

## Personians May Get Stung Either Way Tax Poses Dilemma

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Person County citizens appear to be in one of those "damned if they do, damned if they don't" situations with regard to the local option one per cent sales tax question. At this point at least, the Person taxpayer's choice on referendum day Nov. 4 seems to be not one of whether he will or will not get wounded, but a choice as to the severity of the wound—and that's probably worse than no choice at all.

If the referendum is passed here, Personians will begin paying an additional one cent sales tax on all those items that now are subject to the statewide three per cent sales levy. If the referendum fails, county citizens will continue with the three per cent tax. That sounds simple enough; but, no matter which way Person votes, the implications likely will be far from simple indeed.

The local option sales tax matter is one of the "iffiest" animals to come down the pike

in some time. This being the case Personians stand to be rather hard-pressed when it comes to making the "correct" decision, providing there is a correct decision. But before examining the dilemma facing voters, perhaps it would be best to review the mechanics pertaining to the local option tax as prescribed by the 1969 General Assembly.

All 100 North Carolina counties will vote on the question Nov. 4. The counties that vote yes will soon thereafter begin paying four cents tax on the dollar for most purchases. There will be no sales tax change in the counties that vote no.

The counties approving the measure will be able to keep one-half the income collected from the total amount brought in by the extra penny tax. These same counties then will place the other half of their respective total collections from the total amount brought in by the five total collections into a pool. The pool money then will be redistributed back to the participating counties on the basis

of population, the smaller counties receiving proportionately more than the more heavily populated counties participating. (This makes it possible for a county to get more money back from the pool than it originally put in.) After the county receives its pool rebate, it will split the rebate with the municipalities within its boundaries on the basis of property valuation. For example, the City of Roxboro would receive about one-sixth of the pool rebate, the county would take five-sixths, since the city's property valuation is roughly one-sixth of the total county valuation.

The allure of the local option sales tax is this:

- (1) it means revenue for the county;
- (2) it means an additional "source" of revenue;
- (3) it is based on the county's economy, the purchasing power of the county's citizens--one pays the tax only when one buys an item, and
- (4) as such, it tends to ease the pressure on county commissioners to increase property taxes so as to maintain and expand services.

Traditionally, North Carolina counties have been forced to rely on property taxes for the major portion of their opera-

tional finances, although receipts from ABS sales do help augment the ad valorem coffers. The state, on the other hand, has a rather wide range of revenue sources--income, licenses, gasoline, sales, etc. and beginning this coming Wednesday soft drinks and cigarettes. Thus, the counties are pretty much limited in so far as coming up with new sources for income. Perhaps it is only natural, then, that most county governments should look hopefully to the local option sales tax prospect. But between the county government and this additional money stands--the voting taxpayer.

Earlier it was mentioned that the local option sales tax is an "iffy" proposition. Some of the ifs that Person voters are considering are these:

If the additional one-cent tax is adopted, it won't hurt those people who are relatively well off financially--many of these would just as soon pay a whole nickel extra rather than be bothered with the pennies. But, low income citizens and the poor will feel the extra bite into their pocketbooks. It is not implausible to suggest that some poor families here would have to forego supplying some of their longer period of time what with the addi-

tional money required to purchase various items. In general, the heaviest burden would fall on the poor.

County merchants tend to eye the extra tax askance. They see it so nothing like this: "If Person adopts the tax and IF Durham, Wake, Orange and other surrounding counties do not, what will happen to our business?" Good question. It is entirely possible that in this event, local business would suffer, at least somewhat. The reason is elementary. As a matter of course, people are going to buy goods and services where they can get them cheapest. If they feel the price is too high in Roxboro, they may drive to Durham in search of a better buy. Sometimes they'll find it; sometimes they won't, but in either case, seldom do they consider the expense of the trip to Durham. If they can save 10 cents on the asking price, they'll save 10 cents; if they can save a penny sales tax, they'll save a penny sales tax.

But this can work two ways. If Person votes the tax down and IF surrounding counties adopt it, Person merchants stand to gain additional trade from the other counties. For local merchants, the best odds appear to be on a no vote, at least from one viewpoint.

There's a hitch, however, IF Person rejects the extra tax, what will that mean as far as property taxes are concerned?

Conversations with county commissioners here seem to indicate that that question is simply academic. As the commissioners tell it, they were treading on thin ice to hole the line on the \$1.20 tax rate for the present fiscal year. At least one of the commissioners has said, in effect, that should the local option sales tax go down in November, county property taxes will go up next July.

