

On The Riverfront

A Brunswick County planner begins work with the "Save Our Shellfish" organization as it tries to identify the means to restore once-fertile shellfishing grounds in the polluted Lockwood Folly River. See the story on Page 7-C.



It's Smart!

Offering no-alcohol beverages is a smart approach to holiday entertaining. With drinks such as the VICA Vanilla Virgin concocted by West Brunswick High School VICA students, you won't miss the alcohol. The story and recipes are on Page 10-B.



Back To The Inlet

Fishermen and shellseekers should soon regain access to Shallotte Inlet from the east end of Ocean Isle Beach. Sections of two east-end streets closed to the public since Hurricane Hugo in September are due to reopen soon. Check the details on Page 8-A.

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Seasons Greetings



County Votes To Implement 911 System

BY RAHN ADAMS

Brunswick County Commissioners were all business Monday, as they breezed through an hour-long agenda and approved at least one matter—implementation of a 911 emergency telephone system—that has stymied them for nearly a year.

All five commissioners were present for the regular meeting, which was the first full session under new Commission Chairman Gene Pinkerton and the first meeting since former County Manager John T. Smith was forced to resign Dec. 4.

Every action taken Monday by commissioners was unanimous, in sharp contrast to the often-divided board's reputation for approving issues on 3-2 votes.

Still, the meeting was not without controversy, as several residents turned out to oppose a recent appointment to the Brunswick County Airport Commission.

The impromptu protest immediately preceded a scheduled announcement by Airport Commission Chairman Odell Williamson that he plans to resign Dec. 31. The two matters apparently were unrelated.

911 Gets Go-Ahead

Finally putting their names on the dotted line, commissioners Monday signed a letter of intent authorizing Southern Bell and Atlantic Telephone Membership Corporation to begin installation work on a 911 system for Brunswick County. Installation will take about two years.

The board also set a public hearing for Monday, Jan. 29, at 7 p.m., in the Public Assembly Building, for input on a proposal to pay for 911 through a 50-cent monthly surcharge on telephone subscribers' bills. Municipal boards are being invited to schedule joint hearings the same night in Bolivia. For the county to charge all county residents the fee—whether they live inside or outside a town, each municipality must hold a public hearing and then vote to allow the levy.

There was little discussion of 911 prior to Monday's unanimous vote. The matter was last discussed in a Nov. 22 work session, in which Commissioners Grace Beasley and Frankie Rabon expressed reservations about two backup public safety answering points (PSAPs)—locations in the system where emergency calls can be received and dis-

patched—that are planned for Southport and Long Beach.

Ms. Beasley and Rabon said last month they felt that the location of two answering points in the Southport area could be a potential problem, if other communities wanted PSAPs of their own. County Emergency Management Coordinator Cecil Logan explained that the three answering points would correspond with the three full-time radio dispatching systems currently in operation. The primary answering point would be handled by the county.

The letter of intent that was signed Monday lists "Brunswick County EMS" in Supply as the primary PSAP location. Plans are to eventually move the Brunswick County Emergency Management office to the old Agricultural Extension Service/Brunswick Community College building on U.S. 17 near Supply. The letter also lists PSAP locations at the Southport and Long Beach police departments.

911's total installation cost is \$243,840 and will be due when the system goes on line by January 1992. On-going monthly maintenance costs will amount to \$13,956. Logan told commissioners last month that the 50-cent surcharge is

(See 911 System, Page 2-A)

Calabash Thrift Hit Again; Different Robber Suspected

BY RAHN ADAMS

"It wasn't another robbery, was it?" an elderly woman asked Chief Sheriff's Deputy John Marlow Friday morning in the parking lot of Security Savings and Loan in Calabash. When the lawman confirmed her suspicions, the woman simply shook her head as she rolled up her car window and told her husband to drive on.

A hand-lettered sign on the front door of the small brick building located on N.C. 179 near the Cala-

bash Road intersection informed customers that the financial institution was closed for the morning and that they should go to the company's Shallotte branch for service. Inside, county detectives interviewed savings and loan employees who had just been robbed at gunpoint for the third time since June. No one was hurt.

Outside, members of the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department, N.C. Highway Patrol and SBI used a new tracking dog to search nearby

Marsh Harbor Golf Links for the robber and manned a roadblock on N.C. 179 near the South Carolina state line. But as of Monday afternoon, no arrest had been made.

County Det. Gary Shay said Monday that authorities had no suspects in the Friday robbery, which is under investigation by the sheriff's department and the FBI. "At this point in time, there are no similarities," Shay said.

He also indicated that the robber, who got away with an undisclosed

amount of cash, apparently was not the same suspect believed to be responsible for unsolved armed robberies in July and September at Security and United Carolina Bank, respectively. "All three tellers said it appeared to be someone different," the detective added.

