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Cougar football drills opened this week with 40 candidates on hand -- 10B

The State Port

PILOT

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Would-be investigators take to the woods to help search for clues -- 1B

County math: \$5 million = ten-cent rate hike

Chairman: 'We're all happy for the children'

By Terry Pope
County Editor

The amount needed to adequately fund the Brunswick County schools has taken one giant step forward.

Last week's decision by a Brunswick County Superior Court jury to give the schools \$5 million more than what county commissioners allocated for 1994-95 may have surprised both sides.

"I'm just finally glad that someone really believed us," said Donna Baxter, chairman of the Brunswick County Board of Education. "This is something that the board has said all along. We're all happy for the children."

It will take a ten-cent increase in the county's tax rate to pay for the \$14 million awarded to the schools, payable through a special add-on assess-

ment to be mailed in December. Regular 1994 tax bills are already calculated and will arrive sometime in August.

The judgment will drive taxes up for every property owner in the county. For example, on a \$50,000 home taxes will be an additional \$50 per year. A one-cent jump generates about \$500,000 in revenue.

"I think all of the commissioners were shocked," said Don Warren, chairman of the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners.

Not happy with the \$8.7 million in local funds the county gave, school officials petitioned the courts and headed to an immediate trial when a mediator wasn't available. The two boards entered mediation last year, and ended 14 hours of negotiations with the schools receiving an extra \$500,000 to begin construction of a new elementary school in the northern attendance area and \$325,000 in additional

current expenses.

"I thank the jurors," said Ms. Baxter. "I'm just very happy with the outcome. I think it was a fair case."

School board attorney Glen Peterson wanted the jury to consider two visions and two futures for education. One, he said, was the "actual needs of the school system," but one county officials disagreed with. In his closing argument, Peterson attacked the county's claim that what was offered was adequate.

"They want to give a sum of money and say, 'Here, make it do,'" said Peterson. "That's not the way to do business. What they failed to do was, they failed to look at what the actual need of the system was."

He argued that 86 percent of all local money is spent on instructional items or on programs to support the classrooms. The system now operates with a zero fund balance while the state mandates that local

See Rate hike, page 8

County considering appeal of judgment

By Terry Pope
County Editor

County officials want last week's jury verdict that gave the schools an extra \$5 million in local funds set aside.

But commissioners still are not certain if they will appeal the case if judge Jack Thompson doesn't throw it out of court.

"Our reasoning for this," said Don Warren, chairman of the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners, "is that here we have a school budget increased by 50 percent by a jury. It would be an economic hardship, with the taxes they would have to pay, on many of the people."

Commissioners voted unanimously Monday to instruct in-
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Rec center ideas sought from public

How big should it be? What should we do there? How much should it cost? How can we pay for it?

These are some of the questions that will be put to Long Beach residents in a survey of needs, wants and plans for the Long Beach Recreation Center. The survey will be sent to residents as part of the Town of Long Beach newsletter, town manager Jerry Walters said.

"In summary, we've listed all of the programs offered now," Walters said. "Second, we've listed programs that could be offered. We've tried not to foreclose any particular idea. We'll see what the survey says and take it from there."

In the current fiscal year, Long Beach councilmen have appropriated funds for planning needs. Walters said results of the survey will be brought before the town's recreation advisory board and the planning board for review. The manager will then put together a staff task force to

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Photo by Holly Edwards

Who is this wet man, and why is he smiling? Roy Anderson, CP&L's vice-president in charge of the Brunswick plant, that's who; and he smiles knowing that each dunking he receives helps raise money to support needed community services. Brunswick employees and friends raised over \$11,000 in the United Way Fair at the plant last week.

Service tax plan could rescue city from rising costs

'91 straw vote requested board create districts

By Richard Nubel
Municipal Editor

A 1991 effort to provide municipal fire and rescue units in Brunswick County with funds to serve residents of unincorporated areas died on the vine. But, the City of Southport this year may seek to revive a service tax district plan to finance emergency services to non-residents.

"It hasn't been forgotten," Southport city manager Rob Gandy said this week of the fire and rescue service district plan. "It's one of those things we keep saying we've got to get cranked up on."

