

No Takers Yet In County That Prompted New Drug Excise Tax

BY RAHN ADAMS

Brunswick County law enforcement and state revenue officials aren't surprised that there has been no local response so far to a newly-instituted excise tax on controlled substances, even though illegal drug activity here was what prompted the new law.

Modeled after similar laws in other states, the controlled substance tax, which went into effect Jan.



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1, was sponsored by state Sen. Robert Shaw of Greensboro and ratified in August by the N.C. General Assembly. Shaw, a Holden Beach property owner, said he proposed the new law after following coverage of Brunswick County drug prosecutions in *The Brunswick Beacon* over the past couple of years.

J.C. Raines, manager of the N.C. Department of Revenue office in Charlotte, and Special Assistant Dis-

trict Attorney William Wolak view the new law from different perspectives but expressed similar enthusiasm about the tax's potential impact on drug trafficking.

"I think it's a way to enhance drug enforcement and to try to get it off the street," Raines commented last week. "If (a drug dealer) beats the court system, he still has to pay the tax...It may deter somebody who's thinking, 'Hey, I'm getting

out of this mess.'"

Wolak, whose job is to keep drug traffickers from beating the court system in the first place, said last week of the new tax, "It's my intention to pursue it. I think it's a great law." Wolak prosecutes most drug trafficking cases in the 13th Judicial District (Brunswick, Bladen and Columbus counties) and also works with investigative grand jury drug probes elsewhere in the state.

When he proposed the new tax last March, Shaw told the *Beacon* that the law's intent was not so much to raise additional tax revenue for the state as it was to give law enforcement agencies another tool with which to fight drug trafficking.

Shaw also said he had noticed that many convicted drug dealers in Brunswick County were not being sentenced to mandatory minimum (See DRUG TAX, Page 2-A)

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Hugo Checks Top \$500,000

Leaders from five local governments and a power company received more than \$500,000 last week to help meet some of the costs of recovery from Hurricane Hugo.

Joseph W. Dean, secretary of the N.C. Department of Crime Control and Public Safety, delivered checks totaling \$513,032 to Bolivia last Friday to present to local officials. At the brief ceremony in the public assembly building, Dean said Brunswick County was the first site in the state where local leaders used video footage to show the extent of storm damage and subsequently obtain a disaster declaration.

Ocean Isle Beach Mayor Betty Williamson accepted the largest check—\$113,720. Other checks went to Brunswick Electric Membership Corp., \$103,494; Long Beach, \$97,361; Holden Beach, \$80,992; Brunswick County, \$74,737; and Bald Head Island, \$42,728.

The money is part of the public assistance program that became available when Brunswick County was declared a federal disaster area following Hurricane Hugo. Other local towns that received their checks earlier include Sunset Beach, \$9,100; Southport, approximately \$12,000; and Yaupon Beach, \$9,204.

Under the program, local governments and private non-profit groups receive reimbursements toward the costs of debris removal, street repairs and other recovery operations. Local towns will use the money to replenish funds which were depleted following the storm as a result of extensive cleanup and repair efforts.

President George Bush's local disaster declaration came Sept. 28, about one week after Hugo's storm surge resulted in an estimated \$89 million damage in Brunswick County. Almost all of the damage was along the beachfront.

Brunswick was one of 29 counties in the Carolinas to be declared disaster areas, which qualified them for the aid program in which the state pays 25 percent and the federal government pays 75 percent.

So far, more than \$24 million has been paid to agencies that incurred financial losses due to the hurricane. Total public assistance costs throughout the disaster area are estimated at more than \$63 million.

"You only need to look south to know that we were lucky," Dean said last week. "North Carolina's coastal communities for the most part escaped the wrath of Hugo."



OCEAN ISLE BEACH MAYOR BETTY WILLIAMSON, right, accepts a check for \$113,720 from Joseph Dean, secretary of the N.C. Department of Crime Control and Public Safety, during Friday's ceremony in Bolivia.

Car And Boat Auction Proves Crime Does Pay

BY RAHN ADAMS

Three automobiles and two boats linked to the local drug trade went on the auction block last week in Bolivia and raised \$11,600 for the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department and Brunswick County Schools.

According to Chief Civil Deputy Liston Hawes, at least 40 individuals attended the hour-long sale that began at noon Friday in the impoundment yard behind the sheriff's department at the county government center.

"We had a good day and a good sale," Hawes told the *Beacon* Tuesday. "The county will realize a good profit... The most of it will go into the drug program."

Sheriff John C. Davis explained Tuesday that all of the boats and vehicles either were seized in connection with local drug activity or were purchased by his department with federal drug seizure funds over the past several years.

The auction featured an 18-foot Dixie boat and an 18-foot Manatee boat, both with 115-horsepower motors and trailers; a 1981 Chevrolet Corvette with 62,000 miles; a 1983 Pontiac Grand Prix with 98,000 miles; and a 1979 Pontiac Trans-Am with 122,000 miles.

With the exception of \$1,400 paid for the Trans-Am, profit from the auction goes to the sheriff's department, Davis said. As required by state law, the Brunswick County

Board of Education gets the \$1,400; the Trans-Am was the only sale item that was obtained through a state seizure and not a federal action, noted Davis.