Property taxes did go up 15 cents in the City of Roxboro for this year, but even so, some observers claim the local budget is almost hopelessly unrealistic, that it will have to be overextended. Annexation could help the city out of its plight, but that prospect still is pretty much up in the air. The city could use the revenue from the one per cent sales tax.

True, the county does have hope that substantial industrial expansion and projected expansion (CP&L's addition) will boost valuation to the point that the tax rate can be reduced. However, it will be some three, maybe four, years before all this goes on the tax books, while additional revenue, reportedly, is needed

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## New Library Is Ready For Use

Person County's new public library on S. Main Street in Roxboro is now ready for use, thanks to some back-straining effort by the Roxboro Jaycees, Person County Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts and their leaders.

The three organizations joined forces here last Saturday morning to move several thousand volumes and other materials from the old library on Chub Lake Road to the new, \$270,000 facility.

Hyconeechee Regional Librarian Lloyd Osterman supervised the move, which was somewhat more involved than one might think. Books were removed from the old library shelves in general subject categories and placed in the new shelving locations that had been specifically marked for them ahead of time at the new library. Jaycees were on hand with a battery of pick-up trucks which they loaded with the cardboard boxes that had been filled with books by the librarians and scouts. Boy Scouts took over upon arrival of the books at S. Main Street, carrying them inside to more Girl Scouts who placed the books on the proper shelves.

The whole operation lasted

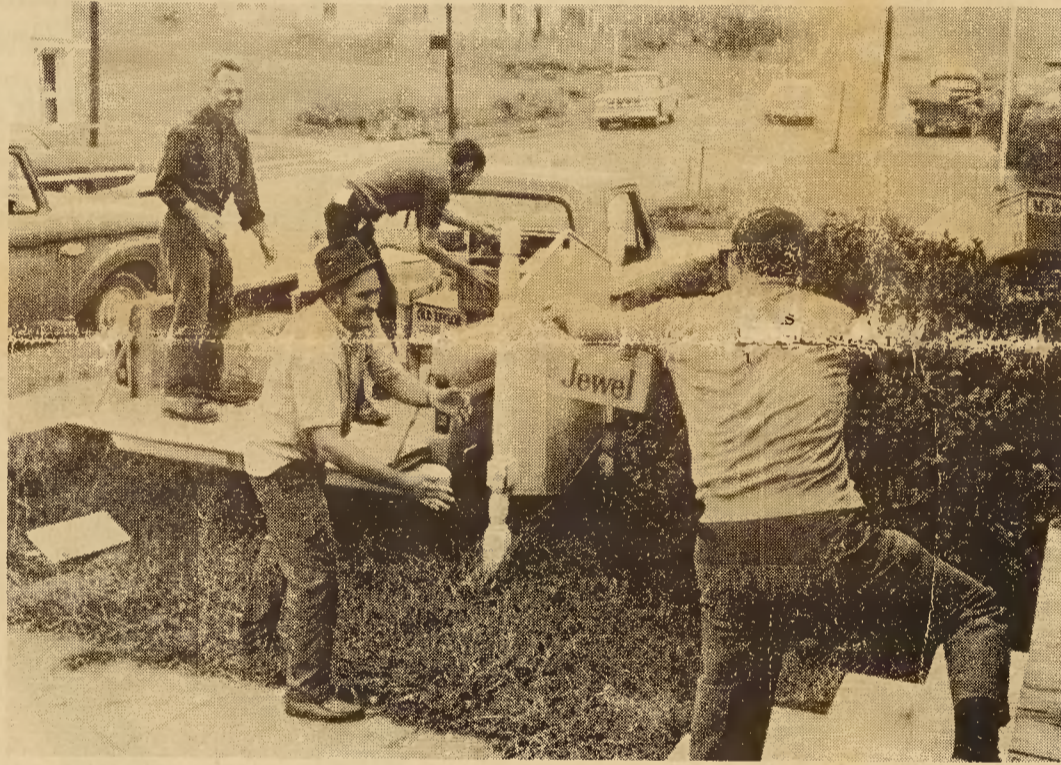
some five and one-half hours--from 8 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. About 2,000 more books remained behind at the old library, but these are not general circulation books, so they will be moved later.

Otherwise, everything seems to be going at the new library, which was some two years in the making.

The project takes in some 28,503 square feet, of which 11,000 square feet is building area. It can seat 74 adults, 12 young adults and 30 children, for a total seating capacity of 116. Book capacity is 50,000 volumes, which includes 33,500 adult volumes, 1,500 for young adults and 15,000 for children. The adults reading area takes in some 5,135 square feet while 460 square feet and 1,750 square feet are devoted to young adult and children reading areas respectively. Remaining space is devoted to staff and work space.

