

Shallotte Recycling Center Opens Friday

BY DOUG RUTTER

Coordinators of a voluntary recycling program in Shallotte dealt a temporary setback three weeks ago plan to open their collection center for business Friday.

The trailer for recyclables will be located in an empty paved parking lot at the corner of Powell and Blake streets. The lot is north of the Hill's shopping center and east of United Carolina Bank's south branch.

The South Brunswick Interchurch Council, a non-profit group organizing the recycling effort, had planned to park a collection trailer in the Hill's food store parking lot and open it before Thanksgiving.

However, coordinators said they were informed Nov. 12 that the site that was promised to them in August was no longer available. They immediately began looking for a new site and found the lot near the Shallotte Volunteer Rescue Squad Building.

Bill Potts, a member of council's recycling committee, said he thinks the site will work out. "Hopefully, it's convenient enough for people coming to town to shop," he said.

The trailer will open to the public Friday at 12:30 p.m., following a ribbon-cutting ceremony. Potts said the trailer will be open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m., and volunteers will be on hand to help people.

Shallotte is the seventh community in Brunswick County to offer a voluntary recycling program. Its recycling trailer will be similar to ones at Holden Beach, Calabash and Sunset Beach.

The trailer will be filled with large containers in which people can place different types of recyclable items. Potts said aluminum cans, newspapers, plastic and glass will be accepted at the Shallotte recycling center.

Potts said he expects the trailer to arrive this week. A group of volunteers from Camp United Methodist Church planned to build stairs and a platform prior to the grand opening.

The trailer will be provided by Bush Recycling of Florence, S.C. Shallotte Aldermen had earlier agreed to pay \$200 per month for the trailer on a three-month trial basis.

However, Brunswick County Commissioners voted unanimously Monday night to fund the project in Shallotte and pay for another recycling trailer soon to be set up in Leland.

The county already is paying for six other recycling trailers. "It's only fair to do the same thing with Leland and Shallotte," said Kelly Holden, newly-elected chairman of the county commissioners.

Jane Gilbert, who is helping to organize the recycling effort in Leland, told county commissioners the trailer would be manned by volunteers and would be coordinated by the North Brunswick Civic Association.

"Leland has space for a trailer, but we're still a couple of months away from being ready," said Mrs. Gilbert, who is a member of the Leland Town Council and local Keep America Beautiful Board.

Potts said the Shallotte recycling committee has signed up nine volunteers who are willing to staff the trailer, but needs 40 or 50 to run the center properly. "We need volunteers desperately," he said.

People interested in helping out can call Potts at 754-5079 or Lena Mintz at 754-6725.

Recycling Trailer Is Moved Onto Island At Holden Beach

The Holden Beach recycling trailer that had been operating since June 30 has been temporarily closed and moved from the mainland to the island.

Holden Beach Town Manager Blake Proctor said the lot where the trailer was parked has been sold. The Holden Beach Ladies' Club moved the trailer last Friday from its site along N.C. 130 East.

It is parked near the Holden Beach Town Hall for the time being, but as of Tuesday had not been reopened to the public.

Proctor said he planned to meet with the town recycling committee and the president of the ladies' club before taking the next step. "I wouldn't mind seeing it open here because most of the contributions come from here anyway," he said.

Alan Holden, a real estate developer at Holden Beach, said at Monday's town meeting that he is willing to provide land for the trailer on the island or the mainland.

Meanwhile, Holden Beach officials are working on a curbside recycling program that would be used by island residents and visitors.

THE BRUNSWICK



BEACON

Twenty-ninth Year, Number 5

©1990 THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

Shallotte, North Carolina, Thursday, December 6, 1990

25¢ Per Copy

34 Pages, 3 Sections, 1 Insert



STAFF PHOTO BY TERRY POPE

Sharing Secrets With Santa

Heather Adkins was just one of the youngsters who got to share their Christmas wish lists with Santa Claus Saturday following the Shallotte Christmas Parade. Heather, just a little bit nervous, said she wants a "big doll," but couldn't remember its name. More parade coverage is on Page 6-A.

EXTENT OF PROBLEM NOT YET KNOWN

Probe Shows Past Employees Carried On Schools' Insurance

BY SUSAN USHER

Brunswick County Board of Education officials are investigating the improper carrying of former employees on the school system's health and dental insurance programs, trying to find out the extent of the problem as well as the school system's potential financial liability.

Those whose premiums continued to be paid through the school system after their employment ended include, among others, former Superintendent John Kaufhold and a former central purchasing officer, Randall Worth, husband of former school board chairman Dorothy Worth, Finance Director Rudi Fallon confirmed Tuesday.

Exactly how many former employees might be involved and whether the payment of the premiums on their behalf was in error or by intent remains to be determined through the investigation.

Ms. Fallon affirmed Tuesday that one individual had had responsibility for handling employee insurance claims and premiums, but would not identify that person.

However, Payroll Supervisor Jewel McCumbee of Ash was suspended Nov. 2 while the board's investigation continues. She has since filed a grievance.

After a special meeting of the school board Friday, Superintendent P. R. Hankins said that the system was having "processing" problems relating to employee insurance claims and payments of premiums. He said the board's next action would be determined by the findings of its investigation and review of the records.

"It's really a nightmare," he said of the problems. "It's not new. It's a cumulative thing. It's been snowballing."

North Carolina Blue Cross/Blue Shield administers the state's self-insurance program, in which the school system participates.

Under a regulation adopted Sept. 1, 1986, and included in employees' insurance handbooks, former employees of the school district are allowed to continue their group policies for 18 months if they pay both their share and the school district's share of the premiums, plus 2 percent. Once taken off the school system books, the former employees are billed directly if they choose continuation coverage for the transition period.

