

# Duplin Times

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## Governor Hunt Declares County Disaster Area

When Governor Jim Hunt visited Duplin County last week, he announced action had been taken by his office to support the request that Duplin be declared a disaster area.

As a result of the late winter snow storm, Duplin County poultry producers lost 200,000 turkeys and half a million broilers, and 138 poultry houses, with several hundred more houses receiving partial damage, county agricultural extension service figures indicate. Responding to the \$10 million loss, Representative Charlie Whitley of the third congressional district (Duplin, Sampson, Wayne, Onslow, Pender, Bladen, Johnston, Harnett and Lee counties) asked President Carter to declare the third district a disaster area.

The declaration would allow farmers and other property owners to be eligible for low interest loans to rebuild. As the Governor toured poultry operations in Duplin County, he explained to farmers that he had sent a letter requesting the small business administration to make assistance available to disaster victims.

Later, during Hunt's visit,

### Rose Hill Rejects Water Bonds

Voters in Rose Hill resoundingly defeated more than \$1 million in water and sewer bonds in a special referendum. Fifty-one percent of the town's 641 voters turned out at the polls despite deep snow, election officials said. The \$650,000 in water bonds were defeated 80-245 and \$435,000 in sewer bonds were denied 87-243.

The project was valued at more than \$3.8 million, with \$2.7 million of the total to come from state and federal sources, including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and N.C. Clean Water Bonds, in addition to other sources.

Mayor Ben Harrell said before the vote that if the referendums were defeated this time, he would try to put them on the ballot again.

he addressed a group of Duplin citizens at the Warsaw fire station. Hunt commended Duplin for their quick action toward asking for disaster assistance, which would also benefit counties adjoining Duplin.

"I am concerned about the damage from the storm. Duplin County is one of the worst damaged areas that I have seen as Governor of this state," Hunt stated.

"And I have sent a letter to the Small Business Administration in Washington, D.C. requesting that Duplin be declared a disaster area," Hunt said, "and my office will follow this request up with telephone calls and visits, or whatever it takes in order to get the fastest results. I am not going to let a lot of red tape slow this down."

"If Duplin is declared a disaster area, then adjoining counties will also be declared a disaster area and will be eligible for low-interest loans," Hunt said.

Progress in the state must be kept moving, Hunt said. "Over the last three years, North Carolina has been progressing steadily, with \$6 million in new investments, which is more than was made in the preceding eight years," he said. Resulting from the \$6 million in investments, 300,000 new jobs have been generated, Hunt said, with 300 of the jobs being in Duplin.

Hunt added that the balanced growth program

### REA Loan For Four County EMC

Third District Congressman Charlie Whitley announced last week that the USDA Rural Electrification Administration has approved a loan of \$2,857,000 for the Four County EMC with headquarters at Burgaw. The REA lists three purposes for the loan: To finance service for 2,000 additional customers, to finance 112 miles of distribution line, and to finance system improvements including substation facilities.

was aimed at communities like the towns in Duplin County. With the aid of Highway 40, Duplin will grow economically, with new industries locating in the county, Hunt said.

"Education determines where industry will locate, and this county has believed in good education and has been under some of the greatest leadership in the state with men such as Dallas Herring," Hunt said.

Hunt added that Duplin County is the leading agricultural county in the state, and through his trips to the Middle East a tobacco market has been established between China and R.J. Reynolds. And this year more North Carolina tobacco has been bought by Euro-

pean buyers than from any other state, Hunt said. Georgia had been the leading supplier for foreign markets until this year, the Governor added. The increased foreign demand for North Carolina tobacco will be what saves the state tobacco farmers, Hunt said.

"The joint venture between R. J. Reynolds and China, where a Chinese cigarette factory is supplied to bacco from R.J. Reynolds might be what saves the North Carolina farmer," Hunt said.

Leadership of the state is a team effort, Hunt said, and the people of North Carolina are positive people working every minute of every day to continue the state's progress.



**DUPLIN SWINE PRODUCERS SUFFER SNOW DAMAGE** - Wendell Murphy of Murphy Farms in Rose Hill, told Governor Hunt that while Duplin swine producers did not suffer the loss of buildings, they would face the loss of many pigs during the next three weeks due to the severely cold temperatures which accompanied the snow storm last week. Murphy estimated their hog loss would total 500 in the next few weeks from pneumonia caused by the cold temperatures. This would be a \$50,000 loss.



**TRAINS DERAIL IN WARSAW** - The first derailment was March 2nd, and was said to have been caused by a faulty switch. Only two days later, in the same spot, a second train derailed, and this derailment was also said to have

been caused by the faulty switch. Railroad crews worked all day Wednesday repairing the track and getting four derailed cars back on the track.

## Emergency Services And The Snow

## Emergency Calls Double

Duplin Emergency Service employees and local fire and rescue volunteers began answering snow-related calls Saturday afternoon, said Emergency Services Director Hiram Brinson.

As the snow increased, Brinson said, so did the list of calls for help. "We answered 47 ambulance and fire calls, which is about double the usual number of calls," he added. "There were so many calls that a priority list was made and each call was ranked."

