THE STATE PORT



Brunsw State historic after a major

Grid Jar Friday night, kicks off foo

shed ay in Southport, NC

Phone 910-457-4568/Fax 910-457-9427/e-mail pilot@southport.net

Volume 68, Number 52

Published

Long-term need

County adopts regional plans for wastewater

'The south-

eastern end

is busting at

need it now."

the seams,

and they

By Terry Pope Staff Writer

The blueprint that has been successful in northern Brunswick County will be

used to develop regional sewer projects for the Southport-Oak Island and Holden Beach-Shallotte communities as quickly as possible.

At a special meeting Wednesday, the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners formally adopted a plan to provide countywide sewer service over the next 20 years.

The plan calls for construction of three

regional sewer treatment plants in three phases, including one already planned for northern Brunswick County. The plan was drafted by HDR Engineering Inc. of the Carolinas, outside consultants hired by the county.

The county will serve as lead agency for projects involving any town or com-

munity which wants to join the two other regional efforts in the southeast and southwest.

A similar plan between the towns of Leland and Navassa, North Brunswick

Sanitary District, developers of Magnolia Greens Golf Plantation and Brunswick County gained the favor of state officials, who recently awarded the project \$12 million in Clean Water Bond grants. The northern project is estimated to cost \$27 million and will be paid for by user fees.

"What we need to do is to get busy and get in the position to get

some grant money so we can get some help," said District 5 commissioner Bill Sue of Leland. "If we have to go out and borrow a lot of money, there are going to be some very expensive sewer bills"

he southeast regional project will See Sewer, page 6

LINEMEN FOR THE CITY

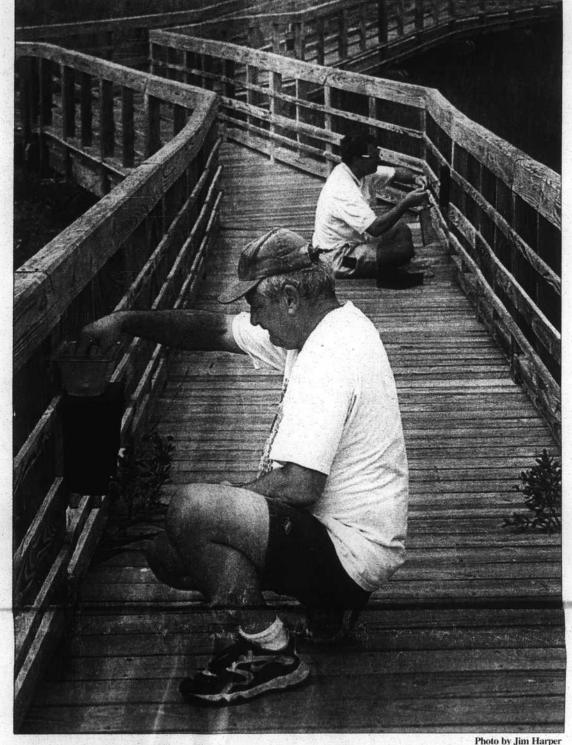


Photo by Jim Harper Workers from CP&L, including Brunswick plant boss Jack Keenan (background), turned out last week to repair Fourth of July vandalism of the lighting on the Riverwalk marsh-crossing and lookout. The power com-

Bald Head parking lot thieves nabbed

By Richard Nubel Staff Writer

Seventy-five warrants charging three men with a rash of auto thefts and break-ins at Bald Head Island's Indigo Plantation parking facilities were drawn by Southport police Tuesday.

One man was arrested early Tuesday afternoon and police were to begin searching for the other suspects that night.

Police investigators say all of the charges — 33 of them alleging felonies — were drawn in connection with activities at Indigo Plantation Parking Lot D late on the night of August 10 or in the early morning hours of August 11.

Two cars — both Jeep Grand Cherokee sports utility vehicles valued at over \$20,000 each — were allegedly stolen from the parking lot that night or morning

In all, 12 more vehicles were entered and about \$300 worth of personal property was taken from them.

An estimated \$4,000 damage was done to the vehicles that were victimized, mostly to doors and ignition systems. It appears that once those responsible gained entry to the vehicles, they attempted to bypass ignition locks to start

them and move them.

Law enforcement officers recovered two cars taken from Indigo Plantation
Lot D that night. In or near the city, Southport police recovered a 1997 Jeep
Grand Cherokee valued at \$20,000 and belonging to a Jamesville, Md., couSee Bald Head, page 10

Minority objections

City backs off on design

By Richard Nubel Staff Writer

Facing a contentious City Hall meeting room, packed with an unusually large number of African-American residents of the city's periphery, aldermen Thursday night again took no action on a proposed ordinance which aims to make commercial development in the city and its extraterritorial planning jurisdiction more attractive.

