

THE PINEWICK BEACON

Twenty-ninth Year, Number 50

12/10/93 11:50
HOG & SAW CO. BRK.
P.O. BOX 162
SPRINGFIELD, MA 01373

Carolina, Thursday, October 17, 1991

50¢ Per Copy

56 Pages, 4 Sections, 2 Inserts

Recycling Centers Forced To Close

BY TERRY POPE

Brunswick County's eight recycling stations will close after Nov. 1, leaving county officials scrambling for ways to deal with the surprise setback.

George Bush's Recycling, of Florence, S.C., notified the county Friday that they can no longer afford to haul goods from the county.

"It came as quite a surprise to us," said County Engineer Robert Tucker. "On an interim basis, it appears we'll be out of the recycling business."

Last fall, Bush had agreed to supply trailers at eight locations, manned mostly by volunteers, at Boiling Spring Lakes, Calabash, Holden Beach, Long Beach, Shalotte, Southport, Sunset Beach and Leland. The county agreed to pay Bush \$200 per trailer each time a loaded one with recyclable goods was hauled away.

The company cited the distance for hauling and a "volatile price market for buyers" as reasons for pulling out of Brunswick County at the end of this month, said Tucker.

Trailers hauled away after Oct. 31 will not be replaced with empty ones until all sites are closed. Bush had agreed to work in Brunswick County on a "handshake" agreement rather than by contract.

"We had tried to get into something long haul," said County Manager David Clegg. "It was his (Bush) wishes to go into something on a trailer-by-trailer basis."

The county began contacting volunteer coordinators at each station and towns Monday to inform them of the bad news. Officials will now seek bids from private companies capable of operating a countywide recycling program.

Last month, Brunswick County Commissioners instructed Tucker to seek bids from private companies capable of taking over the county's garbage collection. The board wants to see if it can save money by contracting the service out to private industry rather than use its county employees.

Invitations for bids, to be mailed this week, will now include a proposal for recycling service, said Tucker.

His goal is to have figures ready for commissioners within 60 days.

It may be January before the county can have another recycling program in place, Tucker said, perhaps operating boxes from the county's three solid waste transfer stations.

"That right now is open," said Tucker. "We're not sure at this point."

The county has envisioned a long-term contract with private industry. The same company would probably want both garbage collection and recycling for it to be cost effective, said Clegg.

"It would not be cost effective to have two vendors fighting for the services," said Clegg.

He said Bush's decision to pull out of Brunswick County may indicate bad news for recycling programs statewide.

"There is no market for the stuff," said Clegg. "That seems to be an emerging problem across the state."

Tucker said he feels certain that the county's recycling program will make use of the transfer stations and convenience stations set for construction on N.C. 904 at Seaside and N.C. 211 near Supply.

"We're just reacting to the flow of events," added Clegg. "We only found out about it Friday."

Chambers Offers Recycling

The sanitation company that serves five South Brunswick Island towns has offered to set up recycling centers in each community or to provide a curbside service as an alternative.

Chambers of South Carolina, which picks up garbage in Calabash, Sunset Beach, Ocean Isle Beach, Shalotte and Holden Beach.

(See CHAMBERS, PAGE 2-A)



THICK SMOKE RISES from the former V-C Chemicals plant in Navassa Monday. Firefighters from 14 departments were called to help control the blaze.

CAUSE UNDER INVESTIGATION

Firefighters Battle Navassa Plant Blaze

BY DOUG RUTTER

Efforts to contain a massive fire that started Monday at an abandoned fertilizer plant in Navassa continued into the night Tuesday, with authorities still unsure how the blaze started.

Brunswick County Fire Marshal Cecil Logan said the fire at the former V-C Chemicals plant was under control Tuesday morning, but he expected the huge wood-frame structure to continue burning at least two more days.

"It's just smoldering around, moving from place to place," Logan said Tuesday afternoon. "We keep having hot spots flare up here and there and we keep putting them out."

The blaze at the 225,000-square-

foot building on the Brunswick River was reported around 9:20 a.m. Monday, said Navassa Fire Chief Bernie Carlisle.

Logan said a small amount of fertilizer and some equipment were the only things inside the plant, which hasn't been in operation since 1985. "The building itself was pretty well empty," he said.

Since the 122-year-old building was vacant, officials decided to let it burn instead of risking injury to firefighters.

Chief Carlisle said firemen stayed outside so they would be protected from the fumes of burning fertilizer and so they wouldn't get caught inside the collapsing building.

"There's nothing that hazardous

in there that we know of," Carlisle said. "There's no use risking lives on something like this when the building's no good anyway."

Logan also said there was no way to stop the dry wood beams from burning. "The only thing we can do is keep it cool and try to contain it," he said.

The cause of the fire was still under investigation Tuesday, but Logan said he didn't think it was arson.

Because the structure was still burning, Logan said he didn't have an estimate on how much property damage had occurred. The building, which was nearly the size of three football fields, was constructed in 1869.

