

Duplin Schools Benefit From Revenue Sharing

By Joe Lanier

The school system has received more than 80% of all Duplin County revenue sharing funds during the last seven years, according to Russell Tucker, county accountant.

The county received \$5,739,988.56 from the federal government in revenue sharing grants from 1973 into 1979. An additional \$151,209 has been received in interest on revenue sharing money deposited in financial institutions.

During this period, the school system received some money for buildings in all but one year. The total from revenue sharing money invested in schools is \$3,990,712.56.

The current fiscal year's revenue sharing fund of \$840,000 has been appropriated for the new Kenansville Elementary School, which will replace the present half-century-old structure. The new school is expected to be completed for the 1980-81 school year.

Last year's revenue sharing grant of \$840,891 was used to finance most of the new law enforcement center and the courthouse renovation projects.

Other schools in which revenue sharing helped finance improvements were Wallace Elementary,

Wallace-Rose Hill High expansion, and East Duplin Fine Arts Building and classroom expansion.

Other recipients of revenue sharing money are the Social Services and Sheriff's Departments.

Former County Commissioner Gerald Quinn of Warsaw said that in the early years of the revenue sharing program, recipients were urged to use part of the money for programs to help the poor.

As a result, he said, the county allocated \$781,800 to the Social Services Department for use as matching funds. The department received \$300,000 in the 1977 and 1978 fiscal years. In the 1975 fiscal year it received \$88,650 and in 1976, \$93,150.

In fiscal 1975, the county used \$30,846.13 of revenue sharing money to purchase cars for the Sheriff's Department. In fiscal 1977, it used \$14,115 for that purpose.

Quinn said the county board has always avoided using revenue sharing money in the operating budget. "It was never known when the money would be stopped," he said. "If the recession had not come in 1975, I believe that year would have seen the end of revenue sharing." Quinn said. He added, "However,

we talked each budget time about using revenue sharing money in our operating budget, but we never did."

Friday Commissioner W.J. Costin of Warsaw said, "I think we've handled this matter correctly. Without it, our building program would have been slowed or we would have had to go to bond issues."

City recreation programs would be largely undermined if the towns in the county lost their revenue sharing money.

Warsaw has been receiving about \$81,000 a year, Alfred Herring, town administrator, said. He said the money had been used for capital outlay, and for the recreational program. A small amount has also gone for supplemental salaries.

Wallace Mayor Farrior said his city has been getting about \$90,000 a year, and has put most of it into the library and recreation programs. Some revenue sharing money has been used in the operating budget.

Rose Hill has been getting about \$63,000 a year, and has used the money for capital outlay and operating expense. Town officials said they would have to cut services, raise taxes, or both if revenue sharing grants are eliminated.



James O. Buchanan presents gift to Arthur Benton from "the other women in his life" . . . the ladies in the County FmHA office.

FmHA District Director Arthur Benton Retires From Kenansville Office

Over one hundred friends and co-workers gathered to honor Arthur M. Benton, FmHA District Director, with a retirement dinner held at the Blockade Runner on Tuesday night, February 6th. Benton's retirement from the Kenansville office became effective on Friday, February 9th, after 35 years of service to eastern North Carolina.

After a buffet dinner, Emcee William E. Henry, County FmHA Supervisor from Gaston, introduced James T. Johnson, State Director, and asked for some remarks about his association with Benton. Johnson said, "Some things that characterize Arthur Benton are: patience, friendliness, humor, cigar, and cheerful."

Arthur M. Benton was born and reared on a farm in Columbus County, and graduated from Evergreen High School in 1935. He attended N.C. State University from 1935 to 1939, and received a degree in Agricultural Education. After graduation, he taught vocational agriculture at Oak City High School about two years, where he met Helen and they were married February 22,

1940. Arthur began work with Farm Security Administration in February of 1941 as an assistant supervisor in Robeson County, and was promoted to county supervisor of Onslow and Carteret counties in January 1943. He served in the U.S. Navy during World War II from July 1943 until March 1946, entering as an apprentice seaman, and was discharged as Lt. JG. He served aboard an attack transport in the Pacific during the war years, and returned to work with Farm Security Administration in the spring of 1946 in Jacksonville. In 1950 he was promoted and transferred to Duplin County as County FmHA Supervisor. Duplin County has been his home

since that time. He has served in several capacities with the agency, including a Supervisor-appraiser, area supervisor, district supervisor, and more recently as District Director.

Arthur and Helen have four children: David of Dover; Delaware; Mrs. Wayne Brown of Spokane, Washington; Mickey and Tommy of Kenansville; and six grandchildren.

Buchanan concluded by saying to Arthur, "We all know that rural North Carolina will benefit from all the years that you served with FmHA."

Jim Mills, County Supervisor for Duplin, presented Benton with several gifts from friends and co-workers. He has served in several capacities with the agency, including a Supervisor-appraiser, area supervisor, district supervisor, and more recently as District Director.

Funds Approved; 1,800 Acres In Duplin To Be Used For I-40

Initial funding to prepare preliminary engineering plans for the construction of an interstate-type facility from Benson to Wilmington was approved by the N.C. Board of Transportation in its February meeting in Raleigh February 9th.

Funds approved totaled \$3 million. The proposed highway will require 1,800 acres in Duplin County. There are eight approach ramps authorized in Duplin.

The Wallace area would have three approaches to the interstate-type highway between Wilmington and I-95, and the projected I-40 leading to Raleigh.

In the Wallace area, the approach ramps would be from N.C. 11, N.C. 15, and U.S. 117. In Duplin County, the approach ramps would be from N.C. 11 near Warsaw, and at Carlton's Crossing near the state line with Virginia.

