



WATCHING AS HYBRID STRIPED BASS eggs hatch at Brunswick Aquafarms at Funston are (clockwise from front left) Brunswick County school board member Robert Slockett, Marine Crescent Director Mike Bradley, ADM engineer Ron Massey; Aquafarms President Doug Holland, BCC Dean of Students Beth McLean and Director of Planning and Research Gerry Shaver.

BCC Eyeing Aquaculture Program

Brunswick Community College trustees and staff members toured several local aquaculture facilities Monday as part of BCC's quest to determine the feasibility of an aquaculture training program on campus.

Thirty-five to 40 persons participated in the tour sponsored by BCC and the Brunswick County Cooperative Extension Service. It included stops at Brunswick Aquafarms at Funston, Walden Creek Aquafarms and the aquaculture program at South Brunswick High School at Boiling Spring Lakes, the only one of its kind in North Carolina.

In addition to trustees, among those on the tour for one or more stops were Kelly Holden, chairman of the Brunswick County Commissioners; Board of Education member Robert Slockett and Supt. of Schools P.R. Hankins; Rep. E. David Redwine, Brunswick County Extension Director Milton Coleman; Mike Bradley of The Marine Crescent; Bobby Davis, BEMC economic development officer; members of BCC's administrative council and officials with the Economic Development Administration were among the participants.

There are presently 10 to 12 aquaculture facilities in Brunswick County and about 19 in Columbus County.

At the close of the tour, the group dined at the CP&L Vistors Center on Maynard Owens' cage raised catfish cooked by Owens and Wilton Harrelson.

Doug Holland, president of Brunswick Aquafarms, said a program as that proposed at BCC could provide skilled workers to 50 to 60 farmers who need help.

Speakers told the group that aquaculture is labor and capital intensive, and expensive to start up. Costs average around \$1,200 to

\$1,800 per acre to build ponds and \$3,000 to \$6,000 per acre to operate. The return on that investment typically ranges from 10 percent to 15 percent.

Choices for stocking ponds include hybrid striped bass, which are more difficult to raise but yield a better return, crayfish and catfish.

Aquaculture offers opportunities for North Carolina farmers to diversify, indicated Tom Lasordo, N.C. State extension aquaculture specialist, as well as an alternative for the farmer looking for a means to remain on the family farm.

He said completion of the two year training program by operators would increase financial institutions' willingness to make loans for aquaculture operations.

Holland said the industry in North Carolina could absorb 12 to 15 newly trained employees now and in South Carolina, even more. Pay starts around \$15,000 to \$18,000 annually with a two-year degree. Those who are good managers can be earning around \$30,000 in three to four years.

The proposed BCC project would only be a two year program in the Carolinas. Speakers on the tour suggested graduates could find jobs across the Southeast as well as in other countries.

Holland and Barry Bey, instructor of aquaculture program at South Brunswick High School, have developed a proposed two-year curriculum that could lead to an associate degree in applied science. Students would study plant biology, limnology, water quality, fish nutrition and diseases, economics, genetics and breeding and aquaculture marketing.

Among those asking questions on the tour Monday were members of an ad hoc committee of BCC trustees appointed July 17 to ex-

lore the feasibility of an aquaculture training program at the school.

The committee was named several months after BCC and the Waccamaw-Siouan Development Association jointly applied to the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA) for a \$239,164 Public Works Grant. The grant funds would help in construction of an aquaculture training facility.

The application is not complete, however, because the EDA is requiring the college to indicate a willingness to use some of its land as security.

Through the efforts of Rep. E. David Redwine, a local bill was adopted that will allow BCC to give security interests in purchased property to federal government agencies in order to receive grants from them.

Appointed by board Chairman Dave Kelly, ad hoc committee members are Jim Rabon, Malcolm Grissett, Lynda Stanley and Jamie Milligan.

The committee is to determine (1) if BCC should enter into a lien agreement with the granting agency; and (2) the feasibility of the program. If both findings are positive, then the group is to decide the exact location of the program on the campus and to assess its impact on the campus.

The committee's report is due in four months.

The grant would cover 60 percent of all costs for the facility while the school will fund the rest.

Project components include construction of 38 acres of ponds including well and plumbing; construction of a 4,200 square foot building with classroom and equipment storage space; and production and classroom equipment.

The proposed site is on a 50-acre tract that is part of BCC's campus at Supply.

Tuition Going Up At BCC This Fall

It will cost more to attend Brunswick Community College or any of the state's other community colleges this fall.

At the direction of the N.C. General Assembly, the State Board of Community Colleges has raised tuition rates at all 58 institutions, according to Dept. of Community Colleges spokesman Mark R. Van Sciver.

Tuition for in-state community college students will increase from \$105 to \$161 per quarter for full-time students, or \$11.50 per credit hour up to a maximum of 14 credit hours.

Out-of-state tuition is increasing from \$981 per quarter to \$1,505, or \$107.50 per credit hour, up to 14 credit hours.

Community colleges must now charge for each credit hour up to 14, as opposed to the previous limit of 12 credit hours.

Registration fees for occupational extension courses were raised from \$25 to \$30 per course.

The boards of trustees of the local colleges set the registration fees for other community service extension courses.

System President Bob Scott and many members of the state board have expressed concern that the increasing tuition fees will affect the system's long-lend tradition of broad accessibility.

"I'm very concerned that our system's open door policy is closing in the face of the very people who could most benefit from a community college education—people for whom a rise of \$55 in tuition means the difference between attending college or not," said Scott.

A tracking system is being developed as part of an effort to analyze student retention rates.

New Postmaster Enjoys Slow Pace In Winnabow

BY TONIA TREST

Betty Carpenter was appointed postmaster at Winnabow on April 6 and was on the job six days later.

She saw an opening for the job in a postal memo and immediately applied, she said. Ms. Carpenter was interviewed along with several other people for the position.

Ms. Carpenter had tried for 10 other appointments, but with no success, she said.

The Columbus County native says she likes the slow pace in Winnabow, where she succeeded long-time postmaster Tom Rabon Sr., who retired this year.

"Winnabow has been very receptive of me, even though I am an out-

sider," Ms. Carpenter said. "I enjoy the customer service of the postmaster position."

Her postal career began in 1975 as a substitute rural carrier. For 15 years she served as a window clerk at the post office in Whiteville.

She was officer in charge in Fair Bluff in 1986 and for four months in Hampstead in 1990 during the postmasters' absences.

Ms. Carpenter commutes every day from Whiteville for now, she said, because she "does not want to uproot" her 16-year-old daughter. She says the 45-minute drive is not that bad and is worth it.

At Winnabow she is the only office employee, but that hasn't led to boredom. "No, I haven't gotten

bored yet and I have been here three months," she said.

Besides handling the mail, Ms. Carpenter is also responsible for any janitorial services. After all this is done, she catches up on her manual reading.

"The afternoons are never boring. Everyone starts getting off of work and they come in to get their mail," she said.

"I like it here, but I am trying to move up," said Ms. Carpenter. "I would eventually like to become a level 20 postmaster." (Wilmington is considered a level 21.)

"I may stay here until retirement (15 years), but it all depends on if the advancement bug bites," she said.

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Correction

An article in the July 25 issue of *The Brunswick Beacon* stated BCC employees would receive an extra day off during the Christmas holidays.

However, the BCC Board of Trustees has not yet approved the proposed extra day. President Michael Reeves is checking with other colleges regarding the number of holidays their employees receive and is to report his findings at the board's next meeting.

The Beacon regrets the error.

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