

Sports

South Brunswick opens its 'second season' Friday night against East Columbus -- 1C

The State Port

PILOT

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50 CENTS

Neighbors

If anybody can get lucky, then practicing home a rea

ng - 1B

Out

Southport plan can save electric bill

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Voting by computer

■ Test may put county on-line

By Terry Pope
County Editor

When Secession I precinct's 2,200 registered voters arrive at the polls for the November 5 election, they won't receive a paper ballot but will instead help test a new computerized machine that automatically records and totals their votes.

If residents and county officials like the demonstration, the machines will be purchased and used at all 22 precincts in future elections. MicroVote Corp.'s electronic voting system is being tested in one precinct to see how voters adjust to the process and how well it works for the Brunswick County Board of Elections.

A model was put on display for county officials Monday at the board of elections office. It is one of three machines county elections supervisor Lynda Britt and the elections board have considered testing, but the 52-pound unit may win out against competition that weighs 200 and 350 pounds each.

"It comes to the precinct looking like a suitcase," said Ed O'Day, president of United American Election Supply Co. of Columbia, SC. "This allows the poll worker, or a couple of poll workers, to get the machines out and set up to use."

Ms. Britt believes converting to electronic voting machines will cut down on time in posting returns and the cost of printing paper ballots. Perhaps thousands of dollars will be cut off the office printing bill for each election. The machines cost \$4,200

See Computer, page 13

BEACH SWEEP



Some Brownies had trouble fitting small hands into the oversized rubber gloves provided for Saturday's Big Sweep event. About 20 Brownies from throughout Brunswick County participated in the litter-collecting effort in Long Beach.

Photo by Holly Edwards

Offshore dump

Corps says it's stumped over debris

By Richard Nubel
Municipal Editor

U. S. Army Corps of Engineers officials say they are unconvinced the Army's ocean dredge material disposal site is the source of huge stumps and other vegetative debris now fouling commercial shrimpers' nets and threatening to float ashore on Oak Island and Bald Head Island beaches, but the corps is working to determine where exactly the debris is coming from.

At the same time, the corps has asked the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency to sanction a dump site farther offshore. Since 1987, the corps has dumped some 31 million cubic yards of spoil on a two-mile-square deposit site about three miles off Yaupon Beach and Bald Head Island. Through 2000, the corps plans to dump an additional 37 million cubic yards on the site where EPA has

Shrimpers say the debris comes from a corps dredge project in the Cape Fear River now on-going

permitted the deposit of silt only. "We have a real keen interest in trying to identify the source of the debris and what our responsibility is in this," said corps operations project manager Brian Moore on Tuesday. "Our focus is: How can we identify the source of this material?" Local government officials became aware of the apparent tons of huge tree stumps and other vegetative debris

See Debris, page 10



Orrie Gore, Brunswick County Board of Elections chairman, gets a closer look at a new computerized voting machine that will be tested among Secession I precinct voters in November.

Last year it was mining

'Quality of life' is key question for planners

By Terry Pope
County Editor

When it comes to long-range planning, what a difference a year makes. Hot topics last September are not necessarily the ones grabbing the most attention today.

From a roomful of participants at a countywide long-range planning session Thursday, only five persons

thought mining issues were one of the top eight concerns facing the county. Last year, in the midst of the county's battle over a proposed Martin Marietta mining operation near Southport, that topic was highly debated.

Protection of the underground aquifer from mining operations and sinkholes is why the Brunswick County Long-Range Oversight Committee was originally ap

See Planners, page 10

By Terry Pope
County Editor

Police officers believe highway checkpoints that search for drivers under the influence of alcohol are making an impact in coastal counties.

The number of DWI charges resulting from checkpoints May 1 to September 12 in Brunswick County dropped from 72 in 1995 to 39 this year. The "Booze It and Lose It" campaign is part of the Governor's Highway Safety Program aimed at cutting down on drunk driving in coastal counties during the summer holiday tourist season.

The message of the campaign is that tourists or residents who go to the beach and have a good time shouldn't attempt to drive home if they have been drinking alcohol.

"A success would mean no DWIs," said Lt. Charlie Miller of the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department, which received a \$10,000 state grant to implement the program this summer. "I would consider the project a success if we were to find no drivers under the influence."

Sheriff Ronald Hewitt is a supporter of Gov. Jim Hunt's program that pays the overtime officers work while conducting the checkpoints. This summer, checkpoints were held along Long Beach Road, at the North Carolina and South Carolina state line near Calabash, on N. C. 133 near Belville, at the Columbus County line on U. S. 74-76 near Maco, Sunset Harbor and on U. S. 421 leaving Wilmington.

In addition to 39 DWI arrests, of- See Checkpoints, page 6

City may borrow, depend on pledges

■ Building costs near \$800,000

By Richard Nubel
Municipal Editor

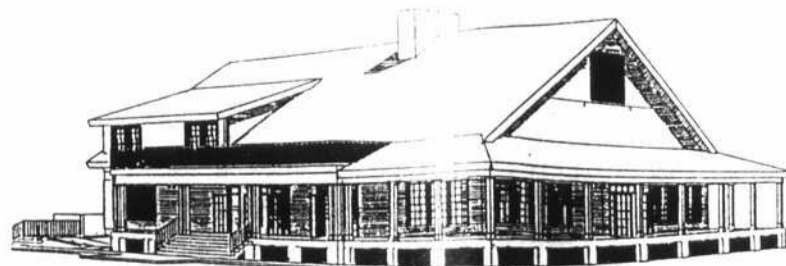
A majority of the board of aldermen appears so convinced over \$400,000 can be raised from private sources to rebuild the Southport Community Building they will let the city borrow the needed money to begin construction sooner, rather than later.

"What we are going to borrow is

going to be backed up by pledges," alderman Paul Fisher said when alderman Bill Delaney questioned a Thursday night suggestion the city would front money for community building reconstruction.

"It's going to come to that," alderman Meezie Childs said. Aldermen took no action and authorized no acquisition of debt Thursday night.

Shortly after the circa 1941 community building burned in January, 1995, the city received a \$275,000 settlement from its insurance company and formed a committee of three aldermen and city manager Rob Gandy to hire an architect and design a new building. On August 23, that committee unveiled plans for a new community building costing



Elevation from Main Street

\$856,000 -- without furniture or landscaping -- and announced a \$411,000 fund-raising campaign to provide money needed to complete the \$720,000 Phase I of building construction. Phase II construction in-

cludes finishing a planned second story of the building to be located on property the city leases from the U. S. Army at Fort Johnston.

Alderman Nelson Adams, who initially wanted to use the insurance

settlement to build a multi-purpose recreation center elsewhere in the city, said he is now "sold" on replacement of the community building, but is unconvinced Southport should borrow money to build its building.

"I understand the concept, but somebody's going to have to do some hard convincing to get my vote for the city to borrow \$800,000," Adams said.

Adams said he has been a member of the city's budget committees many times over the nearly 20 years he has served as alderman and had seen too many needed projects go unfunded because public money was tight. He said there are a number of needed public works projects that are now on the city's back burner for want of

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Forecast

Expect mostly sunny skies with highs each day near 80 and lows near 60 for the period of Thursday through Sunday.

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