

N	Lady in Wacc hitter by	rs	to 6-0 1 no- - 1C
O	Altman tax plan; the best av	1	idon ys it's 'age 2



Sports

The first pitch of the Dixie Youth Baseball 1997 season was tossed Saturday -- **1B**

County expands park area

By Terry Pope
County Editor

The bases are loaded at Smithville Township District Park near Southport, but expansion is in the works to relieve the crowded conditions.

Brunswick County commissioners voted Monday to purchase 17.17 acres of land on the park's north side for \$85,850, roughly \$5,000 per acre, from J. D. and Loretta Price.

In other expenditures Monday, commissioners appropriated \$26,000 to match a state grant that will help fund a domestic violence program for district attorney Rex Gore's office. The 13th Judicial District will receive \$360,000 in each of the next two years, but \$77,000 must come this year in matching funds.

Columbus County officials also voted Monday to contribute \$26,000. Bladen County will be asked to contribute a like amount.

County attorney Huey Marshall has been negotiating for more than a month for the purchase of land to expand the Smithville park and another park in the county, the site of which

See Park area, page 10

'Gouging' ordinance is adopted

By Terry Pope
County Editor

After Hurricane Fran struck last fall, power outages which lasted for weeks in some Brunswick County communities sent residents in search of batteries. Some found the price three times what they were before the storm hit.

County officials say that is "price-gouging" and adopted an ordinance Monday to prevent businesses or individuals from taking advantage of citizens in the event of another disaster.

"We will be presenting it to all 18 municipalities and asking for their adoption so it will be uniform throughout the county," said county attorney Huey Marshall. "It will help law enforcement if it's a violation no matter where they are standing in Brunswick County."

The anti-gouging ordinance was modeled after one the City of Charleston, SC, adopted to make the sudden rise in the price of goods after a di-

See Ordinance, page 10



Forecast

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

INSIDE

- Police report ... 8
- Kids' page ... 14
- Obituaries ... 15
- Business ... 18
- Church ... 4B
- Schools ... 5B
- TV schedule ... 6B
- Calendar ... 8B
- District Court ... 7C



Photo by Jim Harper

What could be better than opening day of baseball season, getting out there and mixing it up with all the guys, having fun -- or, proudly watching the youngster in one of the true American rites of passage, setting boldly forth... What indeed? (More youth baseball photos in the Neighbors section.)

County convention

Brunswick Democrats sticking with 'winner'

By Terry Pope
County Editor

County Democrats on Saturday outlined their political success during 1996 and reelected their entire slate of officers at the annual convention.

County commissioner Don Warren asked why break up a group which has worked well together to regain a majority on the commission and retain control of the school board. Under chairman Connie Powell's leadership, the party also retired a \$22,000 debt on its headquarters building near Supply.

Also reelected were first vice-chairman Moses Stanley, second vice-chairman Bernest Hewett, third vice-chairman Tracie Franks, treasurer Vernon Ward and secretary Ruth Finley.

Unity on the county level is tied to unity on the state level, said state leaders who attended the Saturday session.

"I predict, if we keep working like we have," said state senator R. C. Soles Jr. of Tabor City, "we're going to have a solid Democratic state government in the future."

Soles told the audience it was wonderful to return to the Senate that now has a solid 30-20 Democratic majority. Last fall, voters narrowed the Republican gap in the State House, too.

Guest speaker Saturday was state auditor Ralph Campbell Jr., who served on the Raleigh city council before he chose to run for auditor in 1992. His office is responsible for

See Democrats, page 17

COUNTY SYSTEM

Water taps to become mandatory

By Terry Pope
County Editor

An ordinance county commissioners have requested would make it mandatory for property owners who live where county water lines are accessible to tap to the line or pay the tap-on fee.

It's a move commissioners say will help wean the water system, now running at a \$4-million-per-year deficit, off tax dollars used to supplement it. The vote came swiftly Monday night, and it was unanimous.

Recently, the Brunswick County Utility Operations Board has debated the issue but with no clear direction on where commissioners now stand on the issue. When the system was built in 1987, and in expansion projects since, mandatory taps have not been required.

"I think it's time we've given the utility operations board some direction," said District 1 commissioner Don Warren, whose motion to request an ordinance came at the end of Monday's meeting and was not on the

'We're going to have to do this. We're not going to be able to provide countywide water if we don't.'

David Sandifer
District 2 member

regular agenda.

"Since I've come back on the board, we have been concerned with increasing our customer base and with trying to reduce the deficit," said Warren. "We have talked about different things to improve our customer base."

Warren's motion asked that county

See Water, page 8

Long Beach

Burning ban stays in force

By Richard Nubel
Municipal Editor

A controversial ban on open burning of yard debris will remain in force in Long Beach as the town investigates the purchase of equipment to remove unbagged trash from curbside, town council decided by the narrowest of margins Tuesday night.

Mayor Joan Altman broke a 3-3 tie of council to let the open burning ban begin this year remain in force. It was Altman who brought the burning ban back up for review Tuesday, keeping a promise she made to opponents of the ban several months ago.

Voting with the mayor to keep the

ban in force were councilors Jeff Ensminger, Mary Snead and Horace Collier. Councilors Kevin Bell, Frances Allen and Helen Cashwell wanted to allow open burning of yard debris from one to two days per week by permit from the police department.

In an unrelated item of business, council also voted unanimously to send a resolution to the state's legislative delegation opposing the occupancy tax bill introduced this week by Rep. E. David Redwine of Brunswick County. (See related stories, page 2).

Clearly it was the burning ban that demanded most of the public's attention Tuesday night. Twelve

See Burning, page 8

Cans For Kids success story

By Holly Edwards
Feature Editor

Cans For Kids of Brunswick County has been named the top recycling success story in the nation by Can Manufacturers Institute in Washington, DC.

Over a million cans have been collected thus far, and proceeds from redeeming the cans last year provided \$10,690 to 479 Brunswick County high school graduates. The project began three years ago with one aluminum can bin and has grown to include 20 collection sites.

Project organizer Linda Vereen said the project began with a dream that someday recycling would generate enough money to send every high school graduate in the county to college.

"Our kids recognize that the future is education, and that it's impor-

See Payment, page 6



Brunswick County Cans For Kids was named the top recycling success story in the nation by the Can Manufacturers Institute.