

Courthouse in the works

County 'space crunch' eased by new facilities

By Terry Pope
County Editor

Some departments will get relief from a space crunch at the county government center, including the crowded courthouse.

The Brunswick County Board of Commissioners on Monday allocated \$1 million to build a 10,000-square-foot building to house the Brunswick County office of the Southeastern Center for Mental Health.

Also, Grier-Fripp Architects of Charlotte was hired to design a new courthouse. The present facility at the government center near Bolivia has two courtrooms and a small claims chamber which have outgrown their effectiveness since being built 20 years ago.

Commissioners will pull \$382,647 of unspent funds from past capital outlay projects and add it to \$592,500 already in the pot to build

the mental health center behind the sheriff's department. County finance director Lithia Horne said \$124,668 in surplus was pulled from a warehouse project and another \$106,634 was never used for library construction.

Commissioners set aside part of the funds in the 1997-98 fiscal year budget, and Southeastern Center contributed about \$400,000. The building will be owned by the county.

"Before I came here, there was a plan to build another building and to put parks and recreation in there (mental health)," said county manager Jim Varner. "There is a space need at this complex, a severe space need."

The mental health center will need approximately 7,000 square feet of space. An undetermined county department will occupy the remaining 3,000 square feet. It has not been decided which agency will get the

'We've got several buildings with five or more departments in these buildings. We've got some offices with three or in some cases up to five people sharing that office space.'

Jeff Phillips
County engineer

old mental health center, but the adjacent health department is also facing a space crunch.

"We've got several buildings with five or more departments in these buildings," said county engineer Jeff Phillips. "We've got some offices with three or in some cases up to five people sharing that office space."

Phillips said it would be cheaper to build a larger building and make

room for another department at the same time. He estimates construction at \$100 per square foot. The location would be adjacent to two existing parking lots. But in the future, as the complex continues to grow, more parking will be needed, said Phillips.

"They're very excited about that location," said District 3 commissioner Leslie Collier of Long Beach.

A study done several years ago on space needs at the courthouse found the facility was too small when it was built, with not enough seating in the courtrooms and a lack of waiting rooms for witnesses or where attorneys could meet with clients. An ad hoc committee began meeting in July, 1997, to decide on an architect who had built North Carolina courthouses in the past.

Commission chairman Jo Ann Bellamy Simmons served on the committee along with clerk of court Diana Morgan, sheriff Ronald Hewett, assistant county manager Robert Hyatt and Phillips. A list of seven architects was compiled last November, and three were interviewed in February.

The committee met and unanimously recommended Grier-Fripp to the board of commissioners. Phillips said the firm is the most experienced at courthouse construction and has excellent references.

Free Introductory Consultation

We Want To Help You Achieve Greater Financial Security.

Balanced financial planning is for you. Consider the wide range of financial options we make available:

- Personal Financial Planning
- Tax-exempt Investments
- Money Market and Mutual Funds
- Unit Investment Trusts
- Investment Certificates
- IRAs
- Pension and Profit Sharing Plans
- Limited Partnerships
- Insurance



W. Brett McKelthan
Personal Financial Advisor
Registered Representative

Through your personal financial plan, you and your American Express financial advisor can decide which financial service or combination of services is right for you.

Call today for a free introductory consultation.

FINANCIAL ADVISORS

American Express Financial Advisors Inc.

256-3629

© 1995 American Express Financial Corporation

COASTAL COUNSELING CLINIC

Dr. Marcia W. Whiting Ph.D, MSW, CCSW

Psychotherapy • Counseling
Children • Adolescent • Adults

Medicare, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, PHP Plus, Provident PHC-CP&L/
PCP, United Behavioral SYS.
Green Spring, FED. EMP. PROG., Aetna,
Champus, VA, The Travelers and other insurance accepted
with prior approval.

Call For Appointment (910) 457-0204
4870-2 Long Beach Rd., Southport, NC 28461
Next to Movie Theater



EYE ASSOCIATES OF WILMINGTON, P.A.

Eye Associates of Wilmington
proudly announces Ophthalmology
services in Southport.

Consultations for Diseases and Surgery
of the Eye available

Vision Square
1620 N. Howe Street
Southport, NC 28461
910-457-9920

Appointments available by Referral Only.

Bridge studies to involve town, county planners

By Terry Pope
County Editor

Long Beach resident Rupert Riley asked county officials Monday why they are in such a hurry to plan the corridor for a second bridge to Oak Island.

The Brunswick County Planning Department has formed a joint committee with the Town of Long Beach to compare studies done by both. Long Beach has hired a consultant to help draft its land use plan update, which includes proposals for a second bridge to the island and how it would impact traffic and growth.

"What is the rush?" Riley asked the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners, which did not respond to his question. Riley is president of Long Beach United for Progress, a political action committee.

Riley said land that is being studied falls under the jurisdiction of the county and not Long Beach. The N. C. Department of Transportation (DOT) has selected three possible corridors for the new bridge and a connector road that may route to the Midway community west of St. James Plantation.

Depending on the route chosen, one agency indicates it would require a time-consuming environmental impact study before any construction could take place, Riley said. It could take years to draft the study.

"Wait for the smoke screen to clear," said Riley. "If it does, you may find it may be in the wrong place."

According to county planning director Jeff Coutu, there are at least four studies underway to help the county and Oak Island towns prepare for another bridge:

■ County staff and Long Beach planners are working together on the county's land use plan update, using the town's plan as a guide. It will be discussed by the Brunswick County Planning Board on April 15.

