

# Coastal N.C. county asks for offshore drilling OK

Seeks federal, state support on issue

BY MEGHAN COOKE  
STAFF WRITER

Carteret County inserted itself into an ongoing national debate last week by asking lawmakers to allow drilling for oil and natural gas off the N.C. coast.

The board of commissioners passed a resolution 5-2 encouraging state and federal representatives to support drilling, citing its economic benefits.

The issue of offshore drilling has been in the spotlight for much of the summer. President George Bush lifted a ban on the practice in July and challenged Congress to do the same. Congress has yet to pass legislation addressing the issue.

Carteret County Commissioner Greg Lewis, who introduced the resolution, said coastal counties like his face increasingly scarce federal and state funding for harbors, inlets and waterways.

The prospect for revenue and jobs that drilling might provide is alluring, he said, citing a U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources figure stating that the state could receive nearly \$24 billion in drilling royalties during a 30- to 40-year period.

However, the effects that offshore drilling could have on the coastal environmental and the

tourism industry are hefty considerations, Lewis said, and the county won't be making any reckless decisions.

"If the only place to bring a pipeline onshore was Atlantic Beach, that's not a bright idea," he said. "Let's look and see what's proposed before we pass judgment."

N.C. Rep. Pat McElraft, R-Carteret, said she supports the resolution, although an extensive environmental and economic study is necessary before she or anyone else can reach a decision.

"People are hurting with gas prices, and we need to do something now," McElraft said.

Drilling is unlikely to damage the tourism industry as long as machinery is kept far enough off the coast, she said, adding that with the latest technology, an oil spill is also unlikely.

Some others are still hesitant about the wisdom of pursuing drilling.

The possibility of such high revenue is tantalizing, but it might come at a price, said Molly Diggins, state director of the N.C. chapter of the Sierra Club.

"Proponents have created an illusion that the drilling would take place so far offshore that it wouldn't have any effects," she said.

*"People are hurting with gas prices, and we need to do something now."*

PAT MCELRAFT, N.C. REPRESENTATIVE

"It's just that: an illusion."

Diggins also expressed doubt that drilling would leave the tourism industry unscathed or garner much support in the N.C. government.

"It's hard to picture the state going in a direction that would send tourism somewhere else," she said.

Despite some misgivings, Carteret County's community response to the resolution has been largely positive, Lewis said.

Nearby Onslow County would consider a resolution on offshore drilling if it was put before them, although that hasn't happened yet, said Commissioner Delma Collins.

The county is less dependent on tourism for revenue because it is bolstered by the presence of Camp Lejeune, which controls much of the waterfront property, Collins said.

"It wouldn't be wise of us not to," he said.

Contact the State & National Editor at [stntdesk@unc.edu](mailto:stntdesk@unc.edu).

## AUDITIONS

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views concerning the issues in the scripts.

"Working with ITC has been a wonderful experience," Bernstein said. "It approaches the issues in a very open way, and encourages conversations in a respectful environment."

The program has also adopted a classroom component, a course in the Communications Department titled Performance and Social Change. Members are eligible to enroll after their first semester of volunteer work with the program.

"I met the most incredible people with ITC, people who are

able to see the change they can make in the world," said Alyssa Champion, returning group member and enrollee in the class component.

Even in the first week of the class component, Champion said the course is already a valuable experience that is making her more aware of the various health issues on campus.

"I think today's college student demands programming that engages them fully," Saypol said.

"They want to do something and participate. They want to act. I think interactive theater is the perfect medium for that."

Contact the Arts Editor at [artsdesk@unc.edu](mailto:artsdesk@unc.edu).

## PUBLIC HEARING

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comments that have been submitted on the plan.

The board will return a recommendation to commissioners by Oct. 7.

"Right now the plan is just an intellectual framework," Chairman Barry Jacobs said. "After this comes the implementation process, where the specifics will be discussed."

The hearing was left open so that the board can receive additional comments from the public at a later date.

Contact the City Editor at [citydesk@unc.edu](mailto:citydesk@unc.edu).

## National and World News

### FROM THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL

#### GOP might have lost Fla. bastion

MIAMI (MCT) — There is a new Hispanic majority in Florida, and it is not Cuban.

According to the Democratic polling firm Bendixen and Associates, 44 percent of the state's 1.1 million Hispanic voters hail from the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Venezuela, Nicaragua and other Latin American countries.

