

The State Port

PILOT

VOLUME 66/ NUMBER 40

SOUTHPORT, N.C.

50 CENTS



Sports

North Brunswick player, coach lead all-Brunswick baseball squad -- Page 1C

News
Cleaning disposal unusual c
shore
ome
e 1B

Opinion
What's the take on future movie-filming here? Time for speaking parts -- Page 2

County sewer

Service district recommended

By Terry Pope
County Editor

A vote earlier this month to upgrade Leland Industrial Park's sewer plant for northern communities put county commissioners in the sewer business.

Now a committee which has studied the sewer issue closely recommends that either a countywide water and sewer district or a "service district" be created to oversee the project. It would encompass all areas where the county offers sewer.

"The county is growing very rapidly, and there needs to be a simple way it can be added to," said May Moore of Yaupon Beach, chairman of the Brunswick County Stormwater Management and Sewage Treatment Oversight Committee.

Although the county chose to enter the sewer business, it will focus on where the greatest need for wastewater service lies -- in more densely populated areas.

"There are areas of the county where it is hard to visualize sewer will ever be needed," said Ms. Moore. See Sewer, page 6



Photo by Jim Harper

Although it's been in service on the Southport-Fort Fisher ferry run for several months, the vessel Southport was officially welcomed to duty Friday when Garland Garrett, secretary of the N. C. Department of Transportation, broke a bottle of bubbly across her bow. Dignitaries and invited guests, including the Duke Blue Devil, embarked on a short cruise that demonstrated the remarkable maneuverability of the new ferry.

Councilor found NG of assault

By Richard Nubel
Municipal Editor

District Court judge Jerry Jolly Tuesday afternoon quickly found Long Beach town councilor Horace Collier not guilty of two counts of assault on a female -- the charges brought by town resident Betty Weaver and councilor Frances Allen.

In a case that took about an hour and 20 minutes to try, Weaver contended Collier had struck her with a plastic drink bottle subsequent to the February 18 town council meeting at the Long Beach Recreation Center. Allen claimed Collier had pushed her aside as she approached Weaver and Collier in the throes of their dispute that night.

Key to Collier's defense was councilor Mary Snead, who had just been sworn to office and had participated in her first council meeting the night of February 18. Councilor Snead and her husband, Larry Snead, testified they witnessed virtually the entire exchange involving Collier, Allen and Weaver that night and saw neither the alleged poking of Weaver with a drink bottle nor the alleged shoving of Allen.

"Collier had a drink bottle in his hand," she testified. See Assault, page 6

Three dollars out, one dollar in

Fire, rescue proposal costly to Long Beach

By Richard Nubel
Municipal Editor

Long Beach homeowners, business operators and lot owners would pay an estimated \$266,550 in new taxes for fire and rescue funding in Brunswick County next year if county commissioners adopt a proposal advanced by a committee on emergency service funding last week.

The Town of Long Beach would receive only \$87,000 for its volunteer fire and rescue departments under the same proposal.

Pay \$266,550. Receive \$87,000. Is this fair? See Proposal, page 6

"Our big concern all along has been equity: That money raised here, stay here. That's not what is proposed."

Joan Altman
Long Beach mayor

\$15.3 million

Schools request draws favorable county response

By Holly Edwards
Feature Editor

A majority of Brunswick County commissioners said Tuesday night they support the school board's \$15.3-million local budget request for fiscal year 1997-98 and are ready to place responsibility for improving the school system squarely on the shoulders of those who run it.

"I think we've reached a time in Brunswick County where we need to give the school system the benefit of the doubt," declared District 3 commissioner Leslie Collier. "The end result of it is it puts the ball in their court. If they get what they need then they will be responsible for the results, and that's what the public expects."

In his budget proposal, county manager Jim Varner recommended a \$12.3-million allocation to the school system. When this amount is added to other sources of local revenue, the school system's total local budget would be about \$14 million, or more than \$1 million less than school officials say they need.

While three of five commissioners said Tuesday night they supported the school board's budget request, the school system's total local budget would be about \$14 million, or more than \$1 million less than school officials say they need. See Schools, page 7

"If they get what they need then they will be responsible for the results, and that's what the public expects."

Leslie Collier
District 3 commissioner

BEAT workshop

Water quality is emphasized

By Terry Pope
County Editor

Residents concerned with water quality in Brunswick County began to arm themselves with facts Tuesday in hopes of protecting the Cape Fear River and Lockwood Folly River from forms of pollution which have already stricken the Neuse River and turned it into a killing ground.

"We believe a problem is not fixable until it is visible," said Jan Harris, president of the Brunswick Environmental Action Team (BEAT), which held a countywide meeting near Supply. "That is why we arranged the workshop."

BEAT was organized last year as a group of concerned citizens who promote wise stewardship of natural resources in the county and better ways to manage long-range growth. It has taken keen interest in planning issues this year since the county is drafting its five-year land use plan update that outlines how to manage coastal growth, a plan mandated by the Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA).

Gene Tomlinson of Southport, chairman of the N. C. Coastal Resources Commission, a board that must approve county land use plans, said water quality has become a major concern of the CRC. He said state See Water, page 9

While three of five commissioners said Tuesday night they supported the school board's budget request, the school system's total local budget would be about \$14 million, or more than \$1 million less than school officials say they need.

While three of five commissioners said Tuesday night they supported the school board's budget request, the school system's total local budget would be about \$14 million, or more than \$1 million less than school officials say they need. See Schools, page 7

JoAnn Burkholder
Fisheries member

Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA).

Gene Tomlinson of Southport, chairman of the N. C. Coastal Resources Commission, a board that must approve county land use plans, said water quality has become a major concern of the CRC. He said state See Water, page 9

Is there room for a compromise?

By Richard Nubel
Municipal Editor

With no consensus at home and a warring Travel and Tourism Coalition in Raleigh, Rep. E. David Redwine told Brunswick County leaders Friday he would decide early this week whether to fight for a consolidated occupancy tax bill in this session of the General Assembly or let the matter drop altogether.

Actually, Redwine told members of the Brunswick County Occupancy Tax Task Force he faced four options this week when he returned to Raleigh. He could:

OCCUPANCY TAX

- Do nothing. He could withdraw House Bill 889, which creates a first-time one-percent countywide occupancy tax to provide up to \$450,000 annually for travel and tourism promotion in Brunswick County, and wait as Brunswick County continues to build consensus. The bill also allows beach municipalities to increase municipal occupancy taxes, but limits use of those funds to activities approved by the N. C. Travel and Tourism Coalition.
- He could introduce a bill establishing the one-percent countywide occupancy tax only. Towns are clearly divided on whether or not to accept spending limitations on which the Travel and Tourism Coalition has insisted. Compounding the problem, cities and towns want a three-percent increase in municipal occupancy taxes to six percent. The coalition has insisted on a six-percent cap on occupancy taxes in any political subdivision of the state, so if a one-percent countywide tax is enacted in Brunswick, municipalities would be limited to two-percent increases. Long Beach and Southport officials were so angered by this they have asked Redwine to withdraw those towns from any pending legislation this

See Compromise, page 9

INSIDE

Opinion	4
Kids' page	10
Calendar	11
Police report	12
District Court	13
Business	14
Obituaries	15
Recreation	2B
Tar Heel Kitchen	4B
Church	6B
Schools	7B
Classifieds	1D