

THE STATE PORT PILOT



Cougars battle
South contends for playoff

Art in the Park
Fun for the young and old

Trash plan
Long Beach weighs its op

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Election

Tuesday primary is 'quiet'

By Terry Pope
County Editor

It has been a quiet campaign season, and election officials won't guess how many of the more than 41,000 registered voters in the county will head to the polls for Tuesday's primary.

Still, there is a primary May 5 with the polls open from 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. for voters to select local candidates for the November general election. There are few challenges in the races for county commission seats, sheriff and state Senate, and one race won't be decided until September.

Voting for U. S. Congress has been delayed until the fall as legislators must redesign the 12th Congressional District in the central part of the state by May 29. That means a delay also in voting in the 7th District which includes Brunswick County.

The special primary for Congressional seats is the result of a three-judge federal panel's ruling that legislators must redraw the 12th District that stretches from Greensboro to Charlotte. The U. S. Supreme Court ruled earlier this month that districts cannot be drawn on the basis of race, sending state legislators back to the drawing board to eliminate a black-majority district that sliced through numerous counties to take in pockets of minority voters.

Districts in the eastern part of the state are not expected to change.

All primaries, with the exception of those for U. S. House, will proceed as scheduled. One-stop absentee voting will continue at the Brunswick County Board of Elections office at the county government center near Bolivia until 5 p.m. on Friday, May 1.

Sheriff

Incumbent sheriff Ronald E. Hewett, 34, of Supply faces a Democratic challenger in Kenneth D. Messer Sr., 50, of Belville. Hewett was elected to a four-year term in 1994 after serving the department as deputy and as DARE officer.

Messer is a former detective with the sheriff's department and now mayor of Belville. The winner will See Primary, page 6



Always a local favorite, Just Joey the clown was on hand again to amuse and amaze youngsters at Saturday's "Art in the Park" festival, juggling balls, clubs, swords -- even the occasional hat.

Photo by Jim Harper

Southport utilities

Impact fees are first step of expansion

By Richard Nubel
Municipal Editor

New-development impact fees will help pay the estimated \$15-million cost of a new wastewater treatment plant needed to see the City of Southport through its build-out, aldermen decided Thursday.

A state official also told city aldermen Thursday that Southport may not be permitted to dispose of additional treated wastewater into the Intracoastal Waterway. The city now holds a permit to discharge no more than 800,000 gallons of effluent daily from its wastewater treatment plants at a point just off West Street.

In another of a series of workshop sessions devoted to growth, development and its impact on city infrastructure, public services director Ed Honeycutt told the board a wastewater treatment plant of 2.5-million-gallon-per-day (gpd) capacity would be needed to serve the city and its one-mile extraterritorial jurisdiction at build-out.

City manager Rob Gandy this week said he and the public services director will recommend construction of an all-new wastewater treat-

'The option to participate in a regional project is still there and I think the board of aldermen is still committed to taking a look at it if it comes to pass.'

Rob Gandy
City manager

ment facility. The city now operates two wastewater treatment plants, each rated at 400,000-gpd capacity. But, one of the two plants was an experimental model made available to the city at little cost in the early 1980s. Its performance historically See Impact fees, page 7

State of the Child Conference

County must improve on 'Report Card'

By Holly Edwards
Feature Editor

Children in Brunswick County are poorer and have lower SAT scores, lower graduation rates and higher teen pregnancy rates than their average counterparts in North Carolina, according to a county "report card" issued last week at the annual Brunswick County Partnership for Children's State of the Child Conference.

The report lists two grades -- one for "content" that compares Brunswick County with the state average, one for "effort" that assess-

es the county's problem-solving activity level for each area. An effort level for childhood poverty rates was not listed because the partnership board could not objectively evaluate efforts to diminish poverty in the county, explained Partnership for Children director Lori Bates.

Nearly one-fifth of county children live in poverty and many of them do not get the early childhood attention they need for intellectual development throughout their academic careers, Bates said.

"The first three years of life is where we're missing the boat," she said. "Recent brain

research shows that if children aren't talked to and read to and cuddled and nurtured, their brains don't develop the way they should. And if the brain doesn't develop during the first three years, it won't develop later on."

Because poor families often don't have the tools to enhance their child's early brain development, Bates said, poor children are more likely to enter school developmentally behind their peers.

The percentage of county children entering kindergarten below the developmental level recommended by the state has decreased from 44 percent to 37 percent, but is still above state

average, Bates noted.

And, she added, children who enter school behind their peers are more likely to lag behind throughout their schooling.

"About one-third of kids aren't ready for kindergarten and about one-third of county teens don't graduate from high school," Bates observed. "I don't know if it's the same group of kids, but to me those statistics say something. I think teachers know which one-third aren't going to graduate from high school, and I think they know which one-third aren't

See Report Card, page 9



Photo by Holly Edwards
Brunswick Town-Fort Fisher State Historic Site director Jim Bartley and Friends of Brunswick Town president Frances Allen review plans for renovation and expansion of the site scheduled to begin in June. The \$325,000 project is expected to take six to eight months to complete.

Brunswick renovation is planned

By Holly Edwards
Feature Editor

For the first time in over 30 years, the Brunswick Town-Fort Anderson State Historic Site will undergo major renovation and expansion this summer with a \$325,000 grant from the N. C. Department of Cultural Resources, announced site director Jim Bartley.

Exhibits at the historic site were installed for its grand opening in 1967 and were intended to be only temporary, Bartley said. The exhibits have remained essentially the same ever since.

"These have been our only exhibits and storyline for over 30 years," he said. "Now the state has made \$1 million available to make

See Renovation, page 20

Borrow pit site Permit granted Martin Marietta

By Terry Pope
County Editor

Martin Marietta Aggregates has been granted permission by the state to add another 4.45 acres to its mining operation on a tract it owns north of Southport.

The permit modification was issued Friday by Charles Gardner, director of the N. C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources, who listened to public comment at a hearing held March 25 at Bolivia.

At that hearing, residents opposed the permit because they said it would allow digging next to an environmentally sensitive shellfish nursery area and the threat of sinkholes from the dirt pits would risk damage to the Carolina Power and Light Co. Brunswick Nuclear Plant and Military Ocean Terminal Sunny Point ammunition depot.

"They met all the requirements of the Mining Act or we wouldn't have issued the permit," said Gardner on Tuesday. "In fact, there's a pit there now, and this is for the expansion of that permit."

Gardner said the company cannot dig any deeper than the level that is already being removed from the Laster tract.

Martin Marietta obtained the original permit to dig for sand on 4.5 acres after purchasing the tract from Bill and Lucille Laster in See Permit, page 6

Citizens address land uses

By Richard Nubel
Municipal Editor

About 40 Long Beach residents and property owners gathered at the town's recreation center Saturday morning to begin setting policies by which this coastal community will develop in harmony with its unique environment.

Saturday's was the second citizen participation meeting conducted as part of the effort to update the Long Beach Land Use Plan for 1998, required by the N. C. Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA). Under that law, local governments in 20 coastal counties are required to update land use policies every five years. The Long Beach Land Use Plan was last updated in 1993.

The exercise in formulating growth and development policy See Land uses, page 7