

Trojans vs. Topsail

Kick-off for the first home game of the season is Friday at 8 p.m. Story on Page 9-B.



Canal Dredging:

- Sunset Beach gives the go-ahead, 2-A
- Ocean Isle extends payment deadline, 6-A

New President

Allan Dameron is the new head of the South Brunswick Islands Chamber of Commerce. Story on Page 12-C.



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Trucker Killed In Supply Wreck

BY DOUG RUTTER

A South Carolina man was out of the hospital Monday following an two-vehicle collision last Friday near Supply that left another man dead.

Thomas Lee Nick, 25, of Hugen, S.C., was traveling north on U.S. 17 in a dumptruck that skidded into the path of a southbound tanker truck loaded with gasoline.

In the accident, Trooper Bobby Wilkes charged Nick with exceeding safe speed, driving left of center and death by vehicle, according to Highway Patrol spokesperson Ruby Oakley.

Earl Eugene Chavis, 41, of Conway, S.C., was killed in the accident when the tanker he was driving caught fire shortly after the collision.

Brunswick County Emergency Management Coordinator Cecil Logan said the impact did not cause an immediate explosion and allowed Nick to escape the wreckage with no burns.

"It kinda smoldered a little bit then burst into flames," he said. "It never did explode."

Nick was rushed to The Brunswick Hospital near Supply following the accident and was admitted in stable condition at about 4 p.m., according to spokesperson Francis Williamson.

He was transferred to a Wilmington hospital 2½ hours later and was released from New Hanover Memorial Hospital Monday.

The only injury Nick suffered was a stable fracture of a cervical vertebra, added Mrs. Williamson. "He was alert and cooperative," she said. "He was a lucky man."

The accident brought to 13 the number of fatalities on Brunswick County roads this year, said Ms. Oakley. By the same time last year, 15 motorists had died on local highways.

The wreck occurred Friday about 2:30 p.m. on U.S. 17 approximately 9.5 miles north of Shallotte, according to Highway Patrol report. The vehicles collided on a straight stretch of road just south of Brunswick Community College's main campus.

Five area volunteer fire departments and three rescue squads responded to the accident, which forced rerouting of traffic along N.C. 211 south of the scene and Midway

Road on the north side for about three hours.

"We had a lot of sand on the road to soak up the oil," said Logan. N.C. Forest Service workers also responded to the blaze and used tractors to move heavy debris from the roadway.

Logan said emergency personnel were on the scene until about 10:30 p.m. Friday removing oil from the roadside ditch. The remains of the trucks were not removed until Monday.

An estimated 50 to 60 fire and rescue volunteers responded to the wreck, which Logan said was very similar to an accident that occurred eight years ago on the same stretch of road. In December of 1980, a tanker collided with an automobile, killing both drivers.

"I really can't say why it happens at that spot," he said. "I'd say they weren't 20 feet from each other."

The tanker in last week's accident contained about 8,800 gallons of gasoline stored in five compartments, according to Bob Childs, general manager of G.J. Creel Inc. of Conway, owners of the vehicle.

Logan said firefighters waited for most of the gasoline to burn before extinguishing the blaze, which sent thick black smoke towering several hundred feet into the air.

"In a gas type situation the cleanup is a whole lot less when you let it burn itself out," he said, adding that battling such blazes presents an additional risk to firefighters.

Chavis was en route from Wilmington to Conway at the time of the accident, said Childs, and was the company's senior driver with eight years of service. Chavis had earned seven safe driver awards during his employment, he continued, adding that "he was an excellent driver."

The Highway Patrol report listed damage to the 1983 tanker at \$50,000, but Childs said it was closer to \$60,000 or \$65,000 with the gasoline included.

Damage to the 1987 Ford dumptruck was estimated at \$25,000, said Ms. Oakley. It was owned by S.S. Leasing Inc. of Greensboro.

Ms. Oakley also said the wreck did about \$5,000 damage to the highway. A 75-foot-long section will have to be replaced.



STATE TROOPERS Bobby Wilkes, left, and B.C. Jones investigate the accident scene as steam and smoke rise from charred wreckage in the background.

