

Town Creek VRS's Dilemma Not Uncommon, Says Kiehl

BY RAHN ADAMS
Town Creek Volunteer Rescue Squad's decision to discontinue daytime service next month due to a manpower shortage came as no surprise last week to the state official who is completing a study on Brunswick County's emergency medical services needs.

Tim Kiehl, regional supervisor for the N.C. Office of Emergency Medical Services, said Friday that the information he has gathered shows that the county's rescue squad system is under "considerable stress" due to a lack of sufficient personnel, especially during daytime hours.

"There really haven't been a lot of surprises," Kiehl said, adding "it's

certainly a possibility" that other local squads may have to curtail daytime services if personnel problems aren't resolved.

Kiehl noted that his study should be finished by the end of June. It will include recommendations to county commissioners on how emergency medical services can be improved here.

He said one solution to volunteer shortages would be for the county to employ daytime personnel. Also, he said his study will recommend that Brunswick eventually implement some type of advanced life support program, due to the county's rapid growth and the influx of older residents.

Local rescue squads presently pro-

vide basic life support, which mainly involves stabilizing a patient for transport to the hospital emergency room. An advanced life support program would allow certified personnel to perform certain procedures in the field that now are done locally only in the emergency room.

Kiehl said Town Creek VRS is the local first squad to suspend daytime service. However, other rescue squads across the state have been forced to take similar measures due to volunteer shortages, he said.

Town Creek VRS Chief Lee Shepherd said last Wednesday that his squad will discontinue responding to calls from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday, beginning June 6.

Shepherd said the squad has 12 certified emergency personnel. However, only Shepherd and his wife, Connie, will be available to answer daytime calls after school ends next month. A third current daytime volunteer must stay home this summer to take care of children, the chief explained.

"There's a limit to what we can do," he said. "We may not have a (daytime) call for a month, but we still have to be here to cover the phones."

Shepherd said the squad hopes to resume daytime service in September when school is back in session.

Town Creek's district runs from Lanvale Road on U.S. 17 to Coble Funeral Home near Supply; to Antioch Baptist Church on Midway Road; to Boiling Spring Lakes on N.C. 87; and includes about half of the Green Swamp area, Shepherd said.

According to Brenda Freeman of the Brunswick County Emergency Management office, Town Creek residents needing daytime assistance beginning June 6 should call the nearest rescue squad outside the Town Creek district, which is bordered by the Leland, Boiling Spring Lakes, Coastline and Charlotte VRS districts.

"It's just putting an extra burden on those who are already burdened," Shepherd said, "but we can't help it."



STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG PUTTER

'Gator Wrestling In The Surf

Four-year-old Adam Herr of Hickory gets a lift from his inflatable alligator while playing in the surf at Sunset Beach Saturday. He was enjoying the small waves with his three-year-old hometown buddy, Phillip Smith, and their parents.

Sunset Beach Solves Case Of Missing ABC Referendum

After some investigation and research, state and local officials have cracked one of the more trivial mysteries in the recent history of Sunset Beach.

According to Bill Hester, administrator of the state ABC Commission, the question of whether or not the town ever held an ABC referendum, and more specifically the results of that vote, was recently laid to rest after some old town records were dusted off and sent to Raleigh.

He said the state commission accepted the fact that a referendum had been held and that it had passed after reviewing a copy of the minutes of the Sunset Beach Town Council meeting held Sept. 7, 1971. Among other things, those minutes said the Aug. 18 referendum had been approved by voters by a margin of 34 to 8.

"There was some question as to whether or not the people actually had a vote," said Hester. "But according to the minutes, they did have a referendum and the state commission has accepted it."

Town Administrator Linda Fluegel said doubt concerning the required referendum arose when Joe Peard, owner of Bill's Seafood, applied for a state ABC license for on-premise liquor sales. He could not receive the license until it was proven that the townspeople had passed the referendum.

Hester said the state had no record of the referendum results, basically because the Brunswick County Board of Elections, which at the time was based in Southport, had no record of it.

Many towns conducted their own elections at that time, he said, and the referendum was probably never reported to the county board. Other than the meeting minutes, no town record of the referendum could be located.

"It was kind of a strange situation," added Hester. "But everything now appears to be in order."

As it turned out, however, Peard, who was caught in the middle of this bureaucratic pickle, wasn't eligible for an ABC license anyway. The town only allows on-premise liquor sales in hotels and restaurants.

Three Arrested Following Southport Armed Robbery

BY RAHN ADAMS

Three New Hanover County men were arrested by the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department on armed robbery charges following an incident late Friday at a Southport area restaurant.

Detective Lindsay Walton identified the suspects Monday as Marcellus Lyndel Jones, 22, Michael Lavern Hastie, 19, and Darryl Brin Landis, 19, all of Wilmington.

According to Walton, no one was hurt in the robbery, which occurred Friday at 9:27 p.m. at Subway Sandwiches and Salads in River Run Shopping Center on Long Beach Road, Southport.

The detective said one of the suspects held three restaurant employees and five customers at

gunpoint with a shotgun, while another suspect took a "small amount" of money from the cash register. After forcing the employees and customers into a bathroom, the two fled out the front door to a car driven by the third suspect.

An elderly couple parked outside the restaurant saw the suspects leave and were able to give lawmen a description of the getaway car and its direction of travel, Walton said.

About 15 minutes after the robbery, a sheriff's deputy stopped the suspects' car on U.S. 74-76 near Leland. Jones and Hastie were taken into custody without incident, while Landis escaped on foot. The shotgun and stolen money were recovered in the car.

According to Chief Deputy John

Marlow, Landis was arrested Saturday around 2:15 a.m. by Marlow and Sheriff John C. Davis at the USS North Carolina Battleship Memorial.

Marlow said the sheriff's department was staffing a roadblock on U.S. 421 near the entrance to the memorial when a taxi attempted to enter the property. Landis apparently had called the cab from a pay telephone near the battleship.

After questioning the cab driver, Davis and Marlow located Landis hiding under a platform next to the battleship and took him into custody without difficulty, Marlow said.

Walton noted that all three suspects were being held Monday in the Brunswick County Jail in lieu of \$100,000 bonds.

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