Chief Carlisle said the gate in

front of the old plant was locked when Navassa VFD arrived at the scene. He immediately called other fire departments for assistance.

Logan said 91 firefighters and 13 rescue personnel responded to the blaze—one of the largest fires in Brunswick County in recent years.

About 10 fire departments from across the county provided manpower and equipment, including two trucks equipped with ladders that were used to knock down the fire from above.

Brunswick County E.M.S. and rescue squads from Leland and Town Creek stood by, and several fire departments from Columbus and New Hanover counties assisted.

Fifteen firefighters from three de-

(See FIREFIGHTERS, 2-A)



A PAIR OF FISHERMEN head out Lockwood Folly River at sunrise Tuesday as oyster season opens in North Carolina.

Tide Spoils Oyster Season Opener

BY DOUG RUTTER

A low tide that never got low enough for good harvesting threw a wrench in the opening day of oyster season Tuesday in Brunswick County.

But local fishermen didn't let an uncooperative tide put a damper on their excitement or keep them from gathering the first oysters of the fall.

"It looks like just a normal opening day to me," said Carson Varnam of Varnamtown. "Everybody got them a mess of oysters to eat and a few extra bushels and went home."

Shellfishermen awoke early Tuesday to welcome the new season, which started at sunrise around 7 a.m. The low tide also coincided with sunrise, making opening day an early one for local fishermen.

Varnam, who runs an oyster house on the Lockwood Folly River, said the tide didn't get low enough Tuesday morning for a good opening day harvest.

The water stayed too high to expose some of the best oyster flats. Varnam said poor low tides are common this time of year because of easter-

ly winds.

"As long as that wind's out of the east, you're just not going to make a good low water," said Toni Chadwick of Chadwick Seafood at Shell Point.

She said westerly winds are better for oystering because the water level drops more in the local creeks and rivers.

Ms. Chadwick said there were a lot of fishermen in Shallotte River at sunrise when the season officially opened.

"Here on the landing there was probably a dozen waiting for sunrise," she said. "They were ready for it to open."

Ms. Chadwick said she wasn't disappointed in the oysters. "For the first of the season they looked pretty fair. I believe they're a little better than they were last year. It looked like they grew some."

Even with the poor low tide, Varnam said opening day was pretty much business as usual for most fishermen.

"Everybody gets really excited about that first mess of oysters," he said. "The potential looks good."

Brunswick County commercial fishermen are trying to rebound from slim pickings in 1990, when they harvested only 37,633 pounds of oysters.

Pollution, overharvesting and oyster-killing parasites have been blamed for the poor harvests in recent years.

For the second straight season, commercial fishermen are being limited to seven bushels per person and 14 bushels per boat each day during the week and stricter limits on weekends.

Despite recent problems in the oyster fishery, Ms. Chadwick is optimistic about the season, which will probably end sometime in March.

"I believe the season's going to be a little bit better than it was last year," she said Tuesday. "They look better than last year."

Ms. Chadwick said the harvest of oysters, clams, shrimp and other seafood would improve in Shallotte River if Shallotte Inlet was opened up.

"It's filled in, and they just won't dredge it," she said. "The food can't get in here for the seafood to eat."

Smith's Warehouse hustled with politicking among the crowd of more than 1,000 people, including 971 registered members, more than the 730 needed to conduct business.

Four seats on the 12-member board were up for election Saturday, two each from Columbus County and Brunswick County, with all incumbents proposed by the nominating committee for re-election.

Dissatisfaction with the co-op's retirement plan for directors and top management emerged as a key issue among Columbus County members, who turned out in large numbers to vote at Saturday's meeting. Critics said the co-op directors should use the money tied up in the retirement plan to instead improve benefits for its rank and file workers or to help pay utility bills for elderly customers on small incomes.

"They just want everybody to get a fair shake," said Debra Gore of Whiteville. "The directors shouldn't be getting retirement benefits that are better than those of employees."

New directors will be seated in January and will serve three-year terms on the board of the electrical cooperative, which serves cus-

tomers in Brunswick and Columbus counties and small portions of Bladen and Robeson counties.

Write-in candidate Leroy Williamson of Chadbourn will replace Beasley Strickland of District 11 on a 378-372 vote.

Calvin Duncan of Western Prong, who was nominated by petition for the District 10 seat, defeated incumbent Bobby Jordan 443-333.

A second write-in candidate, Edward (Eddie) Gore Jr. of Sunset Beach, lost to incumbent Bryan R. Smith of Longwood in the District 11 race, 396-374.

Hubert Brittain of Bolivia was unopposed in his bid for re-election to the District 7 seat. He received 786 votes.

Smith said Saturday that Brunswick County co-op members didn't turn out in large numbers for the meeting. And he said he had not known until a few days before the meeting that the compensation plan had become an issue in the elections.

(See CO-OP, PAGE 2-A)

"I'm not saying that it is a bad business decision...but that it is a morally bad issue."

—William David Gore Nakina.



BRITTAIN SMITH