

Ads Win Awards

County's two weekly newspapers dominate statewide advertising awards. The story's on the business page, 13-C.

Island Living

Supplement included in this issue



Salute To Seniors!

Section D inside this issue focuses on the more than 500 Brunswick County high school seniors who will receive diplomas this week.

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

HOAG & SONS BOOK BINDERY
12/31/99
PO BOX 162
SPRINGPORT MI 49284

Twenty-ninth Year, Number 29

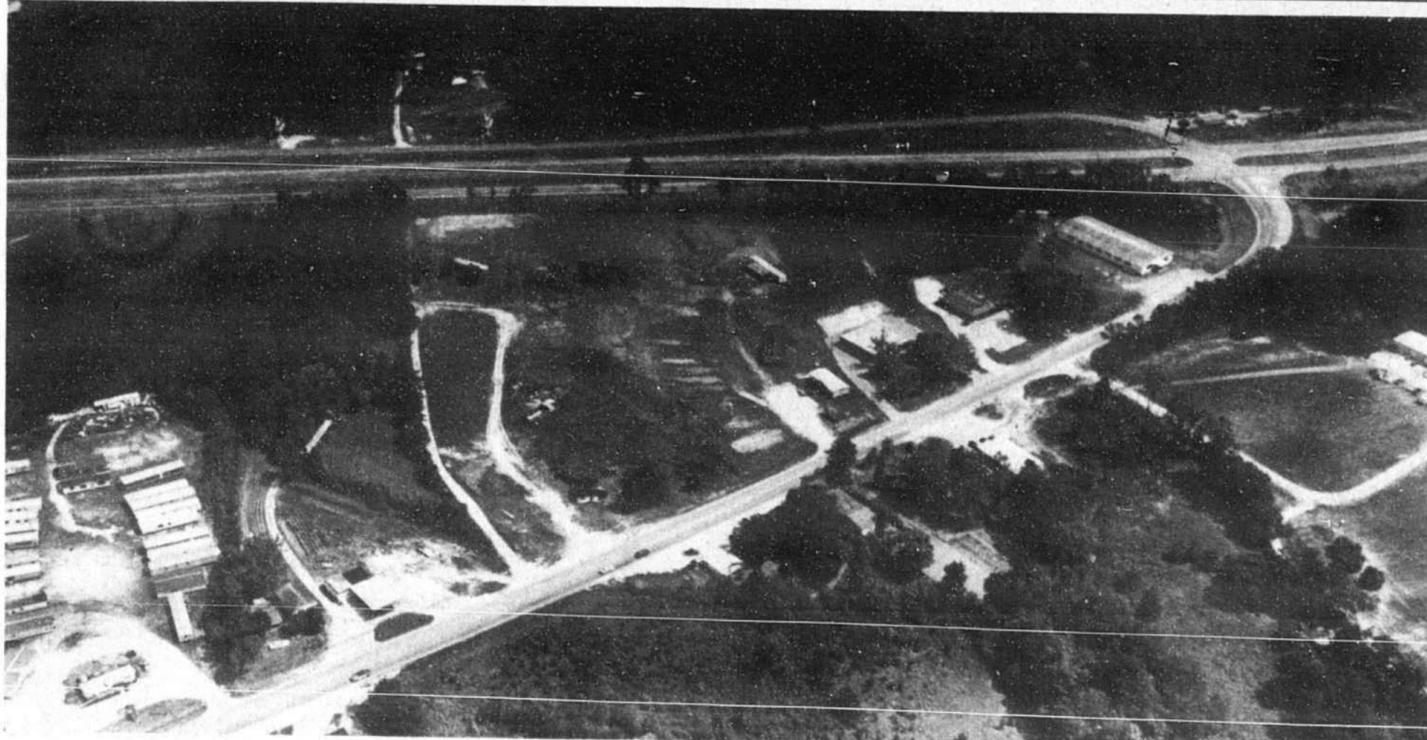
©1991 THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

Shallotte, N.C.

Thursday, May 23, 1991

25¢ Per Copy

112 Pages In 4 Sections & Supplement, 2 Inserts



MOTORISTS can get on and off the U.S. 17 bypass at a traffic light (upper right) at the north end of Shallotte. More aerial views are on page 10-A.

STAFF PHOTO BY SUSAN USHER

Bypass Opens With Joy Ride

BY DOUG RUTTER

Shallotte Mayor Sarah Tripp and Brunswick County Board of Commissioners Chairman Kelly Holden were planning a five-mile joy ride Wednesday.

They were to meet at Black's Tire Service north of Shallotte Wednesday morning for a ceremonial "first ride" on the U.S. 17 Shallotte bypass.

