



P. R. HANKINS

# Board Hires Hankins As School Superintendent

BY TERRY POPE

Brunswick County Board of Education members ended a five-month search for a new school superintendent Monday night, voting 4-1 to give acting superintendent P. R. Hankins a two-year contract effective October 1.

Board member Bob Slockett cast the only dissenting vote against hiring Hankins, a 33-year veteran of the Brunswick County School system. The vote came following four hours of interviews Monday night involving the top four candidates for the job. Hankins will replace former superintendent John Kauf-

hold, who was fired in April.

"Now we'll try to get things in motion," Hankins said following the vote. "We'll try to get the pedal down some now instead of riding the clutch."

Board member Doug Baxley's motion to hire Hankins for a two-year term was seconded by James Clemmons. Chairman Dorothy Worth said the board will now advertise and start the process necessary to hire someone to fill the associate superintendent's position Hankins had held since 1988. He was also assistant superintendent for federal programs in Brunswick

*"We'll try to get the pedal down some now instead of riding the clutch."*

—P. R. Hankins  
Superintendent

County from 1973 to 1988. "It was a very hard decision," Ms. Worth said, "and one that I'm

glad is made. In the four years that I've been here on the board, it has truly been the hardest decision we've had to make."

Board attorney Glen Peterson said the contract will become effective October 1 with a local supplement of \$12,696 in addition to his state salary.

Hankins said his first order of business is to call the central office staff together to "sit down and take assessment of where we are."

"I don't know if I'm going to make any revolutionary, drastic changes," he added. "I'd like to think that what we have to do is

fine tune. We already have some good programs in place."

The other final three candidates interviewed Monday were William Harrison, the county's assistant superintendent for curriculum; Barbara D. Rogers, principal of East Wake High School; and Betty C. Wallace, who is on leave from the N. C. Department of Public Instruction, where she was a deputy assistant superintendent.

It was the second set of interviews for the final four list. School board members voted last week to reinterview the candidates following (See BOARD HIRES, Page 2-A)

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PHOTO BY C.C. PRITCHARD

**THIS 'MONSTER' ALLIGATOR** was tied with ropes and taken to the Green Swamp after making an appearance on the Holden Beach strand last Thursday night.

## Alligator Taken To Green Swamp After Beach Visit

BY DOUG RUTTER

An alligator the size of two grown men was captured and taken to an isolated section of Brunswick County last week after making an unwelcome holiday visit at Holden Beach.

The alligator, which weighed more than 500 pounds and was more than 12 feet long, was taken to his new home last Thursday night after surprising a group of people enjoying an evening stroll on the strand.

The large reptile was caught on the beach and later released at Driving Creek in the Green Swamp, one of three areas in the county approved for the relocation of alligators, said Fred Taylor, local enforcement officer with the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission.

"That's the biggest 'gator we've ever had to mess with," Taylor said in a telephone interview Monday. "He was real tough to handle."

Working with wildlife officer Milton McLean of Lake Waccamaw, Taylor said it took about 2 1/2 hours to tie up the alligator, which had crawled out of the ocean and onto the beach in the vicinity of 1000 Ocean Blvd. West.

The officers were called to Holden Beach around 11 p.m. last Thursday and it was after 2 a.m. when their work was finished. They used ropes to restrict the alligator's movement, placed it in a boat and then released it in the Green Swamp.

It took about 30 minutes to get the first rope around the alligator's neck. "You have to play cowboy and just lasso him," Taylor said.

Once the rope was secured around the alligator's neck, officers got ropes around its tail and mouth and tied its legs together behind its back.

Taylor said the alligator was too heavy to lift, so officers used boards for leverage and hoisted the reptile into a boat, which was used to transport the alligator to the swamp. Taylor said the alligator took up almost all of the space in the 14-foot boat.

"He was just a monster alligator," Taylor said. "Even after we had him tied up, I wasn't comfortable getting around him. I wasn't comfortable with him until he crawled into the creek."

Taylor said the alligator was first spotted in the surf off Holden Beach Sept. 1. The alligator was a couple

*"That's the biggest 'gator we've ever had to mess with. He was real tough to handle."*

—Fred Taylor, wildlife officer

of hundred yards off the beach, however, and officers couldn't remove him without seriously risking personal injury.

The alligator probably passed through either Shallotte or Lockwood Folly inlet on its way to the ocean. Taylor said most alligators that end up in the ocean usually find their way back inland through an inlet.

The wildlife officer said the alligator probably got tired of the salt water and fighting ocean currents and went onto the beach. "When he finally got to the beach, he wasn't going back into that ocean," he said.

Taylor, who said he's called on to relocate six or seven alligators each year, said Brunswick County has a good population of the reptiles. Most of the ones he's had to remove have been less than six feet long.

