



INTENSE HEAT toasted firefighters trying to contain the early morning blaze that apparently began in Shallotte Furniture Co., above, located about mid-way the length of the center.

Blaze Guts Seven Stores

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At the other end of the shopping center, as the double wall underwent an unexpected trial by fire, Milliken was taking no chances. He and employees, firefighters and other volunteers began hauling merchandise out of the store.

But as the flames subsided, it became apparent the fire wall had held its own.

"From the beginning the things we were trying to save were the ends of the building," Logan said, referring to Tripp's Jewelry to the south and Shallotte Electric to the north.

At first, the water supply wasn't as large as needed. "You can't pump but so much from these hydrants," Logan said. As more trucks arrived, firemen set up three drop tanks, portable pools that the trucks kept refilling throughout the morning.

Before the fire, the renovation of

the plaza was beginning to show visible results.

Mrs. Cox said she had tenants waiting for two of the three unoccupied storefronts. The only vacancy was the spot previously leased by Shallotte Rexall Drugstore.

"We were getting it ready for them," she said. In addition to the fire wall, workmen had replaced the flat roof, stuccoed the walls and were almost through refurbishing the facade.

The Coxes said they weren't sure what would come next; that it would depend in part on what the tenants want to do.

Mrs. Cox said they had assumed existing insurance on the structure, with coverage about equal to the money already invested in the renovation. "We had talked with our insurance agent just yesterday about obtaining more coverage."



SHALLOTTE RESCUE VOLUNTEERS Minor Hewett, Betty Hewett and Chief Janice Hargis tend to Shallotte Point fireman Ray Jackson, who tripped over a hose while at a point of near exhaustion. While he was the only fireman to actually "go down," Emergency Management Coordinator Cecil Logan said all the firefighters on the scene went their limit Tuesday morning.

New County Health Director Assumes Duties In November

BY SUSAN USHER

A new Brunswick County Health director is expected to begin work Nov. 1, ending a search that began on May 15.

Michael Rhodes, director of environmental health for New Hanover County, was the unanimous choice of the Brunswick County Health Board Monday night. He succeeds Thomas Blum, who resigned in mid-May to accept a similar position in Ohio.

Health Board Chairman John Madison said the board set out to find a person who was skilled in dealing with the public as well as a competent administrator. He said the board is optimistic Rhodes meets both requirements. "In his background and ability to work with people and personnel he came highly recommended," said Madison.

Rhodes, 34, has been environmental health director in New Hanover County since November 1983, and joined the department in December 1982 as a sanitarian supervisor. Previously he had been employed as a sanitarian with the Greene County Health Department and the Wilson-Green Health Services District. Rhodes earned a bachelor's degree in sociology from Atlantic Christian College and holds a master's degree in administrative services from East Carolina University.

In his new post, he will earn within the advertised salary range for the job: \$32,500 to \$39,000, but Madison said the final salary must be approved by the county commissioners.

Rhodes was one of 35 candidates for the job, not all of whom met the state's minimum requirements. Of

that number, eight were invited for interviews with a search committee. Of those, five were actually interviewed and three invited back for interviews with the full board. Of those, one withdrew.

Madison said the board basically made its decision at a Sept. 8 meeting. "But we agreed that when the decision was reached we would do a thorough background check."

"An interview is basically impressions, a popularity contest. We wanted to make sure those impressions were verified by past performance," he continued. Madison added that Rhodes checked out "very well."

Before beginning candidate interviews, the health board spent several weeks hammering out a profile of the type person it would look for.

"We decided that we were interested in a person who really cared about the people we're delivering service for," said Madison. "Public relations is extremely important, especially in environmental health."

"When a person has a \$30,000 lot that won't pass a percolation test, you need a person that can at least understand their situation and who will try to help to the extent possible without breaking the law."

"We don't want to be so much an enforcement agency as a service agency. We want to help solve a problem where there is a solution."

Madison also praised the performance of Environmental Health Supervisor John Crowder, who is serving as acting director of the agency. "He has done a super job. We've been very pleased."

Weather Looks Pleasant

Near-normal temperatures and rainfall are in the weather outlook, according to Shallotte Point meteorologist Jackson Canady.

Temperatures should be pleasant, ranging from the mid-60s at night into the mid-80s during the daytime, with about a half-inch of rainfall.

For the period of Sept. 9-15, Canady reported a maximum high of 87

degrees that occurred on both the 11th and 15th and a minimum low of 57 degrees on the 14th.

An average daily high of 81 degrees combined with an average morning low of 65 degrees, for an average daily temperature of 74 degrees, Canady said that was "fairly near" normal.

He measured eight-hundredths of an inch in rainfall.

Channels To Be Added

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distance of at least one quarter-mile.

Currently the co-op has 4,146 cable customers, 3,218 of whom live in unincorporated areas.

An engineering feasibility study should be completed by Dec. 31, in anticipation for the extension project. Price said the co-op has also identified a private source of lower-

interest loans.

