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## Southport

# The state of live oaks

### Public wants to know how to save trees

By Laura Kimball  
Feature Editor

Southport residents care about their live oak trees.

Tuesday night, over 100 residents concerned about the city's huge, shady landmarks packed the rows, aisles and wall space of the old courtroom at City Hall for a town meeting about how to preserve the trees.

Many of the live oaks are infested with an insect known as a live oak kermid, which is causing dry, brown leaves and the possible mortality of affected trees, said extension forestry specialist James McGraw of N. C. State University.

The kermid, a kind of scale insect, is round, brownish-black and about the size of a large pearl. It attaches itself to branches and sucks sap from a tree.

McGraw and David Nash, Brunswick County cooperative extension agent, explained that, though damaging, the scale is not the only factor affecting the trees' health.

"The scale is here and has raised our awareness that the live oaks have a problem, but there's a long history of other things taking place," McGraw said. "Even if the scales are wiped out, problems to the trees are not eliminated."

Nash agreed. "There are a lot of factors at play here. This is just the straw that broke the camel's back," he said.

After learning about the insect, residents were interested in what they

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Photo by Jim Harper  
Craig Blackman sprayed a huge live oak on West Street Monday in an effort to thwart the kermid pest. Treatment such as this was among remedies discussed in a board of aldermen hearing on the community-wide problem Tuesday night.

## Town, county plan Second bridge corridor finds middle ground

By Terry Pope  
County Editor

A committee has hammered-out what county officials say is a workable compromise on development plans for a second bridge to Oak Island corridor which may connect the new roadway to N. C. 211 near the Midway community.

The Brunswick County Planning Board will meet tonight (Wednesday) at 6:30 p.m. to discuss, and possibly endorse, the joint planning document received negatively by the county in May. The committee of county planners and Long Beach officials have met on several occasions to iron-out their differences.

Brunswick County commissioners initially were alarmed that Long Beach sought authority over zoning issues in the county's jurisdiction, but the agreement reached last week gives both sides equal input in how a second major roadway leading to Oak Island will be developed and how it should look. The corridor extends about five miles beyond Long Beach's extraterritorial jurisdiction and into the county's zoned territory west of St. James Plantation.

"I personally think it's an excellent representation of cooperation between the town and the county," said Alan Lewis, corridor committee member and county planning board vice-chairman.

Elements of the revised plan include the following:

- Brunswick County will retain zoning control within its jurisdiction.

The town and county agreed to work on a compromise after Long Beach's plan to serve as lead agency over development along the entire corridor did not sit well with county commissioners

- Long Beach will retain zoning authority within its jurisdiction.

- A joint steering committee appointed by Long Beach council and county commissioners will review any development projects within the corridor.

- The Corridor and Parkway Advisory and Review Committee (CPARC) will make recommendations to the appropriate planning authority.

- The N. C. Department of Transportation will be advised on designing a roadway with a divided median, grass swells, paved shoulders and aesthetically pleasing look.

- Access to the corridor will be

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## Funding for fire

# County looks for best way to answer the call

### Squads gain support of community

By Laura Kimball  
Feature Editor

You've seen the fund-raising signs. Posters, fliers and roadside banners announce fish fries, bingo games and homemade barbecue all over Brunswick County, with most of the events to be held at a local volunteer fire department.

These fund-raisers are what keep many of the county's departments going since they can't make ends meet with county funds, said Grover Hewett, chief of the Sunset Harbor/Zion Hill VFD.

"A lot of people think that since we get county funding we shouldn't have to have fund-raisers," he said.

However, the Sunset Harbor/Zion Hill volunteers are struggling to make ends meet. They have about four fund-raisers a year, not including their summer hot dog sales, said Shirley Hinson, treasurer. Also, they still owe about \$50,000 on their property, she said.

The department has one tanker, two pumpers and one utility van, but could use a ladder truck to accommodate the large housing developments that are

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Yaupon Beach Volunteer Fire Department is not a department of municipal government but depends on contracts to provide service to Yaupon Beach and Caswell Beach for a fee.

By Terry Pope  
County Editor

An issue elected leaders first debated 20 years ago still puzzles a county which relies even more heavily on volunteer fire and rescue personnel today.

Still, there are no easy answers.

Brunswick County commissioners hope to agree on the best way to fund units without burdening the taxpayer at a special workshop Monday. With five members serving on the board, there may be five different opinions. They'll be hoping to solve a problem that has plagued their predecessors for two decades.

"This is the first board that's had the guts to do something about it," said Ken Proctor, an Ocean Isle Beach volunteer fireman who is pushing a plan to fund 100 percent of the departments' budget needs through tax districts.

Three funding options are legally available to counties that want to boost their fire and rescue funding. The board can impose tax-based collections which would come from the general fund and involve a personal property tax increase. District-based collections can also be imposed if special fire and rescue districts are established first through

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'The county's population profile, dense in small areas, sparse in others, does not lend itself to immediate solutions.'

Huey Marshall  
County attorney

## Towns see different needs

By Richard Nubel  
Municipal Editor

When county commissioners meet to discuss fire and rescue funding alternatives Monday they will have at their table a record of expectations of the county's larger towns and cities which maintain fire and rescue services as departments of municipal government.

Southport and Long Beach are key among local governments operating municipal fire and rescue services. Officials of the two municipalities have, for over a year, advocated "flexibility" in fire and rescue funding, with a number of funding sources made

available to municipally aligned departments.

If fire and rescue districts are established -- and both have advocated creation of more than one district -- then revenues should be divided among departments in the districts from which revenues are collected, not thrown into one pool.

Southport and Long Beach staked-out these positions over a year ago as county commissioners and a blue-ribbon panel of emergency service interests wrestled with fire and rescue funding options. That panel's eventual recommendation to charge a flat fire and rescue service fee to all property owners -- residential, commercial and industrial -- was eventu-

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