The wildlife officer said last week was the first time he has ever felt apprehensive about releasing an alligator. "He was still a little bit feisty when we went to cut the ropes off," he said.

Taylor estimated that the alligator was 50 to 60 years old based on its size. He said it's very unusual for an alligator that old to go to an area with a lot of people.

He said any alligators over six feet long can pose a threat to humans. Alligators usually harm people by clamping down on limbs with their strong jaws and rolling. The also can be dangerous when they snap their large tails.

"We were just lucky with this one, especially with him out there on the beach at night," Taylor said. "That 'gator was really too big to leave down there around people. I don't know where 'gators like that come from."

## County, Shallotte Think Census Figures Short

BY TERRY POPE

Local officials have until Monday to question the 1990 preliminary population and housing figures released by the U.S. Census Bureau last week.

Brunswick County commissioners have instructed Planning Director John Harvey to protest the population count for the county, which they believe falls about 4,000 persons short of the actual number of residents.

According to the Census Bureau's preliminary figures, about 50,681 persons live in Brunswick County, but Harvey believes the actual count should be closer to 55,000 residents. In 1980, about 35,777 people lived in the county.

Some incorporated areas also stand to hurt in tax revenues if the figures are not amended before the final tabulation. Shallotte officials estimate that about 500 people living within the town limits have gone uncounted in the 1990 census.

According to the figures, Shallotte increased in population from 680 people in 1980 to 828 residents this year. However, town officials believe the actual population stands closer to 1,400.

Town Clerk Mary Etta Hewett says Shallotte will file a protest this week to try to correct the figures. She believes the state Budget Office's 1989 estimate of 1,459 residents within the town limits is a more accurate figure.

"We want to go ahead and file our response and get it in," Ms. Hewett said. "I don't know if that will make a difference or not, but we're going to try."

Shallotte isn't the only municipality confused by the preliminary figures.

"Southport thinks they're way undercounted, by about 1,600 people," said Harvey.

Southport's population showed a decrease, from 2,824 residents in 1980 to 2,338 people in this census. Belville showed a decrease by 36 persons while Bolivia lost 26 residents in the new census.

However, not all local towns are upset by the census results. Holden Beach Town Manager Blake Proctor was pleased with the numbers.

*It's not too late to return your 1990 U.S. Census questionnaire.*

Proctor doesn't think all of the 628 people counted at Holden Beach are permanent residents of the island but just happened to be there when the census forms were delivered in April.

He added that the high figure should help the town in obtaining state and federal funds. The number of estimated year-round residents is believed to be lower.

"It gives us a little more clout than 380 people would give," Proctor said.

Holden Beach gained almost 600 housing units since 1980, according to the census. Ocean Isle Beach gained close to 1,500 housing units while Sunset Beach gained close to 500 additional units.

"For the county, we're close on the number of housing units," Harvey added. "The concern is the population numbers reported."

Commissioners instructed Harvey to draft a letter "expressing the county's concern over the differences between this preliminary census population count and our own projections."

Towns and counties were given the preliminary figures August 27. They have been given 15 working days to respond.

Brunswick County will address its concerns to William Hill, director of the Charlotte Regional Census Center. In a letter addressed to county officials August 23, Hill warned that the figures released are "partial and preliminary in nature" and that they are subject to change "pending completion of ongoing census activities." Those activities will include the work of a Postcensus Local Review Program, which will hear

(See CENSUS, Page 2-A)

## Sunset Beach Names New Chief

BY SUSAN USHER

Sunset Beach has a new police chief.

Jesse Buell, who has been chief of the Bethel Police Department in Pitt County for the past five years, will begin work in approximately two weeks.

The post has been vacant since June 4, when the Sunset Beach Town Council voted unanimously to fire then-chief William Hill, not making public the reason. Hill had held the job since 1982.

Buell, 46, was one of seven applicants interviewed for the post by

a committee comprised of Town Administrator Linda Fluegel, Mayor Barber and Councilman Al Odom. Odom was unable to attend Monday's meeting, at which Buell was hired on a unanimous vote.

The new chief holds a B.S. degree in police science from Southeastern University in Tucson, Ariz., and has spent 20 years in police work. He is qualified to train other officers in the department in fire-arms, radar and investigative work, indicated town spokesman Cookie Minton. He spent eight years in the U.S. Army.

He and his wife have two chil-

dren and were interested in relocating to the beach, said Cookie Minton, accounting clerk, who discussed the hiring in Ms. Fluegel's absence Tuesday.

The post drew a stack of applications from points as diverse as Atlanta, Ga., Virginia Beach, Va., and New York, as well as the Carolinas, Ms. Fluegel said Monday. "I was shocked."

