personnel action, said Warren.

When she was fired, Ms. Babson earned \$20,714 per year and had accumulated

See Worker, page 6

City budget hearing has one speaker

One person attended a public hearing Tuesday night on Southport's proposed \$6.1-million budget for fiscal year 1993-94. A special meeting has been scheduled for budget adoption on Monday, June 28, at 7:30 p.m. in City Hall.

Southport resident Glen Woerner told the board of aldermen that he recently moved to the city and came to the hearing "just to watch the budget process." He also asked about the proposed changes in garbage collection fees and electric rates.

The budget includes a proposed \$15 fee for large appliances and

See City budget, page 6

Lakes budget

The Boiling Spring Lakes Board of Commissioners adopted its 1993-94 budget Tuesday night following a public hearing.

Although town expenses are expected to increase about \$28,000, the tax rate will hold steady this year at 40 cents per \$100 of property valuation. The budget is based upon anticipated revenues and expenditures of \$832,120, and includes a 2.5-percent increase in salaries for all city employees.



Yelton new county manager

By Terry Pope
County Editor

Brunswick County's new manager expects to start work on Monday.

William Yelton, 56, was hired by a 3-1 vote of commissioners and will earn \$50,000 per year.

The board also awarded the Rocky Mount resident a benefits package Monday that includes two weeks vacation, one week of sick leave and \$3,000 moving allowance.

Board members were split over who they wanted to fill the vacancy created when David Clegg resigned under political pressure in

March.

Voting for Yelton were commissioners Don Warren, Wayland Vereen and Tom Babson Sr. Commissioner Jerry Jones voted no, while Donald Shaw was sick and did not attend.

Jones said his top candidate was Jimmy Varner of Yalquin County. Most members had Al Sharp Jr. of Lincoln County as their number-two choice.

"It appears he was the candidate, if he was everyone's second choice," said Jones.

The board apparently did not attempt to reach such a compromise.

Reinstated into executive session for about an hour

See Yelton, page 6

Health, waste are main town meeting topics

By Holly Edwards
County Editor

Health care reform, the environment, education, the lottery, taxes, solid waste disposal and open meetings law reform are some of the topics local citizens brought up during a town meeting Friday evening at Southport City Hall hosted by state legislators David Redwine (D-Brunswick), R. C. Soles and Dewey Hill.

Another town meeting is planned at Leland Town Hall on Friday, June 25, at 7 p.m.

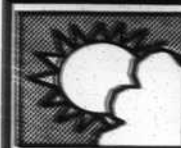
Over 30 people attended the meeting, which is the largest turnout so far, said Sen. Soles. Similar town meetings have been held in Taber City, Whiteville, Shallotte and Chadbourne.

"The meetings were a joint decision of all of us," Soles said. "We all said during the campaign that we wanted to be more responsive to the public, and it's not fair to ask folks to come to Raleigh every time they want something."

Health care and the environment have been two recurring themes at the

See Meeting, page 6

OUTSIDE



Tide table

HIGH	THURSDAY, JUNE 24	LOW
— a.m.		5:58 a.m.
12:13 p.m.		6:16 p.m.
HIGH	FRIDAY, JUNE 25	LOW
12:23 a.m.		6:48 a.m.
1:09 p.m.		7:14 p.m.
HIGH	SATURDAY, JUNE 26	LOW
1:20 a.m.		7:41 a.m.
2:10 p.m.		8:16 p.m.
HIGH	SUNDAY, JUNE 27	LOW
2:18 a.m.		8:38 a.m.
3:11 p.m.		9:22 p.m.
HIGH	MONDAY, JUNE 28	LOW
3:19 a.m.		9:38 a.m.
4:14 p.m.		10:27 p.m.
HIGH	TUESDAY, JUNE 29	LOW
4:21 a.m.		10:37 a.m.
5:14 p.m.		11:30 p.m.
HIGH	WEDNESDAY, JUNE 30	LOW
5:24 a.m.		11:35 a.m.
6:13 p.m.		— p.m.

The following adjustments should be made:
Bald Head Island, high -10, low -7; Curwell Beach, high -5, low -1; Southport, high +7, low +15; Yaupon Beach, high -32, low -45; Lockwood Folly, high -22, low -8.

Forecast

The extended forecast Thursday through Saturday calls for highs of 90 degrees and lows in the 70s. Partly cloudy skies will prevail throughout the period, according to the National Weather Service.