

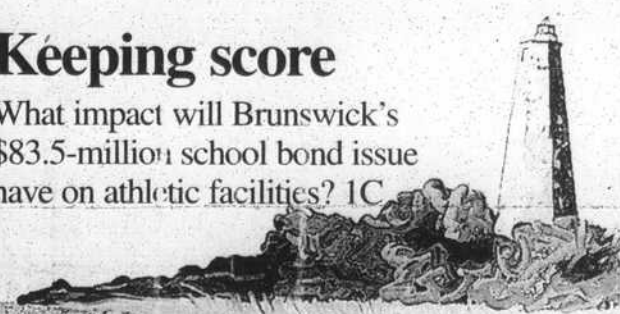
PILOT THE STATE PORT



Keeping score

What impact will Brunswick's \$83.5-million school bond issue have on athletic facilities? IC

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Winnabow golf course plan heard

By Terry Pope
Staff Writer

The Brunswick County Planning Board will resume a public hearing tonight (Wednesday) on a 1,226-acre golf course subdivision proposed for the rural Winnabow community.

A hearing that began November 17 was cut short by the sudden death of Winnabow resident John Troy Lewis Sr., who collapsed and died of an apparent heart attack after he addressed the board and spoke in favor of the project. The board recessed the meeting until December 1, at 7 p.m.

The hearing will continue in commission chambers in the public assembly building at the county government center near Bolivia. Before the hearing was halted two weeks ago, some residents spoke in favor of the project while others were opposed. They expressed concerns about traffic and environmental damage to surrounding creeks and streams.

Bluegreen Golf Clubs Inc. has applied to rezone the large tract owned by International Paper Realty Corp. of Georgetown, S. C., from rural to R-7500, for medium-density residential. The company plans to file for a planned unit development (PUD) that will allow it to turn the timber tract into a golf course and residential subdivision bordering Rice's Creek.

Not everyone who wanted to speak at the hearing had done so before it was recessed two weeks ago. Representatives of Bluegreen Golf Clubs did not have a chance to respond to concerns raised by residents and had not formally addressed the board before the hearing was recessed.

Planners will resume the hearing and vote on whether to recommend approval or denial of the rezoning request to county commissioners, who have the final say. Commissioners must hold a second public hearing before they vote on the matter.

The large tract extends from U. S. 17, just south of the N. C. 87 intersection at Bell Swamp, to Governor's Road. Although no preliminary plats have been filed with the county planning See Project, page 14

OH, CHRISTMAS TREE



Southport's Christmas tree appeared in its usual place over Thanksgiving, but not in its usual way, and Lew Cabral and Elton Jackson found themselves Monday decorating a living tree provided by an anonymous donor. The official lighting at the foot of Howe Street will be at 6 p.m. Friday.

Photo by Jim Harper

Oak Island Annexation plan moves past N.C. 211

By Richard Nubel
Staff Writer

"Welcome to Lowe's of Oak Island." "The Hampton Inn of Oak Island welcomes you."

One might hear these, or similar, words uttered frequently as soon as March, 2001, if the Town of Oak Island stays on schedule to complete the annexation of 255 acres in the Long Beach Road corridor and on N. C. 211.

"Total tax base value of the annexation area is \$35,708,815," said Nancy Wilson, assistant to the Oak Island town manager. "Based on the current Oak Island tax rate of 34 cents per \$100 valuation, anticipated revenues from the annexation area are \$121,410."

Town council Monday night voted unanimously to adopt a resolution of intent to annex what is essentially the remaining commercial lots on either side of Long Beach Road, from the town's present corporate limits at Fish Factory Road to N. C. 211. The annexation territory extends east and west along N. C. 211 from the site of the new Hampton Inn on the south side of N. C.

"We know we will be heard, but will you be listening?"

Rosetta Short
Oak Island resident

211 to Jones' shopping center on the north side of the highway.

Ms. Wilson said the territory proposed for annexation contains 93 commercial, 11 residential and two industrial properties.