Board Tom Bradshaw said, "We are delighted to begin plans on this extremely important highway. A multi-lane facility joining the port of Wilmington with major inland travel and transport routes has long been sought as a means of bolstering import-export trade. The interstate-type facility from Benson to Wilmington will connect North Carolina's deep-water ports on the coast with the state's piedmont and mountainous regions. It represents the board's commitment to carry out Governor Hunt's policy of balanced growth and economic development."

The project has been divided into four sections for design and surveys. Each of the sections will be designed and surveyed by an engineering consultant firm. The Department of Transportation is currently in the process of selecting a consultant firm to prepare the plans.

According to board member Gerald W. Gorman of Wilmington, the Department of Transportation will award \$2.5 million from

the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for right-of-way acquisition on this project. He said, "We

Straughan To Speak At Warsaw DSA

Thursday, February 15 in the Jester's Court at The Country Squire. Straughan, the son of Mrs. J. William Straughan, Sr., of Warsaw, and the late Dr. Straughan, is presently employed as Director, Office of Resource Development, American Bar Association, Member Senior Executive Group, Chicago, Ill. He was formerly Vice President for Development, Wake Forest University, and Associate General Counsel from 1974-77.

Awards to be presented will include the Distinguished Service Award, Outstanding Young Farmer, Outstanding Young Educator, Outstanding Young Law Enforcement Officer, and Outstanding Young Teenage Boy and Girl.

have an active partnership with the FHWA and appreciate its assistance in developing the freeway."

Democrats Nominate Elections Board Members

The Duplin County Democratic Executive Committee met Thursday, February 8, with Chairman Janice Williams presiding. The meeting had been called to nominate three persons from which the Governor will appoint two to the Duplin County Board of Elections for two-year terms. The three nominated were Claude Hepler of Wallace, Susie G. Smith of Albertson, and Robert Smith of Rose Hill.

The committee discussed a prior proposal for Duplin County to seek legislation to enable it to elect its Board of Education members on a district basis such as it now elects its County Commissioners instead of the present system of electing Board of Education members county-wide. It was decided to hold another meeting of the County Democratic Executive Committee during the last week of February to vote on either endorsing or opposing legislation to elect Board of Education members on a district basis instead of county-wide.

Duplin Education Board Considers Representation By Five Districts

By Joe Lanier

A plan to select members of the Board of Education by districts instead of at-large was discussed by the Board of Education Tuesday night. The plan was sent to the county Democratic committee for review. The Board of Education decided to send questionnaires to the school advisory committees for their opinions.

The proposal would establish five districts using the County Commissioner district lines as boundaries with one school board member elected from each district.

Under the plan, the School Board candidates would only be elected by residents of their districts in the primary election. Victory in the county Democratic primary is tantamount to election, since Duplin has about 18,000 Democrats and about 2,000 Republicans.

The plan would have the members, although coming from specific districts, voted on county-wide in the general election.

Under the present system, all Board members could come from one or two areas of the county. When the Board is sworn into office in April, the area comprising Commissioner District 5 will have no representative while the Warsaw area will have two. Commissioner District 5 includes Kenansville, Rose Hill, and Magnolia, and is in the center of the County.

After April, the Board will consist of Mrs. Pat Broadrick and James Strickland from Warsaw, Graham Phillips of Wallace, Frederick Rhodes of Albertson, and Dr. E.L. Boyette of Chinquapin. Russell Brock will go off the Board in April. He and Rhodes now come from the same district.

Phillips said he believes all voters should be able to vote on Board members because they really represent the entire county, not just small portions of it. He contended if Board members were

electd by voters of their districts, the candidates and the Board members would never cover the entire county as they now must do, and representation would be poorer than it is now.

Boyette said the way members are now chosen could allow the entire Board to come from one area, or even from one town.

Value of putting more dollars into the educational program of the county to improve the standing of its students in comparison with neighboring counties drew pro and con comments.

Phillips said the only way for the county to top nearby counties is to put more money into the program to hire more teachers. He said the competency test misled people. "The only thing we have discovered is the underachievers, the 10-15%

doing poorly. We have no yardstick to measure the 85-90% who are getting along all right. We don't know how well we are doing. We only know how badly we are doing," he said.

Taking an opposite view, Commissioner Alan Nethercutt of Lyman said, "Sometimes it is not just money that needs to go into the system. We may need to review our values."

The Board voted to have building supervisor, H.P. Honeycutt, negotiate with W.C. Elliott on disposal of an unused building on the Warsaw Junior High School site.

It was also decided to make a charge of \$1 for the first three credit transcripts requested by a graduating student for applying to colleges and \$1 per transcript beyond that number.

Four County EMC Sets Deadline For Essay Contest

Deadline for submitting essays to Four County Electric Membership Corporation (EMC) for the Rural Electric Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., is March 15th, according to general manager L.P. Beverage.

The essay contest is open to all high school juniors in Bladen, Duplin, Pender, and Sampson counties. One winner will be selected from each county for the week-long, expense-paid tour of the nation's capital.

The theme of this year's essay contest is "Energy Conservation — Or What." Essays should be 750 words or less and may include energy conservation techniques, possible alternate energy sources, and/or what the results would be if con-

servation measures are not taken.

Essays will be judged on the basis of (1) knowledge of the subject, (2) originality, (3) composition, (4) neatness, and (5) grammar. Emphasis will be placed on subject knowledge and originality.

Each participant must include on a separate sheet of paper his name, address, phone number, parents' names, school, hobbies, extracurricular activities, honors, and awards.

Essays can be mailed to: "Youth Tour," Four County EMC, P.O. Box 667, Burgaw, N.C. 28425, or they may be taken to any of the cooperative's offices in Burgaw, Elizabethtown, or Rose Hill by the March 15 deadline.