



Duplin Democrats Vote To Elect School Board By Districts

The Duplin County Democratic Executive Committee voted Thursday night in favor of electing the Board of Education by Commissioner districts. This change was approved by a vote of 113 to 8 and climaxed more than a year of study and debate on the issue.

The change to districts was earlier approved by the Board of Education and is designed to insure that members are evenly distributed throughout the county. The State legislature will have to approve the change before it becomes law.

The proposal calls for:
--District 1: one seat for Faison and Wolfscrape townships with a population of 5,165.

--District 2: two seats for Glisson, Smith, Limestone, Albertson and Cypress Creek townships with 11,442 inhabitants.

--District 3: two seats for Island Creek (Wallace), Rockfish and Rose Hill townships with a population of 11,856.

District 4: two seats for Warsaw, Kenansville and Magnolia townships with 9,552 inhabitants.

The Committee voted 121 1/2 to 11 in favor of changing the term of office to 4 years instead of the present 6 years. A motion to change the date of swearing in a new School Board member in

December following his election was passed unanimously. A new member must currently wait until April following his election to take office.

Executive Committee members voted 44 1/2-87 against a proposal to raise the number of Board of Education members from 5 to 7. Also defeated by a vote of 27 1/2 to 104 was a motion to elect School Board members on a non-partisan basis.

The Executive Committee filled two vacant offices by electing Carolyn B. Ingram of Kenansville as first vice chairman of the Duplin County Democratic Party and Gerald Carr of Rose Hill as a member of the N.C. Democratic Executive Committee.



OUTSTANDING FINANCE OFFICER 1979-80 - Chairman of the Duplin County Commissioners William Costin presents county Finance Officer Russell Tucker with a statewide award of Outstanding Finance Officer of the Year.

Duplin County Students Start School Friday

Those big yellow school buses, 137 of them, will hit the roads Thursday as drivers move the vehicles from the bus garage in Kenansville to the starting point of their routes.

The buses will start on their routes early Friday to bring most of the expected 9,000 Duplin County students to their schools for Friday's half-day orientation session.

School will continue from

8-11:30 a.m. Friday. The normal class schedule will begin at 8 a.m. Tuesday.

The Duplin school system employs about 700 persons, officials said, including about 450 professional workers.

Special Water Bond Election September 4 In Kenansville

There will be a special water bond election held in the Town of Kenansville on Tuesday, September 4th. The polling place will be in the Fire Station which opens at 6:30 a.m. and closes at 7:30 p.m.

Claude L. Hepler, chairman of Duplin County Board of Elections, released the proposition to vote "Yes" or "No" as follows:

Shall the order adopted on July 18, 1979, authorizing not exceeding \$170,000 Water Bonds of the Town of Kenansville, North Carolina, for the purpose of providing funds, with any other available funds for enlarging, extending and improving the water system of said Town, within and without the corporate limits of said Town, including the construction of facilities for the supply, storage and distribution of water and appurtenant facilities, and the acquisition of necessary

land, rights of way and equipment therefore, and authorizing the levy of taxes in an amount sufficient to pay the principal of and the interest on said bonds, be approved?

According to Woody Brinson, town administrator of Kenansville, the referendum has received endorsements from the Kenansville Area Chamber of Commerce, Kenansville Voluntary Fire Department, Kenansville Hospital Board of Trustees.

Richard Harrell, president of the Kenansville Chamber of Commerce, polled the membership which gave an overwhelming endorsement of the project. Harrell also stated in a letter from the Duplin General Hospital Board that without the water system improvements, the accreditation of the hospital was in jeopardy. In making their endorsement, the Jaycees commented on the

impact that the project would have on the Town's growth. A spokesman for the Jaycees stated that the Jaycees unanimously endorsed the project at their August 13 meeting.

Fire Chief Lauren Sharpe has stated that the water system improvements should improve fire protection. The additional storage capacity of a 250,000 gallon tank, the looping of dead-end lines, and the replacement of 40-year-old lines with new 8-inch lines should put the Town's fire protection system in top shape. According to Chief Sharpe, after the project has been completed, then an inspection by the N.C. Fire Insurance Rating Bureau will be requested to determine if Kenansville's fire insurance rating can be changed from a rating of 8 to 7. If this rating is obtained, an insurance premium savings of one to fifteen percent might be possible.

Russell Tucker Named Outstanding Finance Officer

Duplin County Finance Officer Russell Edwin Tucker was named "Outstanding Finance Officer 1979." The statewide award was presented to him at the NC Association of County Commissioners meeting on August 16th in Raleigh.

Chairman William Costin said Tucker was an outstanding finance officer in this county, but he was glad the state recognized Tucker's dedication. According to Costin, the number one interest of Tucker is the growth of Duplin County, and he has gone beyond the call of duty as finance officer to promote the county.

Tucker was one of 100

finance officers (one from each county) in North Carolina considered by a nominating committee for the award. Buck O'Shields, vice-president of the state organization, presented Tucker with the award. Finance officers and county commissioners attend the state association meeting which is held each year.

Tucker is a resident of Pink Hill. He graduated from James Kenan High School in 1962 and from East Carolina University in 1966. He also attended the Institute of Government at UNC-CH where he received a certificate in county administration.

Tucker worked two years

as a staff accountant with A.M. Pullen & Co., certified public accountants, in Greensboro before he was hired as Duplin County Accountant in August of 1968.

The title has been changed to County Finance Officer, and Tucker is responsible for planning, maintaining and directing the receipts and disbursements, and accounting of Duplin County's revenues and expenditures. He is also responsible for managing investments of county funds and the compilation and preparation of the annual budget.