In addition to Lowe's and the Hampton Inn, now both under construction, significant commercial properties that will become part of Oak Island include those in Live Oak Village Shopping Center and River Run Shopping Center.

This new annexation proposal of See Annexation, page 7

North Brunswick Student charged with starting fire

By Diana D'Abruzzo
Staff Writer

A North Brunswick High School student was jailed Tuesday morning under \$500,000 bond, charged with breaking into his school and setting the library afire. David Leon McKoy Jr., 17, of Northwest was apprehended as he left North Brunswick High School around 3:30 a.m. carrying a computer laser printer, said Leland police chief Brian Barnhardt.

McKoy, a senior at North Brunswick, was charged with felony burning of a school house, breaking and entering, larceny, possession of burglary tools and injury to personal property, Barnhardt said.

Fire damage was minimal, estimated at \$5,000, and the school was opened for classes later that morning, Barnhardt said.

Police were alerted to the break-in when the silent burglar alarm was activated, Barnhardt said. Within five minutes, Leland police Sgt. Roger Greenwood was on the scene and noticed lights on in the library. Moments later, McKoy emerged from the school.

"The officer confronted him and told him to put his hands in the air," Barnhardt See School fire, page 9

Small change forgiven, but not big bucks

By Terry Pope
Staff Writer

Some Brunswick County taxpayers are getting a break.

That is, if they owe \$2.50 or less.

A resolution adopted by the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners directs county tax supervisor Boyd Williamson's office to not send bills when a person owes \$2.50 or less in property taxes. It takes at least \$2.50 just to print, address and mail a bill to

someone with a relatively small amount due.

Under state law, governing bodies which tax property owners and collect their own taxes can direct assessors or collectors not to collect anything when the taxes and fees total no more than \$5. Brunswick County has opted not to go that high, but to instead set the minimum at \$2.50.

That policy also will apply to accounts for municipalities or sanitary districts which contract with the county tax department to collect their taxes due. When a bill is \$2.50 or less, a record is kept and a report is

given to commissioners at the time the bill is settled or excused.

The new policy starts immediately and applies to fiscal year 1999-2000.

While tax collectors aren't worried about small stuff, they are aggressively collecting the \$3.53 million in back taxes that residents owe dating back to 1988.

County tax personnel can seek ways to force payment of delinquent accounts dating back ten years — See County tax, page 10

Continued from page 1

Stairs step up interest

By Richard Nubel
Staff Writer

Oceanfront owners at odds to figure out just how to rebuild staircases from their homes to the beachfront in compliance with Oak Island's new guidelines can take a deep breath.

Help is on the way. Monday night, town council authorized building inspector David Clemmons to visit each staircase job site to assist homeowners in their efforts to place staircases. Co-mayor Joan Altman said inspections officials could even assist by placing flags where staircases may land.

The direction to Clemmons and the inspections department is a signal of some flexibility on the town's part. The building inspection See Dunes, page 14

Fund balance Money in the bank helps with recovery

By Richard Nubel
Staff Writer

Oak Island could not have begun to deal with the estimated \$5 million in public costs associated with Hurricane Floyd mitigation had the town not had a solid unappropriated general fund balance, town manager Jerry Walters said Tuesday.

When Hurricane Floyd devastated the town's oceanfront, Oak Island had to reach deeply into its unappropriated cash on hand to foot the cost of clean-up and security and berm reconstruction. Federal officials are traditionally slow to reimburse towns for the cost of hurricane mitigation.

"We are still out-of-pocket a considerable amount today," Walters said. "We've See Recovery, page 6

"We are still going to be dealing with it for a considerable amount of time, but in lesser degrees than when we were involved in debris removal and sand management."

Jerry Walters
Long Beach manager



The autumn storms provided challenges in depth for Oak Island's public works department. While cleanup and repair continued last week on the oceanfront, other town workers were installing storm drains where heavy rains had created a flooding problem on 47th Street NE.

Photo by Jim Harper