

Holden Beach Reopens To General Public Saturday Morning

BY DOUG RUTTER

The general public will have its first chance to view Hurricane Hugo's damage at Holden Beach this Saturday when police officers lift a roadblock at the foot of the bridge.

At their regular meeting Monday night and a special meeting last Friday, town officials debated at length whether to allow the public on the island before Saturday. But in the end, commissioners decided to stick to the original plan set early last week.

The board voted 4-1 Monday in favor of Gay Atkins' motion to reopen the island Saturday at 8 a.m. William Williamson voted against the motion, saying afterward, "I'll oppose it just for general purposes."

In two periods of discussion relating to the matter, board members talked about opening the island to vacation rentals and the public as early as Wednesday. Most of the talk, however, centered on whether to open Friday afternoon or hold off until Saturday.

The general public and vacationers who rent for less than 30 days have been kept off the island since Hurricane Hugo made landfall Sept. 21, causing about \$31 million in damage.

Commissioner Atkins and two real estate representatives in the audience Monday night pointed out that rental companies had canceled reservations through Saturday.

Mrs. Atkins added there are still a number of homes

on the island that are unsafe and that sightseers would likely get in the way of clean-up efforts along Ocean Boulevard. "It is still dangerous driving these roads," she said.

Williamson, who operates a campground on the island, did not hide the fact that he was losing money because the public was being kept away.

When asked Monday night when he would like to see the island reopened to the public, he responded, "Personally, yesterday. Business is hurting on the beach."

Throughout the discussion, however, Williamson and other board members agreed that it didn't matter when the public was allowed back on the beach since the is-

land is still weeks away from being cleaned up.

Commissioner Bob Buck said the town had "widely publicized" that it would not allow the public back on the island until Saturday. But he added that he had no problem with opening up sooner.

"The only people we are excluding for the next five days are sightseers," said Buck. "Quite frankly, we can do without sightseers."

Residents attending Monday night's meeting offered points for moving the opening date to Wednesday or Friday, while others encouraged the board to stick with Saturday.

Although he didn't make any recommendation, Town (See Holden Beach, Page 2-A)

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FEDERAL COORDINATING OFFICER Thomas Credle talks with county and municipal officials Monday morning in Bolivia about federal disaster assistance that will be available in Brunswick County.

Disaster Application Center To Be Open Through Saturday

BY RAHN ADAMS

Federal officials arrived in Brunswick County Monday with two battles on their hands—to help the county recover from Hurricane Hugo's recent devastation and to help prepare the ravaged coastline for a possibly damaging high tide later this month.

Brunswick County Emergency Management Coordinator Cecil Logan announced Tuesday that a disaster application center (DAC) will be open today (Thursday) through Saturday, from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., at the N. C. National Guard armory in Shallotte.

Logan said the local DAC's schedule would be publicized across the state, to notify non-resident property owners that disaster assistance applications are being accepted here and that the center will be open Saturday.

North Carolina residents who cannot visit the DAC in person may use a disaster information hotline for application purposes and receive full service, according to a Federal Emergency Management Agency news release. The hotline number is 1-800-458-5095. Hours are from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily.

Brunswick is the only coastal county among the 13 North Carolina counties now eligible for federal disaster aid as a result of the Sept. 21-22 hurricane. Last Thursday, Brunswick and eight counties in the Piedmont and foothills were added to an original list which included four counties in the Charlotte area.

Temporary assistance includes temporary housing for homeowners and renters made homeless by the storm. This aid will be in the form of rental assistance for alternate

places to live.

Homeowners, renters and businesses may apply for low-interest loans for real and personal property losses not covered by insurance. Businesses may also apply for loans to cover losses of stock and equipment.

Also, individuals and families may be eligible for direct grants for serious needs and necessary expenses not covered by one of the other programs, including storm-related medical expenses.

Logan said county and municipal representatives will meet with federal officials Saturday morning in Bolivia to discuss federal disaster aid available to public bodies in Brunswick County.

An initial meeting was held Monday morning at the Public Assembly Building. Representatives from the county and every beach town met for two hours with federal and state emergency officials, including Thomas Credle, who is federal coordinating officer for the North Carolina disaster operation, and N. C. Division of Emergency Management Director Joe Myers.

Credle explained that private engineers hired by FEMA were expected to "walk from the (S.C.) state line to the Cape Fear" this week and determine what areas are eligible for construction of a "temporary, emergency sand pile" to protect endangered property from an astronomical high tide expected to occur between Oct. 14 and Oct. 16.

Shallotte Point meteorologist Jackson Canady told the Beacon Tuesday that abnormally high "spring" tides occur during the full moon in October and November, due to the alignment of the sun and

moon. Spring tides generally are two to three feet above normal and can be pushed even higher by storms, Canady added.

Credle indicated that the berm would be built either by municipalities or the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on the public portion of the strand in front of structures that are determined to be in imminent danger under federal standards. He noted, however, that only 8 1/2 miles of South Carolina's 140-mile shoreline was approved for berm construction.