After the 18 months, members must make their other insurance arrangements.

However, so long as the former employees' premiums are paid through the school system, Ms. Fallon indicated, the insurance company does not become aware that they were no longer employees of the system.

"In a lot of cases they (former employees) paid us for what we had been paying, but additional money is still needed," she said.

What is owed in those cases is the 2 percent in additional premiums the employee would have had to pay if continuing the coverage on his or her own.

For the past year, the school system computer has been programmed to automatically pay the premiums, indicating which portion is paid by the school system and which part by employee payroll deduction.

However, employees who are on leave of absence can send in checks to cover their share of the premiums while they are not on the payroll. Those payments are handled manually from a separate set of books.

Ms. Fallon is concerned about what the county's additional liability may be for employees who were improperly continued on the insurance program.

"That's where I think we may get a letter from the insurance company saying, 'You owe...'"

The insurance company may seek payment of the additional 2 percent in premiums the former employees would have had to pay for continuation coverage and the difference in premiums collected and claims paid, she said.

If so, any additional money owed would have to be made up with local funds unless for the current fiscal year. Neither the state nor federal government will provide the system additional funds once books are closed for a fiscal year.

Who should pay? "That's what the State of North Carolina will have to tell us," said Ms. Fallon.

Worth's name was marked off the bill in June and he was no longer carried as an active employee. He received a letter from the insurer offering him 18 months' continuation at the higher premium rate; the insurance company did not know he had resigned from county employment in September 1985.

Worth has said he did not know about the 18-month limit on continued coverage.

In a procedure not normally followed, the county sent a change form for Kaufhold to the insurance company in August. Kaufhold's name should have been marked off the bill as of June 30, when his employment ended, Ms. Fallon said.

Previously he and one dependent had been carried on the program, at a cost of \$173 per month, of which \$107 was paid by the system for Kaufhold.

Employees and the school system share the cost of hospital insurance premiums, with the system's share (See PROBE, Page 2-A)

Sunset Tables Request For Annexation

BY SUSAN USHER

Faced with more questions than it had answers for, Sunset Beach Town Council Monday tabled a request to annex a strip of property that would extend the town's jurisdiction to the Seaside business district.

In one of a series of five public hearings, only two speakers addressed council regarding the proposed annexation. Former council

member Minnie Hunt and Sunset Beach Taxpayers Association President Cletus Waldmiller questioned the cost-benefit ratio for the town in annexing the proposed area and whether an annexation study fully addressed demand for services such as police protection. They also raised questions about why the property owners want to become part of the town, since they would gain little else in additional ser-

vices.

"I don't see how the devil you can vote for this thing," said Waldmiller.

The area proposed for annexation consists primarily of Sea Trail Corporation property, including a strip bordering Seaside Station along one side of N.C. 179 and nine holes of Sea Trail Links on the other side, excluding the Sugar Sands I (See ANNEXATION, Page 7-A)

Northern Loop Study To Limit Possible Routes Before April

BY TERRY POPE

A consulting firm hired by the N.C. Department of Transportation plans to identify possible routes for the proposed Northern Outer Loop project by April of next year. Meanwhile, residents of northern Brunswick County are anxiously waiting to see what the impact of the highway will be on their homes and businesses.

The Wilmington bypass will route traffic heading south on I-40 around Wilmington on a four-lane path through northern Brunswick County where it will connect with U.S. 17 south of Bishop near Town Creek. DOT's 1990-97 draft Transportation Improvement Program has the project scheduled to begin in fiscal year 1996.

Greiner Inc. of Raleigh will compile a two-year Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) of the project to determine "where to locate corridors which will have the least negative impact" on the area, said Sharon Phillips, project manager with Greiner. The public's comments will be included in that study.

Officials from the towns of Leland

and Navassa are concerned that the bypass will be disruptive to their communities. Leland Mayor Russell Baldwin said he hopes the two towns can convince officials that running the highway through the incorporated areas would be devastating.

By April, Greiner will have identified possible routes for the proposed highway and will hold another public hearing at that time. There may be as many as five to 10 possible routes at first, but that number will be narrowed to three by April for the more detailed study, Ms. Phillips said.

Two of those proposed routes would exit traffic off of I-40 between North Chase subdivision and Castle Hayne in New Hanover County and carry traffic through Brunswick County to U.S. 17 south, a 14-mile project that would have to cross both the Northeast Cape Fear and Cape Fear rivers. The only part of the project that is definite at this time, Ms. Phillips said, is the location of where the loop will exit from I-40.

A third proposal would end the loop on U.S. 421 north of Wilmington and route traffic along U.S. 74-

76 past Belville to the U.S. 17 interchange in Leland. Those highways would have to be widened. It is a route county officials object to because of anticipated traffic congestion.

Greiner's EIS will research the project's anticipated effect on water quality, historical sites, schools, churches, businesses and residential relocations, community cemeteries and impact on lakes and streams. It will be completed by October 1992.

"Every time you take a house, you have to buy that home," Ms. Phillips said. "It's very disruptive; people get angry. There are a lot of reasons you don't want to do that. We have some real incentives not to take large areas of development."

A Wilmington Bypass Steering Committee has identified an alternate route that would carry the highway through the middle of Navassa and across U.S. 74-76 and Old Fayetteville Road in Leland, providing no access to those roads and disrupting several churches and developments along its path. Brunswick County has two members on (See LOOP, Page 7-A)



STAFF PHOTO BY TERRY POPE

ANN AWTRY OF Leland reviews maps showing the area under study for the proposed Northern Outer Loop bypass of Wilmington with N.C. Department of Transportation Chief Consultant Ron Elmore.