'Assistance' Is Factor In Williamson Parole

BY RAHN ADAMS

A judge's finding that a drug trafficker has been of "substantial assistance" to investigators apparently affects more than just the prison sentence the defendant receives. The finding also is taken into consideration when the inmate is up for parole.

DeCarol Williamson, who was sentenced in May to a two-year prison term after he pleaded guilty to cocaine trafficking, was paroled from the N.C. Department of Corrections last month, according to N.C. Parole Commission Chairman Sam Wilson.

Wilson said Williamson's parole was granted Aug. 8, after the defendant's case was reviewed by the commission in Raleigh.

"We consider everything," Wilson told the Beacon last Thursday. "The public record showed that Mr. Williamson provided substantial assistance to law enforcement."

According to state law, a finding that a defendant has "provided substantial assistance in the identification, arrest or conviction of any accomplices, accessories, co-conspirators or principals..."

allows a trial judge to give the defendant a lighter sentence and fine than is required by state drug trafficking laws.

Although the chairman would not comment on specific reasons behind the commission's decision to grant early parole, Wilson also noted that Williamson's two-year prison term was "substantially lower" than the presumptive 12-year sentence Williamson faced after the finding of substantial assistance by Superior Court Judge Gile Clark.

The 37-year-old Williamson—a local businessman and the son of Ocean Isle Beach developer Odell Williamson—was one of 48 individuals indicted on drug trafficking charges in April by a Brunswick County special investigative grand jury. His indictments stemmed from a 1984 drug conspiracy involving seven other area residents.

On May 16, he pleaded guilty as charged in Brunswick County Superior Court to conspiracy to traffic in more than 400 grams of cocaine and trafficking in more than 400 grams of cocaine. The following day Clark consolidated the charges and sentenced him to a \$10,000 fine and a two-year prison term.

Williamson's possible maximum prison term on the consolidated charges was 40 years. He also faced a minimum fine of \$250,000, if not for the finding of substantial assistance. During the sentencing hearing in May, an SBI agent testified that Williamson had helped set up a "sting" operation near Calabash that resulted in the arrest of three cocaine traffickers from Florida. According to documents on file at the clerk of court's office, the arrests were made Dec. 19, 1987, around 3:30 a.m., at Williamson's The Pearl Golf Links.

In addition to finding that Williamson had provided substantial assistance, the judge also listed no aggravating factors and several mitigating factors in the sentencing—facts which Wilson also noted last week. Court records show that the mitigating factors were that Williamson had no prior criminal convictions, admitted guilt prior to his arrest and cooperated with law enforcement.

Department of Corrections Public Information Officer David Guth said last Thursday that Williamson was admitted to the prison system on May 18. He was placed on work

release on June 3 and was assigned to the New Hanover County Prison Unit. He was paroled on Aug. 10.

According to Wilson, even with a two-year prison sentence, Williamson's sentence would have "maxed out" on May 17, 1989, due to the Department of Correction's policy of giving inmates one day of credit for every day of good behavior.

New Hanover Unit Supervisor Ray Murphy said Friday that Williamson's release date is March 9, 1989, as a result of additional "gain time" credit he earned while in custody.

Murphy explained that Williamson was granted a standard 270-day parole, which is allowed when the Department of Corrections is under a "system emergency" such as overcrowding. Murphy said the system has been in that situation for the past several years. The Emergency Powers Act allows the commission to parole inmates for the last 270 days of their sentences.

Citing confidentiality requirements, neither Wilson nor Murphy would comment last week on the specific terms of Williamson's parole.

Commissioners Set Jail, DSS Expansion Projects In Motion

BY RAHN ADAMS

Brunswick County Commissioners Monday discussed a full range of potential capital projects facing the county and decided to tackle the two most pressing needs first—relieving overcrowded conditions in both the county jail and local Department of Social Services.

Attended by all five commissioners, the four-hour work session in Bolivia also included an hour-long executive session requested by Chairman Grace Beasley to discuss the proposed purchase of land for expansion of the county landfill near Supply. No action was announced after the closed-door session.

