



**Sports**

Big-hands people played Monday when two former South stars collided -- 9B

# The State Port PILOT

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**Neighbors**

An 88-page history of Oak Island is included in this issue of *The State Port Pilot*

**Our Town**

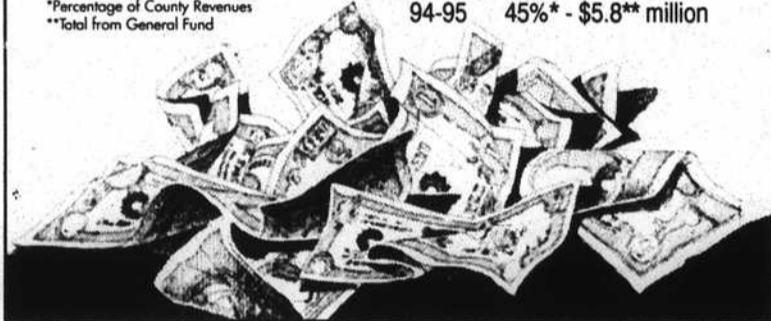
Caswell Beach will sample water quality to determine long-range needs -- Page 2

## Between county, schools Funding compromise reached

### The schools get their share...

Brunswick County		New Hanover County	
8,623 Enrollment (1994)		19,630 Enrollment (1994)	
94-95	29.5%* - \$9.4** million	94-95	22.2%* - \$22** million
Next Year	36%* - \$13.3** million		
Columbus County			
7,506 Enrollment (1994)			
94-95	45%* - \$5.8** million		

\*Percentage of County Revenues  
\*\*Total from General Fund



By Terry Pope  
County Editor

Does Monday's budget settlement with the schools represent a tax increase for county residents in June?

No one can say for sure. "If the county continues to run like it's been running it may result in a tax increase," warns District 5 Brunswick County commissioner Bill Sue. "We're going to have to tighten our belts."

County officials formally accepted a settlement offer Monday that will give the schools \$4 million more next year and avert a faceoff in court.

The agreement ends a two-year battle over school funding that resulted in a jury award of \$14 million last fall, an amount opposed by county leaders who filed for a review with the N. C. Court of Appeals.

The final offer includes an additional \$1.35 million now to finish the school year and 23 cents of the county tax rate each of the next

two fiscal years. That amounts to \$13,267,872, a jump from the \$9.4 million the schools received in June, 1994.

It took weeks to hammer out a proposal that both sides were willing to accept. A liaison committee of school and county officials negotiated the plan that ends the guessing game - at least for the next two years -- of what amount schools can budget on programs. It includes a gentleman's agreement to prioritize the school capital outlay needs along with the county's five-year building plan it is now compiling.

"Our proposal offered them was fair," said commissioner Sue of Leland. "Our differences were about \$800,000 per year. That's about \$100 a year per kid. I think we ought to invest that in our kids, so we can enable them to compete in the marketplace."

The original proposal was rejected by the school board, which last week submitted a counterproposal that would add the estimated \$800,000 per year. Lethia Hahn, county finance

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**Schools response:**

### Higher scores are the goal, but how to get there?

By Holly Edwards  
Feature Editor

The funding settlement between Brunswick County commissioners and the board of education will provide the newly elected school board members what they have claimed to need since coming to office -- the assurance of adequate local funding for the next two years.

School board members also acknowledge that the settlement calls upon them to translate more money into higher test scores.

Exactly how that will be accomplished is not yet clear to anyone.

But, school board member Bud Thorsen said he's glad the friction between the two boards is over.

"We've finally got the heated arguments behind us, and now the two boards can sit down and start to work together," Thorsen said. "It's a challenge by all ten of us, but we chose to be in this predicament."

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## Garbage contract approved

By Terry Pope  
County Editor

It may cost slightly more, but shipping county garbage to an incinerator rather than burying it in a landfill is the route Brunswick County will take for maybe the next 25 years.

A contract approved with BCH Limited Partnership Inc., the operators of an incinerator built by the Vedco Energy Corp. adjacent to the DuPont Co. near Fayetteville, will turn trash into electrical energy and help boost county recycling efforts.

"I see this as a way to move Brunswick County into the 21st century with waste management," said District 3 county commissioner Leslie Collier of Long Beach.

"I would still like to see the county look into the purchase of some adjacent property at the Supply site as something for us to fall back on."

The \$2.3-million-per-year Vedco offer has been on the table since December. An independent study performed by David M. Griffith and Associates of Raleigh, a consulting firm specializing in public contracts, estimated the costs for 25 years.

Project manager Bill Strickland told the county last week his study concluded it would cost an average of \$36.40 per ton to dispose of trash

**'It will cost more money, but I know it is worth it. It will be converting something that has never been worth anything to anyone into energy.'**

Wyman Yelton  
County manager

with Vedco and \$35.17 per ton to continue to operate the Supply landfill site for the duration of the contract.

