



**Sports**

Long Beach couple races to the altar, but who's crew chief on pit row? -- 1C

# The State Port PILOT

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**Neighbors**

The Fourth of July came early this year, with parade and fireworks display -- 1B

**Our Town**

Yaupon Beach asks state permission to explore using waterway outfall -- 2

## Growth is 4th fastest

By Terry Pope  
County Editor

Brunswick remains one of the fastest-growing counties in North Carolina, and at a rate even higher than once predicted.

The U. S. Census Bureau has released updated population estimates for all 100 counties; Brunswick ranks fourth with an increase of 24 percent between 1990 and 1996. According to the bureau's latest figures, county population at July, 1996, stood at 63,225.

"Based on this rate of growth, Brunswick County's population as of July 1, 1997, would be 65,183," said Don Eggert, planner II with the Brunswick County Planning Department.

Leading the state in growth is Pender County with an increase of 26.8 percent, followed by Wake County at 25.3 percent and Hoke third at 24.6 percent. Neighboring New Hanover County had a growth rate of 19.3 percent and Horry County (SC)

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## Welfare changes

Cuts accepted by some rather than seek work

By Terry Pope  
County Editor

A state welfare reform program has shown positive results locally by reducing the number of families on public assistance by 21 percent.

But Brunswick County social services employees say there are some flaws in the system that need to be worked out, flaws that encourage applicants to accept cuts in their welfare checks rather than search for jobs.

"I think it needs to be emphasized more that welfare is only temporary," said Cheryl Bowers, an income maintenance case worker for the Brunswick County Department of Social Services. "I know it sounds cruel to be taking money from children that didn't ask to be

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All sorts of strange creatures were to be seen Monday and Tuesday at the Southport yacht basin as filming of the movie "I Know What You Did Last Summer" incorporated a Fourth of July parade. (More photos in Neighbors section.)

Photo by Jim Harper

## City to seek payment Admission charge for the movies?

By Richard Nubel  
Municipal Editor

With a full-scale movie production on-going in the city, aldermen Thursday night received for review a proposed guideline which sets out fees to be charged movie companies wishing to film in Southport.

In addition to setting a daily fee for filming long-term and short-term productions, the draft policy establishes charges for filming at specific locations, fees for use of

city equipment and fees for utilization of city personnel.

The draft policy, which begins by charging film production companies between \$300 and \$750 per day to film in Southport, also requires film production companies to purchase general liability and other forms of insurance and to name the City of Southport co-insured.

Aldermen are expected to take action on the policy

See Payment, page 6

**LIMITS EXPECTED**

## Occupancy tax proposal to cost taxpayers

By Richard Nubel  
Municipal Editor

A bill consolidating the authority to levy accommodations taxes in Brunswick County will cut municipalities' options to levy taxes on short-term rentals by one percent. But, the county will be given the option to levy a one-percent occupancy tax to fund a travel and tourism development agency.

This is clearly not what beach municipalities in the county bargained for this winter when the two county chambers of commerce proposed the one-percent countywide occupancy tax. Municipalities -- including Southport and the Oak Island communities -- have levied three-percent occupancy taxes since the late 1980s

See Proposal, page 9

'He met with motel, hotel and tourism people and they told him they would not let him do it (any other) way without fighting him. They have a powerful lobby.'

Dot Kelly  
Yaupon Beach mayor

**TAX DISTRICTS**

## Fire, rescue departments seek funding

By Richard Nubel  
Municipal Editor

While 55 percent of Southport Volunteer Fire Department responses are made outside the city, city residents pay 85 percent of department costs.

Brunswick County this year will pay only \$15,000 of the department's total \$110,000 operating costs, a figure that is "totally inadequate," volunteer fire chief Gregory Cumbee told aldermen Thursday night.

Cumbee serves as one of five county fire chiefs who, with county commissioner David Sandifer and five volunteer rescue chiefs, have been charged with recommending new funding practices for volunteer emergency units in Brunswick County.

Aldermen on Thursday joined mayor Bill Crowe in calling on county commissioners to establish

Each fire and rescue tax district would be governed by a special commission empowered to set a district property tax to support volunteer fire and rescue units

several fire and rescue tax districts in Brunswick County. Each fire and rescue tax district would be governed by a special commission empowered to set a district property tax to support volunteer fire and rescue units.

Chief Cumbee said if fire and rescue tax districts are created, all those in the Southport Volunteer Fire Department's five-mile response area -- not just city residents -- would support emergency units.

"People outside our city benefit," Cumbee said. Using city funds to upgrade equipment and facilities, the city has obtained a Class 6 rating by the state Insurance Services Office. This entitles all residents of the department's response area to a reduction in fire insurance premiums equal to \$788 a year for a \$100,000 home or \$540 per year for a \$50,000 home, Cumbee said.

The department's favorable insurance rating annually saves homeowners close to \$1 million in fire insurance premiums in the five-mile response area.

"People outside the city get the same benefits as those in the City of Southport and we feel the county has got to foot a bigger part of the bill for

See Funding, page 15



**Forecast**

The extended forecast calls for mostly sunny skies Thursday through Saturday with highs in the 70's.

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## Dosher gets nursing beds

By Holly Edwards  
Feature Editor

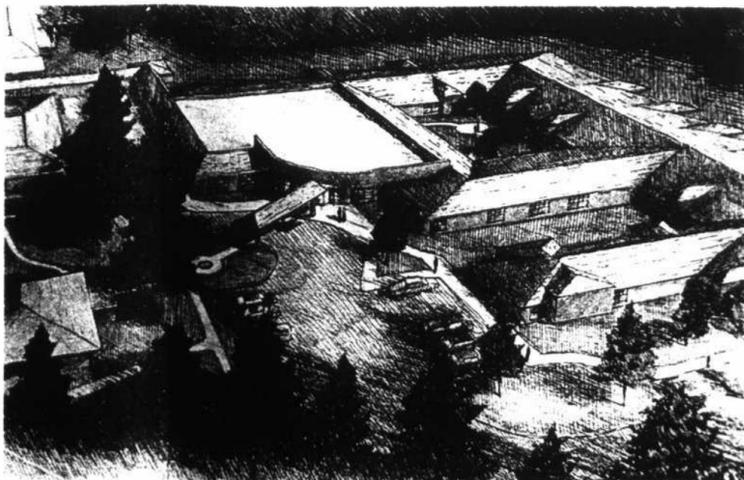
Dosher Memorial Hospital received state approval to operate 60 skilled nursing beds and should have a functional facility within two years, hospital administrator Edgar Haywood said last week.

Dosher was selected from among six Brunswick County applicants. Haywood said the hospital received the allocation because of its reputation and support from the community.

"From day one, we tried to drive home the idea that Dosher wants to operate a quality facility and do it right, or we don't want to do it at all," he said. "And I think Smithville Township showed a tremendous amount of community support for the hospital."

Over 1,300 letters of support were presented the state on Dosher's behalf.

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The 60-bed skilled nursing facility will be constructed behind the main hospital building where the parking lot now is located. The Cape Harbor Apartments building will be demolished and Dr. Thomas Savidge's office will be moved to make room for additional parking.