

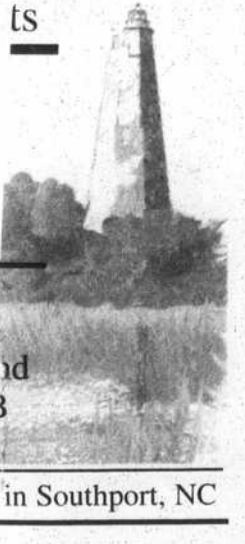
# THE STATE PORT PILOT

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## Oak Island Postal facility is due

By Richard Nubel  
Staff Writer

Plans for a new first-class U. S. Post Office on Oak Island have been moved quickly to the front burner and local postal and government officials say an announcement of the go-ahead is days off.

An announcement of funding for a new first-class Oak Island post office is expected from 7th District U. S. Congressman Mike McIntyre shortly — possibly within days.

McIntyre Monday traveled to Oak Island to meet with local officials who have long lobbied for an upgrade of postal services for zip code 28465. Currently, the 7,500 year-round and 40,000 seasonal residents of Oak Island are served only by a contract post office facility many find to be inadequate.

The three Oak Island mayors, Southport postmaster James Hardy and members of a committee that has long sought a first-class Oak Island post office caucused with McIntyre and USPS official R. Clark Rule of Charlotte.

Rule is to confer with other postal officials and complete plans for the Oak Island facility within days, those present said.

Hardy said it was Southport's dilemma that lead to acceleration of plans for an upgraded Oak Island post office.

"The problem is, I have a space problem here in Southport," Hardy said. "This facility is what they were looking at as the primary problem. Looking to Oak Island is like killing two birds with one stone."

While no plan is yet set in stone, Hardy said he believes events will move quickly now that a preliminary See Postal, page 11

## Access: smooth sailing

By Richard Nubel  
Staff Writer

Frank talk about public access appears to have paid off for Long Beach town councilors and Davis Canal property owners.

One week after council played host to a sometimes angry crowd of canal owners, council Tuesday night directed staff to resubmit necessary applications for a public access project on Davis Canal at 20th Street SW. This time, however, council will seek to build a scaled-down canoe and kayak dock facility, apparently without the controversial boat-launch ramp that was included in an earlier described project.

In another action, council approved the Long Beach wastewater committee's recommendation for phase I of a municipal wastewater collection system. Council also authorized staff to seek grants and low-interest loans to finance collection system construction in the town's central business district and in residential areas adjacent to it. Estimated cost of the wastewater collection system project is \$3,049,000, public works director John Olansen said.

