



Sports

Bishop is coach of year; Green top player on all-county football team -- 1C

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Southport

Marina sale still possible

By Richard Nubel News Editor

N. C. State Ports Authority has asked attorney general Mike Easley to render an opinion as to whether it has the ability to sell Southport's Small Boat Harbor, former Southport mayor Norman Holden told the city's board of aldermen Tuesday afternoon.

Hearing this, aldermen indicated they would weigh seriously a city effort to acquire the valuable property on the Intracoastal Waterway.

Holden, who has remained in close touch with Easley since he moved from Southport to become state attorney general in 1992, may have also let the former district attorney's political plans slip while advising city aldermen.

"Being politically involved, as I am," Holden said, "I am glad you signed a five-year agreement with the State Ports Authority. In a couple of years we're going to have a new governor and Southport could be sitting right pretty."

Holden's inference was that Easley planned to run for governor at the conclusion of fellow Democrat Jim Hunt's present term of office. Southport two months ago inked a five-year deal with SPA to oversee some functions of a contractor at the Small Boat Harbor.

Holden said the attorney general was interested in how the City of Southport viewed a potential sale of the Small Boat Harbor. Presently, the property is owned by the State of North Carolina, which has relegated its control to the State Ports Authority, a body which manages the ports of Wilmington and Morehead City.

SPA, in turn, leases management rights to the Small Boat Harbor to Southport Marina Inc., a private company. Earlier this fall, city officials and SPA members tussled over terms of an agreement, originally forged in 1989, whereby the city oversees certain provisions of SPA's contract with Southport Marina Inc. SPA announced it would quit paying the city \$1,500 monthly to monitor operations at the Small Boat Harbor.

Although State Ports Authority executive director Erik Stromberg told aldermen the Small Boat Harbor property was for sale for the right price, SPA members later said that was not true.

Southport grudgingly agreed to a five-year contract to monitor the Small Boat Harbor contractor, but will receive no compensation for See Marina, page 13



The Cape Fear pilot boat prepares to take a pilot off an outbound tanker at the Cape Fear River bar. The small craft puts to sea approximately 1,600 times a year to serve the 800 ships which annually visit the port. Photo by Jim Harper

'Decisions always painful'

Latest CP&L layoff cuts 79 at Brunswick

Seventy-nine employees of Carolina Power and Light Co.'s Brunswick plant at Southport were told their jobs had been eliminated this (Wednesday) morning.

Only six of those employees were offered other positions.

In all, 148 positions at CP&L's Brunswick plant were eliminated in this latest round of downsizing. The other 69 positions were unfilled at this time, company officials said.

"While staffing decisions are always painful for

everyone involved, getting our staffing levels aligned with other top-performing plants is the only way we can remain competitive in today's electricity markets," said CP&L Brunswick plant vice-president C. S. Hinnant.

Plant spokesman Mac Harris said notification of the 79 employees to be outplaced was to be done between 7 and 10 a.m. today. He said the staffing decisions, actually made last spring, affected virtually every department at the plant. Employees were notified in July that, See CP&L layoff, page 8

Brunswick County

'Heritage' designation sought for Cape Fear

By Richard Nubel News Editor

Reluctantly, and without the support of District 3 commissioner Leslie Collier, county commissioners Monday night directed staff to seek federal "Heritage River" designation for the Cape Fear River.

The move, District 5 commissioner Bill Sue said, will allow the county to compete for federal grant funds which may become available for river improvement projects.

"I'm told this designation don't cost us anything, but we can be in position to receive federal grants," Sue said. Later he told commis-

sioners, "My thought is we could use it to clean up the river. If federal funds come along, only rivers with this designation will be eligible."

But other commissioners, notably Collier, feared federal grant funds would bring with them unwanted See Heritage, page 6

The bridge Few are having second thoughts

By Richard Nubel News Editor

Long Beach resident Frances Allen, defeated in her November bid for a second term on town council, asked the N. C. Coastal Resources Commission November 20 to reject a Long Beach request to amend its land use plan.

Allen, in a presentation to the CRC at the Wilmington Hilton -- in language borrowed liberally from a November 3 letter by the N. C. Coastal Federation's Tracy Skrabal to N. C. Department of Transportation environmental engineer Franklin Vick -- asked the agency in charge of land use planning to deny a possible Long Beach request to include a Second Bridge to Oak Island Corridor Planning Study as part of its Coastal Area Management Act land use plan.

Allen further asked the CRC to join her call, and that of newly created Brunswick Environmental Action Team (BEAT), for a full Environmental Impact Study (EIS) of the area in which the planned second bridge to Oak Island would be sited, including two proposed western road corridor routes DOT has rejected.

Long Beach mayor Joan Altman said Allen's arguments were unfounded and her requests would further delay completion of the planned second bridge to western Oak Island.

"I am here in a desperate attempt to protect some very fragile and important wetlands, watersheds and Carolina Bays located in the Department of Transportation preferred route..." Allen told the CRC, asserting that she did not appear as a Long Beach councilor but as a member of BEAT's board of directors.

Reacting to a text of Allen's pre-See Bridge, page 10



"I am here in a desperate attempt to protect some very fragile and important wetlands, watersheds and Carolina Bays..."

Frances Allen



"The importance and need for this bridge has been documented for 20 years and NCDOT has worked diligently to address the legitimate concerns it raises."

Joan Altman

School calendar change proposed

By Holly Edwards Feature Editor

The proposed calendar for the 1998-99 school year has students taking exams prior to Christmas vacation, provides more instructional time prior to end-of-course and end-of-grade tests and facilitates dual enrollment at Brunswick

Community College for high school students, said assistant superintendent of instructional services Mary McDuffie.

The school year will begin August 4 and end May 25 and will include 180 student days and 1,000 instructional hours, according to the proposal.

A similar calendar was proposed for the current school year but was rejected when parents complained they did not have enough notice that summer vacation would be short-See Calendar, page 8

Caswell's water system accepted

By Richard Nubel News Editor

Over the dissenting vote of District 3 commissioner Leslie Collier, county commissioners Monday night approved a contract by which Brunswick County will maintain and operate the municipally owned water distribution system in Caswell Beach.

* Caswell Beach commissioners approved contract terms on November See Caswell, page 6

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