

# 'Working' County Budget Includes Four-Cent Tax Rate Increase

BY SUSAN USHER

A budget document presented to the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners last week includes a 50.5 cents tax rate per \$100 valuation for 1987-88, an increase of four cents over the current rate.

The owner of a \$50,000 house and lot could expect to pay \$252.50 in county taxes.

That rate is based on a total real property valuation of an estimated \$3.8 billion and the current 95.6 percent rate of collection. If adopted it would yield the county about \$18.4 million next year, or close to \$365,000 per penny.

As changes in the state law go into effect, property owners will not pay personal property taxes next year.

Finance Officer Lithia Hahn, budget consultant William Carter and Acting County Manager David Clegg, who put together the package, stressed the "working" nature of the budget commissioners are studying. They

said it is based on current board policies. It will be reshaped through additions and deletions and policy decisions by the board before going to public hearing in June. A budget must be adopted by July 1, the start of the next fiscal year. Commissioners are currently aiming for adoption on or before June 28.

In its review, the board also will look at the possible realignment of county departments requested in but not included in the proposed budget. These include a county utilities authority, created from the existing engineering and water departments and utility operation board, and making the building inspections program a separate department rather than part of the planning department.

Commissioners continued their work on the budget Tuesday night, with additional sessions expected to be scheduled during the coming weeks.

#### Revenues, Expenses

In addition to property taxes, other major sources of

revenue in the \$27.4 million budget include \$1,090,000 of the Revenue Sharing fund balance; \$3.7 million of the general fund balance; and \$2 million from the last two half-cent sales taxes adopted by the state, which go to the capital reserve fund for county and school projects.

On the expense side, various departments requested more than 30 new employees; budget shapers trimmed the list down. It includes five of nine employees sought by the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department.

However, commissioners questioned where new employees would be placed in buildings that are already overcrowded. Among items left out of the working budget is a building project to provide more office and storage space at the complex. The county currently has set aside reserves of \$800,000 for this, to which it expects to add \$1.8 million after July 1st.

Other expense items included are the first of three annual payments proposed for lease-purchase of 26 elec-

tion result tabulators for the Board of Elections, a replacement backhoe in Operation Services, and replacement garbage truck and trash compactor for Landfill; two new positions and two replacement cards for the Tax Supervisor's office; and a replacement car for Landfill's solid waste control officer.

Also, addition of one position in the County Attorney's office to provide both a legal secretary V and an administrative assistant II who would serve as clerk pro tempore to the board and assistant county public information officer.

Also in are 1½ positions in the Register of Deeds office; \$15,000 for professional services each both that of the Clerk of Court's, for computer programming.

Others items included are a replacement 1½-ton truck for Building and Grounds, 10 replacement patrol vehicles, a body mike, logging recorder and two base sta-

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GOV. JAMES MARTIN (left) presents National Oyster Shucking Champion Cathy Carlisle of Boone's Neck a plaque recognizing her accomplishment as Rep. E. David Redwine stands by.

## Cathy Carlisle Shucks Her Way To State Capitol

BY DOUG RUTTER

For The Brunswick Beacon

Gov. James G. Martin and State Rep. E. David Redwine honored local hero Cathy Carlisle in Raleigh Tuesday for her capture of the National Oyster Shucking Championship last October.

Ms. Carlisle, 23, of Boone's Neck, was recognized first in the State House of Representatives by Redwine. She then paid a visit to the governor's office to talk with Martin about her success.

According to Redwine, "Cathy's accomplishments are a tribute to her hard work and determination. Our state is proud to honor her, and we wish her the best of luck in the world championships."

Martin presented a plaque to Ms. Carlisle in recognition of her national title. It will be displayed in the South Brunswick Islands Chamber of Commerce office in Shallotte.

Commented Martin to Ms. Carlisle, "I have heard an awful lot about you, and I am happy to finally meet you."

Also while in Raleigh, local af-

filates of the three major networks interviewed Ms. Carlisle.

"The interviews were a lot of fun. I felt like a real celebrity."

Accompanying Ms. Carlisle to Raleigh were South Brunswick Islands chamber of Commerce representatives J. Alan Holden, president; Allan Dameron, 1987 Oyster Festival chairman; and Anne Marie Schettini, executive director.

"We hope that this publicity introduces more people to the area," said Ms. Schettini. "It should bring tourists here in the fall and help the local businesses in an otherwise slow period of the year."

The delegation also presented Martin with 1987 Oyster festival sweat-shirts.

Ms. Carlisle will compete in the World Oyster Opening Championship in Galway, Ireland, Sept. 24-27, against 11 other national champions.

For winning the U.S. title on Oct. 11, 1986, her expenses for the Ireland trip will be covered by the Leonardtown Rotary Club, which sponsors (See CARLISLE, Page 2-A)

## Proposed Bill Aims To Help Roads That Fall In Cracks

BY SUSAN USHER

Residents of roads that fall between the cracks of current state highway programs are targeted for help in a local roads bill proposed by the Brunswick County Commissioners.

The bill was to be sent to Rep. E. David Redwine, hopefully in time for consideration during this session of the N.C. General Assembly. Commissioners approved its wording at a budget session/meeting last Wednesday night.