Hawes indicated that the sheriff's department was most pleased with the Corvette's \$5,900 sale price, considering that all three vehicles have been used recently as undercover cars by the county narcotics squad. The Corvette also was used by the Shallotte Police Department.

"We did a good day's work on that one," Hawes said of the Corvette's sale. He added that the sheriff's department expected to receive only about \$2,500 for the high-performance sports car.

Hawes listed other top bids as \$1,900 for the Dixie boat; \$800 for the Manatee boat; and \$1,600 for the Grand Prix.

Davis indicated that the Dixie was seized as part of a federal drug investigation during former Sheriff Herman Strong's administration prior to 1983. The Manatee was bought with federal drug seizure money, the sheriff said.

The sheriff's department used the boats—both of them "pleasure craft"—to investigate drug trafficking and assist with water searches. Hawes explained that the boats were sold because they no longer meet the agency's needs. Davis added that the department is considering the purchase of another vessel.

Shallotte Mayor Files For County Commissioner

BY RAHN ADAMS

Shallotte Mayor Jerry Jones last week became the second Shallotte town official to file for county office this year, as he entered the race for the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners District 2 seat. Shallotte Alderman David L. Gause announced for sheriff earlier this month.

According to the Brunswick County Board of Elections office, Jones, 44, of Columbus Street, Shallotte, filed last Thursday on the Republican ticket for the seat now held by Democrat Benny Ludlum. The commissioner announced in December that he would not seek re-election to a third term.

A former town alderman, Jones was re-elected to his second consecutive four-year term as mayor in November 1989. He told the *Beacon* Tuesday that he had considered running for county office for the past several months but didn't make up his mind until last week. He is employed as assistant manager and purchasing agent for Shallotte Lumber Co.

Gause, an unsuccessful Democratic candidate for sheriff in 1986, was elected to his second straight four-year term as Shallotte alderman in November 1987. He is running now as a Republican. Other candidates for sheriff so far are Democratic incumbent John C. Davis of Bolivia, and Republican William "Bill" Sisk of Long Beach.

If Jones and/or Gause eventually are elected to the county offices they seek, they would be required to resign their town positions, according to Brunswick County Elections Supervisor Lynda Britt. Vacancies

that occur in any elective town office are filled by appointment of the board of aldermen for the remainder of the unexpired term.

Two other local men filed for District 2 commissioner races during the past week: Alfonza Roach, 54, of Boones Neck, as a Democrat; and Eugene Hewett, 67, of Route 1, Supply, as a Republican.

Roach, a Holden Beach area developer, is a former member of the Brunswick County Utility Operations Board and Brunswick County Airport Commission. Hewett is a member of the Brunswick Community College Board of Trustees and a former member of the Brunswick County Hospital Authority.

Other District 2 county commissioner candidates are Democrats Allan Dameron of Holden Beach and Joseph Stevenson of Route 3, Supply. Raybon Moore, who had also filed on the Democratic ticket, withdrew from the race last week, after the board of elections office determined that his Route 2, Bolivia, residence was just outside the District 2 boundaries.

According to the county elections office, the only other candidate to file between Jan. 10 and 16 was Democrat Julie Strickland, 39, of the Olde Towne community, for the District 5 Board of Education seat now held by Democrat James Clemmons of Leland. Clemmons, the only other District 5 candidate so far, is running for re-election. A 13-year resident of the county who has done volunteer work at Lincoln Primary School for the past 1 1/2 years, Mrs. Strickland said her goal, if elected, is "to support first-rate

education for every child." She is a certified substitute teacher and serves on the executive committee of the new Brunswick County Education Foundation.

Prior to Jan. 10, the following candidates filed for other county and district offices, according to the state board of elections in Raleigh, and elections offices in Brunswick, Columbus and Bladen counties:

•Clerk of Superior Court—Democratic incumbent Diana Morgan of Long Beach.

•County Commissioner, District 5—Democratic incumbent Grace Beasley of Route 3, Leland; and Republican Donald Shaw of Route 1, Leland.

•Board of Education, District 2—Democrats Joseph Carter of Route 2, Supply, and Polly G. Russ of Shallotte; and Republicans Richard F. Bangs and W. James Payne, both of Shallotte.

•District Attorney—Democrats Rex Gore of Shallotte, and Tom Aldridge Jr., of Route 2, Whiteville.

•Superior Court Judge—Democrat William C. Gore Jr., of Whiteville.

•District Court Judge—Democratic incumbent David G. Wall of Elizabethtown.

•N.C. Senate—Democratic incumbent R.C. Soles Jr., of Tabor City.

As of Tuesday afternoon, no candidates had filed for the N.C. House seat currently held by Democrat E. David Redwine of Ocean Isle Beach, according to the elections offices.

The filing period ends at noon Feb. 5. Party primaries will be held May 8.

Ocean Isle Police Charge Teens With Stealing Newspaper Racks

BY DOUG RUTTER

No news was bad news for three area teenagers arrested last week in connection with the theft of two newspaper racks at Ocean Isle Beach, including one belonging to *The Brunswick Beacon*.

