

Duplin Times

PROGRESS SENTINEL

VOL. XXXV NO. 10 USPS 162-860 KENANSVILLE, NC 28349 MARCH 11, 1982 16 PAGES THIS WEEK 10 CENTS PLUS TAX

Board Now Following Procedure

The Duplin County Democratic Party executive committee is now following the proper procedure for filling a vacancy on the county Board of Elections, party chairman Melvin Williams said last week.

The committee acted improperly last week when it elected Douglas Judge of Kenansville to fill the vacant elections chairmanship, state elections director Alex K. Brock said Tuesday. Brock said only the state elections board can appoint members of county elections boards

and only the elections boards can elect their chairmen. Williams said the Democrats' committee acted last week through the mistaken impression it could name the replacement, not realizing it could only recommend nominees to the state party chair-

man. Brock said county parties must submit their elections nominations to the appropriate state party chairman. The chairman consults with the state elections board on the nominees.

Thursday, Williams said the county Democratic executive committee has nominated Judge and Larry Bostic of Beulaville for consideration by state Democratic Party chairman Russell Walker.

The executive committee gave Judge 85 1/2 votes and Bostic, 39 votes, for the position last week.

Brock also said a board member's resignation becomes effective only after

being submitted to the state elections board. Claud Hepler of Wallace, the former county elections board chairman, did that. Hepler also sent a copy of the letter to the county Democratic executive committee, which Brock said was proper procedure.

A county elections board consists of three members, usually two from the majority party and one from the minority party. In Duplin County, Democrats are the majority.

Both parties, Republican and Democratic, must be represented on the committees. Members are appointed for four-year terms.

Kenansville CP&L Dispute In Limbo

A long, confusing wrangle Monday night among the Town of Kenansville, Carolina Power & Light Co. and a property owner over construction of a power line ended with the town's consulting engineer saying he believes the problems can be worked out.

The board agreed to take the controversy to the State Utilities Commission if a compromise cannot be reached.

The town needs a three-phase power line constructed from the new Kenansville Elementary School to the new well and water pumping station near the school.

Landowner Steve Williamson wants a single-phase power line extended to his horse stables as recompense for providing right-of-way. Without provision for his power line, Williamson objected to the three-phase line crossing his property.

Steve Banks of Goldsboro, district right-of-way agent for CP&L, said the proposed three-phase line could use existing poles but would require one additional pole, plus guy wires, on Williamson's property. It would require cutting down several trees as well.

Last fall Williamson asked the power company for a line across an open field to his

stables. He said CP&L wanted \$1,279 to construct the line.

"Let's get this thing straight," said Williamson. "I'm not wanting money. I want a power line run to my horses' stable as compensation for the right-of-way."

A plan to build the three-phase line on another location struck a snag when the landowner, Ivey Fields, refused to sign a right-of-way agreement even though he didn't object to the line. Banks said the company can not build a power line across property without a signed right-of-way agreement.

Board member Jimmy Johnson said: "I don't understand this. The town has offered to pay CP&L \$1,279 (the cost of the Williamson stables line), and the company won't accept it."

"Any time we accept money, we have to put it on our books," Banks replied, "and we don't want to do that if we have to turn around and take it right back out."

Johnson said: "I don't know why you've got to have everything your way... whether anyone likes it or not. I think it's time to stop this arguing."

Board member Earl Hatcher said, "We spend \$12,500 for street lights and another \$12,500 for other

power with you. The town's due for some consideration."

Mayor Carolyn Hall said Jo Johnson, the Mount Olive CP&L office manager, told her the company would neither accept a check from town nor negotiate for the right-of-way.

The exasperated Hatcher said: "Let me tell you, I don't care if my neighbors fight. But, when they start throwing bricks that break my windows, then they're encroaching on my rights. I can see both sides of this thing. CP&L is so big they have a monopoly. We're willing to pay. CP&L won't take it. Williamson won't take it. What are we going to do? If somebody don't do something, this is going to be known as Kenansville's folly beside the creek."

"It's about time one of you took a stand we can negotiate with," he said. "We know what the trouble is. It's the principle of the thing. I don't see why CP&L should care where the money comes from."

Tyndal Lewis, engineer with McDavid Associates of Goldsboro, the town's engineering firm, said after talking separately with Banks and Hatcher: "I think we can work this out. It's the well driller's responsibility to get power to the well."

Duplin Will Live With School Cuts

The Duplin County school administration will not try to offset reductions in federal and state funding by asking for more local money.

"Although the federal and state projected revenues for public schools appear to be significantly reduced, there will be no attempt to expand the local budget to absorb those projected losses," Superintendent L.S. Guy said at their meeting last week on Tuesday night.

Information from the state level indicates that federal reductions will not be absorbed by the state," Guy said.

He estimated 1,197 school jobs affecting 173,000 students in the state could be lost because of proposed federal budget reductions.