Suggested by Commissioner Chris Chappell, the bill is intended to offer the county's help to two specific groups: 1) residents of subdivisions developed before October 1975 that are sold out and don't meet minimum

requirements for having the state take them over. After that date, almost all 100 counties in North Carolina began requiring subdivisions to build their private roads to state standards so that they could later be taken over for maintenance and improvements such as paving; Brunswick County did not.

The second group includes residents of roads that are already on the state system that have little likelihood of qualifying for improvements and may have been waiting for years to be paved.

Rep. Redwine has suggested the county revise its subdivision ordinance to keep the problem from occurring in the future. So far commissioners have taken no action regard-

ing a draft revision of the ordinance submitted to them by the Brunswick County Planning Board.

Meanwhile, Chappell said last Wednesday night he would like to see the county "extending the hand of government a little to the property owners."

If passed the bill would affect only the county. It would allow 75 percent of the landowners along a road to petition the county for help. The county would hold a public hearing to decide whether to accept the road project. These landowners, with someone acting as their representative or "developer," would then have 90 days in which to come up with all the money for the project. The money would go to the N.C. Department of Transportation.

The work would begin. The county would assess all property owners—including those who didn't sign the petition—based on the lot frontage they own along the road, plus a 10 percent fee to cover its administrative and overhead costs.

As other property owners pay their assessments, then the citizens who put the money up for the project would be reimbursed all but their actual share of the cost.

Thirty days after the due date, the county would have the right to begin foreclosure of assessment liens against property owners who did not pay their assessment.

According to County Attorney and Acting County Manager David Clegg, the program will cost more than the

state's property owner participation plan, but will also be speedier.

The bill had a bumpy road to follow to its adoption by commissioners, with several amendments and votes before they completed the final version. Chappell first intended it to apply only to the old subdivision roads, but agreed with other commissioners that a way should be found to help residents of other roads unlikely to be paved or improved by the state in the near future.

While suggesting on one hand that the program would create more bureaucracy and possibly force citizens into doing something they don't want, on the other Commissioner Frankie Rabon noted, "If you can find 75 percent of the people in a community . . . or anywhere in favor

of something, then Frankie Rabon will be for it.

"This is the only way many people are ever going to get better roads, regardless of who's governor," he told fellow members.

When it was clear the original motion wouldn't meet approval, Chappell asked the board to approve the measure for District 1 only, which drew a 3-2 vote of opposition.

He didn't drop the issue; instead pressing until the board arrived at a compromise solution.

Commissioner Benny Ludlum afterwards told Chappell he was concerned about the District 12 commissioner's blood pressure. "I was getting scared you were taking it too serious."

## Holden Beach Water Line Causes One Last Headache

BY TERRY POPE

Water from Phase II of the Brunswick County water system is scheduled to reach Holden Beach within the next week.

That's good news for Holden Beach officials, for as Town Administrator Bob Buck phrased it, "We have a problem."

The problem may exist with the 12-inch line that now supplies county water to Holden Beach from Oak Island, a route that carries the polyethylene pipe under the Lockwood Folly Inlet.

Holden Beach officials believe it might have a leak. Ten to 10½ million gallons of water used by the town went unaccounted for during the

months of January, February and March, said Buck.

However, county officials believe the water loss will be discovered due to error, and not a leak.

"It could very easily be a computer error," said Kenneth Hewett, Brunswick County water system supervisor. "Right now, we're checking what water went on the beach and what went off the beach."

If the water loss is not discovered in billing errors, Hewett said, then the main valve on the beach will be shut off and water going through the meter on the Oak Island side will be monitored. If water continues to pass through the meter, it would indicate a leak in the inlet.

"We're still assuming that there is a leak," Hewett said. "But we don't know for sure."

The inlet line will be shut down after the county begins pumping water through Phase II of the countywide water system. Hewett said Tuesday that Phase II of the system will "hopefully" start up within the next ten days.

The island will then be supplied by another 12-inch main that follows N.C. 130 from Shallotte and crosses the Intracoastal Waterway on the causeway. The inlet main will then be used for backup.

"It'll be good to be able to go either way for a while," Hewett said of the additional water line.

Buck told the town board last week that he has monitored a steady increase in the amount of water usage that has gone unaccounted for by the town since October 1986.

For the first three months of 1987, the town lost 10 to 10½ million gallons of water, Buck said, which represents a 68 percent loss factor. The loss is determined by the amount of water billed to town customers compared with actual usage by the town.

Hewett said he had not noticed a drastic change in the town's consumption of water in recent months.

From October to December, the town recorded a loss factor of 26 to 28 percent in its billings, Buck said.

"We may find an explanation for the 68 percent loss," Buck said.

A leak of that size would be detected on the island, he added, but there has been no evidence of leakage.

"If it is a leak, it has to be in that inlet," Buck said. "It sounds like it could very well be a blowout."

Buck has asked the county to investigate and to verify the meter readings at Oak Island.

Hewett said polyethylene pipe generally doesn't experience such problems as leakages or breaks.

"I don't think it's leaking," Hewett said. "It could be either a computer error or a bad meter. I'm trying to be

optimistic because that would be the best thing. I just flat hope it's not leaking."

Erosion problems in the inlet last winter had threatened the under-water pipe, but had not damaged it, he added.

In 1983, the water line was raised by a boat passing through the inlet and had to be secured to the bottom again.

"That 68 percent scares me, for the welfare of this island," said Mayor John Tandy.

Sid Swarts, a resident on the west end of Holden Beach, said he has not noticed a decrease in water pressure recently.