

Welcome to the N. C. Fourth of July Festival

— Festival schedule, event updates in this edition

June 30, 1999

THE STATE PORT PILOT



Futures

Golf, from children to women pros, on 1

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Volume 68, Number 45

Published every Wednesday in Southport, NC

FOURTH

Safety, patience stressed

Most events of the 1999 N. C. Fourth of July Festival have been scheduled on the weekend and large crowds are expected to flock to Southport to be part of the official state celebration of Independence Day.

Southport police chief Bob Gray asks festival attendees to be especially tolerant of others while visiting the city and to be mindful of a few simple rules.

"We don't establish a lot of special rules for the Fourth of July Festival," Gray said. "All we do is ask our visitors to be extra considerate of other families that want to enjoy the festival and to practice everyday good citizenship."

Celebrants are reminded the City of Southport forbids the public possession and open display of alcoholic beverages every day of the year, including festival days. City police and officers of the N. C. Division of Alcohol Law Enforcement will patrol downtown Southport during the festival. Alcoholic beverages may be confiscated and those in possession or openly displaying alcoholic beverages may be issued citations.

"This is nothing special," chief Gray said. "This is the law in Southport every day of the year."

A second everyday rule in Southport prohibits the use of skateboards on the streets of the city's historic district. This makes especially good sense during the N. C. Fourth of July Festival when streets are crowded and potential for injury is high. Skateboards may not be used in an area between Atlantic Avenue and Lord Street on the east and west of the city and between the Cape Fear River and Nash Street on the north and south of the city.

"The best rule is simple: leave skateboards home when you make your festival visit," chief Gray said.

Parking in Southport during the N. C. Fourth of July Festival is difficult sometimes. This is just an unfortunate See Festival, page 12

FLAG-RAISING



Elton Jackson and other city workers were out early Monday, festooning downtown Southport streets with the colors of the day. Preparations delegated to city workers include wiring for special electrical needs, setting up temporary barricades and clean-up of city streets, which has been in progress for several weeks.

Photo by Jim Harper

The town of Oak Island

Consolidation of the towns of Long Beach, Yaupon Beach becomes official Thursday

By Richard Nubel
Staff Writer

A new chapter in local history begins Thursday.

On that day, the Town of Oak Island becomes Brunswick County's newest municipality. It will be formed by consolidation of the towns of Long Beach and Yaupon Beach.

Consolidation is an old idea. It was an idea floated and rejected first in the mid-1970s. It was an idea whose time apparently came only when there was substantial parity in the cost of living in Yaupon Beach and Long Beach and at a time when residents of the two towns enjoyed essentially the same level of public services.

Consolidation began to seem right in the fall of 1998 after Yaupon Beach commissioners and Long Beach town councilors successfully negotiated a plan for Yaupon Beach to make a substantial quantity of sewer flow available to Long Beach. Both towns would profit: Long Beach badly needed to bring public wastewater management to its central business district; Yaupon Beach badly needed the income from additional treatment fees.

Yaupon Beach commissioners began to wonder what other joint service ventures the two towns could undertake. After

considerable additional thought, the idea that one town might be stronger than two began to take shape.

"I think anybody who sits down and really thinks about it will really come to the same conclusion," Yaupon Beach mayor Dot Kelly said Tuesday, two days before she was to become co-mayor of the new Town of Oak Island and its 6,000 population. Though she's sure not every-

'Now that our workforces are combined, we can begin to achieve all of the things people expect.'

Jerry Walters
Town manager

body agrees, "I have not had anybody to tell me it's a bad idea," mayor Kelly said.

So, it was Yaupon Beach commissioners who approached Long Beach town councilors with the notion that the time for consolidation might have arrived. The two governing boards arranged an October 1, 1998, joint meeting at which the public was first informed that consolidation was to be explored.

Throughout October, 1998, Long Beach town councilors and Yaupon Beach commissioners met in smaller task groups to examine the social impact of consolidation, the impact of consolidation on service delivery and the impact of consolidation on the financial lives of the towns. Those task committees reported the essentials of a consolidation plan in early November, 1998, and four citizen participation meetings were scheduled in the first weeks of

See Oak Island, page 6

McIntyre delivers Lakes keeps its post office

By Diana D'Abruzzo
Staff Writer

You've got mail again, Boiling Spring Lakes.

Residents will see their small post office across from City Hall reopen in the coming months, and there's hope on the horizon that the city will one day get its own ZIP code and official postal facility, U. S. Rep. Mike McIntyre said Friday.

"I was uplifted quite a bit," said Boiling Spring Lakes mayor Thomas Tully, who met with McIntyre and regional U. S. Postal Service officials last week in Fayetteville.

At the meeting — also attended by Southport postmaster James Hardy and Boiling Spring Lakes commissioner Paul Toland — postal service officials from Charlotte said they will post notice for bids immediately to reopen the Boiling

Spring Lakes post office.

If bids are received, the post office could reopen within 60 days, McIntyre said.

The death of Boiling Spring Lakes postmaster Marceline Reynolds, who operated the post office for more than 30 years on a shoestring salary, prompted the U. S. Postal Service to close the building in May.

Though it had the look and feel of a real See Post office, page 6

Brunswick County Water system back on line after fuel spill

By Terry Pope
Staff Writer

A 40-hour county water crisis ended just after noon Friday as the worst fear never materialized — a diesel fuel spill at the King's Bluff pumping station in Bladen County did not seep into the county's distribution lines.

Contaminated water did make its way into an intake system which feeds raw water via a pipeline to the county's treatment plant. But no tainted water was found in any of the water lines exiting the plant, and the public apparently was never in any danger.

"All tests were negative," said Huey Marshall, Brunswick County public information officer, around 1 p.m. Friday, when county officials cranked the engines and sent water pumping again from its Northwest Township treatment plant to a number of dry elevated tanks.

Much to the relief of residents and local businesses, some of which were forced to close for two days because of low water pressure or no water at all

With the busiest week of the year approaching, county officials were edgy when they received news early Thursday of a diesel fuel spill at the water intake facility operated by the Lower Cape Fear Water and Sewer Authority. The authority operates a pipeline from just above lock and dam No. 1 on the Cape Fear River that feeds water to the county plant

See County water, page 7

Continued from page 1

End-of-grade test scores on the rise

By Diana D'Abruzzo
Staff Writer

A sneak peek at this year's state end-of-grade test scores in Brunswick County has educators smiling at the dramatic improvement their children have made in reading and math.

The county on Monday released preliminary school-by-school results of the end-of-grade reading and math tests taken by elementary and middle school students in May.

The test scores, which play a major role in the state ABCs of Public Education account-

ability program, reveal that Brunswick County's schools are producing more students who are performing at or above grade level in reading and math. High school scores will not be released until mid-July.

"We're very pleased with what we've seen so far in our school system," said Marion Wise, superintendent of Brunswick County schools. "We've seen some fluctuation, but there is positive growth in all of our schools."

It's too soon, however, to determine what kind of growth has been made and if the See Test scores, page 8



Young and old alike applauded as the 2nd Marine Division Band got the holiday rolling on the Garrison Saturday afternoon. More photographs of that performance are in the Neighbors section.

Photo by Jim Harper