The \$1.23-per-ton difference is because the capital costs for a landfill will be retired in ten years, versus 20 years for the Vedco offer.

The contract will begin January, 1996, with an option to end it after ten years if the county isn't pleased

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The fishing vessel *Marion Francis* was towed to its berth by a crew from U. S. Coast Guard Station Oak Island Thursday morning. Oak Island station took over tow from the Coast Guard vessel *Metompin* at sea buoy #2 at 5 a.m. that day for the remainder of the trip to the Southport Fish Co. dock. Photo by Jim Harper

## Murder remains mystery

By Terry Pope  
County Editor

The small gray-and-white house across the street from the Leland Town Hall is where Lucille Blake was reared.

It is also where her granddaughter was brutally murdered eight years ago.

When February 23 arrives Thursday, it will serve as a reminder for the family of Beverly Jaye Potter Mintz.

They would rather have this incident behind them with an arrest of a suspect, but that day has never come. Her death has kept state and local officials puzzled for nearly a decade. It has tormented a family that has no answers.

"It's like he dropped down from the sky, and went back up that way," said Ms. Blake, who now serves as a Leland town councilman.

Noted as an adept local historian, there is very little about Leland that she does not know

See Murder, page 6

## Lease agreement approved Airport hangs future on expanded services

By Holly Edwards  
Feature Editor

In a "precedent-setting decision," the Brunswick County Airport Commission voted 3-2 last week to lease a portion of airport property to Ocean Aire Aviation for hangar construction.

Ocean Aire Aviation owns four planes and provides sightseeing flights and flight lessons.

Hangar construction is planned for mid-March.

A similar land lease and hangar construction arrangement is pending with Westward International, a manufacturing company based in Loveland, CO, said airport manager Howie Franklin.

The president of that company, Gunter Hafer, owns "a considerable amount of property" and vacations in the Southport-Oak Island area, Franklin said.

Hafer usually flies here on a twin-engine aircraft but would like to use his Cessna Citation jet. However, Franklin said, Hafer does not want his \$5-million jet left exposed to sun, salt and wind.

Ocean Aire Aviation plans to build a 3,600-square-foot hangar; Hefer wants to construct a 3,000-square-foot hangar, Franklin said.

Franklin said both projects would benefit the airport and the county. "Activity begets activity," he said. See Airport, page 12

## Pilot Line extended

Beginning March 1, South Brunswick High and South Brunswick Middle school students who live outside the 457-calling area can reach Pilot Line without charge by dialing 253-8427.

The original number, 457-5084, will still be available to those who live within the Southport-Oak Island calling area. Each number provides access to all Pilot Line services.

Until now, students and parents in the Bolivia and Boiling Spring Lakes area could not readily access Pilot Line, which provides homework assignments and announcements for all classrooms at each school.

The free calling will be of great assistance to students and parents in the 253- exchange, said South Brunswick High School principal Sue Sellers.

"We've had a lot of parents say they've used Pilot Line, especially with the rash of flu we've had," Sellers said. "But one mother said she had to call back six times to get all of the assignments -- and she had to pay each time."

Teachers are encouraged to update their assignments regularly, Sellers said.

## Long Beach Manager gets raise and praise

By Richard Nubel  
Municipal Editor

Mayor Joan Altman Tuesday night broke a 3-3 tie of council to award town manager Jerry Walters a two-year contract extension and a five-percent salary increase.

But council likes the manager better than that vote indicates.

Commissioners Jeff Ensminger, Danny Leonard and Bill Easley objected to a public evaluation of the manager and votes against Kevin Bell's motion to extend the contract and raise the manager's pay reflected that dissatisfaction with procedure.

In two separate actions, council voted unanimously to finance construction of a 500,000-gallon overhead water storage tank and the proposed new fire station on Oak Island Drive at 2nd Street SE at Southern National Bank and voted, also unanimously, to finance the \$300,000 cost of purchasing a two-block section.

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## Forecast

We can look forward to slightly warmer weather with daily temperatures 55 to 60 for the period Thursday through Sunday. Partly cloudy skies will also be a part of our weekend forecast.

## Tide tables

HIGH	THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23	LOW
2:10 a.m.		8:28 a.m.
2:27 p.m.		8:43 p.m.
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 24		
3:18 a.m.		9:25 a.m.
3:36 p.m.		9:51 p.m.
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 25		
4:23 a.m.		10:37 a.m.
4:41 p.m.		10:53 p.m.
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26		
5:23 a.m.		11:33 a.m.
5:41 p.m.		11:50 p.m.
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 27		
6:18 a.m.		----- a.m.
6:35 p.m.		12:24 p.m.
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28		
7:08 a.m.		12:42 a.m.
7:24 p.m.		1:11 p.m.
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1		
7:54 a.m.		1:30 a.m.
8:09 p.m.		1:54 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; Lockwood Folly, high -22, low -8.