A fire and rescue service district, if established by county commissioners, would allow Brunswick County to levy an additional property tax on residents receiving fire and rescue service from the city. Proceeds from the special levy -- much like the property tax paid to the Doshier Memorial Hospital tax district -- would be returned to municipalities providing these emergency services.

As the City of Southport enters fiscal year 1994-95 with little cash in reserve and mounting costs for providing fire and rescue services -- in and out of city limits -- city staff and elected officials may soon look once again to creation of service districts to bolster general fund revenue.

Southport closes the books on 1993-94 with a paltry unappropriated general fund balance of about \$130,000. The meager unappropriated balance -- monies used in the event unforeseen costs arise and to pay the cost of

See Rescue, page 6

Cost, need are factors in decision

By Richard Nubel
Municipal Editor

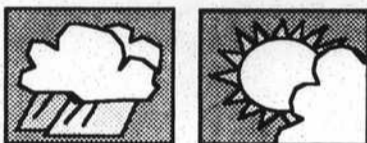
Should city and county officials agree to create a special tax district in which recipients of fire and rescue services living outside Southport would be taxed, state law offers two options, according to *County Government in North Carolina*, a publication of the Institute of Government at UNC-Chapel Hill, edited by A. Fleming Bell.

Either kind of tax district is a creation of county government, but proceeds of the special property tax would be returned to the city.

County commissioners could support a tax-supported Rural Fire District. The establishment of this kind of district requires an affirmative vote of those residing in a proposed tax district.

A second option is the creation of a County Service District. Commissioners can create this kind of tax district by adoption of a reso-

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Forecast

The extended forecast calls for partly cloudy skies Thursday and Friday with a good chance of afternoon thundershowers. Highs will rise again to the low 90s, with nighttime lows between 70 and 75. On Saturday, expect fair skies and less humidity, with highs in the 80s and a low near 70.

Pilot Line
THE TALKING NEWSPAPER

Weather updates are available on Pilot Line. Dial 457-5084, then extension 191.

Tide table

HIGH	THURSDAY, AUGUST 4	LOW
6:17 a.m.		12:22 a.m.
6:45 p.m.		12:25 p.m.
FRIDAY, AUGUST 5		
7:06 a.m.		1:09 a.m.
7:31 p.m.		1:13 p.m.
SATURDAY, AUGUST 6		
7:52 a.m.		1:53 a.m.
8:13 p.m.		1:59 p.m.
SUNDAY, AUGUST 7		
8:36 a.m.		2:35 a.m.
8:55 p.m.		2:44 p.m.
MONDAY, AUGUST 8		
9:21 a.m.		3:16 a.m.
9:37 p.m.		3:29 p.m.
TUESDAY, AUGUST 9		
10:06 a.m.		3:58 a.m.
10:20 p.m.		4:15 p.m.
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10		
10:53 a.m.		4:40 a.m.
11:05 p.m.		5:03 p.m.

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

Towns, district weigh their options

Northern area sewer plan on tap

By Terry Pope
County Editor

Three northern towns that hope to build a regional sewer system are searching for the most politically correct route to take.

They want the referendum to pass. Some are plotting careful strategy so that it does.

"There are a lot of things we have to take into consideration, from a political standpoint and from a voter standpoint," said Leland mayor Franky Thomas. "Once it is spread out to more rural areas, it could dilute our voting

strength. The people's way of thinking might possibly change, and they may look at a sewer system as being more of a municipal project, something they may not have a need for."

Sewer committee members from Belville, Leland, Navassa and the Leland Sanitary District were scheduled to meet Tuesday night to pick one of three options for establishing the North Brunswick Regional Sewer Authority.

The options would form a commission to run the authority under one of the following plans:

•One member each from Belville, Leland, Navassa and the Leland Sanitary District, boundary within the sanitary

district;

•One member each from the three towns, boundary of the three towns, commission will purchase services from sanitary district; or

•Commission run by sanitary district, boundary the entire district, electoral districts with representatives from each town, areas serviced first would be the towns.

Leland officials like the second option and believe it would easily pass a vote. The district includes a lot of rural property not within the three towns, or the more populated areas and where conventional septic tank systems often

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