

Duplin Times

PROGRESS SENTINEL

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County Plans To Collect Taxes

Duplin County plans a major drive to collect more than \$1 million in delinquent taxes, according to County Attorney Russell Lanier.

A change in the way delinquent taxes are collected will enable the county to seize personal property of those owing back taxes more quickly and easily than in the past, he added. The new approach will make it economically possible to collect even small delinquent tax bills.

Lanier said the county never has made this much of an effort to collect delinquent taxes. Computerization of county records makes the plan workable, he said.

The plan eliminates complicated court proceedings to seize property on which taxes are owed, Lanier said.

Information and forms for garnisheeing wages and attaching bank accounts of delinquent taxpayers have been programmed into the county's computer, he said. Lanier said the paper work that required many man-hours prior to computerization now can be done in minutes.

During the next 12 months, information on personal property will be programmed into the computer to enable the sheriff to seize any item needed to meet delinquent tax bills. Those items will be sold, on the courthouse steps.

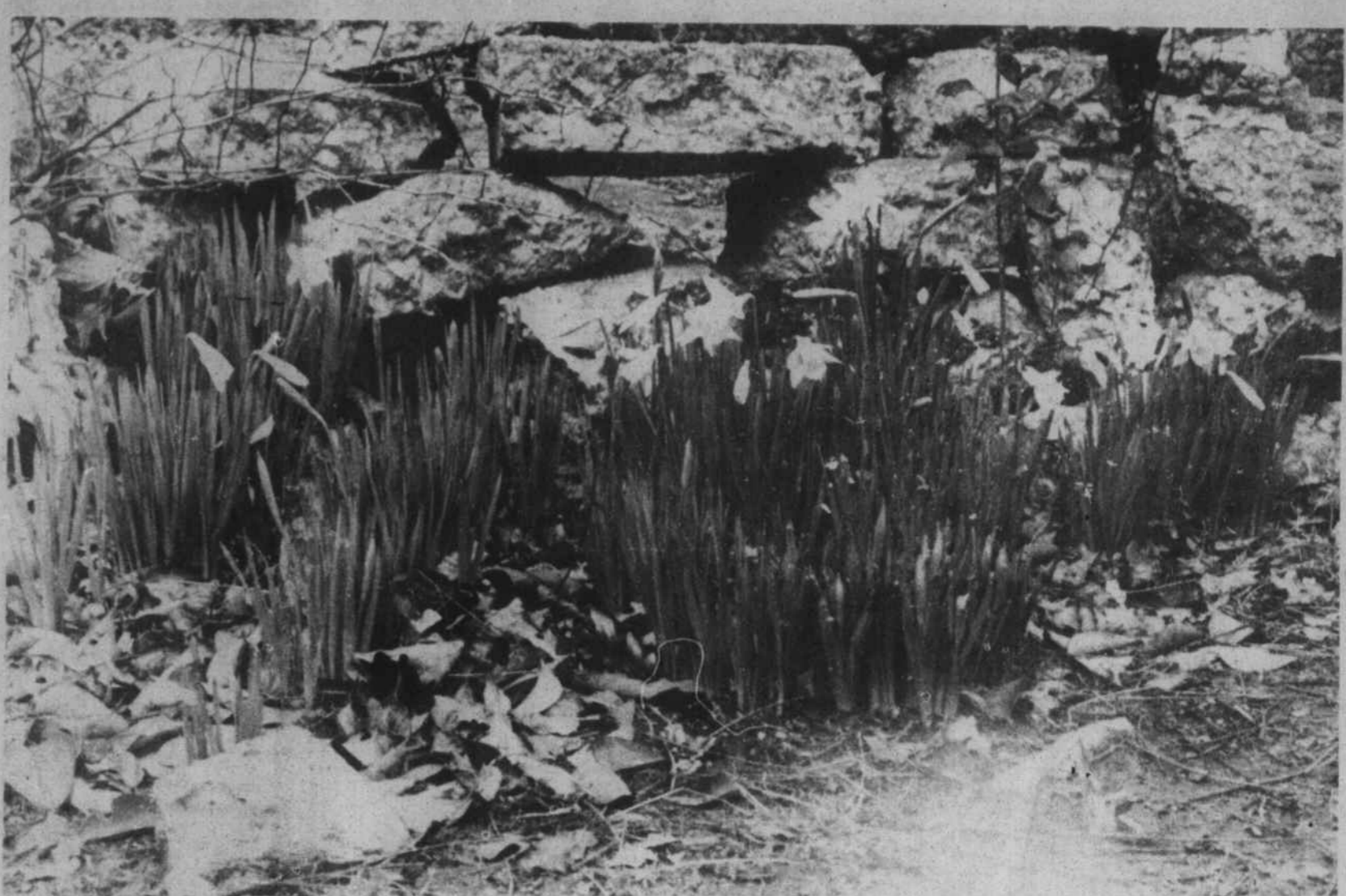
The system first will determine who is delinquent in each township. This information will be provided to the clerk of court, Lanier said. Property owners then will be notified by certified mail of their tax delinquency. The clerk will make out the docket and order the sheriff to collect whatever property is necessary to meet the delinquent bill.

