

## Calabash Style?

Why eat "Calabash style" seafood when you can eat the real thing in Calabash? That's the message a new merchants association wants to get across. Page 9-B.

## Greer Wins Again

Billy Greer makes the trip from New York State worth his while, as his team wins the Poor Boy Shark Tournament for the second consecutive year. The story and photos are on Page 11-C.

## Ramp Debate Over

Holden Beach Commissioners ended the debate Monday, reaffirming their support of state plans to build a free boat ramp on the island, not the mainland. Page 7-A.

## Sunset Beach Water Access Plan Passes

BY SUSAN USHER

Over the strenuous objections of member Ed Gore, Sunset Beach Council adopted its first water access plan Monday night on a 4-1 vote.

Developed by a citizens' committee, the plan is intended to offer guidelines for providing permanent parking for visitors to the beach community—up to 600 spaces by the year 2000 on the island and the adjoining mainland.

"We don't have assured parking spaces out there except along the DOT right-of-way," said Mayor Mason Barber. "We would be out of the parking business if the current leases are cancelled."

Councilwoman Minnie Hunt's motion was adopted after its second introduction. When she first made the motion, Gore asked her to withdraw it and continue a discussion begun earlier in the meeting during a hearing on the document.

While saying the plan had some good ideas, Gore said he didn't think it was in a form suitable for adoption.

(See SUNSET, Page 2-A)



STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER

GOV. JAMES MARTIN (second from right) helps break ground last Wednesday on the second phase of the U.S. 17 Shallotte bypass. Joining the governor, from left, were Tommy Pollard, member of the N.C.

Board of Transportation; Tommy Harrelson, deputy secretary of the N.C. Department of Transportation; and Jerry Jones, mayor of Shallotte.

## Governor Breaks Ground For Bypass

BY DOUG RUTTER

Gov. James Martin came to town last week to talk about local traffic congestion and what the state is doing to eliminate it.

About 100 people turned out for the Wednesday afternoon celebration and watched as the governor and other state and local officials broke ground for the second construction phase of the U.S. 17 bypass of Shallotte.

The N.C. Board of Transportation awarded a \$1.4 million contract last month for grading the 2.5 miles which make up the northern half of the bypass, which is part of a four-laning project of U.S. 17 from the South Carolina state line to the existing four-lane section north of Bolivia.

Last October, the state awarded a \$1.5 million contract for clearing and grading the first half of the bypass and is expected to accept bids for paving both sections next fall.

During last Wednesday's half-hour ceremony, speakers pointed out that the bypass and four-laning project will serve the area's growing tourism industry as well as the people of Brunswick County.

Shallotte Mayor Jerry Jones, who personally thanked the governor for his work improving highways in the state, was one of numerous town and county officials to welcome Martin.

"Those of us who live here and

work here realize it will be a great relief to get the bypass completed," said Jones. "We're definitely going to see a marked increase in tourism."

The positive impact expected on tourism was one of the major points of Martin's speech, who focused on the local benefits as well as the positive impact which will be felt statewide.

According to Martin, U.S. 17 in Brunswick County was one of 20 roads identified by the state as a "strategic corridor highway."

Eventually, he said, all of those highways will be tied together to create an "intra-state system" of roads which can better serve visitors and the people of North Carolina.

"When they are completed we will have a continuous unbroken network of highways that will go throughout our state," said Martin, adding that a better system of roads will attract industries and better jobs to the state.

The governor also said that these highways will be given special consideration whenever extra funds become available. Additional funds for these roads, he explained, will move the completion dates closer to the present.

Throughout the ceremony, state officials made light of the traffic problems in Shallotte, which should be relieved when the bypass is completed in 1990.

During his brief address, Martin compared the traffic in Shallotte to the traffic in Charlotte. While the populations differ by some 350,000 people, he said the congestion is equally bad in both places.

Tommy Pollard of Jacksonville, who represents Division 3 on the N.C. Board of Transportation, said he accused Mayor Jones of "staging" traffic jams the first few times he visited Shallotte. After a while, however, he said he came to realize the problem was great when the congestion was just as bad when he came without announcing it ahead of time.