Hispanic Democrats also now outnumber Hispanic Republicans in Florida, making what had long been a relatively predictable voter population for politicians much more fluid.

#### Russia recognizes independence of breakaway territories in Georgia

MOSCOW (MCT) — Russia's parliament voted unanimously Monday to recognize the independence of two Georgian breakaway regions that its military invaded earlier this month.

The move gave a domestic legal basis for the Kremlin to take control of the areas in defiance of the U.S.-backed government of Georgia.

Russian leaders said they weren't worried that NATO would cut off cooperation in response and seemed confident western countries will come to terms with Russia's actions because they have

no other choice.

"I am positive that Europe and the U.S. will respond in a reasonable manner; the U.S. economic situation is not good, Russia is on the rise," said Alexander Kozlovsky, deputy head of the foreign committee in Russia's lower house in an interview. "We need cooperation."

Russia's lawmakers heralded their bill on Monday as a crucial step in marking their resurgent sphere of influence.

In Georgia, officials were dismayed but not surprised.

#### U.S. Navy brings aid to Georgians

POTI, Georgia (MCT) — A U.S. Navy destroyer delivered 55 tons of humanitarian aid for Georgia on Sunday as residents staged a second day of protests against Russian forces still occupying the country.

Russian officials have criticized humanitarian deliveries by other NATO countries, including Spain, Germany and Poland, as fueling tensions in the Black Sea.

"I do not think that this will contribute to the stabilization of the situation in the region," Col. Gen. Anatoly Nogovitsyn, the deputy head of the Russian general staff, said Saturday.

#### Maliki requests U.S. withdrawal

BAGHDAD (MCT) — Prime Minister Nouri al Maliki said Monday there would be no security agreement between the United States and Iraq without an unconditional timetable for withdrawal.

But the White House disputed Maliki's statement and made clear the two countries are still at odds over the terms of a U.S. withdrawal.

"Any decisions on troops will be based on conditions on the ground in Iraq," White House spokesman Tony Fratto said. "That has always been our position. It continues to be our position."

## INSTITUTE

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in other careers.

Junior Chessa Atkinson, a business major, said she hopes to employ sustainability practices toward a business career.

"I am, of course, taking all of the normal B-school classes," she said. "But eventually I intend to apply them toward sustainable green business."

She said she was motivated to take the class after taking other environmental classes.

"I took (Greg) Gangi's

Environment and Society class pretty early in my career here at Carolina," said Katherine Betz, a senior environmental studies major. "And he was one of the ones who was planning it and doing it."

Betz said she is glad the course was created in time for her to enroll.

"I was just really excited about this," Betz said about the sustainability class. "This was my last chance to take a sustainability course, and they were offering it during my last semester."

Contact the University Editor at [udesk@unc.edu](mailto:udesk@unc.edu).

## 60 LANGUAGES

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She said Seawell's diverse ESL program is an asset to the community.

"We hope that parents and teachers in the community are aware of those differences and respect them," Lawrence said. "I hope they see it as part of our learning community and embrace this as an opportunity to learn about the world."

Contact the City Editor at [citydesk@unc.edu](mailto:citydesk@unc.edu).



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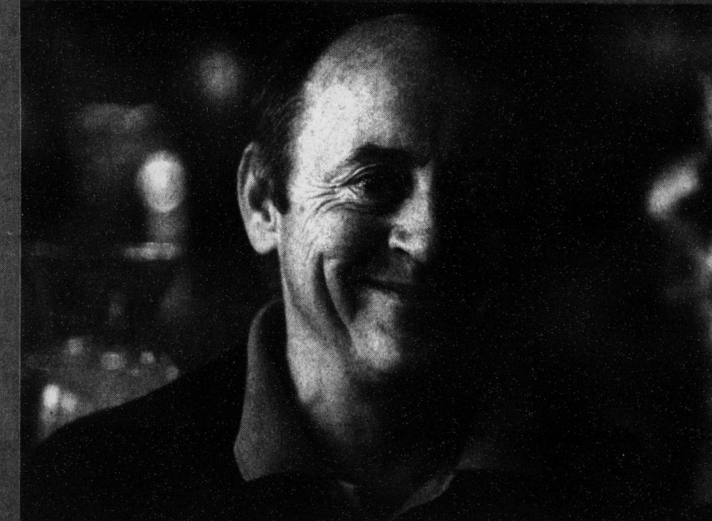
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