The system may require adding one worker in the tax office and one deputy, Lanier said.

Prior to this year, after serving notice to property owners of tax liens against the property, the county then had to go to court to enforce collection, often a long delaying process.

County Finance Officer Russell Tucker said the county usually has collected 95 percent of a year's taxes by June of the following year. In 1980, the county billed \$4,360,014 in property taxes. They were due Dec. 31. Through January, \$743,071 remained uncollected and due.

Taxes can be collected for ten years after they are due. Tucker said \$1,343,007 remains unpaid over the 10-year span.



First Signs Of Spring

SPRING-LIKE WEATHER TO CONTINUE - The spring-like weather that has given the area a respite from the chilling winter is expected to continue through Friday. The extended forecast calls for fair weather with

highs in the low 60s and lows in the 30s. The warming trend will continue through Friday with partly cloudy skies and highs in the 60s to around 70. Always the first sign of spring are the daffodils shown above.

American Red Cross Duplin Chapter Report

At a recent meeting of the Duplin County chapter of the American Red Cross, Lloyd B. Stevens, 1980 fund campaign manager, gave the following report with community workers and amounts:

Albertson, Hazel Ruth Kornegay, \$173.; Bowdens, Jean Wilson and Bettie Carlton, \$43.11; Beulaville, Bill Thigpen and Charite Chasten, \$234.68; Calypso, Rev. Louis Galloway, \$153.32; Charity, Glorious Boykin, \$50.; Chinquapin, George Landen and Tom Kenner, \$348.20; Eatson, Grizzell, \$215.00; Kenansville, Rev. Troy D. Mullis, \$664.64; Magnolia, Marjorie Pickett, \$66.00; Rockfish, Ethel Alston, \$51.35; Rose Hill, Rev. Clark Porter and Irene Carr, \$873.00; Smith's, Sheila Futrell, \$78.53; Teachey, Rev. Larry Blount, \$40.36; Wallace, Emily Jessup and Robert Smith, \$381.76; Warsaw, Ray Roberts and R.E. Wilkins, \$534.08; and Wolfscrape, John Goodson, \$107.40. The combined total amounted to \$4,014.43 and was reported to be the best campaign in about ten years, according to the secretary and treasurer's records.

Board Of Commissioners Approves Money For Hospital

The Board of Commissioners approved \$100,000 last week for remodeling the first floor of the south wing into rental offices for private physicians.

The plan presented by Herb McKim of Ballard, McKim & Sawyer, a Wilmington architectural firm, calls for tearing out present partitions and establishing two offices. One would be used by two physicians working together and the other by one physician. The project also includes paved parking for 27 vehicles.

The offices will be rented at fees comparable with similar privately-owned offices. The rental payments will be credited to the hospital account.

Hospital Administrator Richard Farrell said the office space is needed as soon as possible. He said an

obstetrician-gynecologist planning to locate in the area would rent one of the offices almost immediately. Two internal medicine specialists have indicated they are seriously considering locating in the county and would use the larger office, he told the board.

Commissioner W.J. Costin, who made the motion to have the work done, said it is one way of helping the hospital achieve financial independence from the county government. The county contributed \$75,000 to the hospital's maintenance in the last fiscal year.

