

Trojans Crush Fairmont

West Brunswick's Trojans blasted the visiting Golden Tornadoes 41-6 in football action last Friday, improving their season record to 3-2 before hitting the road Friday to South Robeson High. For details, turn to Page 8-B.



Dead Myrtle Blues

Holden Beach officials are singing the blues as they consider ways to dispose of wax myrtles killed by salt water overwash from Hurricane Hugo. An overabundance of the dry shrubs could pose fire and health hazards. The story's on Page 7-A.



Open Starts Friday

Anglers are converging this week on Southport, where the 12th annual U.S. Open King Mackerel Tournament begins Friday. For a previous and other fishing news, see Page 11-C.

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Award Of Bridge Contract On Hold Pending Result Of Federal Hearing

The N.C. Department of Transportation will delay awarding the contract for construction of a high-rise bridge at Sunset Beach until a federal judge rules in a lawsuit over whether the state should build the span.

In Fayetteville Monday Judge W. Earl Britt heard six hours of evidence in the case, a suit filed by the 530-member Sunset Beach Taxpayers Association. The suit stems from an 11-year dispute over state plans to replace a one-lane swinging pontoon bridge with a fixed concrete span at an estimated total project cost of \$10 million.

According to DOT spokesman Bill Jones, the DOT had expected to award the contract immediately after its approval by the state Transportation Board, which meets Friday in Cherokee. Eleven bids for the actual construction of the bridge range from a low of \$8.4 mil-

lion to a high of \$12.2 million. Work was to have begun sometime after Oct. 29, with completion scheduled by June 1, 1993.

The SBTA is concerned that the bridge will encourage denser development, harming the environment and destroying the beach community's family atmosphere. It contends the state should have completed a more thorough environmental assessment of the bridge's overall impact on the community before proceeding with the project.

However, in presenting the state's case Monday, Deputy Attorney General Jim Richmond argued that the group's specific environmental concerns had not been brought during the 10 or 11 years leading up to the bidding stage of the project, though concerns about effects of anticipated growth and development on the commu-

nity's lifestyle had been aired. The SBTA has expressed concern for effects on the wood stork and loggerhead turtle, among other endangered or threatened species of animals and plants. It is also concerned about the appropriateness of suspending a sewer line from the a bridge that crosses wetlands.

Richmond acknowledged that opposition to the new bridge has been intense, in part because people view high-rise bridges as being associated with coastal development. At Ocean Isle Beach, construction of a high rise condominium followed completion of a similar span. At Holden Beach, the town had legislation adopted limiting the height of buildings. The law can be changed only by a vote of town residents.

The state also contends that the pontoon bridge is inadequate, unsafe and costly to maintain. In the event of

high winds or water, the bridge must be tied off. It must also be opened to allow most boat traffic to pass through.

The state Transportation Board had been expected to vote approval Friday of a \$9.63 million budget to construct the bridge.

The board is still expected to act favorably on several other local items on its agenda, including initial approval of funding for a visitors center along the U.S. 17 bypass of Shallotte. The final vote will be at the board's November meeting. Other items include a request for an additional \$25,000 toward preliminary engineering work related to the four-laning of U.S. 17 from N.C. 211 north of Supply to N.C. 87 at Bell Swamp and release of \$51,000 for paving of S.R. 1324 and spot stabilization of S.R.s 1850, 1851, 1848, 1413 and other roads as needed.



STAFF PHOTO BY EDDIE SWEATT

THE LEONA cruises along the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway near Holden Beach. Congress has authorized a one-time dredging of Eastern Channel at Lockwood Folly Inlet, which local fishermen say should help improve water quality and provide better access to the ocean.

House Authorizes Eastern Channel Dredging

BY DOUG RUTTER

A proposal aimed at improving water quality in Lockwood Folly River got a major boost last week when federal legislators authorized a one-time dredging project in Eastern Channel.

The U.S. House of Representatives voted last Wednesday to include the demonstration dredging of the channel in the Water Resources Development Act, said Keith Pitts, spokesman for Congressman Charlie Rose (D-N.C.).

