

County Stands To Benefit From I-40 Corridor Growth

BY SUSAN USHER

Coordinating their efforts will be the key to communities along or near the I-40 corridor between Raleigh and Wilmington taking full advantage of economic growth along the link, according to a study released last week.

Likening I-40's role to that of the railroads in the 1800s, the Interstate 40 Economic Impact Study Final Report predicts the highway will have "a profound effect" on accessibility and economic development along its route.

The final section of I-40, a 120-mile stretch from Raleigh to Wilmington, opened in June 1990. It was 10 years in the building and cost \$241 million. The link between I-40 and Brunswick County will be even stronger with the completion of a proposed outer loop connecting I-40 to U.S. 17 north of Town Creek.

The study was conducted by the Center for Business and Economic Research at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, with support from the N.C. Division of Community Assistance and a steering committee that represented about 60 local government and corporate sponsors from along I-40 between Raleigh and Wilmington. Heading

the team of investigators was Professor David T. Hartgen.

Annette Odom of Sunset Beach, president of the South Brunswick Islands Chamber of Commerce, and Sabrina Hodges of Southport, manager of Southeastern Welcome Center, will represent Brunswick County interests on the I-40 Association Board of Directors. Other association members come from the nine counties directly along I-40—Duplin, Harnett, Johnston, New Hanover, Onslow, Pender, Sampson, Wake and Wayne.

Formation of a corridor association was among the key recommendations made in the economic development study, with the idea of furthering cooperative efforts in planning development along the route.

While Brunswick County isn't one of the nine counties along I-40, said Mrs. Odom, after a promotional "blitz" by the two county chambers in communities along I-40, the county was invited to join the asso-

ciation because of its "vested interest" in I-40 as a route to the coast.

"I think it will be a good plus for us," she said. "What gets done when we all work together is amazing."

"I think they were pleased to see us and excited about our expertise in tourism and tourism development," she said of the delegation's reception by other association members. "In turn, we expect to learn from them what they know about economic development."

Economic development is one of the areas in which the South Brunswick Islands Chamber of Commerce is greatly expanding its efforts this year while continuing to work on behalf of the tourism industry.

Mrs. Odom is convinced that by working together to promote and strengthen the region's economy, all counties and communities in the association stand to benefit.

As one example, she cites a proposed cargo airport site. Brunswick County may not have the infrastructure or location to support such a venture, but still stands to gain if one locates in southeastern North Carolina because of the related business and industry it is expected to attract.

By banding together to promote one site at a promising location along the corridor and lining up investment support for it, she said, rather than competing against one another, "we stand a much better chance of getting it in this part of the state."

"All of us would still benefit," she said. "I would like very much to see that facility in this part of the state."

The new I-40 Association, still in the formative stages, will take the lead in fostering this kind of cooperation in the areas of business, government, tourism, agriculture, education and economic development, and in promoting planning from a corridor-wide rather than local perspective.

Recommendations drafted in the study address not only opportunities afforded by the interstate, but also concerns related to I-40 growth pressure in the form of more people, more development and more traffic; the need to protect quality of life, to provide quality employment and services; and challenges relating to labor skills, secondary school education, lack of planning and zoning and lack of infrastructure in the participating communities.

"The challenge," states the study,

"is to balance the potential for growth with the quality-of-life now present, while improving services and the economy."

Cooperation On All Fronts

Other key recommendations among the more than 100 specific proposals for the coming decade include:

- Embrace the concept of cooperatively clustered development. Instead of encouraging thin development all along the corridor, cooperating to encourage development in strategically located clusters, with each cluster concentrating on complementary services and communities in the corridor developing the means to share the benefits and costs of such development.
- Cooperatively select and promote a small number of industrial park sites and a single cargo airport site, in keeping with the "clustering" concept.
- Establish an alliance of educational, business, military and local government organizations to promote, train and develop local jobs and work force potential, improving the corridor's human resources.
- Cooperative preparation of corridor-wide land use and development plans, working together so that planning is not divisive.

■ Develop a corridor-wide business recruitment data base that would be used by all communities to track potential new companies.

■ Recruit departing military employees for jobs and teaching.

■ Develop uniform corridor logo and corridor-wide zoning regulations.

■ Develop an infrastructure loan bank program that would work with local governments to make investment funds available for water, sewer, gas and road projects.

■ Prepare a corridor-wide marketing plan to develop and promote the corridor's features.

