Here Are Answers To Most-Often-Asked Questions About The South Brunswick Islands

Visitors who stream through the South Brunswick Islands Chamber of Commerce office ask lots of questions.

Understandably, they're curious about the county, the beaches, and the towns they're visiting, so the chamber recently compiled a list of the most frequent queries.

A "Mini Data Book" has now been put together by Don Eggert of the Brunswick County planning department, under the direction of John Harvey, planning director.

Here are excerpts, in question and answer form:

Q: What is the largest town in the county, and what's the smallest?

A: The largest municipality in Brunswick County by population is Southport. It has grown since 1980 from a population of 2,834 to its present 3,148. The smallest is Bald Head Village on Bald Head Island, just incorporated in 1985, with 26 residents.

Q: What's the fastest-growing area and town?

A: The most rapidly growing area is the Lockwood Folly Township, which includes the towns of Shallotte and Holden Beach. Its population rose by 62 percent, from 7,361 in 1980 to 11,903 in 1987.

However, the town whose upward spurt of population has been the greatest is in a different township. Ocean Isle Beach, with a present population 269 percent higher than seven years ago, is in Shallotte Township.

Q: How does Brunswick County rank in the state, in regard to population?

A: Between 1980 and 1985, Brunswick County moved from the 50th largest county to the 45th largest among 100 counties in North

Carolina. Its in-migration of 8,601 during that time is the fourth largest in the state.

By the way, North Carolina grew 6.5 percent in those years, from a population of 5.8 million to its 1985 census of 6.2 million.

Q: What is the county's per capita income?

A: In 1979 it was $5,321 per year, as compared with the state average of $8,789. By 1984, Brunswick County's per capita income was $8,212, a 54 percent increase, while the state's average rose only 23 percent to $10,852.

Q: The vacation season undoubtedly swells the county population enormously. Just how much difference does it make, and what is the "peak" season?

A: The vacation season extends from mid-May to Labor Day, with an extended visitation period from April through October. The annual peak population for the county in 1986 was 149,000, a statistic that has risen consistently since 1983, when it was 107,000.

Smithville Township, including Southport and Oak Island, has the largest vacation population, with 43,530, with Shallotte Township a close second, its Ocean Isle and Sunset Beach communities boosting the count to 43,210.

Oak Island, including Caswell Beach, Yaupon Beach and Long Beach, takes first place in peak population with 32,800, almost as much as the entire township of Lockwood Folly during that season.

Q: What is the breakdown by sex and age in the county's population?

A: Older women, from age 70 plus, make up the largest single population group, with 1,931 of them living in the

county in 1985.

The largest age group, however, is the 20-24-year olds who make up 8.2 percent of the total county census.

The largest male group is the 10-14-year olds, numbering 3,650, 8 percent of all county residents.

In shortest supply are males between 65 and 69 years of age, and they are also the smallest overall age group in the county.

To those women seeking the best environment for catching a husband, Brunswick County isn't a choice spot; there were 23,103 females to 22,452 males two years ago, and that ratio probably hasn't changed.

Q: How's business in Brunswick County? What businesses are making money and how much?

A: Retail sales throughout the county have climbed steadily since 1977-78, when the total was $88.18 million. During the year ending in March, 1987, sales totalled $270.4 million.

The biggest money-maker in 1985-86 was listed by the N.C. Department of Revenue as the food industry, including grocery stores and

restaurants. Feeding people brought $62.7 million into county coffers that year.

Far behind it, in second place at $32.85 million was building materials, which says something about our brisk construction industry.

Even more lucrative, as a group, were the service-oriented businesses, such as hospitals, barber and beauty shops, and motels. This whole group accounted for $36.6 million in 1985-86.
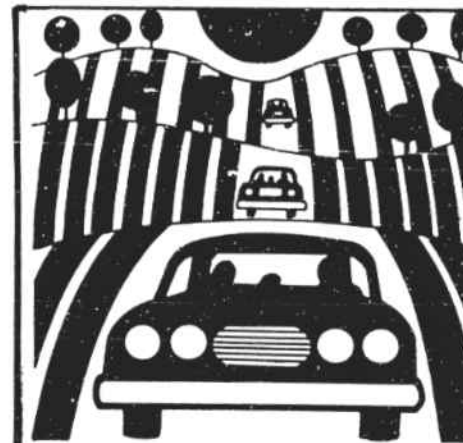
Apparel made a relatively poor showing, with only $3.3 million in sales of clothing.

Q: How does Brunswick County stack up in tourism as compared with other counties?

A: This county is 12th among the 100 counties in dollars spent by tourists in 1986. This dollar value was $121 million, compared to the top tourist attraction, Mecklenberg County, with $804 million.

Tourists spent a little over $5 billion dollars in the top 12 counties that year.

If you're a visitor, reading this series of questions and answers, thanks for spending your dollars in Brunswick.