"It's going to have to be done soon and fast," Credle said of the berm construction. He said the estimated cost of the project would be \$1 million per mile. Funding would be 75-percent federal and 25-percent state.

Earlier in the meeting, Jim Herstine, regional director of the N. C. Division of Coastal Management, said 244 homes in Brunswick County had applied for federal flood insurance funds for either relocation or demolition of structures that are in imminent danger.

A majority of the houses—182—are in Long Beach, Herstine said. In the South Brunswick Islands, Holden Beach and Ocean Isle Beach each had 14 houses to be considered in the program.

The main question that municipal officials had Monday was whether or not property owners would be reimbursed for protection measures they undertake on their own, in areas that eventually are determined to be eligible for the berm.

Credle indicated that work of that nature probably would not be reimbursable, since "we're not going to be building this thing on private property."

Oyster Season Opens Next Sunday

BY DOUG RUTTER

Brunswick County fishermen will be limited to harvesting one bushel of oysters each when the fall oyster season opens Oct. 15, no matter how many oysters they find in local creeks and rivers.

Why? Oyster season begins on a Sunday this year, said Rich Carpenter, regional director of the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries. "There won't be any large opening day harvests this year," he said. "The fishermen will be limited to one bushel—just enough to eat."

The state restricts Sunday harvests to one bushel per vessel for all fishermen, said Carpenter. On other days of the week, those with commercial shellfishing licenses may harvest up to 50 bushels per day. The limit for anyone without a license is one bushel per vessel per day.

When oyster season opens next weekend, area fishermen will be hoping to rebound from two consecutive seasons of below average harvests.

The county's commercial oyster harvest was only 44,015 pounds of meat during the 1987 season and 77,044 pounds last season, according to preliminary statistics from the Division Marine Fisheries. The average harvest over the four preceding seasons was approximately 93,380 pounds of oyster meat.

The 1987 season was cut short by the state's first recorded case of red tide. State officials were forced to close area shellfishing waters for the last six weeks of the season due to the presence of the toxic algae.

Because they had moved hundreds of bushels of oysters from polluted to clean waters when the red tide had its grip on the coast, local fishermen were looking for a great season in 1988. But oystermen ran into other problems when two parasites known as Dermo and MSX infested local waters and caused widespread oyster mortality.

Although he agrees local shellfishermen could use a break, Carpenter said he expects another below average harvest this year. "We don't foresee anything exceptional," he said.

State biologists have found that Dermo is still present in local rivers, although concentrations are low. "We're still kind of holding our breath with the Dermo," said Carpenter. "It all depends on that really."

Though the organism can kill oysters, Carpenter stressed that all live shellfish are edible. "It's harmful only to the old oysters I'm afraid," he said.

Carpenter said officials believe the organisms have been in state waters for years but weren't detected until last fall when oysters started dying. Samples taken through the summer indicate that Dermo is still present in waters south of New River in Onslow County, he said.

Because of the Dermo, the state canceled its oyster relay program in the spring and may have to forego it this fall as well. In the program, the state pays fishermen \$1 per bushel to move oysters from polluted waters to clean waters where they can later be harvested.

Biologists will continue to monitor Dermo levels

and either cancel or implement the relay program accordingly, said Carpenter. Because the parasite can flourish in one oyster bed and have no impact at another, state officials do not want to relay oysters and risk spreading the organism.

Although most shellfish waters in Brunswick County remained closed to harvesting at the start of this week, the director of the state's Shellfish Sanitation branch said he hopes to reopen most of the areas in time for the start of oyster season.

All county waters were temporarily closed to shellfishing Sept. 22 due to heavy rainfall and runoff associated with Hurricane Hugo. The state reopened clam beds in Cape Fear River and Elizabeth River Saturday, but the waterway and north Dutchman Creek remained closed.

Shellfish Sanitation Supervisor Bob Benton said last week most of the area shellfishing waters could be reopened to harvesting by Oct. 15. However, he said it will depend largely on the amount of rainfall the area receives between now and then.

During oyster season, harvesting is permitted between sunrise and sunset. Because of tidal conditions in southeastern North Carolina, however, Carpenter said fishermen in Brunswick, New Hanover and Pender counties can unload oysters from their vessels up to two hours after sunset.

The minimum size for oysters in North Carolina is three inches from tip to tip. But Carpenter said Marine Fisheries officers who check the harvests allow up to 10 percent of the catch to be undersized.

Carpenter said he's not sure what the price of oysters will be this year. "It's hard to say," he noted. "We really won't know that until the season opens." Last year, he said the county average was about \$14 per bushel.

State regulations prevent the oyster season from running past March 31. Carpenter said fisheries officials will decide when to close the season as the deadline approaches.

County's Commercial Oyster Harvest Declines

Brunswick County's commercial oyster harvest has taken a sharp turn for the worse over the past two seasons. A season runs from fall through winter.

