

Regional Science Center Idea Gets Audience

BY SUSAN USHER

Brunswick County got a preview Monday of what a proposed regional science and technology center could do.

In a show-and-tell presentation that closed with introduction of a small, red rat snake, Jeff Priest gave an audience of 60 people gathered at a Southport restaurant a hint of how such a center can help make science and math education come alive.

What would it be like, he asked, if instead of having students turn in their textbooks to read about reptiles, a teacher incorporated one in her lesson plan. "I guarantee they will remember when Mrs. Smith pulls out a snake," he said.

"Science is doing," said Priest. "That's what we're talking about."

Instead of squashing the natural curiosity of children, he said, the center nurtures it and gives it direction.

Priest, whose Ph.D. was based on research he conducted on coyotes, is the only full-time employee of a science center in Aiken, S.C.

He teaches 75 percent of the seminars and workshops offered, he said. That makes it possible for the center to provide in-service education for teachers for certificate renewal credit, usually without charging tuition.

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—Jeff Priest, Director
Patrick Science Center

Keeping up to date in math and science is difficult, he noted, because of rapid advances in the field and the infrequent adoption of new textbooks.

Priest said teachers are the primary focus of the Aiken center.

"We try to make science and mathematics more fun and exciting for the teachers, then they can make it more fun and exciting for their students," he said. "I want them to come back next year and say they used what we gave them. If not that defeats the whole purpose of the center."

The most important result of the center, he said, has been an increased awareness in the community of the importance of math and science education.

The Ruth Patrick Science Education Center also offers programs for students and for the general public.

Student programs include summer research stints with area scientists. It is a partnership of the University of South Carolina at Aiken, local school systems and industry, aided by a start-up grant of \$100,000 from the National Science Foundation. Until this year it had been entirely funded by non-state sources. This year the university is paying Priest's salary.

The center has operated out of the university's biology department for several years while building its programs, and its credibility, Priest said. It soon will soon be housed in a building that will include two computer labs, two classrooms and a small exhibit hall.

After hearing Priest, Brunswick County Superintendent P.R. Hankins told the group, "We're interested in something like that."

Such a center was first proposed by school board member Robert Slockett and the Brunswick County Education Foundation, of which he is an ex-officio member. In recent months a Science Alliance of educators has formed to pursue this and related ideas.

The alliance has surveyed math and science teachers to determine their needs and ways a center could help meet those needs. Results of the survey are being compiled and are expected to be presented to the Brunswick County Board of Education at its July 1 meeting, said board Chairman Donna Baxter.

William Harrison, who will leave his post as assistant

superintendent for curriculum this week, said that by Jan. 1, plans also call for completion of a resource guide for county classroom teachers that identifies area businesses and industries with personnel and other resources they are willing to share with the schools. Sharing could range from providing a guest speaker or volunteer activity leader to donating equipment or supplies.

He also expects the school system to expand its offering of after-school, hands-on science enrichment activities. A pilot project at Southport Elementary School had to turn away participants this past year, he said.

"We want to do more for our teachers, something for our students and get industry and businesses involved in the schools at a higher level," said Harrison.

The audience of 60 people was comprised of educators, school board members, representatives of area colleges and of local businesses that have expressed an interest in development of a center to serve the region.

Slockett said the cooperative venture should help improve science and math education locally and should result in improved student test scores as well as students more equipped to continue their education or to take jobs with area industries.

It was unclear Monday who would be picking up the tab for the luncheon. Slockett said he understood DuPont would be paying for both the dinner and Priest's expenses. If not, he added, the BCEF would.

Sunset Annexes Two Areas, Sets Hearings On Two More

BY SUSAN USHER

It won't become official until Aug. 5, but Sunset Beach Town Council voted unanimously Friday afternoon to bring Sugar Sands and Oyster Bay Colony subdivisions into the town limits.

The action follows a public hearing last week at which several residents of the targeted area said they welcomed becoming part of the town.

The only objections were raised by an island resident who suggested that mainland residents might not have the same concern for the island as island residents have. Cletus Waldmiller, president of the Sunset Beach Property Owners Association, has expressed concerns earlier also about the lessening impact of island voters on town affairs as Sunset Beach continues to expand

its mainland area.

The town anticipates few first-year costs related to the annexation, which would be more than offset by property tax and accommodations tax revenue collections.

Sunset Beach had first considered annexation of the two areas more than two years ago.

Also, council members took first steps Friday toward one town-initiated annexation and one requested annexation, both involving parts of Seatrail Plantation.

The first area includes River Creek, The Woods, the first seven holes of the Dan Maples golf course, two Club Villas buildings, some single-family homes and the new sales office, but not houses on Lakeshore Drive or White Heron Court.