Friday's hold-up was the fifth to occur at a South Brunswick Islands financial institution since June, with three at Security in Calabash and one at each of the UCB branches in (See CALABASH, Page 2-A)

Calabash Sees No Immediate Need For Town Police

BY DOUG RUTTER

Most elected officials in Calabash see no immediate need for a police force in town, despite the four bank robberies that have occurred there since June and a recent vote that brought about 1,000 residents into the town.

Six of the seven town commissioners said Monday they don't see the need for a police department right now. The town presently gets law enforcement from the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department.

The most common argument against a police force among town officials is the high cost of establishing a department. Also, several

"I don't think a police department is going to make a bank immune to being held up."

—Jon Sanborn
Calabash Commissioner

said the financial institutions that have been robbed should be responsible for providing their own security.

Calabash expected to raise about \$106,000 in general fund revenues this fiscal year, and police departments in most local towns cost more than \$150,000 per year to op-

erate.

The southwestern Brunswick County town recently merged with the Carolina Shores golf course community, bringing its tax base up near the \$70 million mark. However, the first taxes from Carolina Shores probably won't come in for at least another year.

First 'Winter' Storm Ices Up Roads, Lines

BY RAHN ADAMS

Though the official start of winter isn't until today (Thursday), Brunswick County residents got a preview of winter-like weather with sleet and freezing rain that made driving especially hazardous Monday morning and caused scattered power outages Tuesday morning.

"It's quite unusual to get weather like this now," said Shallotte Point meteorologist Jackson Canady, adding that the Shallotte area generally doesn't see frozen precipitation until the coldest winter months. "We're getting an early start on a real taste of winter."

Canady attributed the unseasonably cold weather to storm systems that have pushed the jet stream farther south than normal for this time of year, allowing cold air masses from Canada to build in behind them and cause a drop in temperatures.

Colder than normal conditions are expected to dominate local weather at least through the weekend, Canady predicted. Temperatures should average from the upper 20s at night to the upper 40s during the day. Precipitation is expected to be slightly above average at three-

quarters of an inch.

For the period of Dec. 12 through 18, the daily average high temperature in the Shallotte area was 38 degrees, which Canady said was 10 degrees below normal. Precipitation for the period measured 0.28 of an inch.

The daily average low temperature was 30 degrees; the daily average high temperature was 47 degrees. The minimum low temperature during the period was 23 degrees on Dec. 17; the maximum high temperature was 47 degrees on Dec. 12.

Bobby Gore of Brunswick Electric Membership Corporation said scattered power outages started being reported in Brunswick County Tuesday around 5 a.m. "We don't have any major problems—just scattered outages," Gore said Tuesday morning.

He added that most of the outages—caused mainly by fallen limbs—were in coastal sections of the county. BEMC did not experience any particular problems Tuesday in inland sections of Brunswick County or in Columbus County, which the cooperative also serves.

Canady noted that calm winds kept ice-covered trees and power

lines from being more of a problem Tuesday.

As a result of sanding work by the Department of Transportation, Brunswick County roads and bridges were relatively clear Tuesday morning, according to Brenda Freeman of the Brunswick County Emergency Management office.

Monday morning, however, was a different story. Emergency Management Coordinator Cecil Logan said icy conditions on high-rise bridges and overpasses closed the section of U.S. 17 leading into New Hanover County and the Oak Island Bridge for several hours. The Ocean Isle Beach and Holden Beach bridges remained open.

Highway Patrol spokesperson Ruby Oakley said Monday afternoon that "dozens" of weather-related traffic accidents occurred Monday morning in Brunswick County. Approximately 75 wrecks were reported Monday morning in Brunswick and New Hanover counties—the two-county area covered by Ms. Oakley's office.

She added that she wasn't aware of any serious injuries in Monday morning's wrecks. Logan also indicated that none of the accidents Monday were major.

Sunset Beach Will Put Trees To Use

Don't just discard your Christmas tree once the holiday season is over. Sunset Beach will be happy to take it off your hands and put it to good use.

This winter the Town of Sunset Beach will once again be using old Christmas trees to help build dunes on the island. "Any trees we can get will be appreciated because we really need them on the beach this year," said town employee Cookie Minton.

Drop-off points are located at the Sunset Beach maintenance shop behind the fire station and next to the Farm Bureau Insurance office on Russ Street in Shallotte. Trees can be dropped off anytime after Christmas.



A QUARTER INCH OF ICE coats the limbs of saplings near the foot of the Ocean Isle Beach high-rise bridge Tuesday morning. Despite icy conditions, bridges in the South Brunswick Islands remained passable.

STAFF PHOTO BY RAHN ADAMS