On a motion by Commissioner Chris Chappell, the board unanimously voted to seek architectural proposals for expansion of the county jail and construction of a new building for the Brunswick County Department of Social Services.

Chappell also stated in his motion that the county should "get on with those two projects as soon as possible."

According to County Manager John T. Smith, the county's \$1.4 million capital projects fund should cover expansion of the jail and construction of new DSS facilities, even though the fund would be depleted.

He noted that 1986 estimates placed the cost of the two projects at

\$1,175,720. The new DSS building would cost \$750,000, while a new parking area would cost \$50,000. The price tag on expansion of the jail would be \$375,720.

Although no action on financing was taken, Smith suggested that the county fund the projects through a lease-purchase method, since the two-year-old estimates are probably lower than current costs.

The lease-purchase method would keep the county from having to make up-front payments on the construction projects. However, interest would be owed to the lending institution that provided funding, he said.

Prior to the board's vote, Smith emphasized the urgency of both projects. The jail regularly exceeds its 44-inmate capacity, and overcrowding has been noted on monthly jail inspections, he said.

Commissioner Jim Poole pointed out that 18 prisoners had to be "farmed out" to other area jails last weekend, due to local overcrowding.

Sheriff John C. Davis said Monday he feels the jail would have to be doubled in size, or else another expansion would be needed within five years.

Also, "the state has been on us very heavy about our Social Services building," Smith said, noting that the state could eventually choose to withhold its DSS funding if additional

space isn't provided by the county. No official action to require the expansion has been taken yet by the state.

The county's expansion plan calls for the new building and parking lot to be located behind the present Human Services Building. Smith has said that the additional parking also would help relieve the government complex's current parking problems.

Later in the work session, Smith brought the board up to date on completion of a new building to house the offices of Operations Services, Solid Waste, and Building and Grounds.

The office space vacated by Operations Services and Solid Waste in the Planning Building will be used by Building Inspections, he said.

Cost of the new 30-foot by 56-foot building, which opened Friday, was approximately \$36,000, Smith noted. Construction was done in-house by Operations Services.

Water System Discussed
Commissioners also discussed but took no action on matters involving the Brunswick County Water System.

At the outset of Monday's work session, Public Utilities Director Jerry Webb briefly outlined the findings of a just-released study on the water system's immediate needs south of Shallotte (see related story).

Webb said the initial phase of the proposed water system expansion

will cost an estimated \$1.5 million. He added that the immediate needs of the system—a storage tank on Ocean Isle Beach Road and a pump

station near the intersection of N.C. 904 and N.C. 179—should be completed by late 1989, according to the study.

Commissioners instructed Webb to set up a joint meeting between them and the Brunswick County Utility (See EXPANSION, Page 2-A)

NOMINATED BY EMC

Lower Lockwood Folly River Could Gain Added Protection

A portion of Lockwood Folly River last week became the first area in Brunswick County nominated for designation as an Outstanding Resource Water.

Lower Lockwood Folly south of Genoe's Point was one of 12 coastal areas statewide nominated for special consideration for protection against pollution. The vote last Thursday by the state's Environmental Management Commission was unanimous.

While the areas will receive some special protection immediately, their nomination sets into motion a series of studies and hearings by the Division of Environmental Management. "We can't work all of them at the same time," said Preston Howard, regional manager. He added that over the next six months the staff will be doing "use attainability analyses," that is, checking for existing and potential uses such as shellfish and recreation, taking water samples and projecting how the water could be better protected with the ORW classification.

Within nine months DEM must complete its studies as well as public hearings on each proposed project.

In July the Commission adopted guidelines on how it will deal with requests for nomination, but left specific criteria and rules unchanged.

While under consideration for the special designation, that section of Lockwood Folly River will be protected to the extent that no "engineered solutions" for stormwater management can be used on adjacent lands within 575 feet of mean high water. Only low-density controls can be used.

Howard said he didn't see any way that the nomination would affect a marina proposed for development above Genoe's Point since only areas peripheral to the water gain protection.

Several other bodies of water were proposed early for consideration as Outstanding Resource Waters, including the Waccamaw River, with no decision made to date.