

THE STATE PORT PILOT



Easter activity

Last weekend it was egg hunts, this week the Chili Cookoff -

Fast start

South Brunswick sprinter sets the pace for track and field - 1C

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FINDERS KEEPERS



Photo by Jim Harper

Scores of youngsters celebrated the Easter season Saturday in the annual egg hunt held by Southport Parks and Recreation Department in Franklin Square. More information on Easter observances is in the Neighbors section.

'Partnership' renewed CRC steps back, takes second look at coastal rules

By Richard Nubel
Staff Writer

A controversial set of rules aimed at improving the state's coastal water quality was tabled by the N. C. Coastal Resources Commission Friday and a facilitator will be directed to impanel "stakeholders" to draft sweeping water quality regulations.

The move apparently has ended a stand-off between the CRC and local government officials and has breathed life again into their partnership for coastal management.

"This is the coastal partnership of the Hunt administration," CRC chairman Eugene B. Tomlinson of Southport said Tuesday. "By going this route, we are going to get everybody involved and probably come up with a better course of action than we had to begin with."

By unanimous vote Friday in Morehead City, the CRC tabled other provisions of its proposed coastal shoreline water quality initiative.

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'By getting the General Assembly and the Environmental Management Commission involved, we have a better chance of realizing the water quality improvements we all desire.'

Eugene Tomlinson
CRC chairman

Commissioners' retreat Schools funding may go to public

By Terry Pope
Staff Writer

The largest funding issue the county has ever faced could be decided by voters in the fall — whether to approve close to \$90 million in bonds for new construction and renovation of county schools and at Brunswick Community College.

The Brunswick County Board of Commissioners voted Friday to support holding a bond referendum to pay for nearly \$77 million in building needs for schools and another \$12.8-million bond issue for the college, which plans to construct a new continuing education center on its Supply campus.

Consultants estimate the schools need \$77 million for new buildings and to renovate outdated facilities to meet projected enrollment figures over the next ten years and to bring classrooms up to standards. Lithia Horne, county fiscal operations director, has recommended that the sale be broken into at least three phases over the next ten years so it won't

be too much of a burden on taxpayers all at once.

"If we do this, it will fundamentally change the way we've been financing our school capital projects," said Ms. Horne.

In the past, new elementary schools at Winding River, Belville and Supply have been funded through installment financing deals with private banks and repaid through half-cent sales tax revenues returned to the county and earmarked for school construction. That would change under the sale of bonds, but a plan which spreads that volume over ten years could be just as affordable yet not raise the county tax rate, Ms. Horne indicated.

Commissioners say they want to meet with the school board to work out agreements on how to frame the bond referendum which may go before voters this November. Preliminary work has the sale broken down into three phases: \$44.1 million, \$16.2 million and \$16.4 million over ten years.

The first \$44.1-million phase would include

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Southport still facing tough DECISIONS

By Richard Nubel
Staff Writer

Aldermen may have solidified their policy stand on the "Wal-Mart" annexation, but a full plate of decisions waiting-to-be-made still lies before Southport's governing board.

Among the board of aldermen's unmade decisions are possible sale of the city electric system to Brunswick Electric Membership Corporation and a merger request from Southeast Brunswick Sanitary District, plus several key infrastructure matters.

For the past month, aldermen have appeared to do little more than address the outcry associated with annexation of 31.7 acres of land between the Carolina Power and Light Co. canal and Sandfiddler Restaurant — the proposed Wal-Mart development site. A committee is now being formed to address perceived deficiencies in land use and development policy.

With that issue in abeyance for the time being, it is likely the board will return to infrastructural matters

from which its attention has been diverted.

BEMC offer

City and coop officials will meet today (Wednesday) to further consider a BEMC offer of February to buy the city-owned electric distribution system.

Since receiving that February 19 offer from BEMC general manager David Batten, the city has provided BEMC officials with a good deal of financial information relative to city electric operations. The coop has also been provided with a copy of the contract that exists between the City of Southport and N. C. Eastern Municipal Power Agency.

Southport became a member of NCEMPA in 1982 and, in return for a power allotment, assumed a share of debt the agency acquired while purchasing ownership interests in Carolina Power and Light Co. generating facilities, including three of the most costly nuclear units the company operates.

City manager Rob Gandy said Monday the con-

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The issues

■ Should Brunswick Electric Membership Corporation's offer to purchase the city electric system be pursued?

■ Should the City of Southport accept Southeast Brunswick Sanitary District's offer to somehow merge?

■ Should the city develop additional overhead water storage capacity and build an additional well?

■ Should the city proceed to repair areas of its wastewater collection system that allow groundwater to infiltrate?

■ Should the city attempt to finance and construct a new wastewater treatment plant?

Redwine honored by NCAE

Rep. E. David Redwine was honored Thursday by the North Carolina Association of Educators with its Friend of Education award.

The award was presented by NCAE president Joyce Elliott at the awards banquet of the association's annual convention in Raleigh.

Redwine, a seven-term veteran of the N. C. House of Representatives, was hailed as a "champion of parents and teachers who want to make North Carolina the best place to raise and educate young people."

"Rep. Redwine has proven time and time again, when the tide was with him

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Among three in state Southport Elementary bus driver earns grant

By Diana D'Abruzzo
Staff Writer

Children already know Margaret Hughes is special — that's why they bring her gifts of pink azalea branches, leaves coated with frost, unique rocks picked up at the bus stop.

She's "Miss Margaret" to them: A familiar face who's been driving bus 237 to Southport Elementary School every day for 14 years; the lady who faithfully makes sure they get to school and back home again unharmed.

Now the State of North Carolina knows Hughes is special. Last week, she was recognized as one of three bus drivers across the state to receive a \$3,000 renewable scholarship from Thomas Built Buses.

The money will go a long way to fulfill Hughes' dream of becoming an elementary school teacher, something she has been working toward for more than three years.

"I've enjoyed working with the kids," said Hughes, 37, who was a teacher assistant at Southport Elementary for a number of years. "Watching when they grasp a concept and helping them experience different ideas in science and writing and reading has been wonderful."

When Hughes took the job as a bus driver in the mid-1980s, she also started working in Southport's cafeteria because there were no other school jobs available. Soon, she slipped into a teacher assistant job, working over the years in kindergarten through third grades.

In the classroom, Hughes couldn't dismiss the joy she

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Margaret Hughes was one of three bus drivers from across the state to receive a \$3,000 renewable scholarship from Thomas Built Buses. Hughes has driven a bus for Southport Elementary School for 14 years.