Now that the project is authorized, Pitts said funds would be requested in fiscal year 1992, which starts next October. The estimated cost of the dredging project is \$1.3 million, and the federal government proposes to pay 75 percent of the cost.

Meanwhile, Pitts said money for a related impact study in Eastern Channel would most likely be included in this fiscal year's budget, which was still not approved as of Tuesday.

Pitts said public works projects such as the impact study have not been threatened because of the federal budget crisis. The House earlier approved \$465,000 for the study, which carries an estimated cost of \$265,000.

Lt. Col. Thomas Suermann, district engineer with the Army Corps of Engineers in Wilmington, generated the dredging and impact

study proposals in May, following a meeting with Rose, state Rep. David Redwine and other local officials.

Brunswick County fishermen say Eastern Channel, which is situated between the west end of Long Beach and Sheep Island at the mouth of the Lockwood Folly River, has filled in with sand in recent years.

They contend that the channel has restricted water flow and prevented bacterial pollution from escaping the river, which frequently has been closed to shellfishing over the past two years.

Dredging Eastern Channel to improve water quality in Lockwood Folly River was first proposed in March 1988. Since then, it has gained the support of several groups, including the N.C. Environmental Management Commission.

Eastern Channel served as the inlet between Lockwood Folly River and the Atlantic Ocean before the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway was dredged.

The proposed impact study would use a "numerical flow model" to determine whether Corps navigation projects near Lockwood Folly River have had adverse impacts on circulation in the river. The study is expected to last about nine months.

Tom Jarrett, head of the Corps' coastal engineering branch in Wilmington, said recent aerial photos and others dating back to the 1800s before the waterway was constructed would be compared to see how the Eastern Channel has changed.

If the impact study determines that construction of the waterway has had negative impacts on water flow through Eastern Channel, Jarrett said the Corps would develop mitigation alternatives to compensate for the effects.

The demonstration dredging project, if funded, would show what effect the channel has on the rate of water flow between Lockwood Folly River and adjacent waters, according to a May 3 letter from Suermann to Rose.

Jarrett said the channel would be dredged 100 feet wide and six feet deep, and approximately 200,000 cubic yards of sand would be pumped from the channel to the west end of Long Beach.

Water circulation would be monitored before and after dredging through tide stations set up at both ends of Eastern Channel and two in Lockwood Folly River. Red dye also would be used to monitor water circulation.

The dredging project, including a report of the findings, would take about two years to complete.

Low Bid Changes Plans To Negotiate Recycling Contract

BY TERRY POPE

An unexpected low bid from the company now providing a recycling service to the county has altered commissioners' plans slightly.

The Brunswick County Board of Commissioners agreed Monday to begin negotiating contracts with two companies rather than just one for a permanent recycling program it hopes to have in place within four to six weeks.

George Bush of Bush's Recycling of Florence, S.C., has six trailer sites in the county now operated mostly by volunteers. The sites collect plastic, aluminum and paper at Southport, Long Beach, Carolina Shores, Sunset Beach, Holden Beach and Boiling Spring Lakes.

Bush had originally proposed that the county pay him \$350 per trailer to help defray the cost of hauling materials to Florence. Of that amount, \$150 would be recovered from the sale of materials with the county issuing \$200 per trailer as a supplement each time a trailer is hauled.

County Engineer Robert Tucker told the board Monday that Bush has since changed his bid to \$200 per trailer per month, regardless of how often the trailers need to be emptied. The bid is competitive with one submitted by Waste Industries of Wilmington.

However, Tucker recommended to the board Monday that it keep the six sites Bush now operates and also open four recycling stations with Waste Industries for \$426 per month per site. Under the Waste Industries proposal, unmanned bins would be placed at the county's three solid waste transfer stations in Southport, Leland and Ocean Isle and one at the county landfill in Supply.

Three containers would be placed at each site, for three-colored glass, for aluminum and plastic and for newspapers. The bins have lids where people drop in their recyclable materials. Waste Industries would be responsible for separating the items that get misplaced.

