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PPO

Dosher, other hospitals plan new coverage

By Holly Edwards
Feature Editor

Dosher Memorial and eight other hospitals in the Coastal Carolina Health Alliance (CCHA) have formed a preferred provider organization (PPO) health insurance product that can be marketed to small businesses but have hit a "snag" in finding an insurance company with which to partner, said Dosher administrator Edgar Haywood.

"We found two or three companies that were potential partners, and one company from Alabama that was moving in that direction. But the company backed out when they decided there wasn't enough business to put them over the hump," Haywood said.

Despite the setback, the alliance hopes to have a small business PPO plan in place within a few months, said Scott Parisella, CCHA executive director.

The alliance formed its PPO last year to cover employees of member hospitals. The PPO is comprised of nearly 500 doctors in the region, including 15 from Dosher Memorial and 14 from Columbia Brunswick. Employees covered by the plan must use health care providers in the organization or pay higher out-of-pocket expenses for health care.

Haywood said the plan is saving the hospital approximately \$35,000 a year in costs of employee health benefits.

Although Acordia National Insurance of Charleston, WV, partnered with the alliance to form the PPO for alliance employees, that company does not administer health care plans designed to be marketed to businesses, Haywood said.

The primary purpose of forming a PPO to be marketed to small businesses is to direct health care dollars back to the providers, rather than to insurance companies, Parisella said. As managed care health insurance companies have grown, doctors and hospitals have seen their revenues decrease, he added.

And, Parisella noted, a major criticism of managed care companies is that they often have more power over patient care than doctors do. But if the providers and health insurance company are part of the same organization, doctors can make crucial patient care decisions independently.

"Our main goals are to direct more dollars back to the providers and ultimately back to the community," Parisella said. "We also want to give physicians more ownership in the process."

Several insurance companies and insurance brokers -- companies that market prospective insurance plans to insurance companies -- are con-

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A right busy old elf is Santa Claus these days, now appearing at Dosher Memorial Hospital, next parading on Oak Island. Tuesday night he was at Southport's fire station; this Saturday he'll be at Leland's 10 a.m. parade, and parade again in Bolivia an hour later. Then for good measure he will fly in at 2 p.m. Sunday to Brunswick County Airport.

Photo by Jim Harper

Northern schools

Year-round school passes its first test

By Holly Edwards
Feature Editor

As the first semester of the new year-round calendar draws to a close in northern Brunswick County schools, principals, teachers and students say they are less stressed-out and better prepared than ever.

"Our attitudes have improved a lot and there haven't been nearly as many kinds of conflicts," declared Leland Middle School eighth grader Robert Camp. "And

our teachers are better at teaching."

The new calendar implemented at Belville Elementary, Lincoln Primary and Leland Middle schools shortens summer vacation to five weeks but provides a three-week break after each nine weeks of instruction.

During the break, students with academic problems can obtain remediation before they slip farther behind while students who are not having academic trouble can take a breather or participate in enrichment.

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Henson chosen mayor

By Jim Harper
Staff Writer

Fulfilling a promise made in November, mayor Tom Bradshaw resigned from his leadership post and from the village council of Bald Head Island on Saturday, and newly elected council member Kitty Henson was chosen to serve as mayor for the next two years.

Bradshaw, the only non-resident, See Henson, page 6

Special meeting

Lakes water compromise agreed upon

By Richard Nubel
News Editor

Work of the Boiling Spring Lakes water feasibility committee will continue and all committee members can remain on the job, under terms of an agreement reached between three commissioners and new mayor Tom Tully Monday night.

But, the committee will no longer have instruction to prepare a binding referendum on water system development by the May primary election and Tully will appoint two or three additional members to the body, likely in January.

"We worked out a compromise," commissioner Jack Redmond announced to about 50 persons who gathered at City Hall for a specially called meeting of the board of commissioners initiated by him and commissioners Ray Hicks and Bert Buckbee.

The compromise ended a contentious session called in

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'I am not against it. You're trying to tell people I'm against it and I am not.'

Mayor Tom Tully

Yaupon board is reorganized

Dot Kelly will remain mayor of Yaupon Beach for the next two years, fellow commissioners decided Monday night.

Little change was brought to the board of commissioners at its biennial reorganizational meeting. Just as Kelly remains mayor, mayor pro-tem Bill Smith will keep his job until the board reorganizes again in 1999.

Kelly, Smith and newly elected commissioner Marty Wozniak were sworn to four-year terms of office by the mayor's brother.

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Meeting change

The regular meeting of the Southport Board of Aldermen scheduled for 7:30 p.m. Thursday will be called to order and immediately recessed.

Advertising requirements of the state's open meetings law could not be met in time to cancel and reschedule the session. The board wishes to delay this month's meeting in observance of the December 4 death of Almeta Crowe, wife of city mayor Bill Crowe.

The December reorganizational meeting of the Southport Board of Aldermen will be reconvened at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, December 16.

Beach Road district to become a town?

By Richard Nubel
News Editor

Could number 19 be far away? With 18 incorporated towns and cities, Brunswick County has more municipalities than any other of the 100 counties in North Carolina.

Number 19 may be on the way. Commissioners of the Southeast Brunswick Sanitary District are at least interested enough in the benefits of municipal incorporation that they have directed district manager Woody Wilson to prepare a briefing on the possibility.

"The board, simply, at our last meeting, had some questions and charged me with finding some information," Wilson said. "I am doing

that through the N. C. League of Municipalities and the N. C. Institute of Governments."

Wilson said if all responded in a timely fashion he would have a "stack of information" for commissioners when they next meet January 5.

Southeast Brunswick Sanitary District was created by an act of Brunswick County commissioners in September, 1989. The initial task of district commissioners was to construct a public wastewater management system for the Long Beach Road corridor.

In recent years, however, the district has adopted its own zoning ordinance and subdivision ordinance and has taken an affirmative approach to land use matters. Commissioners,

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Traffic backups on the Oak Island bridge were annoying at times this week as the N. C. Department of Transportation began routine replacement of bridge joints. In place of flagmen, DOT employed portable traffic lights to narrow traffic to one lane across sections of the bridge as work progressed.

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