The N.C. Department of Transportation planned to open the road to the public following that first official ride, which comes just two days before the anticipated arrival of several thousand Memorial Day weekend visitors.

Although the bypass will open prior to the first weekend of the summer tourist season, paving work will continue for at least two weeks, according to Dave Boyleston, resident engineer with the state DOT.

Propst Construction still has to put down the final one-inch layer of asphalt, meaning traffic on the four-lane road will be restricted to one lane in each direction in areas that are still being paved.

Boyleston said the final completion date will depend on the weather and flow of supplies to the contractor.

The state's contract with the paving company requires the project to be finished by mid-August. If it isn't done in time, the state could levy fines of \$2,500 per day.

Mayor Tripp said state transportation officials plan to hold a formal ceremony for the long-awaited bypass when it's completed in July or August.

PARCEL FEE TO PAY FOR GARBAGE

\$7.5 Million In Requests Cut So County Can Avoid Tax Hike

BY TERRY POPE

To hold the county tax rate at 68.5 cents per \$100 valuation will cost an estimated \$7.5 million in cuts from departmental budget requests, Brunswick County Commissioners learned Monday night.

The board has also agreed to seek special legislation to allow the county to charge all property owners a fee to pay for solid waste disposal.

The same fee would be charged to every parcel of land in Brunswick County. If approved, it would take the place of controversial tipping fees proposed for commercial haulers that dump at the county landfill, a fee that some area towns say is unfair to its residents.

Brunswick County Manager David Clegg's proposed 1991-92 county budget recommends across the board reductions for all departments and "severe deletions of capital outlay requests" in light of an anticipated \$1 million shortfall in state funding.

Fifty employees will either lose their jobs or have their work time reduced in the older adults, clean county, water, health and social services departments.

The Clean County department would be dissolved, and its director, Terry Munn, transferred to the position of county recycling coordinator in the engineering department.

No across the board pay increase has been proposed and employee health insurance deductibles will increase from \$100 to \$200 to help save money.

Commissioners will hold a public hearing on the proposed budget Tuesday, June 4, at 7 p.m., in the public assembly building at the government complex in Bolivia. The board recessed until Monday, May 27, at 6 p.m., for a workshop on the budget.

Commissioners listened to Clegg's budget message Monday at the end of a four-hour meeting but did not receive copies of the actual budget, nor did they discuss it. A copy was officially presented to Clerk to the Board Regina Alexander.

In his report, Clegg blasted the state for failing to take action to solve the state budget crisis. A shortfall of \$1 billion is expected to shrink amounts allocated to local governments.

Brunswick County chose not to wait on news from the state on the possible availability of additional funds. The county cannot budget money it does not possess and programs must be made operational regardless, said Clegg.

"I do not believe that this watershed of funds will materialize..." said Clegg.

The initial draft of the budget, including all requests presented by department heads, would have required an 86 cents per \$100 valuation tax rate.

Clegg and Lithia Hahn, director of fiscal operations, and Jerry Hewett, director of computer services, worked on a second and third draft of the budget that trimmed the tax rate to 72.25 cents and 71.08 cents respectively.

"Change is an inevitable component of our lives," said Clegg, "and this budget reflects the realities of a changing relationship between all units of government."

The proposed parcel fee to help fund solid waste disposal would be a set fee for each tract of land and be imposed as of July 1, if State Rep. David Redwine is

able to have special legislation approved by the N.C. General Assembly.

Clegg said details of the proposed fee have not been worked out and depends on what Redwine is able to have passed.

"Hopefully, we're going to have some flexibility with legislation there," said Clegg.

A parcel fee would ease worries of municipalities that have labeled a proposed tipping fee for commercial haulers to the Supply landfill discriminatory against town residents.

"How nondiscriminatory can you get, if you charge everyone?" said Clegg on the parcel fee.

The previous plan did not call for charging residents who live outside of towns a fee for garbage disposal.

District 3 Commissioner Gene Pinkerton said Clegg's budget message was the most professional one he had seen during his term on the board.

"I think it is certainly plain and understandable," Pinkerton said.

RECOMMENDS FIVE WORKERS CUT

Consultant: Water System Has Too Many Chiefs, Low Morale

BY TERRY POPE

A consulting firm hired to evaluate the Brunswick County Water System recommends the county cut five of that department's employees and take action to boost morale.

The recommendation contrasts sharply with a request from the public utility director to commissioners in January for additional water system employees for a preventive maintenance program.

Recommended cut from the county payroll are these: the water system director, an assistant to the director of public utilities, two maintenance mechanic positions and a water treatment operator for the Northwest treatment plant in Malmo.

"You have too many chiefs trying to run the organization," said John House, with David M. Griffith and Associates of Raleigh.

