

# Duplin Times

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## Hospital Firm To Study Problems In Duplin County

Hospital Corporation of America will be asked to study Duplin General Hospital's financial situation, the county commissioners decided last week.

Recommendations could include that the county sell the hospital or contract with the private firm to run it. A meeting was held Monday night with representatives of HCA, which manages, leases, builds and buys hospitals nationwide.

The decision to ask the company for assistance followed a discussion of the hospital's current financial problems and future needs at the board's regular meeting last week.

The hospital board has asked the county for \$1 million to pay outstanding bills and to replace obsolete or worn-out equipment. The hospital had unpaid bills of \$704,000 in January, of

which \$200,750 had been unpaid for 75 to 136 days.

Strong opposition to any tax increase to support the hospital from two residents, Gene Colwell Sr. and Joe Batts of Wallace. They presented petitions signed by 231 people opposing any tax increase.

Commissioners D.J. Fussell Sr., Allen Nethercutt and W.J. Costin voiced opposition to selling the hospital, which Costin said "people of the county worked so hard to obtain."

All five board members, including Dovey L. Penney and Calvin Turner, opposed closing the hospital.

Board members questioned Ray Sanderson of Rose Hill, chairman of the hospital trustees, and administrator Richard Harrell extensively on the financial problems.

The commissioners also discussed, but rejected, the idea of hiring a consultant.

"I'm against hiring a consultant for \$10,000 or so to find out we've got financial problems which we already know we have," Nethercutt said.

Costin said a property tax increase of 17 cents per \$100 assessed valuation would be necessary to meet the \$1 million budget request in one year.

The county's present tax rate is 70 cents per \$100 valuation.

Harrell said the hospital's unusually high percentage of Medicaid and Medicare patients, whose payments are limited by the government to less than the hospital's costs, had created much of the financial strain.

He said only 36 percent of Duplin County residents needing hospitalization use the county hospital.

"The street talk is people don't have confidence in the doctors," petitioner Batts told the commissioners.



**TEXTILES REHIRE.** - The National Spinning plant in Warsaw has accepted applications for two days, March 22 and 29. The plant received 189 applications for the first day, personnel director of National Spinning

in Warsaw and Beulaville Ben Ellenberg said. Above, a line begins to form as the personnel reception hall filled with people applying for jobs March 22 at the Warsaw National Spinning plant.

## Bob Lee Resigns At James Sprunt



BOB LEE

Bob Lee, business manager at James Sprunt Technical College, has resigned effective April 1.

Lee turned in his resignation at the college's board of trustees meeting last week. Lee, who has been Sprunt's business manager for 14 years, said he plans to go into private business.

The board named Douglas Judge, the school's evening program director, as interim business manager.

President Carl Price said applications for the business manager's position will be accepted through April 15.

The board of trustees approved a budget request for county funds for 1983-84 for \$498,838. This is an increase of \$128,242 over the present 1982-83 budget. In the current expense budget, the request is for \$212,324. The main item in this request is water and electricity, which is \$123,654. Telephone is \$13,600, repairs to facility \$12,300 and contractual ser-

vices \$17,500. Other items are \$6,000 and under. Current expense budget for 1982-83 amounts to \$185,272. Maintenance department salaries for JSTC are the same as 1982-83 budget, or \$109,324. These employees are on the county pay plan and salary increases are judged by the county policy. Capital outlay request amounts to \$177,190. Capital outlay for 1982-83 was \$76,000.

Alfred Wells reported the total curriculum enrollment of 816 for the winter quarter at JSTC represents a 25 percent increase over the winter quarter of 1981-82 enrollment of 651. Reasons for the increase were stated to be the economy and recruitment. Wells stated this far for the spring quarter, 485 students have signed up; this, too, is a record.

James Sprunt officials will appear before the Board of County Commissioners on Tuesday, April 5, to request an additional allotment from the college's unbudgeted cash reserves. The additional funds are to be used for supplies and repairs. The amount to be requested is \$11,300. The college has in its unbudgeted reserves \$19,247.14 in the current expense and \$25,194.65 in the capital outlay portion.

JSI will also ask for a transfer of county capital funds that are unused, \$3,674.71, to be added to \$1,200 already budgeted for recreation area storage. The monies will be used to construct a 16x32 building at the softball field. In the building

will be two restrooms, a storage area, and a concession stand. Labor for the project is to be furnished by JSTC students and faculty.

Another movement of funds will be requested — \$5,550.84, which will be used for construction of a parking lot and waterproof parapet walls in the Hall Building. This money was not used in an exhaust system; a lower bid was made.

## Kenansville Public Notice

Notice is hereby given to the citizens of Kenansville that business garbage will not be picked up on March 30 due to minor paint touchups on the truck which is under warranty. We hope to have it back so garbage can be picked up on schedule Friday, April 1. April 4 (Easter Monday) is a holiday for town employees so no garbage will be picked up. The Clerk's office will be closed Thursday and Friday, March 31 and April 1, for vacation and Monday, April 4 for holiday. If your utility bill has not been paid for March, you may pay it on Tuesday, April 5, without service being discontinued, according to Mary Anne Jenkins, town clerk.

## Textile Rehiring In Duplin

By Emily Killete

The Warsaw plant of National Spinning Co., Inc. has begun taking applications for employment for the first time in two and a half years. This is good news to many people in Duplin County where textile occupations account for 25.5 percent of the unemployed labor force, according to Employment Security figures.

