



WORKERS LIKE JOEY CAISON stay busy in the summer pulling weeds from the earthen berms that shield county buildings at the complex.



BILLY ROBINSON builds a deck for new office space at the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department.

## Tending To Government Complex A Busy Job For County Workers

BY TERRY POPE

Visitors at the Brunswick County Government Center in Bolivia this summer are greeted by new flowers and shrubs, rose-covered archways and split rail fences. There are also new offices and buildings under construction.

For the Brunswick County Buildings and Grounds Department, it has been a busy summer. The workers say they hope the public will appreciate their efforts to make the complex safer and more attractive.

"We're doing our best," said Winky Evans, foreman of the grounds crew. "We have a limited budget, just like everyone else."

Twelve employees are responsible for taking care of county-owned buildings and grounds, which includes the government complex in Bolivia, senior citizens centers, animal control shelter and community buildings.

Recent construction and beautification projects at the complex have kept the workers busy, said R.C. Dixon, department supervisor.

"We contract very little work to outside companies," said Dixon.

One employee is an electrician, another a painter. The staff also includes carpenters and landscapers.

"It's a big area, and it's getting bigger," said Evans of the complex.

This summer, the county opened a new social services building and is currently constructing an emergency operations center on the complex grounds to house the 911 system.

"That'll be something else we'll be responsible for keeping clean," said Evans.

Evans will wait until cooler weather this fall to plant shrubs and flowers around the new social services building and its parking area. This spring, his crew built the rail fencing and archways and planted thrift in open areas at the complex.



PAINTER BOBBY MILLS adds a fresh coat to the old Department of Social Services building.



STAFF PHOTOS BY TERRY POPE

GROUNDS CREW Foreman Winky Evans repairs damage to a rock berm caused by recent heavy rains at the government complex in Bolivia.

"It's the most work on the grounds that we've done since I've been here," said Evans.

When Evans took over as foreman of the crew last July, he planned how he would make the complex more attractive during a tight budget period.

"If the money was there, I got some of what I asked for," he said.

Workers are renovating a mobile classroom building as additional office space for the sheriff's department. The former social services building must also be painted and remodeled.

"When I get the inside of it done, then I've got to do the outside," said Bobby Mills, the only painter on the staff.

This spring, he painted the outside of every building except two.

"It got so hot on me that I had to give up on the outside and move inside," he said. "I know they're in a hurry to get in here. That's the way it is when you build a new house."

The Buildings and Grounds Department was once housed in a tin shed at Supply. Dixon, who joined the

department in 1975, made the move to the government complex the following year.

In the summer, the employees primarily work outside, said Dixon, who schedules as much of the inside work as possible during the winter months.

"We stay busy year-round," he said. "Most of the time, we're spread out pretty thin."

Flat roofs at the complex must be routinely swept to prevent pine straw from building up, said Evans. However, the most unusual part of his job is caring for the earthen berms that line the sidewalks around the buildings.

Maintaining the berms is not difficult, he said.

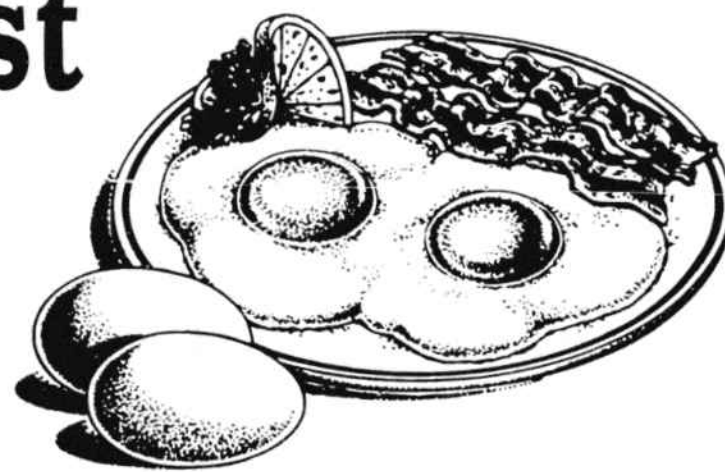
"We get a lot of weeds in them in the summer," Evans said. "That keeps us busy."

Signs warn visitors to stay away from the berms for they contain poison, but it's not the green plants that are dangerous, said Evans.

Poison is placed on the berms to protect against rodents and fire ants. Rocks around the berms are also sprayed with weed killer, he said.

Last week, workers had to deal with the effects of three inches of rain at the complex, as the busy summer has also turned into a wet summer.

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