Under terms of newly seated See Access, page 11

## FEATHERED FRIEND

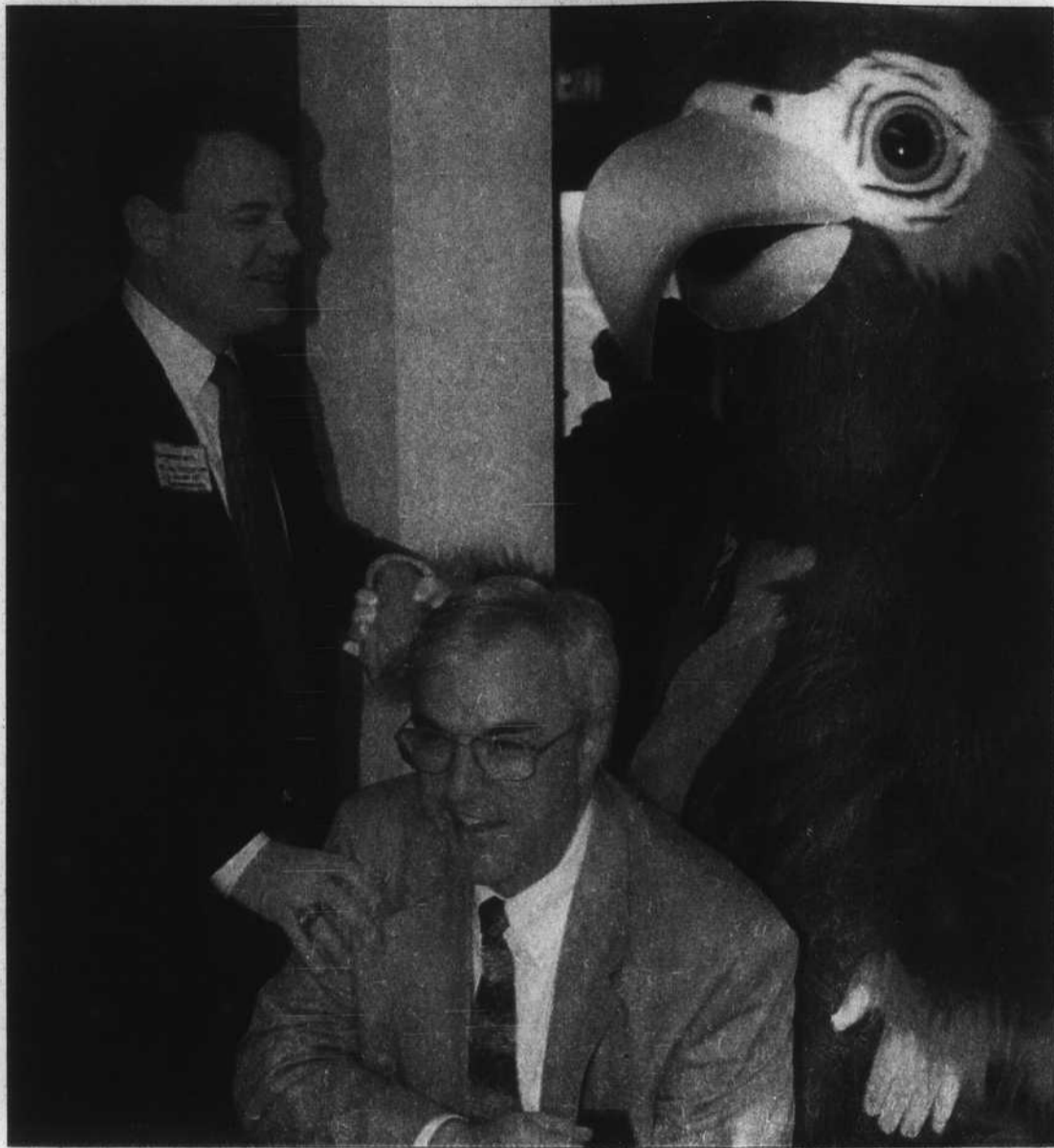


Photo by Jim Harper

Everywhere he went, he found a friendly face. Seventh District U. S. Congressman Mike McIntyre chats with Brunswick County schools Supt. Marion Wise and "Charlita," the county's parrot mascot for the N. C. Health Choice program, at a Southport-Oak Island Chamber of Commerce luncheon.

## Health care, airport among items on McIntyre agenda

By Diana D'Abruzzo  
Staff Writer

With a heap of issues on his plate, 7th District U. S. Congressman Mike McIntyre spent a few hours in Brunswick County on Monday, talking shop with locals on issues of rural health care and a certain much-needed post office.

McIntyre's day began with a trip to Southport Christian School where he spoke to children about the rights and responsibilities of being an American citizen.

He then went to the Southport-Oak Island Chamber of Commerce luncheon at Fort Caswell, where he was the "kick-off panelist" for a discussion on the N. C. Health Choice program, which provides free or low-cost health

insurance to needy children.

"I gave them my perspective on a national level regarding rural health care issues," said McIntyre, who co-chairs the Rural Health Care Coalition in Washington, DC, and works on health care issues that affect rural areas including Brunswick County. "We're working with health agencies and rural hospitals to make sure they represent the three A's of health care: Accessible, affordable and accountable."

Other panel members at the chamber luncheon included Brunswick County health director Donald Yousey, family practitioner J. Robert Forstner, Health Choice parent Dottie Jones, and Debbie Dale of the Brunswick

See McIntyre, page 11

## Coach proposal Many volunteers may be sidelined

By Terry Pope  
Staff Writer

A quickly drafted policy may slam-dunk some of the county's best high school volunteer coaches while questions linger over the role District 3 county commissioner Leslie Collier played in bringing it to the floor.