Aldermen tabled action on the pro-

posed Commercial Nonresidential Design Guidelines (CNDG) ordinance when presented with a petition bearing the signatures of 174 property owners who oppose the measure. Two residents of the city's extraterritorial planning jurisdiction (ETJ) were added to a task force charged with development of the ordinance. Alderman Meezie Childs said yet another draft of the document will be brought back to aldermen.

Property owners living just outside See Design, page 16 'I am on property my family has owned for generations....'

Betty Cowan

Caswell to weigh merger

By Richard Nubel Staff Writer

Members of the area's delegation to the N. C. General Assembly will be told Caswell Beach opposes the proposed secession of Oak Island Beach Villas in order to join the Town of Oak Island.

But, Caswell Beach commissioners Thursday set September 9 as the date for the first in a series of public information meetings the town will hold on pros and cons of the consolidation of Caswell Beach and the Town of Oak Island.

The Town of Oak Island was created July 1 by the consolidation of Yaupon Beach and Long Beach. Caswell Beach was not involved in discussions that

Pros, cons Sept. 9

in discussions that led to that consolidation.

In calling for consideration of consolidation, mayor Joe O'Brien said Caswell Beach officials had never foreclosed on the idea.

"Since the very beginning of the whole thing, we always had the option open for us to consider consolidation.

ers) agreed starting September 9 to have a series of meeting to explore the issue."

This recent drive to consider consolidation of Caswell Beach and Oak Island was spurred in July when directors of the Oak Island Beach Villas (OIBV) Owners' Association said they found Caswell Beach unwilling to consider the issue. OIBV association directors said the larger Town of Oak Island would best serve the future of villas owners. As Caswell Beach had no interest in consolidation, the villas would seek "deannexation" from the town to be annexed by Oak Island.

Last week, OIBV directors formally presented a request for annexation to Oak Island Town Council. Oak Island co-mayors Joan Altman and Dot Kelly were authorized to conduct "conversations" with OIBV and Caswell Beach officials.

O'Brien Thursday repeated a position he had taken earlier this month: The issues of OIBV's proposed secession and consolidation of Caswell Beach and Oak Island should be considered separately.

"I'd like to keep them essentially separate," mayor O'Brien told fellow commissioners and about 20 residents gathered for the board's regular August meeting. "We think we are opposed to the deannexation of the villas; consoli-

See Caswell, page 13

Voters to decide \$97.5 million bonds November 2

pany and Brunswick staff provided lighting for the structure last winter.

Few attend public hearing to voice either pro or con

By Diana D'Abruzzo Staff Writer

Showing photographs of rotted ceiling tiles in out-of-date buildings, officials with Brunswick County Schools told their side of the story:

Facilities are too old, too small, too behind the times.

Then a handful of Brunswick County residents said their peace:

Taxes are already too high the wish-

Taxes are already too high, the wishlist of school needs is too long. Monday night's public hearing before

Monday night's public hearing before county commissioners brought out those in favor of the \$97.5-million bond package — school and community college officials and a couple residents —

and those who expressed concern with high costs.

"The public and your good offices need to know much more about the ramifications of this proposal in terms of its impact on the county tax burden," said Southport resident Bob Quinn. "A crash sales promotion to run the referendum during low-turnout elections would short-change the public and the education system."

During a presentation on the condition of schools at the beginning of the hearing, Clarence Willie, assistant superintendent of Brunswick County Schools, said the average adequacy rating of the 14 schools in the county is 74 See Public, page 8

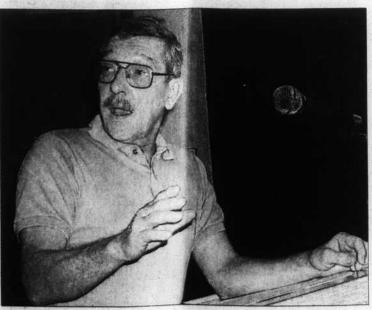


Photo by Terry Pope Brunswick County resident Joe Pasulka speaks out against the \$97.5million bond referendum request at the public hearing Monday night.

County officials already talking about 'what if...?'

By Terry Pope Staff Writer

County officials already are looking ahead, asking themselves what happens should the \$83.5-million school bond referendum fail in November.

Commissioners say they would search for other ways to pay for new schools and major renovations — but it won't be easy. Financing and a pay-asyou-go method using ad valorem tax revenues would be more expensive for the public.

"Should this amount not pass, they are going to have to come back to the county commissioners," explained Brunswick County Board of Commis-

sioners chairman JoAnn Bellamy Simmons on Monday while lobbying to slice the amount requested on the ballot. Unsuccessful, she made the vote unanimous to seek the full amount school board members had asked for.

"If it doesn't pass, where are you going to get the money?" Ms. Simmons asked.

Commissioners held a lengthy discussion on what to do before approving a bond order for \$97.5 million — \$83.5 million for county schools and another \$14 million for Brunswick Community College. They also set the referendum date: Tuesday, November 2. The items will appear as two separate issues on

See Bond vote, page 12