■ Develop a tourism support data system allowing agencies and business to share resources on tourism services and needs.

■ Develop major attractions in the upper- and mid-corridor areas, and a convention center in the Wilmington area.

■ Develop a corridor-wide emergency medical services plan that uses I-40's access.

■ Ensure that additional transportation improvements remain on schedule for related routes and loops around the cities, such as N.C. 24, U.S. 117, U.S. 17 and U.S. 70.

■ Develop future leaders, by encouraging participation at all levels.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Beacon Makes Staff Changes

The Brunswick Beacon has recently added a reporter to the news staff and promoted another writer to sports editor.

New staff writer Dori Cosgrove Gurganus will assume some of the responsibilities previously handled by Doug Rutter, who has been promoted to sports editor. She will cover the towns of Calabash, Sunset Beach, Ocean Isle Beach and Varnamtown, as well as handling general assignments.

Mrs. Gurganus is a newcomer to Brunswick County, having relocated to North Carolina three months ago from Athens, Ga. Born in Charleston, S.C., she was reared in Atlanta, Ga., and graduated from Lakeside High School in 1982. She received a bachelor's degree in English from The University of Georgia in 1987.

Her previous employment included jobs as a photocopy technician, assistant editor of a magazine, restaurant manager and professional musician.

In August, she married Robbie Gurganus of Shallotte, who is a rural mail carrier with the Shallotte Post Office.

Rutter, who has been employed at the newspaper for four years, will continue to cover the towns of Holden Beach and Shallotte as well as local sports and fishing. He succeeds Johnny Craig as sports editor.

Craig, who has covered sports for the Beacon for over ten years, resigned in order to devote full time to his family's growing real estate business at Holden Beach. He will continue an affiliation with the newspaper as a sports consultant and will, on occasion, still cover sports events.

Aimed At Career Women

An upcoming seminar offered by the Small Business Center at Brunswick Community College will address the career woman's concerns relating to personal productivity and leadership as she tries to balance her professional responsibilities and her personal life.

The seminar will be held Thursday, Nov. 21, from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. at no charge to participants.

Issues to be discussed include ways to promote a clear leadership image, how to make choices based on one's own values, how to write and use a life and career plan, how to produce a communication plan, and how to organize and manage one's personal life as well as one manages working time.

Presenter Benjamin Bailey has been a professional speaker and seminar leader since 1985. He holds a master's degree in business administration from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

Those interested in participating in the workshop should contact the Small Business Center at 754-6900, 457-6329 or 343-0203 to pre-register.

Hirings Announced

Comprehensive Home Health Care has announced the hiring of four new employees at its Supply office.

They are Georgia Manges and Virginia Joyner, registered nurses, and Maizie Pankey and Carolyn King, nursing assistant I's, said Christine Waddell, personnel clerk.

Pork Referendum Set

Local pork producers are to vote Wednesday, Nov. 20, on whether to establish a mandatory state checkoff on the "Penny-A-Pig" program.

The referendum will be conducted from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Cooperative Extension Service Office at the Brunswick County Government Center in Bolivia.

Assessments would not be collected unless more than half of votes cast in the statewide referendum are in favor of an assessment. If approved, the program would allow up to 5 cents per hog to be deducted when a producer takes his or her swine to market.

Unlike the national Penny-A-Pig assessment already in place, said Lois Caison of the extension office, all of this assessment would remain in North Carolina. The money would be used by the association for lobbying, for representing swine producers before governmental agencies and decision-making bodies whose actions affect the swine industry.

The money collected would be administered by the N.C. Pork Producers Association. The association's board of directors would have the authority to increase the assessment per hog as much as a penny per year up to the 5-cent limit.

Producers who did not want to participate in the assessment could obtain a refund after the sale of their swine.

More information on the proposed assessment program is available at the extension office.

Projects To Promote Shopping At Home

BY HOLLY RICHARDS, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
South Brunswick Islands Chamber Of Commerce

It's not even Thanksgiving yet and the girls in the chamber office have already drawn for our Christmas "Secret Santas." Not only that, they managed to con me into having a Christmas party for them at my house, my treat! Talk about Christmas spirit, these girls have been singing Christmas Carols for two weeks.

Since we are in the Christmas spirit, we thought we'd share some of it with you. The chamber is again sponsoring our annual shop at home project, known as "Hometown Holidays." In addition, we are featuring a "Best Decorated Storefront" contest (to put you in the mood). To enter, chamber members decorate their business for the holiday season and compete against others to be the best decorated establishment. Judging will take place on Wednesday evening, Dec. 11, and will be announced on Thursday Dec. 19. The winner will receive a trophy at an official presentation ceremony. Deadline for entering is Nov. 18. We encourage all chamber members to participate.