The administrative staff will present its proposed budget to the board at its March 16 meeting.

Guy told the board the school system may get through the year without requiring additional fuel oil. Early last month, officials estimated an additional 30,000 gallons would be needed. However, moderate weather in February enabled schools to reduce fuel consumption.

Because of increasing rates, the school system may need additional money from the county for electricity, he added. Guy said the allocation for electricity must be increased for next year, but

the need can't be determined until the state Utilities Commission acts on Carolina Power & Light Co.'s current rate hike request.

Others appearing before the board last week included: — Alice Scott, assistant superintendent, who said an additional guidance counselor will be needed for junior high schools.

— Gary Sanderson, assistant superintendent, who said funds will be needed to maintain accreditation with the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges and for large equipment items for music programs in the schools.

Sanderson also said more funds should be included for replacement and repair of instructional equipment and furniture so the number of school fund-raisers can be reduced.

— Robert Tart, vocational programs director, who said vocational education faces significant reductions in resources from the state. He said the state may lose from 600 to 1,000 vocational education teachers and large reductions in funds for disadvantaged and handicapped student training because of proposed federal budget cuts.

— Victor Tucker, finance officer, who noted health insurance premiums will increase from \$40 per month to \$48 per month during the next school year.

Duplin Employees Favor Insurance

Duplin County employees want to maintain health insurance even at higher premium costs.

Facing a 39 percent increase in employee insurance premiums, county officials conducted a survey to obtain employees' opinions about health insurance.

The survey revealed 109 employees wanted to continue health insurance, even at higher cost, while 19 were against it and 10 undecided. Also, 97 employees opposed reducing coverage while 21 favored a reduction and four were undecided. Ninety-seven employees said they would favor changing insurance companies and 41 opposed any change.

The county pays \$24 of the monthly premium. Employees pay \$12.84 per month plus additional amounts for family coverage. The county began paying the total Blue Cross-Blue Shield premium of \$6.50 per month for employees in 1975. When the premiums were raised to \$24 per month in 1979, the county upped its payment to cover them.

The 39 percent increase would raise an employee's payment to \$27.19 per month

if the county contribution remained at \$24. If the county raised its share of the premium payment by \$26 a month to \$50, leaving \$1.19 for an employee to pay, it would cost the county an additional \$43,977 a year, County Manager Ralph Cottle said. That would amount to 2.5 percent of the county payroll, he added.

If the county increased all employees' salaries by \$26 a month, the cost would be \$6,621. However, after deductions, an average employee would only receive \$153 more take-home pay a year out of the gross pay increase of \$312 per month, he added.

The board will study the matter at its March 15 meeting. Meanwhile it will deduct the increased premium from employees' checks to keep insurance in force.

Two hundred Duplin County employees are covered by the insurance program.

The county paid \$125,417 in premiums and insurance processing fees last year. Claims of \$122,000 were paid by the company, mostly to dependents of employees. Claims averaged between \$1,700 and \$1,800.



EMPLOY THE OLDER WORKER WEEK - Carolyn M. Hall, mayor of Kenansville, signs a proclamation designating March 14-20 as Employ the Older Worker Week. Dennis Kirby looks on. Gov. James Hunt has

proclaimed the observance in North Carolina. All employers in the area are asked to consider the skills and other qualifications of men and women aged 40 and over.

Student Aid Cuts Worry Sprunt Officials

James Sprunt Technical College officials said they are uncertain about the effect of the economic crunch on the Kenansville institution.

"We lost 50 students this past quarter who simply couldn't pay their fees or buy books," said Dr. Carl Price, president of the school.

Prospective federal cuts in student aid will force more of the neediest students out of school, he said, noting 38 percent of the 650 full-time students receive aid through the federal grant program.

"Our immediate problem in keeping the doors open is cost of electricity," Price said. "It appears that we'll be out of utilities money in a month or two. Over half of the money we get from Duplin County is budgeted to utilities and this keeps growing. We're going to have to go back to the county commissioners for more money for utilities."

The school is continuing to adjust plans to train students for fields in which job opportunities seem available. It added a two-year course in electronics technology last fall in which 18 students are enrolled. This is a two-year program to teach students to repair and service electronic machines — such as computers, word processing machines and game machines.

"We can place everyone who graduates from this course," Price said.

The school had added computer, data and word processing to its business and secretarial programs, said Gene Ballard, dean of students.

He said a course on understanding data processing, a beginning step for more advanced work in the field, is being planned for next quarter. A skills laboratory to provide better individual development opportunity for students in shorthand, typing and office machine use is being developed.

A day care center is being considered. It could serve two purposes: providing care for children of students and providing training for students interested in this field of work. Ballard indicated such a field might interest some of the people who have

considered teacher aide training as opportunity in that field has about evaporated.