SOURCE: N.C. DIVISION OF MARINE FISHERIES

SEASON	HARVEST	VALUE
1983	97,927 lbs.	\$133,532
1984	84,772 lbs.	\$140,710
1985	89,146 lbs.	\$192,223
1986	93,680 lbs.	\$234,588
1987	44,015 lbs.	\$114,923
1988	77,044 lbs.	\$215,089

Easley Announces Run For U. S. Senate Seat

It's official. District Attorney Michael Easley ended speculation Monday by announcing he will enter next year's U.S. Senate race for the seat currently held by Republican Sen. Jesse Helms.

Word that the 39-year-old Southport resident might run for Senate surfaced in August when Easley was mentioned in the Raleigh press as a possible Democratic contender. Only one other Democrat—former state Sen. R.P. "Bo" Thomas of Hendersonville—has announced as a candidate so far.

Easley told the Beacon Tuesday that Monday's announcement was meant to lay rumors about his candidacy to rest, in the wake of former University of North Carolina



EASLEY

System President William Friday's decision last week not to seek the Democratic Senate nomination.

"Actually, (the announcement) was to clear the air," Easley said, "because I'd gotten so many calls since Friday when Bill Friday said he wouldn't run."

Easley's decision also means he will not seek a third term next year as district attorney for the 13th Judicial District, which covers Brunswick, Bladen and Columbus counties. Under state law, North Carolina candidates cannot seek two separate offices at once, as candidates can in some other states.

"I recognize that it will not be as easy to campaign while prosecuting," he said, "but I feel my commitment to the people here must come first."

Speaking before supporters Monday morning at N.C. Democratic Party headquarters in Raleigh, Easley said he wants to serve in the Senate "because the decisions our

nation makes today are going to shape the 21st Century...I am deeply concerned about the problems facing our country and our state, and I believe I can make a constructive contribution toward solving them."

Easley, who has played a leading role in developing and pushing new laws to fight drug trafficking in the state, called the country's drug problem "a vicious challenge...that threatens to unravel all of our hopes for the future." He added that he will "replace political rhetoric with responsible action."

The local district attorney told the Beacon that he feels he will be well accepted in other areas of the state due to his experience as a past president of both the N.C. Conference of District Attorneys and N.C. District Attorneys Association. He added that he is "fairly confident at this point that the money will be

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FBI Investigating Complaint Against Shallotte PD Over Shelter Incident

BY RAHN ADAMS

An FBI spokesman confirmed Monday that an investigation is under way involving four black Shallotte area residents who were arrested by Shallotte Police officers after a Sept. 21 incident at the Shallotte Middle School evacuation shelter.

Individuals involved in the civil rights complaint against the Shallotte Police Department are Sandy Bland, 31, and her husband, William Linwood Bland, 31, as well as relatives Ray Bland, 31, and David Bland, 29, all of Route 2, Shallotte.

"Yes, we have received a com-

plaint involving the Blands," Chuck Richards of the Charlotte FBI office said Monday, "and we have initiated a preliminary investigation."

Richards would not comment on details of the complaint. He said findings of the preliminary investigation will be submitted to the civil rights section of the federal Department of Justice in Washington, D.C. The investigation will take approximately 60 days to complete.

The civil rights section will then review the case and determine whether the complaint is legitimate and whether a full investigation is

necessary, Richards added.

Shallotte Police Chief Rodney Gause would not discuss the complaint Monday. "Right now, I can't comment on it at all," Gause said.

However, the chief said no disciplinary action has been taken against any of his officers in connection with the incident. "In no way, shape or form," Gause replied, when asked if disciplinary action had been taken, "and there's not going to be on my part."

Three Shallotte policemen—Ronnie Odum, Steve Darr and Perri Alford—were injured while

making arrests Sept. 21 at Shallotte Middle School. Odum, who fractured his wrist and knuckle, was the only one to require medical treatment. Gause would say only that the officers were injured "during the arrest procedures."

Family spokesperson Sandy Bland told the Beacon that William and Ray Bland also were hurt in the scuffle with the officers. Both men sought hospital treatment, she said, adding that two officers had beaten Ray Bland "until his eyes were closed."

Hospital Administrator John

Marshall confirmed Tuesday that both William and Ray Bland were treated at The Brunswick Hospital and released on the night of the incident.

Police said Mrs. Bland was charged with assault on an officer; William Bland, delaying and obstructing an officer, and drunk and disruptive; Ray Bland, assault on an officer and resisting arrest; and David Bland, disorderly conduct in an emergency shelter, assault on an officer and resisting arrest.

According to officials, the incident in question occurred Sept. 21

between 9 p.m. and 10 p.m., outside the public shelter at Shallotte Middle School. Some 500 hurricane evacuees were registered at the shelter, which was operated by the Brunswick County Department of Social Services.

Both Mrs. Bland and DSS Director Jamie Orrock indicated last week that the incident stemmed from a disagreement over where evacuees were supposed to go to smoke. Orrock said a "verbal dispute" erupted after a smoking area

(See FBI, Page 2-A)