Buell will earn a salary of \$25,500 and supervise a staff of four officers, Anna Redmond, Ed Rudloff, Tommy Grantham and Lisa Hoagland.

## Roach Appointed To County Planning Board

BY BOB HORNE

A Holden Beach realtor and developer who has a precedent-setting variance request pending before the Brunswick County Planning Board Wednesday night was appointed to that board.

William Alfonza Roach of Roach Realty was unanimously approved by the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners to replace Alan Holden as the District II representative on the Planning Board. He was nominated by Commissioner Benny Ludlum.

Also appointed to the Planning Board was Troy Price of Calabash, a Kelly Holden nomination representing District I. He replaces Planning Board Chairman Ed Gore. John Barbee's term, representing District III, also has expired but District III Commissioner Gene Pinkerton was absent Wednesday night, so no action was taken on that slot. Pinkerton's father is ill in Asheville. Scott Irby of Calabash was unanimously appointed to fill the unexpired term of Dennis Crocker, who recently resigned from the Resources Development Commission. All three appointments are effective immediately.

Roach appeared before the Planning Board July 18, seeking an elevation variance of requirements under the county Flood Prevention Ordinance for six lots in Sea Breeze subdivision under "justifiable hardship" grounds. The hardship, he

told the board was that all six lots were sold and he would have to buy them back if the variance was not granted.

The Planning Board tabled the request and did not address the matter at its August meeting. County Attorney David Clegg said if the variance is granted, it will be the first such variance since the county Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance was adopted in March 1987. From a legal standpoint, he recommended that the Planning Board approve the variance.

At the July 18 meeting, Roach produced a letter dated May 6, 1986 in which Planner Don Eggert identified lots in Sea Breeze subdivision that were located in the flood hazard area. The letter did not identify the six lots that are now listed as being in the flood hazard area.

During the meeting, Roach told Planning Director John Harvey that he (Harvey) instructed Eggert to write that letter. But after the meeting, Harvey said he had no knowledge of the letter until it was called to his attention in June, after he performed a "flood check" of lot 100 in Sea Breeze and determined it to be one foot too low.

Only Vernon Ward attended a public hearing on the selling of bonds that preceded the commissioners' meeting. He said he understood that \$4 million worth of bonds were to be sold for the Brunswick Community College auditorium and

that the auditorium was projected to cost only \$3.2 million. He asked the commissioners to apply the \$800,000 difference toward the \$1.1 million Brunswick County Industrial Training Center.

However, during the regular commissioners' meeting, Finance Director Luthia Hahn said only \$3.5 million in bonds, not \$4 million, are available for the project. She said that approximately \$4.5 million, not \$4 million, have been sold from the original \$8 million approved for the college.

The commissioners also unanimously approved a Holden motion that the commissioners instruct Planning Director Harvey to write a letter objecting to preliminary results of the 1990 census.

Holden said the census listed Brunswick County as having 50,781 residents, which he said the county Planning Department felt was about 5,000 short. Holden said housing starts increased about 73 percent during the last 10 years and the population figure increased 47 percent.

"They couldn't even find me," Holden said of the United States Bureau of the Census. He said he had to go to the census bureau to obtain a census form.

In other action, commissioners:  
• Scheduled a ceremony and unveiling of a (See OTHER, PAGE 2-A)

## State Sets Public Meeting On Upcoming Oyster Season

A possible reduction in daily oyster harvest limits and other rules affecting the upcoming oyster season will be discussed at a public meeting next week in Shallotte.

The meeting is scheduled Thursday, Sept. 20, at 10 a.m. in the National Guard Armory on Main Street, said Rich Carpenter, southern district manager with the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries.

A proposal to lower the daily limit on oysters from 15 bushels per person to five bushels per person will be the most important issue affecting local fishermen, Carpenter said.

He emphasized that the five-bushel limit is just a proposal. "It's still up in the air," Carpenter said. "That's why we're having the meeting."

Oyster season usually opens in the middle of October and closes in the middle of March. The state normally allows fishermen to harvest up to 50 bushels per boat per day, with stricter limits on Sundays.

However, state fisheries officials are concerned about the pressure on the oyster resource. Harvests have dropped dramatically each of the past two years.

The small harvests have been blamed on overharvesting, pollution of shellfish waters and oyster-killing parasites that were detected for the first time in North Carolina waters in 1988. Tests taken this year have shown small concentrations of the parasites.

Mike Marshall, fisheries development chief with the Division of Marine Fisheries, said in a recent interview that the state needs more-restrictive limits on daily oyster harvests to protect the resource.

"Generally, the harvest pressure has been very high," Marshall said. "By limiting the amount harvested each day, you limit the amount of pressure on the resource."