



**Sports**

Quinton McCracken helped his major league chances in winter baseball play -- 1C

# The State Port PILOT

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Market reopens Saturday in  
an upbeat fashion -- Page 2

## Long Beach

### Inspections department cleaning-up

By Richard Nubel  
Municipal Editor

Town council couldn't clean-up the issue of clean-up bonds Tuesday night.

And, building permits in Long Beach still live forever.

Responding to a list of complaints raised by councilor Helen Cashwell in December, Walters Tuesday outlined suggested procedures aimed at improving accountability in the Building Inspections Department. Again, this month, Cashwell asserted clean-up bonds were not properly accounted for and builders were allowed too much time to complete a construction project once a building permit was issued.

In his report to the board, Walters said staff had reduced, and was continuing to reduce, the number of \$100 clean-up bonds held on the town's books for years at a time. He also reported the contractors' credit accounts, now maintained by the inspections department, would be approved and kept by the finance department. The town allows contractors who sometimes have many projects ongoing to purchase building permits on credit, but clean-up bonds must be paid in cash, code enforcement officer David Clemmons said.

The manager suggested a new policy that would allow building permits to expire after three years, if construction were not completed. After expiration of the three-year permit, builders would have to apply for another permit of one-year duration.

Councilor Kevin Bell's motion to affirm Walters' recommendation fell, however, when only he and councilor Jeff Ensminger supported it. Councilors Cashwell, Frances Allen and Horace Collier voted to conduct a workshop session on building inspection issues. That workshop will be held February 11 at 10 a.m.

Cashwell said accountability problems still existed, as subcontractors were allowed to perform work on the strength of a general contractor's clean-up bond.

"One thing that's definitely lack- See Long Beach, page 7

## HOWE STREET MARCH



Approximately 75 people participated in a community march through Southport streets Sunday in honor of Martin Luther King's birthday. Marchers joined hands and sang "We Shall Overcome" while a tape of King's "I Have Dream" speech was played.

## Room tax

### Chambers ask penny allocation

By Holly Edwards  
Feature Editor

A 22-member committee will consider a proposal to implement a one-percent countywide occupancy tax in addition to the occupancy taxes currently levied by Brunswick County municipalities and will make a recommendation to Rep. David Redwine (D-Ocean Isle Beach) by March 1.

That was the consensus reached Tuesday night during a meeting at Brunswick Community College among Redwine, municipal representatives and members of the Southport-Oak Island and South Brunswick Islands chambers of commerce.

The two chambers have proposed the new one-percent occupancy tax to be used exclusively for travel and tourism promotion and marketing. The new tax would yield about \$450,000 a year and, under the chambers' plan, would be governed by a special board appointed by county commissioners, but distributed to Travel Pack, a joint marketing and promotion venture of the two chambers.

Municipalities now are authorized to utilize the occupancy taxes they collect for any tourism-related function -- including providing traditional urban services such as police, fire, rescue and sanitation -- to the governing unit's population, swelled by tourists in summer time. Occupancy taxes are generated by short-term rentals of cottages, hotel and motel accommodations.

While municipal representatives attending Tuesday night's meeting said they did not oppose the chambers' proposal, most also said they did not want to restrict the amount of money their towns could generate through the occupancy tax.

By state law, a municipal occupancy tax combined with a county occupancy tax cannot exceed six percent.

Local bills have established a six-percent occupancy tax in Bald Head Island, and three-percent occupancy tax rates in Southport and all of the Oak Island communities, as well as many other beach communities in See Room tax, page 7

## BRUNSWICK SCHOOLS

### Pay supplement increase sought

By Holly Edwards  
Feature Editor

Low teacher supplements in Brunswick County cause some teachers to feel undervalued and are one of the major reasons many new teachers ultimately leave the profession, Brunswick County Association of Educators (BCAE) president Linda Callender told the school board last week.

Callender presented the board with a proposed schedule for teacher supplement increases that had been approved by a previous board of education but never implemented, and asked the board to include the increases in the 1997-98 budget.

The board directed superintendent of schools Marion Wise to study the proposal and make a recommendation to the board during budget See Increase, page 7

## Helping youths focus of 'dream'

By Holly Edwards  
Feature Editor

More than a hundred people gathered for breakfast and a roundtable discussion of race relations Monday in honor of Martin Luther King Day.

Other observances of the holiday included a community march through Southport Sunday, followed by a discussion of King's philosophy led by the Rev. Ray Gilbert.

The main topic of the third annual community breakfast, held at the North Carolina Baptist Assembly, was "How can we create a community in which all children are valued, supported, healthy and safe?" Each table discussed the question and a facilitator presented a summary of each group's conclusions.

Many participants pointed out the importance of community involvement and the need for action rather than apathy.

"I can recall in one of Dr. King's speeches he said he was tired of taking the tranquilizing drug of gradualism," said Leslie Myrie Sr. "We say a lot and we mean a lot but we don't do a lot."

Myrie said young people in Brunswick County suffer from a lack of See 'Dream,' page 7

## Cheerleader collapses, dies Tuesday night

An East Columbus High School cheerleader suffered an apparent seizure and died Tuesday night during a junior varsity basketball game in Shallotte.

Courtney Bowen, a sophomore, collapsed to the floor with 1:26 left in the game. Paramedics arrived at the West Brunswick High School gym shortly after the call around 6:05 p.m. but could not revive her.

Team coaches and trainers, and a registered nurse at the game, all rushed to help when she collapsed.

West Brunswick athletic director Yogi Hickman canceled the varsity girls and varsity boys games that were scheduled to follow.

The girls were not performing stunts or cheers when the incident occurred.

## Regional plan is suggested

### County looks at northern sewer

By Terry Pope  
County Editor

County commissioners agreed Tuesday night to study regional sewer for northern Brunswick County more closely and to see if the Town of Belville is interested in selling its treatment plant.

Board members cautioned this doesn't mean the county is ready to jump into the sewer business. But they have given assistant county manager Robert Hyatt the green light to negotiate with Belville to possibly come up with some figures that could provide regional sewer service to the growing Leland, Belville and Navassa area.

"If we step into this issue, there are several other entities that are going to come to us and want us to step into their situations."

Leslie Collier  
District 3 commissioner

"Before we can be in a position to even make a decision, we need some specifics," said District 5 commis-

sioner Bill Sue of Leland. "If it's going to cost us some money, we're not going to be interested in it. If it's

going to make us some money, we're going to be interested in it."

The three northern towns have failed at talks to form a regional entity for the northern community. Belville owns a 400,000-gallon-per-day plant with state permits to double that capacity.

A Northeast Brunswick Wastewater Study Committee reported findings from its regional study prepared by McKim and Creed Engineers. Project director Tim Broome said the Leland Sanitary District alone is expected to double in size from 4,000 residents to 8,000 within 20 years.

He said it would take a capacity of See Regional, page 7



## Forecast

The extended forecast calls for a chance of showers on Thursday & Friday with highs mid 50's to mid 60's. Saturday will be fair and cooler with highs in the 40's to mid 50's.

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