As many of you know, our Hometown Holidays project includes cash! That's a handy thing to have around Christmas. For three consecutive Thursdays, we'll be drawing for our big winners. Member retail merchants will have a registration box placed in their business. Registration begins on Friday, Nov. 29 and continues through Tuesday, Dec. 17. The deadline for merchants that wish to participate in cash giveaways is Nov. 15. If you need more information about Hometown Holidays, is the Best Decorated Storefront contest or any of the other projects the chamber is involved with, please call us.



RICHARDS

475 Deeds Recorded By County In September

The Brunswick County Office of Register of Deeds recorded 475 deeds in September for \$3,974 in revenue, according to its monthly report.

Total revenue collected by the county in September totaled \$43,365.50, which included: 270 deeds of trust, \$3,162; 33 plats, \$653.50; 79 financing statements (UCC's), \$632; 272 cancellations of deeds of trust, \$1,407; excise tax, \$27,320; 27 marriage licenses, \$1,080; miscellaneous recordings and other services, \$5,137.

Under legislation adopted in 1991, the Register of Deeds must remit one-half of the net proceeds from the real estate excise tax to the N.C. Department of Revenue. The term "net proceeds," in this reference, means gross proceeds less the cost to the county for collecting and administering the tax. Therefore, of the \$27,320 collected, \$11,531.92 was sent to the Department of Revenue.

Another change in state law requires the office to remit \$20 of each \$40 marriage fee collected to the state Department of Administration for the Domestic Violence Center Fund, which helps support

domestic violence shelters such as Hope Harbor Home in Brunswick County.

This is in addition to the \$5 already being remitted to the State Treasurer for the Abused Children's Fund.

Of the \$1,080 collected in September for marriage fees, \$540 was turned over to the Department of Administration and \$135 to the State Treasurer.

Expenses for September (excluding salaries) were \$175 per diem, which is paid to five members on the Register of Deeds Advisory Board; service maintenance contracts, \$1,988.75; departmental supplies, \$1,411.05; equipment rental, \$150.75; \$194, maintenance/repairs on equipment; postage, \$245.57; telephone charges, \$388.29; supplemental retirement, \$770.64; and dues and subscriptions, \$15.

The office paid \$2,099.58 for travel and training, which included \$149.51 for one person to attend a notary public workshop; \$151.42 for one person to attend a vital records workshop; \$1,755.47 for five persons to attend the annual Register of Deeds Conference; and \$43.18 for advisory board travel.

TOURS BULK MAIL CENTER

Beacon Editor-Publisher Attends Mail Seminar

Beacon editor and publisher Eddie Sweatt attended a two-day second-class mail seminar in Greensboro last week.

The Brunswick Beacon is sent to mail subscribers each week from the Shallotte post office as second-class mail, the mail class used by most paid circulation newspapers, magazines and other periodicals.

Seminars are conducted throughout the country by the Mail Education Center of the U.S. Postal Service. The Greensboro seminar was taught by Ken Young of Washington, D.C., who retired after 36 years with the Postal Service where he specialized for many years in second-class mail matters.

In addition to in-depth explanations of the requirements of second-class mail, the seminar included a tour of the Bulk Mail Center in Greensboro, the seminar site.

The Bulk Mail Center, which processes up to 300,000 pieces of mail in an eight-hour period, handles mail and packages for the Carolinas,

Virginia and West Virginia.

Sweatt attended the seminar to see if there are ways to speed up delivery of the Beacon to its many out-of-county subscribers. Timely and consistent delivery has been a continuing problem for weekly newspapers for a number of years, he said.

However, among the things he learned at the seminar is the fact that the Postal Service makes no promises when it comes to delivery of second-class mail.

Page 471 of the Sept. 15, 1991 edition of the Domestic Mail Manual, distributed to those attending the seminar, says, "The Postal Service does not guarantee the delivery of second-class mail within a specified time. Publications authorized second-class entry are given expeditious distribution, dispatch, transit handling, and delivery insofar as is practicable."

However, postal officials maintain that newspapers are given preferential treatment closely resembling that given to first-class mail.

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for your support and vote in last week's election.

Jim Fournier
Holden Beach Board of Commissioners

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