

## New Regs May Cost

The cost of building a new beach home is expected to go up as a result of changes in the state's construction code. However, the North Carolina Home Builders Association has some questions about whether those changes are needed. The story's on Page 9-C.



## Fort Spruced Up

Ft. Anderson is getting spruced up just in time to help commemorate the 125th anniversary of the end of the Civil War in North Carolina. A Sunday afternoon program marks the Confederacy's Feb. 18, 1865, evacuation of the fort and its subsequent surrender by the Union to the Union. See Page 12-B for details.



## Branching Out

Starting May 1, property owners within approximately one mile of the Ocean Isle Beach borders will come under the town's planning and zoning regulations. The rules will affect future development in the area, from new signs to new subdivisions. Find out more on Page 8-A.

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OCEAN ISLE BUSINESSMAN Tripp Sloane wasn't injured when he crash-landed this single-engine airplane Saturday afternoon off East 4th Street, Ocean Isle Beach.

## Ocean Isle Man Survives Crash-Landing On Island

BY RAHN ADAMS

When local pilot Tripp Sloane left Ocean Isle Beach Airport in his single-engine airplane Saturday afternoon, he didn't know that he would be "homeward" bound due to an engine malfunction shortly after takeoff.

Sloane, an Ocean Isle Beach real estate agent and developer, escaped injury Saturday around 4 p.m. when he crash-landed his Beechcraft Bonanza A-36 aircraft on the east end of Ocean Isle Beach. The crash occurred in an undeveloped dune area less than a block from his residence.

"Fortunately, I just walked out unbruised and unhurt," said Sloane, who was alone in the plane when the accident occurred. He added that he has been a pilot since 1980 and that the crash Saturday was his first airplane accident.

Ocean Isle Beach Volunteer Fire Department was dispatched to the accident, even though there turned out to be no fire and no fuel leakage from the downed aircraft, according to Chief Terry Barbee. County Emergency Management Coordinator Cecil Logan also responded to the mishap.

Sloane told the *Beacon* that he reported the accident to the Federal Aviation Administration

Monday morning and that a report would be filed this week. An investigator from Grand Strand Airport in North Myrtle Beach, S.C., was expected to inspect the wreckage Tuesday.

The plane, which Sloane said sustained "substantial" damage to its nose and landing gear, was not moved after the accident. The crash site—off East 4th Street near Asheville Street—was only yards from the unpaved roadway and across the street from the last row of houses on the Intracoastal Waterway side of the island.

Sloane indicated he took off from the Ocean Isle Beach Airport Saturday around 4 p.m. with plans to fly to Grand Strand Airport. However, when he got into the air, he saw bad weather between Ocean Isle and North Myrtle Beach, and he decided to abort the flight and return to the Ocean Isle airfield.

While in the traffic pattern to land at Ocean Isle, the airplane's engine stopped running, and he was unable to restart it. He said Tuesday that the cause of the engine malfunction had not yet been determined.

"There was so much to think about," Sloane commented. "When I couldn't get the engine

started again, I thought I'd better concentrate on flying the plane and finding a place to put it down... I just slid it up on the dunes."

He added that the landing site he chose was "kind of bumpy" but that the aircraft stopped quickly in the sandy dune area—a situation which possibly kept the plane from cart-wheeling. The plane came to rest nose-down in a wire fence between undeveloped lots.

Sloane's wife, Karen Sloane, said the couple's children were playing the yard of the family's 3rd Street residence and saw the crash. She said the youngsters—at first unaware that their father was piloting the aircraft—watched the low-flying plane and yelled that it was about to crash.

Mrs. Sloane said she heard the plane hit the ground and immediately notified authorities of the accident. "The kids came in the house screaming, and I was already on the phone calling the sheriff's department," she commented.

In addition to emergency personnel, a large crowd of residents from houses in the neighborhood gathered around the downed plane, which Mrs. Sloane added was a popular "attraction" on the east end of the island throughout the weekend.

### AT OCEAN ISLE BEACH

## Commissioner Resigns; Wife Fills Empty Seat

BY DOUG RUTTER

Ocean Isle Beach Commissioner Ed Steele resigned from the town board for health reasons Tuesday and then watched from the audience as his wife, Pearl, was appointed to serve the rest of his term.

After accepting Steele's resignation during their regular monthly meeting Tuesday morning, commissioners voted 4-0 to appoint Mrs. Steele to the board. Steele had recommended her appointment.

However, before the board acted, Commissioner Debbie Fox urged fellow members to postpone the

vote at least one month. She said she hadn't been notified of Steele's plans to resign until Saturday.

While she agreed with other board members that Mrs. Steele would make a good commissioner, Ms. Fox said town officials should seek public input before appointing anyone.

Ms. Fox did not voice a vote for or against Virginia Gibson's motion to appoint Mrs. Steele, but her silence counted as an affirmative vote.

Commissioner Bill Benton said ordinarily he would agree that a de-

lay is appropriate, but he voiced full support for appointing Mrs. Steele as a new member of the board. "I think Pearl would be a great commissioner," he said.

Immediately after the vote, Mrs. Steele took the oath of office from the town clerk and took her husband's old seat at the commissioners' table.