Martin also noted during his speech that a welcome center will be built as the four-laning of U.S. 17 nears completion in 1994. It will be located near the bypass intersection with N.C. 130 West and will be operated by local organizations.

He said the addition of welcome centers along non-interstate highways which experience heavy tourist traffic is very important. A visitors' center already exists on U.S. 17 near the Virginia border and there are several along highways in the mountains.

Martin, a Republican, is seeking re-election as governor in November.

## Sunset Beach Bridge Faces Two-Year Delay

BY DOUG RUTTER

Depending on the point of view, Sunset Beach residents and visitors will have two additional years to either curse or enjoy the old pontoon bridge before it is replaced.

The state has delayed construction of the proposed high-rise bridge two years and postponed any more work on the project pending approval of several environmental permits, according to Tom Shearin, project engineer with the N.C. Department of Transportation.

The high-rise was originally scheduled to be let to contract next fiscal year, but will now be postponed until early 1991. Design of the bridge should take one year, while actual construction is expected to take about two years.

The \$6.9 million span, which should now be completed sometime in 1993, will rise 65 feet over the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway at its highest point and will allow for simultaneous boat and vehicular traffic, similar to bridges to Ocean Isle Beach and Holden Beach.

Despite the delay with the high-rise bridge, the old bridge will add a new twist to traffic flow when it begins opening on an hourly schedule next week.

Starting Friday, Aug. 12, the pontoon bridge will open to boat traffic every hour on the hour from 7 a.m. until 7 p.m. In future years, this opening scheduled will be in effect from April 1 through October 31.

Because of special conditions which may be included in the environmental permits, Shearin said land acquisition and design of the new bridge cannot continue until they have been granted.

"It's just a decision to not proceed with the design because the conditions on the permits could affect the design," he said.

The department of transportation will have to acquire four permits for the bridge project, he said, including two from the N.C. Division of Coastal Management for building over coastal wetlands and for water cer-

tification.

Because the bridge will cross the waterway, permits will also be needed from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Coast Guard.

According to Shearin, the state applied for the CMAA permits and Corps permit in April, while the U.S. C.G. permit application was mailed in June. "I was told it will generally take from six months to a year to get them," he added.

In addition to affecting the actual design of the bridge, conditions in the permit could also cause changes in the exact right-of-way needed for the project.

According to Shearin, the state has already acquired eight of the 12 tracts needed in the right-of-way. The right-of-way includes nine acres and the estimated cost of nearly \$1 million includes relocation of utilities, assistance in moving homes and administrative costs in addition to land values.

Acquisition of the four remaining pieces of land, which are located on the mainland near where the bridge will cross the waterway, has been stopped pending approval of the permits.

"The permits could, in a minor way, affect the right-of-way we need," said Shearin. "It will not affect any other properties, but it could shift the exact right-of-way."

Shearin also noted that the state has altered original bridge plans which called for a slight curve along the entire length of the bridge, and as a result, expects to save about \$900,000 in design and construction costs.

"A bridge with a curve in it is just more expensive than a tangent bridge," he said, adding that most of the curve will now be on the mainland side of the bridge.

The state wants to replace the old pontoon bridge primarily because of increasing maintenance costs and increased boat and car traffic. The existing bridge, according to Shearin, has been used since 1961 and is the last of its kind in North Carolina.

## Commissioners Schedule Meeting To Discuss Brunswick Airport Problems

BY RAHN ADAMS

The Brunswick County Airport Commission and representatives of the four governmental boards that appoint its members will meet head-to-head next week to hash out differences over the airport commission's controversial lease with Airport Enterprises.

Members of the airport commission and other concerned citizens attended the Brunswick County Commissioners' regular meeting Monday night to do just that. However, on a motion by Chairman Grace Beasley, the county board halted discussion of the matter and scheduled the special meeting for Thursday, Aug. 11, at 7 p.m. in commissioners' chambers.

"This board is going to be prepared to discuss that (the airport lease)," said Ms. Beasley. "We're going to do our homework."

"We're going to do our homework (on the airport controversy)."

—Grace Beasley  
Commission Chairman

Ms. Beasley said she asked for the special meeting to allow the airport commission's other three appointing bodies to participate in the discussion. Her motion was unanimously approved.