The conversion of the Warsaw textile plant from filament equipment to open-end spinning is still in progress, Ben Ellenberg, National Spinning personnel director, said. The conversion of the plant into an open-end spinning operation is currently in its second of three phases of completion, Ellenberg said. The personnel department at the Warsaw plant had long lines of applicants all day Tuesday, March 22, to fill a limited number of jobs in this phase of hiring.

"Open-end spinning business is excellent," Ellenberg

said. "We are more flexible with open-end equipment producing products for the fabric trade, hosiery and outerwear trade. The filament operation is a specialty trade that continues to decline even though we still do a limited amount of that product." The cost of converting National Spinning Co. Warsaw and Beulaville plants reached into the millions of dollars, Ellenberg said. The Beulaville plant conversion was completed two years ago and employs four shifts working seven days a week.

"We will be taking applications on Tuesdays, only," Ellenberg said. "After we receive applications, the Employment Security Commission administers the dexterity test. From the test results, we will set up interviews and call the first employees in about two or three weeks. The dexterity test is helpful in our hiring process because it measures the applicant's hand and eye coordination. We find appli-

cants who lack good hand-eye coordination have trouble mastering the job skills."

The dexterity test is part of the General Aptitude Battery given by the ESC. The examination measures the coordination of the fingers, hands and eyes. Kenansville ESC supervisor Dennis Kirby said, Duplin County has a labor force of 16,700 and ESC figures show 14.7 percent were unemployed at the end of January. During the week of March 12, the Kenansville ESC received unemployment claims from 520 people. Claims from unemployed textile workers totaled 138 during the week of March 12.

Kirby said, which is 26.5 percent of the total claims filed.

"State and federal unemployment extensions have enabled many unemployed textile workers to continue drawing benefits," the Kenansville ESC supervisor said. "The extensions have made it possible for some people to draw unemployment benefits up to a year. But, there are a number of textile workers who have exhausted both extensions and are no longer eligible for unemployment benefits."

"Duplin has many people in its work force who are trained in textiles and when the factories laid off, these people had no other jobs to

go to. The textile worker has just had to wait for the job to reopen," Kirby said.

The Kenansville office of the ESC paid out \$334,799 in benefits during January of 1983. The textile workers are the leading category of unemployed in Duplin, followed by construction and apparel workers, Kirby said. Layoffs at Duplin textile plants including J.P. Stevens in Wallace, Guilford East in Kenansville, and National Spinning in Warsaw contributed to unemployment among the textile workers. However, Kirby added, National Spinning is rehiring in the Warsaw plant and J.P. Stevens of Wallace is beginning to hire again.

## Duplin Appoints New Tax Collector

Norman Sandlin of Chinquapin was sworn in as deputy Duplin County tax collector last week and assumed the tax collector's position, March 25, when S. Leland Grady retired.

Sandlin was administrator of Plainview Health Center in Greenvilles until federal budget cuts eliminated the position. Before joining the center, he worked in the Duplin County finance office. Sandlin will start at a salary of \$16,449 a year.

Grady left the post March 25. He plans to work with his wife in operating Rhodes Grill in Beulaville. Grady was appointed tax collector in 1970.

The county Social Services Department is seeking a clerk to administer several assistance programs. Included are the butter and cheese giveaways, heat and energy aid, and crises intervention programs.

The county Board of Commissioners authorized a salary of \$13,276 per year to establish the position, which was requested by Millie Brown, social services director.

The commissioners approved a request from Duplin's hunting clubs to change the doe season to a special doe tag system. Jack Brinson of Kenansville was spokesman for the group.

Winfred Mobley of the Lyman area also spoke in favor of the concept, as did Joe Williams of the Rose Hill area. Hunting club representatives will present this new plan to the state Wildlife

Commission in New Bern March 30. Under the new plan, anyone wishing the doe deer to be cut down in certain area must control at least 2,000 acres (about one and one half miles square) and have a Wildlife biologist come and declare an excessive deer herd.

The state biologist must also state how many does can be killed and issue that number of tags. Joe Williams stated this is not a plan for wholesale slaughter of deer, but a plan to upgrade the quality of the herds.

A community development block grant public hearing was held. J.C. Thompson,

Edwin Thompson and James George of the Burning Bush area near Faison requested a water system and housing rehabilitation program in their area be in the grant. Ledell Wallace, Benita Wallace and Lila Richardson of the Wallace area requested a community building and recreation area be included in the grant application for an area including Rockfish and Teachey. A second public hearing will be held April 18 at 11:30 a.m. in the commissioners meeting room in the courthouse in Kenansville.

## Wallace Manager To Take Office April 11

Robert C. Hyatt, assistant administrator of Elizabeth City, will take over the position of city administrator of Wallace on April 11. Mayor Melvin Cording said last week.

Hyatt, 25, spent the past year completing his internship at Elizabeth City. His starting salary will be \$18,000 a year. A native of Randleman in Randolph County, Hyatt received his bachelor's degree in public administration from Appalachian State University in Boone in 1980.

"The budget, of course, is the big thing upcoming," Cording said last week. "It would have been better if he could have come sooner, but we can get it together in time."

Other than the budget, Cording said, Hyatt will have to watch over progress of the town's waste water treatment plant. The town has been assured the project will be funded soon, he added.

The former city administrator, Steve Routh, left Nov. 20 to become city manager of Madison in Rockingham County.



**SPRING SNOW** - Duplin County and most of the state was covered last Thursday night by a snow storm. The snow

added more water to Duplin's already saturated farmlands and yards, but was a welcomed change from falling rain!