■ Consultants are drafting a Long Beach land use plan update that includes issues on the mainland side regarding the impact of a second bridge.

■ State Department of Transportation consultants have drafted an Oak Island thoroughfare plan which includes specific recommendations for the widening of roads and connectors ahead of bridge construction.

■ DOT consultants are also at work on a comprehensive Brunswick County thoroughfare plan with the second bridge corridor a major issue, along with the Northern Outer Loop of Interstate 40 near Leland and other highway needs.

Coutu said his department realized it needs to better plan for the corridor and decided to work with Long Beach to incorporate the town's ideas into the county's land use plan update.

"We've realized the county staff needed to be more involved," said Coutu.

The joint committee includes Long Beach town manager Jerry Walters and Coutu, along with a number of town and county planners. The committee hasn't drafted anything yet but will discuss the Long Beach plan with the county planning board on April 15.

ASSOCIATED FOOT & ANKLE SPECIALISTS



INGROWN TOENAILS

Permanent Surgical Correction
Medical treatment for fungus nails.
"Every effort is made to treat each patient as
painlessly as possible"



Dr. Timothy Vogler

Residency Trained (three years) in Foot and Ankle Surgery
Fellow, American College of Foot & Ankle Surgeons
Diplomate, American Board of Podiatric Surgery

755-6512
SOUTHPORT

Help is closer than you think.

(So is April 15th.)

A timely reminder that no one has more experienced preparers at more convenient locations than H&R Block. Our rates are reasonable, we stand behind our work. So while tax time is just around the corner, the good news is, so are we.

H&R BLOCK

828 N. Howe St., Southport • 457-5614

CAPE FEAR Ford

I.R.S.

WE'VE OVER-ORDERED OUR SPRING INVENTORY AND ARE HAVING AN INVENTORY REDUCTION SALE! **SALE!**

FORD TRUCK MONTH

| | |
|--|---|
|  <p>NEW '98 FORD RANGERS 4x2s, 4x4s, regular and super cabs, flaresides and stylesides.</p> <p>UP TO \$1250 REBATES OR AS LOW AS 1.9% APR FROM \$10,590 For XL with air #8T5210</p> |  <p>NEW '97 FORD F-SERIES HD Over 8500 GVW, F-250s, F-350s, F-450s, gas and diesel, 4x2s, 4x4s!</p> <p>CLOSEOUT REBATE \$1750 OR AS LOW AS 4.9% APR 48 MONTHS</p> |
|--|---|

APRIL FORD TRUCK MONTH SPECIAL!!

BUY A FORD BEDLINER FOR \$9900 INSTALLED!

With The Purchase or Lease Of A New RANGER or F-SERIES During The Month Of April!

| | |
|--|---|
|  <p>NEW '98 FORD F-SERIES FULL-SIZE PICKUPS 4x2s, 4x4s, including a big selection of 4x4 supercab!</p> <p>70 TO CHOOSE FROM! FROM \$14,685 For F-150 #8T5114 AND GET AS LOW AS 4.9% APR FINANCING On Regular Cab V-6 F-150s</p> |  <p>NEW '98 FORD EXPLORERS FULL-SIZE SPORT UTILITIES SPORTS, XLT, LDDIE BUARERS, LIMITED AS LOW AS</p> <p>1.9% APR 36 MONTHS / 4.9% APR 60 MONTHS FROM \$18,650 For 2-Door Sport #8T5546</p> |
|--|---|

AS LOW AS 1.9% APR 36-MONTH FINANCING / **2.9% APR 48 MONTHS** / **4.9% / 5.9% APR 60 MONTHS**
In Place Of Rebates, On Selected New Ford!

| | |
|---|---|
|  <p>NEW '98 ESCORTS SEDANS AND WAGONS! ALL WITH AIR CONDITIONING!</p> <p>FROM \$10,590 For Sedan #8C5426 OR AS LOW AS 1.9% APR</p> |  <p>NEW '98 ZX2s SPORTY COUPES WITH 130 HORSEPOWER! ALL WITH AIR CONDITIONING!</p> <p>FROM \$10,990 For Sedan #8C5617 OR AS LOW AS 1.9% APR</p> |
|  <p>NEW '98 CONTOURS EUROPEAN STYLE SEDAN! 4-CYLINDER and 170 HP V-6!</p> <p>FROM \$12,985 For LX #8C5010 OR AS LOW AS 1.9% APR</p> |  <p>NEW '98 MUSTANGS THE STANDARD FOR SPORT COUPES! NOW PRICED BELOW '97 PRICES!</p> <p>FROM \$14,990 For V-6 Coupe #8C4435 OR AS LOW AS 4.9% APR</p> |
|  <p>NEW '98 TAURUS SEDANS AND WAGONS Including the SE Sport Sedan with FREE 200 HP DOHC Engine and Bucket Seat!</p> <p>20 TO CHOOSE FROM! FROM \$16,950 For LX Sedan #8C5628 OR AS LOW AS 1.9% APR</p> |  <p>NEW '98 FORD CROWN VICTORIA Full-Size V-8 Luxury Sedan NEW MORE FORMAL STYLING!</p> <p>22 TO CHOOSE FROM! FROM \$20,770 For #8C5401</p> |

CAPE FEAR Ford 61 YEARS

799-4060 4222 Oleander Drive

All prices are after maximum Ford rebates and plus tax, tag, and processing fee. * Special finance rates will vary depending on credit worthiness of customer as determined by Ford credit and model selected.