"We have snow tires on all our vehicles and at first that was enough to get us through but as the snow piled up we could only use the two four-wheel drive vehicles the county department has," Brinson said. "However, we had plenty of help because there were people calling in and volunteering to help. Farmers were helping with their tractors, and people with four-wheel drive trucks were helping to transport nurses to and from the hospital and Guardian Care," he added.

The local fire and rescue volunteers manned all the local fire stations day and night, Brinson said. Anyone traveling through Duplin County or living in Duplin but unable to get home was taken to the nearest fire station where they were pro-

vided a cot and food, Brinson said.

"We took the cots and pillows and blankets from the Emergency Department's packaged portable hospital to the fire stations for the people who were stranded," Brinson said. "There were about 35 stranded at the Warsaw fire department, 10 in Kenansville, and 6 or 8 in Beulaville, and the majority of these people were from out of the county."

"And each time we sent out the ambulance, we had to send out a tractor to pull it through the snow," Brinson said. "Monday we had a call in Chinquapin, and it took the Chinquapin ambulance over four hours to get to the hospital, and then the patient had to be transported out of Duplin General by helicopter to another hospital for an operation."

"On another one of the calls we had to deliver a baby. The call came from the Potters Hill area, and on the way back, Dr. Nichols (Emergency Room doctor at Duplin General) was brought out to meet the ambulance and he delivered the baby before the ambulance arrived at the hospital. Dr. Nichols returned to the hospital in the jeep with the baby," Brinson said.

There were no deaths related to the storm, Brinson

said. But, he added that one death occurred during the snow in February when a man froze to death. As part of the emergency services, Brinson said wood was taken to two people, and several other persons were transported to and from the grocery stores.

Brinson added that only local dispatchers and jailers worked at the Sheriff's and emergency services departments during the snow storm, and like the rest of the employees, they slept when they could. Many employees worked double shifts, if not completely through the entire snow storm, Brinson said. And, according to Brinson, the jobs did not end when the snow stopped falling; volunteers with four-wheel drive vehicles and tractors continued to work day and night scouting the roads for stranded motorists and transporting hospital and nursing home staff members.

"I would like to thank all the people with four-wheel drive vehicles and tractors who helped us during the storm, and I think everyone worked really well together, which made everything run very smooth," Brinson said.

"It was a team effort when the Piggly-Wiggly roof collapsed in Faison. We had local fire and rescue units

from Faison, Mount Olive, Warsaw and Kenansville answering the call," Brinson said. "The entire county worked as a team to aid anyone in trouble," he added.

After the roads were cleared and transportation back to normal in the county, the emergency services department began to survey damage, Brinson said. The emergency services was among the first county departments to contact government officials such as Representative Doug Clark, Senator Harold Hardison and Insurance Commissioner John Ingram with requests for aid to poultry farmers and private citizens suffering a loss due to the storm.

The latest Duplin Agricultural Extension Service figures indicate that 148 poultry houses were completely flattened by the snow and wind, killing about 50% of the birds in the houses.

## Snow Pay Approved By Commissioners

Duplin County employees will receive administrative leave for the three days the offices were closed this past week because of the weekend snow and ice storm.

The board of commissioners authorized the leave during its storm-delayed meeting Thursday.

Administrative leave means that each employee will be given straight pay for the lost days. Persons who worked regular hours during the three days will be given time off for time worked.

Persons paid hourly wages who had to stay on duty extra hours will be paid time and one-half for hours worked in excess of the standard 40.

During the three-day period, the dispatchers at the sheriff's department handled 47 ambulance and fire calls,

about double the normal amount for that length of time, Civil Preparedness Coordinator Hiram Brinson told the board.

After a 30-minute executive session, the board, by a split vote, failed to adopt an ordinance that would have required the county manager to inform the commissioners prior to hiring or firing any employees. The motion was made by D.J. Fussell and seconded by Allen Nethercutt. Voting against the motion were Commissioners W.J. Costin, Franklin Williams and Calvin Turner.

James Sprunt Technical College was authorized to transfer \$1,300 from a budget line item, \$3,000 from building contingency funds and \$17,930.56 from unbudgeted cash reserves to meet costs of repairing the

roof over the diesel shop. The roof has been leaking.

The Airport Commission received permission to install a jet fuel tank at the P.B. Raiford Airport. The commission will advertise for bids on the project.

The board authorized David Underhill, supervisor of the county landfill, to transfer \$15,000 from auto repair funds to supply funds to pay for the increasingly high cost of fuel. He said last year he paid 57 cents a gallon for diesel fuel, and he is now paying 97 cents. He said gasoline had increased from 67 cents a gallon to \$1.04.

Representatives of the Department of Transportation will discuss highway work plans for Duplin County for the next year at the board's March 17 meeting.



**FAISON PIGGLY WIGGLY ROOF COLLAPSES** - Late in the shopping day Tuesday, March 4, the snow-covered roof of the Faison Piggly Wiggly collapsed injuring four persons. Three store employees and a customer were rescued from the front of the building in the check-out area where the roof fell without warning. All except the customer, who was

hospitalized, were treated and released. The following day store employees worked to salvage what items they could as the snow melted and poured from the roof into the building. According to store employees, the store will be closed until repairs have been completed, and no estimate of how long that will be given.