Tucker has been a member of the N.C. Association of County Finance Officers since 1968 and served as

president in 1977-78. Also, he has been a member of the Duplin County Mental Health Board, the Advisory Committee to Local Government Commission, Finance Committee of the Duplin General Hospital, and the Duplin County Arts Council. Tucker is a past treasurer of the Hospital Building Fund and a past member and office holder of the Region "P" Human Development Agency.

Tucker is a member of the Smith Presbyterian Church where he is a deacon, former Sunday School superintendent and teacher, member of the Area Cluster Council, as well as choir member and director.

Duplin Secondary Road 1306 To Be Closed Two Weeks

The Division of Highways of the North Carolina Department of Transportation will close Secondary Road 1306 in Duplin County through traffic for approxi-

mately two weeks, according to Division Engineer Ted Funderburk.

The road, located near Red Hill about .3 mile from Secondary Road 1519 toward

Secondary Road 1521, will be closed from Tuesday, September 4 to Tuesday, September 18.

The temporary closing will allow NCDOT maintenance

crews to replace a pipeline on the road. Traffic will be detoured over local roads.

W.C. Casteen, bridge supervisor, said that every

effort is being made to complete the project as soon as possible to minimize any inconvenience to the traveling public.

Design Hearings For I-40 Spark Controversy In Duplin

By Emily Killete

A public hearing was held August 21st to discuss the alignment and design within the approved location of section B of I-40 at the North Duplin High School. There were about 200 present.

Section B is a 25-mile length of I-40 from south of Newton Grove to north of Magnolia. I-40 is a 90-mile freeway from Benson to Wilmington which is being constructed to provide a direct connection for the coastal plains to the port of Wilmington. The total project is estimated to cost \$267,500,000; costs of section B are \$60,042,000. Funds for the project will come from the federal government who will supply 75 percent and the state of North Carolina paying 25 percent. According to the Department of Transportation officials, a true interstate is 90 percent federally funded and only 10 percent state funded.

The right-of-way width of I-40 will be 320 feet with two one-way lanes each 24 feet, and a 46-foot median between the lanes. The remaining 220 feet will be divided on either side of the freeway as shoulders. Highway officials indicated that a 46-foot median is needed for safety reasons, and the 110-foot shoulders include expansion room for the future. According to highway department figures, there will be as many as 9,000 automobiles traveling I-40 daily in 1985, and by the year 2005, an estimated 15,100 daily travelers. The design speed for I-40 is 70 miles an hour.

Bill Garrett of the Department of Transportation conducted the hearing and explained relocation and appraisal procedures for property owners affected by I-40. Garrett answered questions and explained the design of the proposed overpasses, dead-end roads, and access locations of section B. Garrett then opened the

meeting to citizens who wished to comment on section B of I-40. Garrett or highway officials traveling with him answered questions posed by the citizens at the hearing. Individual comments were recorded by officials, and these remarks will be part of a public record which will be reviewed by the Board of Transportation and the administrative and engineering staffs of the Division of Highways and the Federal Highway Administration before the final decisions on the project.

In section B there will be 19 homes relocated. Many of the speakers at the hearing were property owners. The first speaker was Ben Warwick, an attorney from Clinton, who was speaking on behalf of John C. Warren of Sampson County. The Warren family has a hog farm, and the proposed location of I-40 will take the only suitable place for part of their operation.

J. G. McGowan of Faison questioned officials for rea-

sons I-40 would cut through two fields of his farmland. McGowan said he would not object to the road going through his woodland, but he asked the department to spare his cleared land. According to him, I-40 would split two of his cleared fields and isolate part of the land making it hard to reach and farm.

Jimmy Sauls of Bowden, who will not be affected by the I-40, urged citizens against the location of the new freeway to voice their opinions. "The government is spending our tax money the way they please, so now is the time to fight before it is too late," Sauls said. He said the state is letting citizens down by not using existing roads such as NC 701 or NC 421. "There is a great demand for prime farmland in the state, and after the concrete is poured, it will be too late to try to fight," Sauls said. He also urged concerned citizens to write their representatives and congressmen before it was too

late. Jack Williams of Faison was concerned with appraisal values of land. Williams felt the only fair way to set land values would be to use local appraisers. "What recourse do I have if I don't like the appraisal value the transportation department gives me?" Williams questioned. "And I am sure I won't," he added.

Highway officials explained that if the owner of the property could not agree with the transportation appraisal value of the land, a court hearing would set a price.

Other speakers followed Williams with questions about the value of their land. Many citizens felt appraisal of their land "as if they wanted to sell" was not fair. They felt there should be compensation for not wanting to sell, but being forced to. Other citizens had questions about taxes on the money they receive as payment for their land. Chairman of the Duplin County

Commissioners, William Costin, offered his help answering tax questions.

Speakers also expressed a concern about the width of the right-of-way and asked why it was not decreased. Concern was also expressed about the location meetings held in Smithfield and Benson. Citizens questioned officials concerning publication of meetings choosing the specific location of the I-40 corridor. Highway officials stated there were news releases sent to area newspapers and radio stations concerning the corridor location meetings. According to the officials, the design hearings could yield only minor shifts in alignment and a complete shift of the corridor would be very unlikely.

A public hearing August 22 in Teachey on Section C of I-40, drew nearly 400 people. Strong support was shown at this meeting for the proposed freeway along with concern from property-owners who would lose land to I-40.