Mrs. Steele, who has never held an elective office, said following the meeting, "I've got a lot to learn, but I'll do my best."

Steele said after the meeting that his wife has a good grasp of the

needs of the resort community. Mrs. Steele helps manage the couple's two restaurants and motel at Ocean Isle Beach.

"She's pretty well aware of how the town functions and its needs," Steele said of his wife. The couple has lived at Ocean Isle 15 years.

Steele, who was first elected to the town board in 1987, recommended that his wife be appointed to serve the 22 months remaining in his term in a letter of resignation submitted to Mayor Betty William-

(See STEELE, Page 2-A)

## Calabash Names New Commissioner

BY DOUG RUTTER

Stuart Thorn is the newest member of the Calabash Board of Commissioners. The Carolina Shores resident was appointed to the commission Tuesday night to fill the District II seat vacated by Ed Schaack, who resigned to take over the building inspector's post.



THORN

Nominated by Commissioner George Anderson, Thorn received 192 votes as a candidate for commissioner in the November 1989 election. In making the nomination, Anderson said Thorn was the highest vote-getter from the district who was not elected last fall but was still willing to serve.

Two other unsuccessful commissioner candidates from District II garnered more votes than Thorn, who will serve on the commission until the next regular municipal election in November 1991.

Commissioner George Taubel, who nominated Thomas Brendgord for the position, was the only board member not to vote for Thorn at Tuesday's town meeting. Brendgord received 153 votes in the election last fall.

Board member Phyllis Manning was absent, and Commissioner Keith Hardee left the 2 1/2-hour meeting before the appointment was made.

Planning Commission Set  
Commissioners approved changes in the makeup of the planning and zoning board Tuesday and appointed members to the four boards that fall under the planning

(See Calabash, Page 2-A)

## Pontoon Bridge Broke Again; Sanford Questions High-Rise

BY SUSAN USHER

The pontoon bridge across the Intracoastal Waterway to Sunset Beach was to be out of commission for repairs much of Wednesday and today (Thursday), while in Washington, D.C., a second federal legislator has raised questions regarding its proposed high-rise replacement.

The pontoon bridge broke Saturday between 1:30 p.m. and 2 p.m., according to Bridge Supervisor James Hayes, interrupting vehicular traffic for approximately six hours until temporary repairs could be made.

"The operators had a little accident and broke the piece of rail-road iron the apron sits on."

That weld on the beam keeps the apron—the part of the bridge that goes up and down—from slipping, Hayes explained. When it broke, the apron fell off. It was the second accident of this type recently, according to Hayes.

So that workers could repair the weld on the locking piece, the apron had to be left in the raised position.

It was to be back in the raised position Wednesday and Thursday (today) from approximately 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., estimated Hayes. "We're going to try to work it so we can have it opened by 3 p.m. Wednesday. That's the only day it might be a problem."

Hayes said he joked with Sunset Beach area residents that "maybe they would promote the new high-rise bridge."

"But they said no, that they want the old bridge," he continued.

Hayes was working with DOT in Columbus County when he helped construct the pontoon bridge, he recalled, back in the early 1960s. "We used salvage material for the piles and joists. About the only thing that was new when we put it in was the floor."

SAVE OUR BRIDGE  
SUNSET BEACH, N.C.

LOBBYING EFFORTS by the Sunset Beach Taxpayers Association on behalf of the pontoon bridge to the island continue, as does pre-construction work on its planned high-rise replacement.

"They either need a new high-rise or else we need to do a whole lot of work on this bridge," he suggested. "It looks like they're going to get the high-rise whether they want it or not."

While workers continue to take core samples along the route of the new bridge, Cletus Waldmiller, president of the Sunset Beach Taxpayers Association, said Tuesday

dent Tommy Harrelson, who could not be reached for comment Tuesday.

In his Dec. 18 letter, Sanford joins Congressman Charles Rose in asking the N.C. Department of Transportation to re-examine the "feasibility and prudence" of the high-rise bridge, given its high price tag and divided community support. The 65-foot-high, fixed-span bridge is to be built using federal and matching state funds. Its latest cost estimate is \$7.88 million, including an additional \$550,000 added to the engineering budget at the state board of transportation's Feb. 2 meeting.

Sanford advised Harrington, "I would like to join with Mr. Rose in this request and also ask, on behalf of the many Sunset Beach residents and property-holders who reject the high-rise bridge plan, that you examine all possible alternatives before proceeding with the project. Is

this a wise use of the limited amount of federal highway monies granted to North Carolina, especially in light of the new bridge's estimated \$6.9 million price tag?"

Saying he was "hopeful that a compromise could be reached," Sanford further suggested that any upgrading efforts not extend in purpose beyond safety objectives.

"I hope that you will... make absolutely certain that a high-rise structure, such as the one proposed, will best meet the needs and requests of the island's taxpayers."

Waldmiller said the letters from Sanford and Rose came as a result of lobbying by members of the taxpayers' organization. In a renewed campaign effort launched last fall, members have been urged to write both North Carolina legislators and North Carolina's congressional delegation, as well as newspapers across the state.