Brunswick County appoints four of the seven members on the airport commission. Southport, Long Beach and Boiling Spring Lakes each appoint one member.

The county's appointees include Richard Conrad, Harold Hartwig and Burton K. Myers. Other members include John Walters of Southport,

Lavern Tagge of Long Beach and George H. Lanier Jr. of Boiling Spring Lakes.

Albert Parker Jr., who the county appointed to a two-year term in January, resigned last month, saying he was discouraged by the airport commission's inability to work together.

At Monday's meeting, county commissioners tabled consideration of Parker's replacement until the special meeting, despite objections from citizens.

(See SHRIMPERS, Page 2-A)

## Five 'White Tide' Defendants Are Sentenced; Two Others Plead Guilty

BY RAHN ADAMS

Five defendants who were indicted on drug trafficking charges in this year's investigative grand jury probe were sentenced last Thursday in Brunswick County Superior Court, while two others entered guilty pleas but were not sentenced.

So far, some 30 of the 48 individuals indicted in April's "Operation White Tide" have pleaded guilty.

According to the Brunswick County Clerk of Court's office, defendants sentenced last Thursday included Wendell Evans, 23, of Shallotte, Douglas K. Evans of Wilmington,

and Gary Lee Phelps, 27, Carlton Jeffery King, 29, and Keith Francis Tatro, 26, all of Supply.

Also, Charles Lindberg Smith, 29, of Shallotte, and John Dudley Bryant, 45, of Leland, pleaded guilty.

Court records show that Smith pleaded guilty to two counts of conspiracy to traffic in more than 28 grams of cocaine, and two counts of trafficking by possession of more than 28 grams of cocaine.

Bryant, who also faced drug charges from a 1986 undercover investigation, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to sell cocaine, trafficking in

more than 28 grams of cocaine and seven counts of selling less than 28 grams of cocaine.

Judge C. Preston Cornelius continued Smith's sentencing until it is scheduled by the district attorney's office. Bryant is scheduled to be sentenced during the Aug. 29 term of Superior Court.

All five defendants who were sentenced last Thursday received active jail time, ranging from six months to 4½ years.

Douglas Evans, King, Phelps and Wendell Evans entered guilty pleas (See FIVE, Page 2-A)

## Two Die In High-Speed Crash; Stolen Goods Found In Truck

BY RAHN ADAMS

Two Southport men were killed last Sunday night when their pickup truck crashed into a utility pole near Orton Plantation.

According to the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department, property that apparently was stolen last weekend from a Southport store was recovered at the accident scene.

Highway Patrol spokesperson Ruby Oakley identified the victims

as Melvin Lee Stewart, 34, and James Anthony Phelps, 41, both of Southport.

The deaths were the seventh and eighth traffic fatalities in Brunswick County this year. The same number of motorists had died on local roadways by this same time in 1987.

According to Ms. Oakley, the double fatality occurred Sunday at 10:50 p.m., ½ miles north of Boiling Spring Lakes on N.C. 133.

She said the 1977 Toyota pickup, driven by Stewart, was headed north at a high rate of speed when it ran off the right shoulder of the road in a left-hand curve, causing the driver to lose control.

The truck came back onto the roadway, then ran off the left shoulder and sheared a utility pole near McKenzie Creek Bridge, Ms. Oakley said. Both men were thrown from the vehicle into the water.

Brunswick County Coroner Greg White said Tuesday that Stewart and Phelps were dead on the scene. Both men died from injuries suffered in the collision and not from drowning, White said.

The coroner added that there was no evidence of alcohol use by the driver, although he had not received the results of a toxicology test as of Tuesday morning. Autopsies were not done.

Also, White said the weather was not a factor in the fatal mishap, since the wreck happened prior to the thunderstorm activity in the area early Monday morning.

Brunswick County Sheriff's Capt. Phil Perry said Monday that deputies found merchandise from Southport's Rose's store floating in the water near the wrecked vehicle.

The goods, which were still boxed, included two barbecue grills and a

bicycle. Store officials told the sheriff's department that the items had been taken from a fenced area outside the store sometime over the weekend.

Perry said Tuesday that the merchandise was returned to the store and that the matter was no longer under investigation. "The case is closed, as far as we're concerned," he said.