"We want to add a biological science program," Ballard said. This would be a two-year course to train technicians for the poultry and swine industries, major industries in the region. Ballard said the demand for such people is good. He said the industry had indicated it could employ all who would be graduated from such a program.

Price said the welding classes are full and the school has to turn students

away from them.

In contrast, if building trades continue in the doldrums, Price said the school would have to "take a hard look" at reducing its courses in these fields to enable it to provide facilities in more active job-producing areas.

In addition to the full-time students, Price said about 3,000 people are taking extension courses.

Price said 100 adults qualified for high school diplomas through the adult high school courses offered at the school last year. The county's four high schools graduated about 500 students last spring.

Whitley Will Seek Re-election



member of the House armed services committee, and he remains active in defense-related issues.

He is a graduate of Wake Forest University and its law school, having been awarded the BA degree in 1948 and a law degree in 1950. He earned a master's degree in legislative affairs from George Washington University in 1974.

Whitley is married to the former Audrey Konegaw of Warsaw, and the couple has three children: Charlie Jr., Martha and Sara.

Commenting on his decision to seek a fourth term, Whitley said, "The people of the third district have an investment in me, in my education which I received by virtue of the GI Bill, in the experience I have from 22 years in the third district congressional office, and in the money, energy and support they have provided in my past campaigns. I offer myself again as a candidate this year with the commitment that I will continue to do my utmost to conduct myself in a way that will reflect credit upon them and provide for all of the people of the third district the kind of representation they deserve and have a right to expect."

Whitley, now completing his third term, served for more than 15 years as administrative assistant to his predecessor, David N. Henderson of Wallace, before seeking election in his own right in 1976.

In the House he serves on the agriculture committee and is the ranking Democratic member on its subcommittee on tobacco. He was elected by his colleagues from North Carolina and Virginia as zone whip, a position in the House Democratic leadership structure.

During his first term in Congress, Whitley was a

Duplin Officials Fear Federal, State Cuts

Duplin County officials say they will face their greatest challenge in putting together the 1982-83 budget because of troubled economic conditions and federal and state grant reductions.

While money demands will increase, they pointed out, high unemployment, low farm product prices and weak business demand will virtually preclude any tax increases.

Calvin Turner, chairman of the county board of commissioners, said, "No one wants any tax increase, but all this stuff that is being cut out (federal budget reductions) is passed out to the states and from the states to the counties. Counties have only one source of money - ad valorem taxes - and these simply can't pick up everything that's being cut."

While saying he expects a "tough year," Gerald Quinn, of Quinn Wholesale of Warsaw added, "I think it looks good for industry in Duplin. One of the things that will help the county in the future is I-40 and our location on the expressway to the port at Wilmington."

He said, "Duplin is very different from other counties. Things seem bad right now, but it will be a different tune in April. When people get out in the fields, the music and the tempo change."

The Warsaw businessman said he believes the recession will be severe but

shorter than in 1974.

Although the unemployment rate of 10.3 percent in November was expected to increase during December and January, John Gurganus, county economic development director, expressed some optimism for later in the year.

"If folks can see daylight (improved economic conditions nationally)," he said, he believes more industry, jobs and tax base will come to the county this year than in the past five. Employment should increase by June, he added.

On the darker side, he said, "I don't like to think about it, but our textile industry is closely related to auto industry, and they're (auto) going to have to turn around before textiles will build up."

"A job today is a lot more important than it was a year ago," said Graham Phillips, chairman of the county board of education.

"My corn is a \$1 and soybeans \$1.60 cheaper than last year, while nitrogen fertilizer was \$98 (per ton) last year and \$118 this year," Turner said. "Interest rates are so high we can't buy tractors or equipment."

"A lot of our folks who went up north for work are coming back here as the jobs give out up there," he said. "That means welfare here."

County manager Ralph Cottle said, "This will be the most difficult budget yet,

due to the economy and grant cuts. They cut grants but didn't cut the paperwork even though they cut administrative money."

The county's 1980-81 budget totaled \$8,285,000. County ad valorem tax revenue provided \$4,255,000 or 51 percent of the total. Revenue sharing provided \$800,000 last year. In the past, revenue sharing has provided as much as \$800,000 in a single year.

Cottle emphasized that the county will be unable to take on any new programs or expand existing programs in the next fiscal year.

"Local political people will have to become more involved, such as county boards meeting more often," he said. "As the cuts come down, the local government is going to become more complicated."

Cottle said that despite economizing, basic costs continue to increase.

He said the county paid \$7.5 cents a gallon for 159,000 gallons of gasoline in 1977, a total cost of \$81,525. In 1980 it paid \$1.12 a gallon for 131,000 gallons, a total of \$146,720.

BARBECUE SUPPER

Unity United Methodist Church of Route 2, Warsaw, will have a barbecued pork and chicken supper beginning at 5 p.m., Saturday, March 27. Plates are \$2.50 and may be eaten in or taken out.