

The State Port PILOT

VOLUME 66/ NUMBER 23 SOUTHPORT, N.C. 50 CENTS



Sports

South Brunswick and West Brunswick butted heads in Tuesday night action -- 1C

SOUTHPORT LIBRARY
101 MOORE STREET
SOUTHPORT, NC 28586

Neighbors

fishing has
around activity
port area -- 1B

Town

Island's South
in need of
sand -- Page 2

County growth

Every town reports gain in population

By Terry Pope
County Editor

It was another record year for growth in Brunswick County.

The number of building permits issued in the county for single-family homes in 1996 increased 45 percent over 1995 figures, reported Don Eggert, planner II with the Brunswick County Planning Department.

According to Eggert's year-end report, permits for 371 new homes valued at \$34.4 million were issued compared to 256 permits for homes in 1995.

Also, permits for eight multi-family buildings including 57 units were issued in 1996 for another \$2.02 million in construction. The total number of residential units permitted -- including mobile homes for which no value is listed -- jumped 20 percent in 1996, from 1,187 to 1,428 units.

Still, Brunswick remains the third-fastest-growing county in the State of North Carolina, according to information reported earlier this month in population estimates released by the N. C. Office of State Planning.

According to the state figures, the fastest-growing counties from 1990 to 1995 are Wake, Pender, Brunswick, New Hanover, Currituck and Franklin, in that order.

"Fourteen counties have gained more actual people than Brunswick from 1990 to 1995," stated Eggert. "Wake County led the state with an increase of 91,970. We had an increase of 9,754 people."

By percentage, Brunswick registered a 19.1-percent increase in population compared to New Hanover's 16 percent. Wake tallied a 21.6-percent jump and Pender increased 20.2 percent. Brunswick County jumped from 50,985 residents to 60,739 during the five-year period.

The state study also compares increases in municipal populations for the 18 towns in Brunswick County. All reported increases. It shows the following permanent population data, comparing 1990 to 1995:

- Bald Head Island, from 78 to 87, 11.5 percent.
- Belville, from 66 to 93, 40.9 percent.
- Boiling Spring Lakes, from 1,650 to 1,976, 19.8 percent.
- Bolivia, from 228 to 251, 10.1 percent.

See Growth, page 6



Photo by Jim Harper
Nancy Maguire, who engineered the "campaign that defied all fund-raising wisdom" for the Smith Island Land Trust, was one of those explaining on Saturday what the options now are in the movement to preserve developable portions of Cape Fear, and what direction SILT must take to that goal. (Story, page 2.)

Virginia slaying

Teen murder suspects caught in Long Beach

By Richard Nubel
Municipal Editor

Four Virginia Beach, VA, teenagers, wanted for first-degree murder, were arrested without incident by Long Beach police Sunday afternoon

after officers evacuated the area surrounding a 55th Street NE home they occupied.

At least one weapon, possibly that used to kill 17-year-old Timothy Wheaton, a Virginia Beach high school scholastic and athletic

standout, was recovered from the small home at 215-55th Street NE, major Johnny Freeman said. Virginia Beach officials have asked that information about the weapon be withheld.

Long Beach police early Sunday
See Murder, page 6

Occupancy tax to face opposition

Municipalities say they need all they can get

By Richard Nubel
Municipal Editor

Southport-Oak Island municipal leaders this week said they want to see the greater justification for an additional one-percent occupancy tax before one is enacted.

Last week, representatives of the two county chambers of commerce and Travel Pack -- a joint marketing venture of the chambers -- unveiled a proposal to reap an estimated \$450,000 annually by imposition of a countywide one-percent tax on short-term rentals. Traditionally, the occupancy tax has been a significant funding source for municipalities only.

In a series of local bills several years ago, the state's General Assembly authorized many of the county's beach communities to levy accommodations taxes, but set a cap of six percent on all accommodations taxes. At

"The one percent is not sacred. A budget is sacred."

Bill Boyd
Caswell Beach

a meeting with state Rep. E. David Redwine last week, it was disclosed the six-percent cap would allow municipalities to raise accommodations taxes to only five percent if the countywide one-percent tax were authorized.

Southport and the three Oak Island municipalities currently impose a three-percent accommodations tax. Bald Head Island currently levies a six-percent accommodations tax and would have to cut its municipal tax by one percent if the countywide tax were enacted.

Commissioner Bill Boyd, finance officer for Caswell Beach, says it is critical to the long-term challenges
See Opposition, page 6

Land use plans attracting more public attention

By Terry Pope
County Editor

Land use planning issues haven't attracted much interest from county residents in the past.

But a packed auditorium on the Brunswick Community College campus Monday shows a closer eye may be kept by the public this time on the county's updated five-year plan for future growth and development.

"Any of us that has any smarts at all can see the pressures that are on our county today," said Eugene Tomlinson of Southport, who is also chairman of the N. C. Coastal Re-

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"If you want to live there, you have to do a lot of planning in order to live in harmony with these natural systems."

Dr. Mike Mallin

Pilot wins 11 statewide press awards

General excellence honor among seven first places

The *State Port Pilot* news staff received 11 statewide press awards Thursday night -- the most of any newspaper in its division -- including first place in general excellence and six other categories.

The awards were presented by the North Carolina Press Association at its annual Winter Institute, held at the Friday Center in Chapel Hill. The *Pilot* was entered in the community newspaper division, circulation 3,500 to 10,000, with judging by the Georgia and West Virginia press associations.

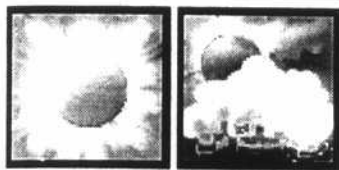
In addition to the general excellence award, the newspaper won first place in editorial page and sports coverage and third place in use of photographs. Holly Edwards won first-place awards in the literacy feature and investigative reporting categories; Terry Pope won first place in sports reporting; Jim Harper won first and second places in feature photography and third place in sports photography; Richard Nubel earned a third-place award in news enterprise reporting.

"It is gratifying to receive this recognition," said *Pilot* editor Ed Harper, "and especially the general excellence award -- our seventh in the past eight years. That particular award reflects credit on the entire newspaper, from advertising effectiveness to the talent of our writers and photographers. Combined with the most recent

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Gov. James B. Hunt joined the editorial staff of *The State Port Pilot* Thursday night at the North Carolina Press Association's annual awards ceremony. Pictured are (from left) editor Ed Harper, Gov. Hunt, staff writer and photographer Jim Harper, county editor Terry Pope, publisher Margaret Harper, municipal editor Richard Nubel and feature editor Holly Edwards.



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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