"It just wouldn't qualify" in terms of density of development,

according to Mayor Mason Barber.

A public hearing will be held Sept. 9 at 7 p.m., with a report of plans for extending services to the area to be available no later than the board's Aug. 5 meeting.

In a related matter, council set a public hearing Monday, July 8, at 7 p.m. at town hall on a petition from Seatrail Corp. requesting annexation of Oyster Point I, Seatrail Plantation, by the town.

As new areas are brought into the town, Sunset Beach has the authority to extend its extraterritorial jurisdiction up to a one mile from its newly defined borders. The planning board is still working to establish new ETA lines following the earlier annexation earlier of a strip that extends to the Seaside community at N.C. 904/N.C. 179.

Other Business

In other business, council members:

■Adopted, on a 4-1 second vote, an ordinance that allows the town to have weeds or other "noxious growth" cut, at the property owner's expense, should a property owner fail to cut weeds on a vacant lot at least twice each year, before July 1 and after October 1. Councilman Ed Gore voted no, saying the cutting should be a town service. Al Odom, who had voted against the ordinance at an earlier meeting, was absent Friday.

■Reappointed Administrator Linda Fluegel as the town's mosquito control officer.

■Amended a town ordinance regulating fuel storage tanks to specify that it is unlawful to keep or store more than 15 gallons of gasoline within the town limits unless specif-

ic guidelines are followed. Council upped the limit from five gallons to allow for household usages such as lawnmowers and boat motors.

■Contracted again with Terry Willetts for electrical and mechanical

inspections at the following fees: \$25 per visit for residential electrical or mechanical inspections; commercial-electrical, \$50 per visit plus \$1 per each outlet over 50; commercial-mechanical, \$50 per visit.

Sunset Beach Officer Promoted



GRANTHAM

Sam Grantham of the Sunset Beach Police Department has been promoted from senior patrol officer to lieutenant, effective last Friday.

"In effect he will be the assistant chief, said Police Chief J.B. Buell. "He'll be in charge when I'm not here."

Grantham has been with the department a total of nine years. After a three-year stint, he left to go to work for the Columbus County Sheriff's Department. He rejoined the department six years ago and is its senior officer.

Buell said the new lieutenant has good working relationships with fellow officers and the public and should be accepted readily in his new position.

Grantham will attend a three-week supervisory school at the N.C. Justice Academy at Salemburg this fall.

Ocean Isle Beach OKs Budget, Land Use Plan

BY DOUG RUTTER

Ocean Isle Beach officials approved a spending plan for the coming year and a set of policies that will help guide growth for the next decade Tuesday following two public hearings.

Commissioners adopted the 1990-91 budget, with no change in the tax rate, and accepted the town's 1990 land use plan update, which has been in the works for more than a year.

Expansion Budgeted

Next fiscal year's \$3.1 million budget includes money for routine services as well as funds to expand the sewer system and purchase additional land at the airport.

The town has hired a Raleigh engineering firm, Boney and Associates, to design expansion of the sewer system. Ocean Isle officials have budgeted \$500,000 to extend service to the east end of the island.

Commissioners also put \$175,000 in the budget to buy land at the east end of the airport for future expansion. The town expects half of the money to come from a state grant.

Based on a tax rate of 17 cents per \$100 of property and a tax valuation of \$305 million, town officials expect to collect \$514,446 in taxes next year.

Other major sources of general fund revenue in the budget are \$56,000 from the ABC store, \$50,000 from the accommodations tax fund and \$46,000 in building permits and fees.

General fund expenses budgeted include \$226,287 for police, \$96,690 for administration, \$84,169 for streets and \$83,342 for sanitation.

Ocean Isle Beach officials anticipate \$357,700 in accommodations tax next year, including \$32,700 carried over from this year.

Commissioners plan to use

\$88,200 of the fund for sanitation, \$50,000 for erosion control, \$50,000 for police and administration and \$30,500 for tourism promotion.

Plan Completed

The land use plan update includes background information on the town such as growth in population and buildings since the last plan was done in 1986.

It also includes a land classification map and policies designed to help the town board deal with growth over the next 10 years.

Building Inspector Druied Roberson said one of the new policies in the plan says sewer service will not be extended outside the town until all town properties are served. That has been an unwritten policy of the town board for several years.

Roger Briggs, a planner with McKim & Creed of Wilmington who helped the town's planning

board develop the land use plan, presented what could be the final draft Tuesday morning.

Town commissioners will adopt the land use plan following a review by N.C. Division of Coastal Management staff. It then has to be certified by the N.C. Coastal Resources Commission.