The positions have also been eliminated in a proposed 1991-92 budget presented to commissioners Monday by County Manager David Clegg.

David "Leo" Fulford, the current assistant to the public utilities director, was hired by the county in May 1987. Kenneth Hewett, the current water system director, joined the water department in September 1981.

"We don't see any need, for an organization of less than 50 people, for an assistant director," House told commissioners.

Staffing a water system director creates "oversupervision," he added. More individuals should answer directly to the director of public utilities, a title held by Jerry Webb, the firm reported.

David M. Griffith and Associates was hired in January to conduct a

study of the water department after several personnel grievances were carried before the board of commissioners. The firm investigated the departmental organization, staffing levels and all aspects of its management and operations.

In a report to commissioners in December, Webb asked for more employees and better staff training to help set up a preventive maintenance program. Customer growth has dramatically increased since 1986 without an increase in the number of employees, he noted.

Employees were surveyed by the consulting firm and asked to rate their pay, stress levels, safety concerns, work outside of job descriptions and view of leadership within the department.

"The highest level of concern dealt with salaries," House said. "The perception is that salaries is a morale problem within the department."

Younger employees rated job stress as high, "about as high as we've seen anywhere," House said.

First aid, medical and safety concerns also rated high. Two water plant operators work the same hours because of potential safety problems.

"We do not agree that you need two operators for that reason," said House. "You need to clean up the safety problems first. This is not a safety study. It just popped out that way."

The firm recommends the county move chlorine tanks at the N.C. 211 plant near Southport from an inside lab room to outside; place moveable guardrails around manholes at the

water plants; remove scrap materials from the 211 plant; and pad insulators and piping at the plants.

Additional morale problems exist within the department because employees feel that some workers are singled out to work overtime.

"There is too much overtime paid," House said. "Problems also arise from the selection of recipients

to work overtime. It may not be a problem, but the perception is there."

One maintenance mechanic I worker in the tapping crew is actually doing the job of a maintenance mechanic III worker, but not being paid accordingly, the study found. Two maintenance mechanic II workers were found doing electrical

(See WATER, Page 2-A)



STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER

Look, But Don't Touch!

Three-year-old Michael Powell of Ocean Isle Beach checks out the sharp teeth of a shortfin mako shark Sunday at the dedication of the Museum of Coastal Carolina at Ocean Isle Beach. The natural history center opens to the public this Saturday. The story and more photos are inside this issue.

County Budget At A Glance

Brunswick County departments would get \$7.5 million less than they've requested for the coming year so that the county can keep its current 68.5 cents per \$100 valuation while adding new services such as 911. The following chart looks at cuts in requests and features of the 1991-92 proposed county budget, but does not compare them with existing budgets:

- Solid Waste Department: cut \$76,000; a \$1.2 million budget depends on collection of parcel or tipping fees for solid waste disposal;
- Planning Department: cut \$152,000; budget includes a new subdivision review fee of \$26;
- Health Department: cut \$84,151; raise site evaluation fee from \$35 to \$40;
- Cafeteria: 20 percent increase in prices;
- Water System: no rate increase; cut five positions as recommended by a management study;
- Board of Education: 5 percent increase in funds; \$7.5 million allocation;
- Capital Projects: build driver's license, magistrate's office beside the sheriff's department; build a central warehouse at the complex;
- Brunswick Community College: 3 percent increase in funds; \$501,000 allocation;
- Emergency Medical Services: cut \$1.5 million; eight emergency medical technicians approved; purchase two ambulances;
- Social Services: cut \$109,414; three positions deleted, six approved for a year, four approved for 10 months and four approved for six months for the state-mandated JOBS program;
- Older Adults: cut \$231,516, service provisions reduced to Title III, Council of Governments funding and county matching funds; keep home delivered meals accurate level of service;
- County Engineering: cut \$1.4 million; recycling component of Clean County transferred to this department;
- Clean County: dissolved; director to become recycling coordinator; Keep America Beautiful Board transferred to Parks and Recreation Department;
- Parks and Recreation: add \$32,600 to provide transportation for senior adults in lieu of former funding through Older Adults;
- Brunswick County Library: 13 percent increase; \$125,000 allocation;
- Fire and Rescue Squads: current funding levels;
- Southeastern Mental Health: funded at 75 percent of requested amount;
- Building Inspections: no fee increases;
- Water Expansion: Sunset Harbor and Mt. Pisgah Church Road projects, \$1.36 million, placed in abeyance for possible 1992-93 two-thirds bond funding; funding kept for \$10 million Phase III extension project to Shallotte Point and Seaside; and
- New Programs: operations funding kept for 911, Emergency Medical Services, Geographic Information System and Road Naming.