

Paperwork Can Be A Pain

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1989 and from 4,076 permits issued in 1988.

"We usually rank between one and five in the state," Crowder said. "At one point we were number one."

On the average, it takes four or five working days to process a septic tank permit application, Crowder said. A person should not have to wait more than 10 days to receive an answer, even under the busiest circumstances, he added.

A fee of \$35 is charged for a single-family home. For commercial businesses, the minimum fee is \$50 and up, depending on the estimated amount of sewage flow to impact the system.

The home owner can obtain an application or fill one out at the health department. Information needed includes a tax parcel number and a description of the lot and proposed homesite. The home owner may draw a sketch on the application.

Sometime after July 1, changes are in store for septic tank permits, Crowder said. Senate Bill 960 may require that home owners applying for permits also submit plans for continued maintenance of those sewer systems. The changes will not immediately affect single-family dwellings, Crowder said.

"There are a lot of unanswered questions," Crowder said, "but for regular septic tank systems, they won't be affected right away. We may be talking about years down the road."

On the average, about 13 percent to 16 percent of installed septic tank systems fail the home owner. It is recommended that septic tanks be inspected once a year and cleaned when necessary. State legislators passed SB 960 to protect ground-

water contamination, especially in coastal counties.

Health officials are working to make the new requirements less confusing for those who apply for permits. The Brunswick County Board of Health has formed a committee to study the new changes.

Other Needs

Once construction has begun, a series of permits will ensure the home is being built to standards and will be safe for its occupants. When the initial building permit is obtained, an inspection card is issued to the home builder that must be placed in front of the building so the inspectors can sign their approvals at each stage of the game.

A number of footing-slab inspections determine if the foundation is in place correctly. Rough-in inspections must be requested by the electrical, plumbing and heating and air conditioning contractors when rough wiring is installed, water and drain lines are complete and before air ducts are concealed by further building.

Electrical permit fees are \$21.25 per visit while plumbing fees are based on \$6.25 per trap, plus a \$12.50 basic fee and a \$6.25 tap fee. Heating and air permit fees are based on the size of the unit to be installed.

There are inspections for the fire place or chimney, framing and insulation. Afterwards, a series of final inspections for electrical, plumbing and heating and air must be made before the big okay is given, the building final.

The building final indicates that the home is ready for occupancy, that the paperwork is over.

Who Will Be Your Neighbor?

By the year 2010, Brunswick County's population is expected to increase by another 75 percent.

That's a faster rate of growth than the 43 percent increase from 1980 to 1990, when the county's population grew from estimates of 35,777 to 50,985 persons, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

The latest estimates released in January by the Center for Business and Economics Services at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington show Brunswick County leading the way in both population and economic growth in southeastern North Carolina. The center operates out of the Cameron School of Business Administration and is headed by professors Claude Farrell and William W. Hall Jr.

Brunswick County's estimated 50,985 residents will multiply to around 92,000 during the next 20 years if the center is right. Farrell predicts the county to outrace the state average rate of growth, which stands at 18 percent.

New Hanover County is expected to grow by 26 percent during the same period while Pender County's population is expected to increase by 38 percent.

Who are the people that economists predict will call Brunswick County their new home? Your new neighbor is likely to be retired or elderly.

A large number of elderly and retirees are expected to move into Brunswick County within the next 20 years. Farrell predicts the county's population of people over the age of 65 will increase from 13 percent of the total population to 15 percent.

Nancy Price, assistant to the director for the Brunswick County Health Department, said the county is concerned about the rising cost of health care for this age group.

"We have a lot of elderly and retired people coming into Brunswick County," Ms. Price said, pointing out that the number of persons over 65 in

the county grew by 57 percent between 1980 and 1987.

"We need to be able to offer more services to the underserved, underinsured and those who cannot find an adequate health provider," said Ms. Price.

Your new neighbor is likely to be a high school graduate. Statistics predict that the number of regional high school graduates will remain about the same over the 20-year period, around 8,400 students. Ferrell predicts the number of area graduates will fluctuate, dropping to around 7,800 in 1992 and 1994, but increase again to around 8,400 by the year 2000.

Chances are you will know a single parent as a neighbor. The number of births out of wedlock from 1980 to 1988 grew tremendously in Brunswick County, from 6 percent of births to 25 percent.

Chances are your neighbors will be a working group of people. Jobs are expected to become more available after 1991. During the period 1983-85, economic activity rose 32 percent in Brunswick County, but that growth slipped in 1986 and 1989.

"Despite these two downturns, economic activity in the county rose 8 percent over 1985-89," Ferrell said. "For the same period, the increase in economic activity was 19 percent in New Hanover County, 40 percent in Pender County and 18 percent in the region."

Your neighbors are likely to have spending cash, but not as much as in other parts of the nation. Economists say the county's median family income rose between 1979 and 1989, from \$13,000 to \$26,500. During the same period, the national median family income level rose from \$17,000 to \$34,000.

Your neighbor may even be a business owner or retailer. Since 1983, retail sales in Brunswick County has increased by over \$300 million, or close to 20 percent. In 1991, the center is predicting another increase in retail sales by 13 percent.

Local Painters Say Stains Offer The Best Protection From Sun And Heat

BY DOUG RUTTER

Some people enjoy painting their home. For others it's a chore. But like it or not, the outside of every home must be painted on occasion to maintain the appearance of the house and protect it from the elements.

Brunswick County paint experts say oil-based and acrylic stains are the way to go because they can weather the local climate.

One painter, who has been painting area houses for 30 years, recommends that local homeowners use stains instead of paints.

Stains stand up to sun and salt air better than paint, he said, because stains soak into the wood and help preserve it while paints merely coat the surface of the wood siding.

He said the oil-based stains will penetrate the wood better than stains with a latex base, and he suggests an oil-based stain for new homes. Homeowners can then use a latex-based stain for occasional touch-up work.

Local paint suppliers suggest homeowners use an oil-based primer and a top coat of 100 percent acrylic stain or paint for new homes with cedar siding.

They say solid colors hold up better than semi-transparent colors. Light colors are preferred when using oil-based stains, because oil products fade easily.

To prepare older houses for painting, area painters use a bleach solution to remove mildew and fungus and a high-powered wash to get rid of chips and splinters.

Most experts agree homeowners may need to caulk around doors and windows. Areas that are scraped down to the wood should be

primed before the top coat of stain or paint is applied.

How the paint or stain is applied to the house will help determine how it holds up. Local painters say it can be sprayed on, but homeowners will get better results if they use rollers for flat surfaces and brushes for grooves.

A supplier said another option is applying the paint or stain with a sprayer and then brushing it into the wood. "You'll get just as good results in a shorter period of time," he said.

Brunswick County homeowners can paint or stain their homes year round, as long as the weather isn't too extreme.

Spring and fall are the best times of the year for exterior painting. Paint manufacturers recommend against using their products when its below 50 degrees.

Paints and stains can dry too slow or too fast depending on the weather. If it's too hot, a supplier said the paint can dry too fast and brush strokes will show up in the wood.

They also recommend against painting early in the morning or late in the afternoon when there is dew. The dew can get into the wood and cause mildew problems.

Local painters say most stains will last four or five years if there aren't any hurricanes or major storms.

But they warn that homeowners should keep an eye on their stains and paints to check for mildew and fungus.

"If you don't keep it up you're going to have some rotage," he said. "Then you have to replace the wood and the paint."

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