The policy would make it tough for volunteers to qualify as coaches and effectively halt parents from helping when they have a son or daughter on the team. It passed first reading of the Brunswick County Board of Education last week after Ms. Collier, who serves as liaison to the school board and in the powerful position of bringing the schools' funding proposals before the county commission, publicly spoke in favor of it at a school board meeting as a parent.

"It's probably going to cause me to lose my job," said J. B. Sholar, head softball coach and volunteer at North

Collier claimed last week that volunteers "... can be vindictive and retaliate when their actions are called into question and have no accountability."

Brunswick for the past seven seasons. "My personal opinion is I don't think they can require something out of me that they don't require out of the regular faculty."

See Coaches, page 8

## Fire fee proposal okayed

By Terry Pope  
Staff Writer

A plan to give each fire department flexibility to raise funds through district fees won unanimous support of the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners Monday.

County attorney Huey Marshall must submit a request for local legislation before the N. C. General Assembly by Wednesday, March 24, at 4 p.m. so the plan will be in place for the 1999-2000 funding cycle. State representatives will be asked to model the bill after ones already approved for Columbus and Union counties.

"For the benefit of the fire departments in this county..." Jo Ann Bellamy Simmons' words trailed off before she hesitantly agreed to vote with the majority of board members Monday. During two years of debate over finding a better way to fund the county's 22 volunteer units, she has

See Fire fee, page 9

## Wal-Mart site

# City board to approve annexation

By Richard Nubel  
Staff Writer

There is little doubt aldermen Thursday will adopt an ordinance of annexation, making the 31.7-acre tract of land on which Wal-Mart may be sited part of the city.

Three of the city's six aldermen requested an interview with *The State Port Pilot* Monday to address questions surrounding the proposed annexation. Specifically, the three said they would provide answers to the eight questions that were posed by Concerned Citizens of Southport at the board of aldermen's monthly meeting Thursday. (See related stories, page 3).

At that meeting, Concerned Citizens was denied a second public hearing on the annexation proposal, but aldermen Meezie Childs, Paul Fisher and Bill Delaney said answers to the group's questions are available. Mayor Bill Crowe and the remaining aldermen — Jim Brown, Wayne Hewett and Nelson Adams — did not take part in the Monday interview, as bringing more than three elected officials together at

the same time would have constituted a violation of the N. C. Open Meetings Law.

Childs, Fisher and Delaney, however, expressed little doubt their colleagues were prepared to go forward with the annexation when the board meets in special session at 7 p.m. this Thursday. In the course of discussions with developer Wyatt Development Company and Wal-Mart officials themselves, aldermen have concluded the best way to secure the city's position as utility provider and the best way to exercise maximum control over parcel development is to annex.

"Is it better for the development to go there and for us to have control over it, or is it better to let it go out to the blueberry farm (N. C. 211 and Long Beach Road intersection)?" alderman Fisher asked rhetorically.

He has concluded the development should be in the city where property tax revenues and sales tax distributions will flow to Southport.

"The first thing I thought about was them being an electric customer."

See Wal-Mart, page 9

## Redistricting plan

# Change to affect west Oak Island

By Diana D'Abruzzo  
Staff Writer

Rezoning some Oak Island school children to the new Williamson Elementary School at Winding River based on ongoing hope that a second bridge will be constructed in the coming years is a ridiculous notion, some parents argue.

Part of Brunswick County's redistricting plan for elementary schools transfers children living on the west end of Oak Island from Southport Elementary School to the new school near Supply. In drawing up the plan, consultants figured in the future of a second bridge to Oak Island.

But as parents pointed out, delays in construction of a bridge may take several years to resolve.

"They've been planning to build that bridge since I was in high school," said

See District, page 10

'And if the bridge goes in, the children on the west end of Oak Island will be much closer to Williamson. If the bridge goes in, it's a perfect match.'

Kenneth Stevenson  
Education consultant



Photo by Diana D'Abruzzo

Education consultant Kenneth Stevenson answers questions from a concerned parent regarding the Brunswick County schools' redistricting plan.