The board will finance the work with \$60,000 from revenue sharing funds, \$25,000 from hospital capital outlay funds and \$15,000 expected from Duke Endowment funds.

The board approved the offer of \$8,466.76 for library furniture from Omega Enterprises of Rose Hill, the county workshop for the handicapped. The Omega workers will make the circulation desk, two reading tables and shelving for books and periodicals.

The board received \$27,600 from the state for library construction Monday. The Division of Cultural Resources indicated the county might receive a similar amount in July.

The new library will be ready for occupancy in March, according to Bobbie Williams, county librarian.

Wallace Mayor Melvin Cording came before the board to respond to criticism last month of the magistrate's office in the Wallace cityhall by County Clerk of Court John A. Johnson. Cording told the board it is

not the town's responsibility to supply office space for a magistrate, although the town does furnish the magistrate office in the town hall. If more space is required, he said, "we simply have no more space available."

Cording said the office measures 10 feet by 14 feet and that its location is convenient for the police department.

Commissioner Franklin Williams said the office is no more cramped for space than other magistrates' offices in the county.

Johnson asked the board a month ago to move the office from the town hall to another location.

The board appointed Calvin Mercer, chairman of the county soil and water district, as county contract administrator to act as the



REP. DOUG CLARK, center, has been appointed to the House agriculture committee of the 1981 General Assembly. He is shown at the first meeting with Committee Chairman Vernon James, right, and Agriculture Commissioner Jim Graham at the Raleigh Farmers Market.

Receives Water Bids

Ramey Inc. of Clemmons entered the lowest of 23 bids for five additional miles of waterlines on the county water system.

Alfred Dixon, system administrator, said the low bid totaled \$96,298.60. The system's engineering firm, Municipal Engineering Service of Garner, estimated

the cost at \$130,000 prior to the bid opening.

The second lowest bid — at \$103,541 — came from Mercer & Sons Construction Co. The third lowest bid, \$103,724, came from Blue Contracting Co. Johnson Brothers Inc. entered the highest bid at \$187,622.

Dixon will recommend a contractor for the project to the county Board of Commissioners at its March 2 meeting. In most instances, the lowest bid is accepted. Construction will begin about the middle of March.

The extension is part of a \$500,000 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development project. The remaining

money will be used to rehabilitate or replace 37 homes.

The original system included 18 miles of water lines between Kenansville and Greenerivers. It cost \$384,000 and serves 110 customers. The extension will add 33 customers. January water billings totaled \$1,212.

Hardison Reappointed To Retirement System Board Of Trustees

Lieutenant Gov. James C. Green announced the re-appointment of Senator Harold Hardison to the North Carolina Retirement System Board of Trustees.

Senator Hardison has served on the 13-member board since 1973.

Green explained that Har-

dison was chosen because "he has the ability, experience and compassion to administer effectively a program of such importance to the retired employees of the state."

The retirement system is large, having an investment portfolio valued at over \$3 billion. By comparison, the budget of the entire state is \$10 billion.

Hardison said that the N.C. Teachers and State Employees retirement system "is one of the soundest retirement programs in the United States. It

is looked up to by other states as a model for their own programs."

The board of trustees administers the retirement system for over 180,000 state employees and several thousand employees of various local municipalities.

Any private citizens, group or club representative is invited to attend and participate, according to Mark Vinson, chairman of the task force.



DR. HUGH POWELL, left, of Rose Hill, has received an award from N.C. Commissioner of Agriculture Jim Graham for 20 years' service to the N.C. Department of Agriculture. He is presently serving as director of the Rose Hill Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory.

Juvenile Delinquency Group To Meet

The Duplin County Task Force on Community Based Alternatives will meet on Thursday, March 5, in Kenansville in the civil courtroom in the courthouse at 5:30 p.m. The meeting is part of the annual review process for funding upcoming programs and is open to the public. The intent will be to gather input from the community to help decide on programs to be funded for next year to help troubled youth in Duplin County.

The task force is made up of representatives from both local and state child-serving agencies as well as concerned citizens. Their participation is voluntary. The task force was appointed by the county commissioners as part of a statewide movement intended to find local alternatives for youth with problems rather than institutional commitment.

Any private citizens, group or club representative is invited to attend and participate, according to Mark Vinson, chairman of the task force.