

# THE STATE PORT PILOT

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**Playoff time**  
South boys, girls play Tuesday

**Sharper image**  
Unusual work on cutting

**Trash' choices**  
Yaupon Beach weighs on

## Brunswick CP&L tax levy reduced

By Terry Pope  
County Editor

The check from the largest taxpayer in Brunswick County will be somewhat smaller next year, roughly \$1.5 million less.

A sales assessment study by the N. C. Department of Revenue has indicated the county's public utility companies should be assessed at 77.8 percent of market value, based on what homeowners are actually paying during the fourth year of an eight-year revaluation cycle.

Carolina Power and Light Co.'s Brunswick Nuclear Plant will see its value adjusted from \$1 billion to \$778 million, which means a reduction in its payment by about \$1.5 million. There are actually seven utility companies that qualify for the adjustment in Brunswick County, but none with as much at stake as CP&L.

County tax administrator Boyd Williamson said in reality personal property is being assessed around 74 percent of market value, so the 77.8-percent ratio for public utilities is slightly better than the county expected from the Department of Revenue. Both sides have indicated they will accept the figure and won't appeal.

The adjustment is the result of a lawsuit by public utility companies that claim across the state firms are being penalized while homeowners benefit from revaluation cycles. To settle the issue, every fourth and seventh year in a cycle utility companies qualify for an adjustment, too.

Brunswick County's new-home construction is expected to offset the \$1.5-million loss from CP&L, said Williamson. For the 1998-99 fiscal year budget, his office estimates new construction in businesses and homes will add \$230 million  
See CP&L, page 9

## KINGFISH



Bo Crump was pleased and proud after setting a new Oak Island pier record with this 53.6-pound king mackerel caught at Ocean Crest Pier last Thursday. The Fishing Report has more information on the spring king run in the Sports section, and our Waterfront writer discusses other records Crump's catch may have established.

Photo by Jim Harper

## Riverfront property Court battle looms over city appeal

By Richard Nubel  
Municipal Editor

Aldermen will decide Thursday night whether or not to review rulings of the city planning board on preliminary subdivision plats.

Depending on how aldermen act, they could either hear the case of an aggrieved landowner, or risk sitting as defendants in a civil court.

The first order of business, when aldermen meet in regular monthly session at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, will be to consider an amendment to the city's subdivision ordinance which would give the board of aldermen authority to hear appeals of the city planning board's decisions on preliminary subdivision plats.

In February, River Drive property owner Ron Thompson appeared before aldermen, claiming his preliminary plat for River View subdivision was unjustly denied by the city planning board, effectively halting his plan to create five lots from of his one parcel of land at 106 River Drive.

Thompson also asserted the planning board's action was racially motivated, as he is the only African-American property owner on River Drive and old deed covenants for property in that section of the city even prohibited ownership by non-whites.

Under terms of the city's subdivision ordinance as it now exists, Thompson's only remaining option is to sue the city in Superior Court. City attorney Mike Isenberg, however, has suggested aldermen should create one more avenue of administrative relief for Thompson -- and others who may find them-

The owner asserted the planning board's action was racially motivated, as he is the only African-American property owner on River Drive

selves at odds with the planning board -- by amending the subdivision ordinance to afford review by aldermen of planning board rulings on preliminary plats.

"In the event that the planning board disapproves the preliminary plat or approves it conditionally, the applicant may appeal to the board of aldermen in writing within 15 days of the action by the planning board. The applicant and a representative of the planning board shall be given an opportunity to be heard before the board of aldermen.

Following the hearing, and after review of the planning board's decision and reasons therefore, the board of aldermen shall have the authority to affirm, reverse or modify the action of the planning board in accordance with the subdivision regulations," the proposed amendment says.

In January, the city planning board offered Thompson, in writing, six reasons it had denied his preliminary subdivision plat. Thompson appeared at the February meeting  
See Appeal, page 6

## K-8 initiative

# DuPont grant to CIS will aid math, science

By Terry Pope  
County Editor

Teachers who struggle with hands-on methods to teach math and science should benefit from an \$85,000 grant awarded to Communities In Schools Monday by the Dupont Co.'s Cape Fear plant near Leland.

The grant will be used to fund a K-8 science initiative involving a math and science center on the Brunswick Community College campus for school teachers and students. Plans are for the center to be operating next fall.

The DuPont company is plotting a national initiative to support science curriculum aligned with the National Science Education Standards, said Tom Harris, site manager at the DuPont Cape Fear plant. Harris presented the grant to the Brunswick County Board of Education on Monday.

Brunswick County is one of three school districts chosen from 139  
See DuPont, page 6

'This grant is a wonderful and powerful way to begin our initiative.'

Carol Midgett  
Southport Elementary

## SBSD

# Resignations withdrawn by members

By Richard Nubel  
Municipal Editor

Two days after they offered a joint letter of resignation, the Southeast Brunswick Sanitary District chairman and secretary were coaxed back into service and restored to rank by two of three remaining commissioners.

James W. (Bubba) Smith has resumed the position of board chairman and Lucille Laster has been returned to the position of board secretary. Return of the two came after the three remaining commissioners met with Smith and Laster Wednesday morning, May 6, in an "emergency" session called by acting chairman Gene Formyduval. After a closed-door session, commissioners voted 3-0 to  
See SBSB, page 7

## Community center

# Building bids within budget

By Richard Nubel  
Municipal Editor

That sunken garden of weeds and clover overlooking the Cape Fear River at the foot of Fort Johnston Drive may soon give way to a brand-new Southport treasure.

Long anticipated, new bids have been received by city officials for replacement of the Southport Community Building.

This time, the bids are on the mark. "This is definitely doable," city manager Rob Gandy said Tuesday, peering down on a bid tabulation sheet. "It's definitely within our budget."

A preliminary bid tabulation fixes the cost of replacing the Southport community center at between \$720,000 and \$725,000 -- a price city officials targeted about three years ago but have been unable to arrange until now.

While information could not be prepared in time for aldermen  
See Building, page 6

# County changes water procedure in midstream

By Terry Pope  
County Editor

The plug has been pulled on an unpopular method of routing water lines to neighborhoods in favor of a system that doesn't keep assessments on the books for ten years.

At a special joint meeting of the Brunswick County

Board of Commissioners and Brunswick Utility Operations Board last week, commissioners voted to keep pushing forward with a priority list of ten water expansion projects, but under an entirely different method.

That list includes routing water lines to Sunset Harbor as well as the Boone's Neck community, Riverview, Little Shallotte River Estates and Lakewood Estates.

Laying lines at Sunset Harbor will be in two phases and cost \$660,000.

It will be done as a capital improvement project (CIP) and financed by the county with costs recouped through point-of-service fees and tap-on charges rather than property assessments. Commissioners have scrapped the old Special Assessment District (SAD) policy which was used to finance more than 20 expansion projects in

the past. "A few of them I agree haven't paid off," said Al Morrison, chairman of the UOB. "I think this is the first time we've had anyone say, 'This is what we want to do.' I think this group has worked hard to do what it could with what it had to work with."

In fact, of the 23 SAD projects financed by the county  
See Water, page 7