Other Business

In other business Tuesday, commissioners:

■Voted to give town employees a holiday for the Fourth of July. Ocean Isle Beach employees now receive six holidays during the year. Water and sewer employees and police officers will be on call Independence Day, and at least one secretary will be at the town hall.

■Approved a contract for the 1990-91 annual audit with John Carraway of Wilmington. Mayor Betty Williamson said the audit will not cost the town more than \$5,350.

Benton Joins Elections Board

Billy Benton of Grissetown will be the only new member of the Brunswick County Board of Elections this year, according to appointments announced Tuesday by Johnnie McLean, administrative secretary to the State Board of Elections.

Meeting in Raleigh, the State Board of Elections named two Republicans and one Democrat to the panel, selecting the top-ranked nominees of the county Democratic and Republican parties. The appointments are effective July 1.

Benton replaces Pat Ramsey of Oak Island, who was not renominated by the Brunswick County Republican Executive Committee for

the seat.

Glenda W. Walker of Leland, chairman of the elections board, was reappointed, as was Harry Orie Gore of Southport. He is the lone Democrat on the board.

The county Republican Executive Committee had nominated, as its third choice, Harold Willetts of Bolivia.

Alternate nominees from the Democratic Executive Committee were Vernon Ward of Shallotte Point and Murry Stevens of Boiling Spring Lakes.

Under state election law, the party in power is entitled to two of the three seats on the county board and the minority party, the third seat.

Board To Act On Suspension

Shallotte Aldermen will make some sort of decision next week relating to the June 18 suspension of a police officer, said Town Attorney Mark Lewis.

Officer George Samek was suspended with pay last Tuesday. Town officials have refused to give a reason for the disciplinary action.

Lewis said the officer will remain suspended at least through July 3, when the town board of aldermen holds its next regular meeting.

Aldermen will take some form of action on the officer's employment status at that time. Lewis said the officer has the option of requesting

a hearing before the board.

Police Chief Rodney Gause refused to discuss the suspension of Samek, who joined the police department in April 1989. Gause referred all questions to the town attorney.

Lewis also refused to give a reason for the suspension, saying it wouldn't help the town or police officer to make it public knowledge.

"It doesn't help anybody for that information to be released at this point," Lewis said.

Samek, who has an unlisted telephone number, could not be reached for comment.

Accident Report Shows Two Killed In Fiery Wreck

Two Bolton men were killed early Saturday when the car they were in crashed and burned about 10 miles north of Navassa.

A passing motorist helped rescue a third person from the burning car.

The victims have been identified as James Klennis Lowery, 35, and Larry Allen Patrick, 26, both of Bolton, said Highway Patrol Spokesperson Ruby Oakley.

Lowery is believed to have been the driver of the 1978 Chevrolet station wagon that crossed a railroad track on Mt. Misery Road (SR 1426) and rounded a curve at a high rate of speed before running off the road and hitting a pine tree head on.

State Trooper D.A. Lewis reported the car was traveling an estimated 80 mph when the accident occurred around 6:15 a.m.

The two victims were pinned inside the wreckage when the vehicle caught fire and burned, said Lewis. They were pronounced dead at the scene.

A passenger in the rear seat, William Stacey Graham, 23, also of Bolton, was seriously injured and

taken to New Hanover Regional Medical Center in Wilmington.

A passing motorist stopped and helped pull Graham from the burning car, Lewis reported. The trooper did not identify the motorist.

The bodies were taken to The Brunswick Hospital in Supply.

No charges were filed. Damage was estimated at \$800.

So far this year seven people have died on Brunswick County's highways as a result of traffic accidents, Ms. Oakley said.

Through the end of June last year, seven people had also died, she said.

Car Overturns

In another accident last Thursday, a Shallotte woman and her passenger were injured after a car overturned on Old Georgetown Road (SR 1163) about two miles north of Calabash.

Shelly Carmen Gurganus, 19, was charged with having an expired registration for her 1990 Ford following the 12:45 a.m. accident, re-

ported State Trooper D.B. Harvell.

According to Harvell, Ms. Gurganus was traveling north on Old Georgetown Road when her car ran off the right shoulder, overturned and landed upside down on the right shoulder.

She and a passenger, Rebecca Buffkin, 18, of Shallotte, each received class B injuries, which are serious but not incapacitating, and were taken to The Brunswick Hospital for treatment.

Damage was listed at \$7,500.

DWI Charged

An Ash man was charged with driving while impaired after the car he was driving Saturday evening ran off of Little Prong Road (SR 1336) about 14 miles west of Shallotte and struck a parked car.

Henry Mailon Bowens, 70, was traveling south when his 1978 Pontiac ran off the road and struck a parked 1989 Buick owned by Ronnell Marlowe, 35, of Ash, State Trooper W.H. Thompson reported.

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