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Oak Island Police squads merge

By Richard Nubel
Staff Writer

Some things just can't wait. Consolidation of the towns of Yaupon Beach and Long Beach as the Town of Oak Island will not become effective until July 1, but the two towns will have but one consolidated police department beginning April 1.

Yaupon Beach commissioners Tuesday night inked a contract whereby Long Beach will begin to provide police protection to that town on the first day of April. Police officials on both sides of 79th Street say the early move to consolidate public safety departments is essential. Waiting until the week of July 4 to make major changes would be a mistake.

"We want to have everything in place well before July 1," Long Beach police chief Danny Laughren said. "We recognize there will be a period of adjustment. We've got to get the officers on the shifts they'll be working, make vehicle assignments and establish patrol zones."

Those are changes that are better done well before the influx of visitors to Oak Island that swells its year-round population of about 6,000 to nearly 40,000.

"We're wanting to do it now, rather than at the peak of the season," chief Laughren said. "That's the week of July 4 and it's not a good time to be changing."

Yaupon Beach police chief Van Eddinger, who will become assistant chief to Laughren upon consolidation of the two towns, said the early merger of police departments was one of the first recommendations he and Laughren made to those proposing consolidation.

"We made that recommendation around November, to try to get the police departments merged before the tourist season," chief Eddinger said. "Everybody in my department is eager to go. We hate to lose the one-on-one relationships with Yaupon Beach residents and businesses, but we are eager to serve a bigger department."

Under terms of the contract Yaupon
See Police, page 9

ATTENTION WAL-MART



Southport aldermen Paul Fisher and Meezie Childs listened from their accustomed seats as moderator Russ Ferris outlined the Wal-Mart annex issue for the overflow crowd in the City Hall chamber Tuesday night.

Photo by Jim Harper

'Concerned Citizens' Large crowd expresses opposition to Wal-Mart

By Diana D'Abruzzo
Staff Writer

Incensed that Southport is considering the annexation of property that would bring a Wal-Mart to town, more than 100 people packed City Hall on Tuesday to express concern that their quaint "unspoiled fishing village" could be overrun by urban sprawl.

The one-hour meeting of Concerned Citizens of Southport was organized for folks to express their opinion on the proposed annexation of the Wal-Mart site — a 31.7-acre tract off N. C. 211 between the Sandfiddler Seafood Restaurant and the CP&L canal.

Developers want Southport to annex the land so they can better utilize city services.

Large turnout at Tuesday's meeting was in stark contrast to the 35 people who showed up at Southport's formal public hearing on annexation February 25.

Because of that, Concerned Citizens said they are going to ask the Southport Board of Aldermen for a second public hearing on the matter.

"Only three aldermen were at the last public hearing, and while that does constitute a meeting, I really think this group should be in attendance at another formal hearing where you can put the aldermen on the spot and ask questions," said Russ Ferris.

"We want to try to help our aldermen make the right decision and do it with the best interest of all of Southport in mind."

Russ Ferris

Having already collected petition signatures of 600 city residents, 150 nearby residents and 26 merchants, Ferris will ask to address the Southport Board of Aldermen at Thursday's meeting and make a request for a second public hearing.

"If all of you were at the public hearing, we wouldn't be here right now," Ferris told the growing crowd prior to the meeting Tuesday. All 12 rows of seats were filled, forcing
See Wal-Mart, page 7

Hearing next week Incorporation of St. James seems likely

By Richard Nubel
Municipal Editor

It appears the development of St. James Plantation is poised to become the Town of St. James — Brunswick County's 20th municipality — perhaps as soon as July 1.

The N. C. General Assembly's Joint Commission on Incorporation has scheduled a public hearing on a request to incorporate the 2,700-acre St. James Plantation development for 5 p.m. Thursday, March 18, at UNCW's Cameron Auditorium.

Upon completion of that required public hearing, the commission will be free to recommend incorporation to the General Assembly and the area legislative delegation will be free to submit a bill of incorporation for ratification. Bills must be submitted by March 27 for consideration in this session of the General Assembly.

