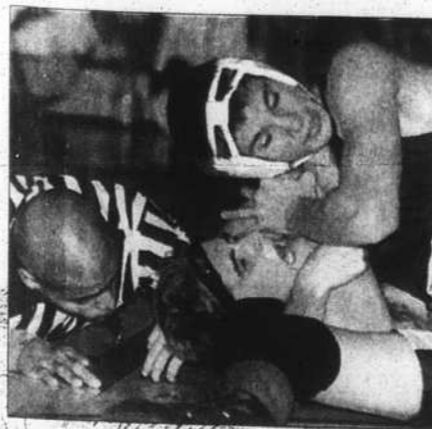


THE STATE PORT PILOT



All-Brunswick

The best football players in the county are honored in this week's edition - JC

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Oak Island post office in the bag?

By Richard Nubel
Staff Writer

Site selection for the long-awaited new U. S. Post Office at Oak Island could be announced by late February or early March, a postal official said Tuesday.

Selecting an adequate site for the promised 12,000-square-foot, first-class Oak Island post office has been difficult, but a postal service site review committee likely will convene on Oak Island in late January, said Robert E. Hill, a real estate specialist with the USPS regional center in Greensboro.

That sets the postal service on a course to begin acquiring property by March. Construction commencement will depend largely on site selection. Local officials and the public will have some say in where the new post office is located.

"The process requires that after our people have made a review of properties, we notify the local mayors of the sites we have looked at," Hill said. "They have 30 days to comment on sites that they feel are in the best interests of the community."

Notice of the properties being considered by the postal service also will be posted at the Southport post office.

At the completion of the public comment period, the postal service may announce its final site determination, Hill said.

Because of Oak Island's small commercial lots and general development pattern, Hill said offers to sell USPS adequate land for its new facility were few. Several months ago USPS announced it would accept offers of parcels four to five acres in size.

Pieces of property that size are difficult to come by on Oak Island and creative offers took a long time to piece together.

"Most of the things that have been put together have been put together after the fact," Hill said, in reference to the deadline USPS set for accepting offers of land on which to build.

Piecing together one or more offers adequate for post office construction was a difficult, lengthy process.

"They have been very time-consuming," Hill said. "People have been very nice and very cooperative, but there is a lot of process when you deal with the federal government."

If all goes according to plan and site selection is made in late February or early March, it is still too soon to say when the first letter will be posted in the U. S. Post Office at Oak Island. Just how much preparation the site event-
See Post office, page 8

WONDROUS EYES



Everyone knows the question, but there's no telling what youngsters will come up with for answers. More on the Christmas requests Santa heard Monday at the Southport fire station in the Neighbors section.

Photo by Jim Harper

Simmons trades places

Sue chairs county board

By Terry Calhoun
Staff Writer

The chairman and vice-chairman of the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners swapped seats Monday night at the December reorganizational meeting of that body.

Outgoing chairman Jo Ann Simmons nominated William Sue to the chairmanship. Upon his election by unanimous vote and his change of chairs with Simmons, his first action was to nominate her for vice-chairman.

Her election also was unanimous.

Before relinquishing the gavel, Simmons thanked the board for her three years at the helm. Sue is a five-year veteran of the board.

In other business, the board of commissioners:

■ Approved a plan to work with the Utility Operations Board (UOB) to plan and fund small capital improvement projects for the county water system. With the aim of improving quality and taste of water running in "dead-end" lines, the
See County, page 9

Consortium meets

Bald Head may shift its position for commitment

By Richard Nubel
Staff Writer

If Bald Head Island were to soon benefit from a 50-year federal commitment to renourish its miles of beachfront, village leaders might feel less pressure to seek 2.5 million cubic yards of sand from the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers' Wilmington Harbor Project.

Brunswick Beaches Consortium chairman Harry Simmons said much of the December 16 consortium meeting at Oak Island Recreation Center will be devoted to discussion of securing such a federal commitment for Bald Head Island. In a 50-year program, the federal government shares costs with local governments to completely renourish a local beachfront. The program comes with assurance the beach will receive maintenance renourishment sand every three years for a 50-year period.

"Bald Head Island claims it has been told it can't get into a 50-year project," Simmons said. He said two possibilities come to mind: Bald Head Island's 50-year renourishment program could be joined with Oak Island's 50-year renourishment program, scheduled for construction in 2003; or, a separate program could be established for Bald

The village has objected to the corps' proposal, asserting it needed no less than 2.5 million cubic yards of sand from the Wilmington Harbor Project and would sue, if necessary, to get it

Head Island alone.

"The worst-case scenario is that neither option would work," Simmons said.

Simmons said he is still trying to identify federal officials who may
See Beach sand, page 11

Speaker addresses city 'smart growth'

By Terry Calhoun
Staff Writer

"Isn't it sad what happened there?"

It's a question, according to J. Myrick Howard, that is asked more and more throughout North Carolina as unbridled commercial and residential development changes the character of those places people once enjoyed visiting.

Howard, Preservation North Carolina (PNC) executive director, advocated the concept of so-called "smart growth" during his presentation at a special program hosted jointly by the Southport Historical Society and the City of
See Southport, page 13

"We've got to grow differently. Can we build a tax base in a different way?"

J. Myrick Howard

Rice's Creek Developer seeks PUD designation

By Terry Pope
Staff Writer

Designers of a new golf course at Winnabow say they will enhance the environment rather than impact it with a 1,226-acre development along the banks of Rice's Creek.

"It's our job not to impact those wetlands," said Dan Weeks, a landscape architect working with Bluegreen Golf Clubs Inc. to develop a design for the tract between U. S. 17 and Governor's Road.

Weeks addressed the Brunswick County Planning Board at a public hearing last week. Winnabow residents appear divided on the issue — some favor and some oppose the project. County planners tabled a decision on whether to rezone the large tract from rural to medium-density residential (R-7500), which would allow developers to file for a planned unit development (PUD) permit.

PUDs are commonly used to aid design of large golf course residential communities and give designers flexibility to come up with innovative ways to route traffic and cluster housing units around greens and fairways.

Before county commissioners is a recommendation to amend the county's zoning ordinance to allow PUDs in rural zones. If that passes, the rezoning issue facing county planners over the Bluegreen tract becomes a moot point. Bluegreen would be allowed to file for a PUD even without the zoning change.

The planning board makes recommendations to county com-
See Rice's Creek, page 10

HIGHWAY 211

Construction brings traffic to standstill

Roadwork necessary for installation of a long-awaited traffic light at the intersection of Highway 211 and Doshier Cutoff continues to frustrate drivers trying to reach area destinations, but an end to delays appears to be at hand.

Morning and afternoon rush-hour delays of an hour or more have been reported by motorists driving to and from Southport from the Long Beach Road area. Traffic along Doshier Cutoff also has been slowed to a virtual standstill during peak drive times.

N. C. Department of Transportation (DOT) officials would give no timeline for completion of the project. However, as electrical work for the signal progressed early this week, a spokesman at the Wilmington DOT regional office said that final paving of the stretch should be completed this weekend.

Continuing road construction around the Wal-Mart Superstore parcel has contributed to traffic delays.



Traffic? Mary Freeman had a word for it as she directed the flow through improvements at the Doshier Cutoff-Highway 211 intersection last week. The work is in preparation for installation of a traffic light there, and paving of the roadway is expected to be completed this week.

Photo by Jim Harper