The library also contains restroom facilities, a kitchenette (furnished through a \$1,000 contribution from the Roxboro Woman's Club) and a special meeting room. The Person County Historical Society will be the first to utilize the meet-

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## Girl Scouts, Jaycees & Boy Scouts Help

Person County Girl Scouts, Roxboro Jaycees and Person Boy Scouts all joined hands here Saturday morning in the laborious task of moving books from the old Person Public Library on Chub Lake Road to the new library on S. Main Street here. Girl Scouts (above

left) placed the books on the proper shelves in the new facility as Jaycees (above) shuttled the reading matter from library to library and Boy Scouts (right) wheeled and carried the deliveries to the appointed spots inside.

(Staff Photos by Rattican)



## Person Farmers Gross \$19.4 Million In 1968

How did the average farmer in Person County make out in the past year? How much progress has he made, in terms of gross income, in the last five years?

Compared with the earnings of farmers and ranchers in other parts of the country, his returns have been relatively good.

The figures for the period are from a national survey released by the Standard Rate and Data Service. It shows that farm receipts in the local area were \$3,361,000 larger in 1968 than they were five years earlier.

The increase was due in part, to better yields per acre. Farmers were able to produce more than in former years, despite the cutback in the amount of land under cultivation, by pouring on more fertilizer, by using more mechanical equipment and by improved tillage practices.

At the same time, the demand for farm products was on the rise and the prices paid for them somewhat higher. Even though the farmer received only a fraction of this additional revenue--most of it going to the middle man--

it was of some benefit.

In Person County, the figures show, gross farm income in the past year came to \$19,488,000, as against the \$16,127,000 reported five years ago.

Those were the gross amounts, before any deductions for operating expenses.

The increase in the period, 21 per cent, compares favorably with that in farm and ranch areas generally throughout the country.

Locally, the major part of the income in the past year consisted of cash receipts from the sale of farm produce and livestock. Added to this were government payments and the value of the home-grown products that were consumed on the farm.

Of the amount that was realized by Person County farmers from their marketings, approximately 87 per cent of it came from the sale of crops and 13 per cent from livestock, dairy products and poultry.

Although 1968 was a record year for the American farmer from the standpoint of revenue, with receipts of \$51.1 billion, it was also a record year for expenses, \$36.3 billion.

## Scholarships Total \$650

## Miss Scott Seeks Title

The second annual Roxboro's Junior Miss Pageant is now but two weeks away from this coming Saturday, and the sponsoring Roxboro Jaycees have announced that scholarships to be awarded will total \$650.

The scholarship figure is \$200 more than the \$450 presented when the Jaycees initiated the pageant here two years ago. The money will be paid directly to the college or school at which this year's Junior Miss plans to continue her education.

The selection of Roxboro's Junior Miss for 1969 will take place Saturday, Oct. 18, at Northern Junior High School auditorium here. Advance pageant tickets are still on sale and may be purchased from any Roxboro Jaycee at reduced prices. Tickets at the door the night of the pageant will be 50 cents higher.

Among the nine contestants already introduced to Courier-Times readers are Sharon Ann Dickerson, Julie Edens, Rebecca O'Briant and Susan Rogers.

Another attractive young lady who will seek this year's title is 17-year-old Vivian Scott, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J.C.

Scott of Rt. 1, Semora. Born in Danville, Va., black-haired, brown-eyed Vivian is five feet six and one-half inches

tall. She is a senior at Person Senior High School, where her favorite subject is public speaking.

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VIVIAN SCOTT



J.D. TALBERT and brother ED parading around town in the pick-up truck late last week displaying a 125-pound (that's what they said) pumpkin that J. D. had nurtured from a mere seed...Former schools superintendent R. B. GRIFFIN kibitzing as library books were being moved last Saturday and offering to buy, just for proof, a photograph of Jaycee and PSHS Band Director MIKE CANNON working!...Football Coach LARRY DIXON trying desperately, but unsuccessfully, to fight back a grin on Friday night with 23 seconds left on the stadium clock and a victory over Northern's Knights assured...Auxiliary police officers helping out with traffic and crowd control at the ball game Friday night, looking smart and neat in their uniforms...High school band sounding great in the halftime performance...CLAUDE HARRIS, of Service Dry Cleaners, who has been pretty good about helping out a particular fellow down on his luck, drawing the line when the guy last week asked him for 75 cents to get his clothes "out of the Martini-zing!"