Depending on the results of the survey and approval of the REA's lien policy, he said the co-op may be able to start construction of Phase II by the third quarter of 1987.

ATMC is presently the only telephone cooperative in North Carolina providing CATV service to its members.

Company Wants Grant For PVC Patio Plant

BY SUSAN USHER

Brunswick County Commissioners will hold two public hearings on Sept. 29 relating to efforts by a new company to obtain funds to help it locate in the Leland Industrial Park.

One hearing, at 6:30 p.m., will describe the Community Development Block Grant program; the second, 15 minutes later, will take up the proposed project.

Creative Lifestyles Inc., run by Robert Keith of Wilmington, wants to build patio furniture out of PVC pipe, primarily for an overseas market. Keith plans to apply to the state for a \$750,000 Community Development Block Grant to help the company locate a 20,000 square foot facility in the Leland Industrial Park. It has obtained an option on a 10-acre tract from the Brunswick County Economic Development Corp.

The company expects to initially employ 25 persons, according to Michael deSherbinin, executive director of the county's Resources Development Commission.

He said the hearing schedule would allow Keith to meet an Oct. 1 deadline for applying for the grant, which would be administered by the RDC.

Contractors Unpaid

Several subcontractors working on the county water distribution system have not been paid by the contractors who hired them, according to Commissioner Benny Ludlum. However, until the companies with the problem file a proper lien against the county, Brunswick County Attorney David Clegg said the county could not refuse to pay the contractors for work they have done.

He added, "But then we can hold it all the way up the line."

Ludlum was concerned that before the proper liens were filed, the contractors involved would have completed their jobs and left the county—with the local subcontractors still unpaid.

Other Business

In other business, commissioners:

- Met behind closed doors for approximately one hour to discuss litigation and client-attorney matters.
- Amended the county personnel policy to stipulate that written reprimands are to be retained in personnel records for three years and then removed and destroyed, rather than remaining on file indefinitely or for varying periods of time. County

Manager Billy Carter said the board had made that decision about six months ago, but that it was not reflected in the minutes.

- Agreed to Chairman Chris Chappell's appointment of DeCarol Williamson of Ocean Isle Beach to the Lower Cape Fear Water & Sewer Authority and to Frankie Rabon's appointment of Mexia Jackson of Leland to replace Morry Watkins on the Private Industry Council.
- Authorized the health board to institute a \$20 fee for recertification of sewage disposal and systems. Acting Health Director John Crowder said the department handled 291 requests between January and June, then a high of 80 or 90 in July alone. The recertifications are required by some lending agencies before existing homes are sold or before homes can be refinanced at lower interest rates. The health board had recommended continuing the service but charging for it.
- Since no bids were received, agreed to re-advertise bids for 10 sheriff's patrol vehicles, specifying 1985 or 1987 models.
- Amended the budget to reflect additional revenue for the Agricultural Extension Service's Integrated Pest Management Program and to reflect General Assembly contributions of \$3,500 to the Brunswick County Parks and Recreation budget to be divided between the Town Creek and Holden Beach senior citizen organizations and the Leland and Pearly Vereen (Waccamaw) community centers. Each commissioner will approve expenditure of the funds in their respective district.
- Amended the engineering budget to reflect \$10,000 from the contingency fund for operation of the county utility operations board.
- Heard, in opening comments, from a Shallotte Point resident concerned that some of the \$1.5 million set aside in the budget for water system extension projects would be spent to build a pump station for the western end of the county rather than lateral lines. Chairman Chris Chappell said the pump station is needed to provide water for the new lines.
- Agreed to reduce retainage to 5 percent for Sheriff Construction for Segments 2 and 3 only.
- Released an uncollectable \$77,150 in county taxes and \$10,787 in Doshier Hospital taxes for 1976. The figure for uncollectables is down \$10,000 from a year ago, according to Tax Collector Nancy Moore and will reflect more drastic increases in future years because of the foreclosure program.
- Heard from Register of Deeds Robert Robinson of a study committee recommendation that the register of deeds function be taken over by the state. The change would mean a loss of any local control of the agency, and for several large counties and for Brunswick County, a significant loss of revenues, he said. Salary is one area of the office not regulated by the state. Salaries vary widely from county to county, which was the initial concern that prompted the study. However, he said the register of deeds organization is expected to endorse the proposal for consideration by the legislature.

Registration Deadline Nearing

Brunswick County voters have until Oct. 6 to register for the Nov. 4 election, according to Lynda Britt, Brunswick County Board of Elections Supervisor.

Voters can register at the elections board or driver's license offices in Bolivia, at any branch of the Brunswick County Library or with any registrar.

Oct. 6 is also the deadline for changing precincts and addresses and correcting names.

Persons who won't be in the county to vote on Nov. 4 will have more opportunities to vote absentee this year. Absentee ballots will be mailed

out through Oct. 28.

"One-stop" application and absentee voting begins at the elections office on Oct. 7 and will continue through Oct. 31.

More information is available from the elections office.

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