Rep. E. David Redwine of Brunswick County this week said he anticipates a favorable report of the incorporation request.

"My guess is the commission will

"Things will transition over to the town. Things can't happen instantly."

Dennis Becker

make a recommendation," Redwine said of the Town of St. James incorporation request. "It is one of the better packages I have seen put together in the time I've been receiving these things."

The estimated 660 residents of St. James Plantation are also eagerly awaiting incorporation, said Dennis Becker, who is scheduled to serve the first St. James Town Council with mayor-designate Earl Dye and councilors-designate Harry Comer, Joan Madsen and Henry Ulrichs. Informat-

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Long Beach Canal access plan to be resubmitted

By Richard Nubel
Staff Writer

If there must be public access to Davis Canal at 20th Street SW, very limited boat access should be encouraged; the area should be developed without significant parking facilities and the area's natural environmental attributes should remain undisturbed and protected.

In developing public access to Davis Canal at 20th Street SW, the town should move to minimize impact on adjacent property owners, so no trailer traffic should be allowed and vehicles should have enough room to turn around without running onto private driveways. Hard structures like wooden docks and piers or concrete ramps should be avoided in favor of sandy areas that invite wading.

Loss of vegetation at the street-end should be replaced. After a lengthy process of listing overall concerns for public access on Davis Canal, then listing ways in which the Town of Long Beach could implement the best ideas for Davis Canal access development, about 100 persons attending a workshop session of town council Tuesday night offered these recommendations.

But, when asked to stand in support of doing nothing to promote access to Davis Canal at 20th Street SW, most stood. Later, however, most stood again when asked if they would support an access area to which a small boat could be hand-carried for launch.

In a short business session conducted prior to the canal access workshop, Horace
See Long Beach, page 7

Board of Education Volunteer, non-faculty coach status is studied

By Diana D'Abruzzo
Staff Writer

A new policy that would make non-faculty and volunteer coaches go through a stringent application process and training before setting foot on the field or court is being considered by the Brunswick County Board of Education.

The board approved first reading of the policy Monday night after hearing from Brunswick County commissioner Leslie Collier, who spoke of her concern as a parent regarding the current procedure.

"Parents feel that faculty head coaches get to know the athletes better, they support academics and they can be held more accountable because of their faculty status," said Collier, who said she spoke on behalf of her constituents.

"Volunteer coaches tend to show favoritism, are not consistent with their rules, can be vindictive and retaliate when their actions are called into question and have no accountability."

Collier's daughter is a member of the South Brunswick High School varsity basketball team, coached by volunteer Mike Isenberg.

The Brunswick County school system expects all school

"No other school system we contacted has this policy. We're on the cutting edge of this one."

Mary McDuffie
Assistant superintendent

sports teams, including cheerleading, to be coached by faculty coaches, said assistant superintendent Mary McDuffie. But if the school has exhausted all attempts to find a faculty or staff member, volunteers or non-faculty may be used.

The current procedure — which follows N. C. High School Athletic Association guidelines — only requires
See Coaches, page 12

Modulars find home at Lakes

By Laura Kimball
Staff Writer

The road is clear for modular homes in Boiling Spring Lakes, and soon a few lots will be, too.

A 4-1 vote of commissioners Tuesday night authorized a zoning ordinance change to allow modular homes in all residential districts of the city.

The former ordinance stated that modular homes were allowed only where mobile homes were permitted.

Arguments about modular homes, and whether or not they should be allowed, have been an issue in Boiling Spring Lakes for nearly five years.

Some residents are concerned that their property values will decrease if modular homes, which they equate to doublewide trailers, are permitted in the city.

But some town commissioners, and mayor Thomas Tully, have been concerned that the city can't legally dis-

See Modular, page 9



Wave a floppy disc at Anecul and she's off like a flash for a watery rendezvous. She spent Sunday afternoon teaching her master how to make long tosses at the Point on Long Beach.

Photo by Jim Harper