The county had originally planned to end its agreement with Bush and establish nine or 10 sites with Waste Industries. The company had asked for a three-year contract. The cost for both Bush and Waste Industries proposals for the remainder of the fiscal year is \$26,136, Tucker said.

Eddie Dick, of Waste Industries, said Monday that since only four sites would be needed his company would be willing to sign a one-year contract with the county. The specialty containers cost his company \$14,000 each, he said.

Waste Industries had originally asked for a three-year contract when it was thought nine or 10 sites were needed.

"My hope is that I don't lose too much," said Dick.

The closest center accepting glass is in Wilson while newspapers must be hauled to Goldsboro, he said.

Commissioner Grace Beasley insisted Monday that the board agree only to the concept of negotiating with both companies until they present their proposals in writing. Tucker was instructed by the board to negotiate contracts with both firms and to bring those contracts back to the board in writing at their Oct. 15 meeting.

"It's just good business that we negotiate," she added.

Bush faxed a copy of his proposal to Tucker Monday. The county now operates with Bush under a "handshake agreement on a month to month basis," Tucker said.

(See LOW BID, Page 2-A)

Bank Heist Calabash's Fifth In 15 Months

BY DOUG RUTTER

Federal law enforcement agents were pursuing several leads Tuesday following last week's robbery of the NCNB branch in Calabash—the fifth bank robbery in that town in the last 15 months.

A man armed with a handgun walked into the bank last Friday at 5:16 p.m., demanded money and fled with an undisclosed amount of cash, said FBI Agent Craig Ackley.

He said there were no customers inside the bank at the time of the robbery, and nobody was injured.

The robber was described as a white man, about 45 to 50 years old, with a stocky build. He was approx-

imately 5 feet, 6 inches tall and weighed about 160 pounds. The suspect had straight brown hair with some gray. He was wearing dark work pants, a short-sleeved shirt and black-framed eye glasses.

Ackley said it is believed the robber fled the scene of the crime in a blue vehicle and took N.C. 179 east toward downtown Calabash when he left the bank. Authorities aren't sure of the make or model of the vehicle.

The FBI agent declined to say if there were any suspects in the case or whether a security camera in the bank videotaped the robbery.

"We're pursuing several leads but we're not ready to give out any

more information at this time," Ackley said Tuesday.

The bank robbery was the first this year in Brunswick County, but the fifth to occur in Calabash since June 1989. The Security Savings & Loan branch in Calabash was robbed three times last year, and the United Carolina Bank branch was robbed once.

Calabash receives its only law enforcement protection from the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department. There are no immediate plans to beef up police protection in the town.

Most Calabash residents who responded to a recent survey indicated they don't think the town should

have full-time police protection. But 70 percent of the respondents from the extraterritorial area, the one-mile area surrounding the Calabash town limits, said they would support a police force.

Calabash Planning and Zoning Board Vice Chairman Patricia Lewellyn said the board's only plans regarding more law enforcement are long-range plans. There has been some discussion about hiring off-duty sheriff's deputies to patrol the town.

"We're not talking about doing anything with police protection right now," Mrs. Lewellyn said. "This is all four or five years down the road."

Holden Beach Officer Suspended From Force

BY DOUG RUTTER

Holden Beach Police Officer Gary Dancy was suspended without pay from the police department after being convicted of assault and trespassing last week in Brunswick County District Court.

Judge William C. Gore Jr. found

the officer guilty of simple assault and second-degree trespassing Sept. 25 in district court. The case was appealed to Brunswick County Superior Court.

Holden Beach Town Manager Blake Proctor said Monday he has suspended Dancy until the case is

settled, which he said could take several months or more than a year.

If Dancy is found innocent in superior court, Proctor said the officer would be reinstated with full seniority, benefits and back pay. Proctor said Dancy would be fired if he is found guilty in superior court.

The town manager said he has given the police officer a chance to resign from the department in good standing. However, once the superior court trial starts he said that option will be withdrawn.

Dancy was charged with assault (See POLICE, Page 2-A)