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Election

Turnout low, vote expected

By Terry Pope
County Editor

In what may be a record low turnout at the polls Tuesday, Brunswick County voters supported the incumbents and pulled no real surprises in the primary election.

Incumbent sheriff Ronald Hewett was the easy winner over Democratic challenger Ken Messer, 3,389 votes to 536. Hewett captured 86 percent of the vote and now faces Republican nominee Mike Allen in November.

Incumbent District 1 county commissioner Don Warren ran neck-to-neck with a candidate who officially withdrew from the race after the ballots were already printed. Warren captured 54 percent of the vote to Randy Stanley's 45 percent, or 1,933 votes to 1,595, in the Democratic race.

Warren will face Republican nominee Debbie Rupp, who easily defeated Jeffrey Milliken in Tuesday's race, 988 to 403. Rupp captured 71 percent of the GOP votes in her race.

In the District 2 Democratic race for county commissioner, Allan Dameron defeated K. C. Rogers, 1,898 to 1,434. Dameron, whose name had been misspelled on the ballots as Damerson, will face Republican incumbent David Sandifer in November.

Only 12.8 percent of the county's
See Election, page 6



Five-year-old Zachary Brown filled the air with popcorn and laughing gulls as he and his family enjoyed a visit to Southport's Waterfront Park Saturday evening.

Photo by Jim Harper

Trash collection Long Beach to join plan, add extras

By Richard Nubel
Municipal Editor

Each month, \$10.98 of Long Beach property owners' county ad valorem tax payment will be used by Brunswick County to purchase once-weekly refuse collection from Waste Industries Inc., beginning July 1.

Additionally, Long Beach solid waste customers will be billed \$5.87 per month -- \$17.61 per quarter -- by the town to cover the cost of additional solid waste services.

That decision of town council to do business with Brunswick County ends a months-long standoff between the town and county over solid waste removal. The decision by town council last Wednesday to do business with Brunswick County did not come easily. Several members of council still appeared embittered over Brunswick County's foray into a traditionally municipal service. In a 5-1 vote, councilor Horace Collier was the last of councilors to contend Long Beach should break from Brunswick
See Long Beach, page 6

Commercial

Landfill remains an option

By Terry Pope
County Editor

Commercial garbage customers say they don't want a negotiated contract with Waste Industries Inc. and have asked the county instead to aggressively pursue the siting and construction of a lined county landfill within six years.

A committee studying options for commercial accounts voted not to ask Brunswick County commissioners to negotiate a
See Commercial, page 6

SBSD: Business not as usual

Chairman, board member resign; no reason is given

By Richard Nubel
Municipal Editor

Three Southeast Brunswick Sanitary District commissioners were shocked to find the resignations of their chairman and board secretary waiting for them when they arrived for the board's regular monthly meeting Monday morning. Chairman James W. (Bubba) Smith and commissioner Lucille Laster have resigned from the SBSB board without explanation. But, commissioners Gene Formyduval and Tommy Bowmer rejected commissioner Ginger Harper's motion to accept the resignations Monday. Formyduval, elected acting district chairman, and Bowmer said they wanted to know Smith's and Laster's reasons for leaving before accepting their resignations.

Contacted Tuesday afternoon at her place of business, Ms. Laster would offer no explanation for the

dual resignation. "No comment," was Laster's response when asked why she had left the board she had served for over seven years.

A telephone message left at Smith's home Tuesday was not returned.

Acting district manager Barbara Stein said a single letter of resignation was hand-delivered to the district office about 35 minutes prior to the 8 a.m. regular monthly board meeting. She did not say who delivered the letter addressed to the district board.

"James W. Smith Chairman of the Southeast Brunswick Sanitary District and Lucille Laster Secretary and Finance Officer for the Southeast Brunswick Sanitary District offer this letter as notice of our resignation, effective immediately," the letter begins.

"We have served this board and our community for the past eight
See Resign, page 7

Is incorporation talk of the town?

By Richard Nubel
Municipal Editor

What is left of the Southeast Brunswick Sanitary District Board of Commissioners is divided on a response to a Yaupon Beach proposal to annex land along Long Beach Road and Fish Factory Road.

With the resignations of district chairman James W. (Bubba) Smith and commissioners secretary Lucille Laster Monday, commissioners appeared at odds to tell district residents what to expect from the governing body now in charge of utilities, and land use regulation along the Long Beach Road corridor.

"I'm in favor of incorporating, if that's what we have to do," commissioner Tommy Bowmer said Monday. By forming a new town he hopes to block the Yaupon Beach annexation attempt. Legislators refer to creation of towns to prevent annexation as "defensive incorporation," a practice that is not encouraged by the present N. C. General Assembly.

"I am totally against us becoming a town," commissioner Ginger Harper said. "I so move we not consider becoming a town anymore."

Commissioner Harper's motion died for lack of a second and Gene Formyduval, acting as the board's chairman, did not
See Town talk, page 7

County, town corridor ideas in committee

By Terry Pope
County Editor

County planners say they won't give up planning control over the second bridge to Oak Island corridor from the Midway community to Long Beach and will ask for changes in the town's land use plan that was to go before the state Coastal Resources Commission later this month for approval.

At a special meeting last week, the Brunswick County Planning Board refused to endorse the proposal and indicated there are more problems with the document than just who will serve as lead agency for corridor planning. A joint committee, made up of two county planning board members and some Long Beach officials, will work out differences the two sides have in what has developed into a "turf war" over local control and planning authority

along the second-bridge route. Long Beach last month asked the county planning board to endorse its document in hopes of making the town lead agency in territory that lies outside the town's extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ). Planning board members say they were not even aware of the proposal until March and wished that county staff had been involved earlier.

"I have a difficult time with the county giving up its planning role in that corridor or not serving as lead agency," said Alan Lewis, vice-chairman of the Brunswick County Planning Board. "We need to be working together. I think whichever corridor is chosen we will have time to study this corridor. The bridge is not going to be built overnight. I feel there are a few sticky points and we need to be working together."

Planning board chairman Ricky
See Corridor, page 7

Tax district could come to the rescue

By Terry Pope
County Editor

County commissioners have adopted a resolution asking state legislators to establish a special countywide district to boost funding levels for fire and rescue services.

"This gets the ball rolling," said District 1 commissioner Don Warren of Shallotte.

Local volunteer fire and rescue squads have

been told to expect the same level of funding for the 1998-99 fiscal year as was received last year while the county continues to work towards a permanent funding solution.

By unanimous vote Monday, the board of commissioners agreed to seek a special district where the county can charge property owners fees for fire and rescue services rather than fund the programs through ad valorem tax dollars. State legislators must approve local bills in the N. C. General Assembly which allows

counties to do so.

County attorney Huey Marshall said he has studied local bills that have allowed Union County and Columbus County to charge fire and rescue district fees but that a district for Brunswick County would be a bit different.

"In Brunswick County, the entire county would be the district," said Marshall. "I don't know how that will play before the legislators' rules."

Last month, the recommendation from a

study committee to the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners was to fund the fire and rescue squads at the proposed level for a two-year period, recognizing that it will take that time to develop and put in place a permanent financing source -- such as a special fire and rescue district or establishment of community service districts.

Monday's resolution will be sent to state representatives David Redwine (D-Ocean Isle
See Rescue, page 5

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