Ocean Isle Beach Police arrested four local teenagers last Thursday night following the break-in of a coin-operated vending machine at The Winds Beach Motel.

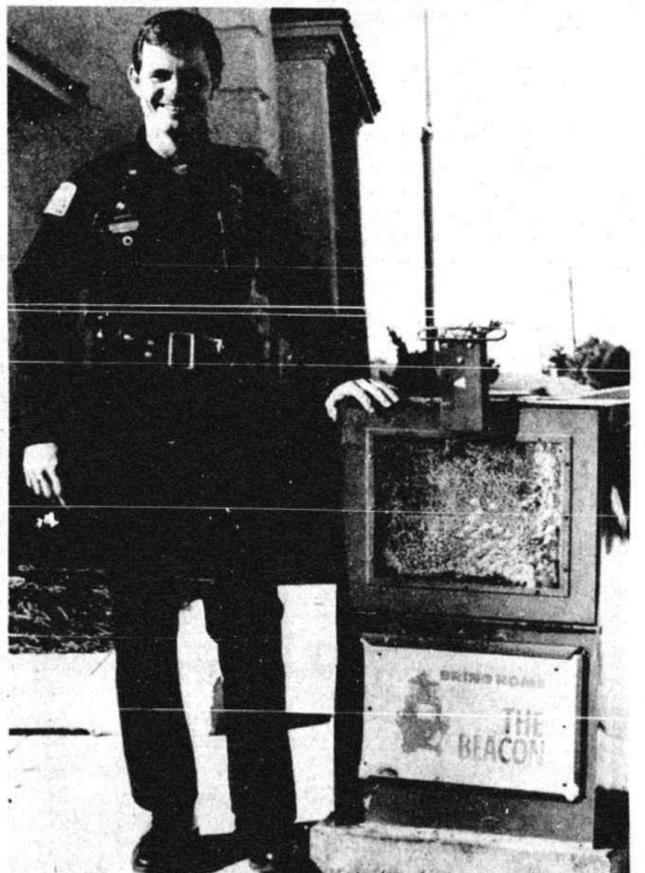
Three of the male teens were later charged with the recent theft of two newspaper racks from outside Ocean Isle Beach Shop. Also, two of the teens were charged with a recent break-in at Salty's Surf Shop at Ocean Isle, and all four were arrested in connection with a series of vending machine break-ins at Ocean Isle and Shallotte.

Ocean Isle Beach Policeman Jimmy Todd identified the two 16-year-old suspects as Chris Bowers and Bryan Benton, both of Rt. 6, Shallotte. Police would not release the names of the two 15-year-old suspects because they are juveniles.

Benton was charged with felonious larceny in connection with the theft of a *USA Today* rack and misdemeanor larceny in connection with the theft of *The Brunswick Beacon* rack.

The charges differed because the *USA Today* rack was valued at \$490, while *The Brunswick Beacon* rack was valued at \$200. Theft of anything worth more than \$400 is treated as a felony. Police Chief Curt Pritchard said both racks were stolen the first weekend in January.

Benton and Bowers were each charged with four counts of breaking and entering and one count of breaking and entering larceny in (See POLICE, Page 2-A)



JIMMY TODD of the Ocean Isle Beach Police Department stands next to the *Beacon* newspaper rack found last Friday near the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway. Authorities charged three local teenagers with stealing the rack.

Finance Officer Dismissed By School Superintendent

BY SUSAN USHER

Given the choice of resigning or being dismissed, Brunswick County Schools Business Manager Elaine Shappell was fired from her post effective Tuesday, Superintendent John Kaufhold said Tuesday afternoon.

Kaufhold cited differences of opinion between the two on management of the finance office and handling of personnel.

Posters advertising the vacancy were published last Tuesday, following a school board meeting at which Kaufhold discussed the personnel matter privately with board members. Mrs. Shappell called in sick the following morning and again this Tuesday, her status with the school system meanwhile in limbo.

Monday, a school system holiday, Mrs. Shappell had made available to the local press a letter sent to members of the school board in which she criticized the superintendent's actions and temperament in specific situations, defended her performance record and said she had no plans to resign. She described Kaufhold's handling of the personnel matter as "shabby treatment" and made references to a "power struggle" and efforts among central office staff to "manipulate" the superintendent, and a lack of full cooperation from some employees that she said the previous superintendent had warned her of in advance.

"I have operated with integrity and feel that I have served the Board well," she wrote. "Under the

circumstances, I cannot resign."

Shappell said she received two identical letters from Kaufhold—one by certified mail Saturday, the other left in the door of her Wilmington home Thursday. The letters gave the two options available and requested that she contact the superintendent to discuss the matter. Kaufhold said Tuesday he had still not heard from her and acted after waiting "a suitable length of time" for her response.

In her letter to the school board Shappell cited several points of difference with the superintendent. Among other concerns, she said Kaufhold rejected her recommendation that personal use of county vehicles needed to be shown as income on paychecks, a procedure (See FINANCE, Page 2-A)