

Brunswick, Regional Leaders Examine Solid Waste Dilemma

BY TERRY POPE

Mapping out plans for a regional, four-county solid waste authority may take years, but the effort is under way.

Leaders from New Hanover, Brunswick, Pender and Columbus counties want to join forces to help reduce the cost of garbage disposal and to tackle the growing problem of shrinking landfill space in southeastern North Carolina.

"One of the things I'm truly convinced of is that there is no recipe for solving your solid waste problems," said Durwood Curling, director of the Southeastern Public Service Authority of Virginia.

Curling spoke to area officials at a steering committee meeting last week to explain how his eight-member authority relies on incineration, landfilling of ash and recycling to get rid of its one million tons of trash per year.

SPSA is composed of eight cities and counties, including Chesapeake, Franklin, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth, Southampton, Suffolk and Virginia Beach.

George Sawyer, Craven County's assistant county manager and member of the recently-formed Coastal Regional Solid Waste Management Authority, also spoke at the meeting in Wilmington hosted by the Cape Fear Council of Governments.

In August, area leaders agreed to meet to discuss possibly forming a regional solid waste authority in the Cape Fear region. The meetings are open to the public, and about 50 people attended last week's session.

Brunswick County Manager David Clegg, Bill Dunn of Boiling Spring Lakes and Jane Gilbert of Leland, a member of the Brunswick County Keep America Beautiful board, attended.

Curling explained how the Virginia authority operates seven garbage transfer stations, a regional landfill in Suffolk, a yard waste recycling facility and a waste ener-

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gy incineration plant in Portsmouth. Energy from the incinerator is sold to the U.S. Navy shipyard there, Curling said.

"I'm not wild about incineration," said Brunswick County Manager David Clegg, "unless there's a great attention to separation and a tremendous attention to particulate control."

New Hanover County recently built and began operating an incinerator, but metals and recyclable materials there are not separated before burning. Joe Boyer, an employee of the plant, told the committee that mass burning of metal and glass also presents maintenance problems.

Tipping Fees Charged

The Virginia communities involved in SPSA joined forces in 1978 but did not begin operating until 1985. It now serves an estimated 1.02 million residents and must make at least \$45,000 per day in tipping fees, sale of recyclable materials and heat-generated energy to pay for the \$153.8 million in bonds borrowed to build the system, said Curling.

Garbage taken to the incinerator is handpicked for aluminum while other metals are mechanically removed.

Tipping fees, charges for dumping garbage, are \$35 per ton for private haulers and \$29.50 per ton for municipal trucks.

The system also maintains more than 50 drop-off sites to collect seven recyclable or hazardous materials, such as household batteries or chemicals. A curbside recycling program is underway with a goal of adding 25,000 homes per year.

Curling said the transfer stations were not built to accommodate recycling. "That's one of the things we would do differently if we were building now," he added.

When planning an authority, Curling said citizens should be invited to serve on the committee. The SPSA board of directors is composed of one voting member from each of the eight communities, regardless of their size or population.

"No matter how good a program you put together," said Curling, "you're going to develop some enemies. Also, prepare to face capital costs beyond your wildest imagination."

The cost to prepare one acre of landfill space for receiving ash from the incinerator, with a lined cell and treatment of runoff, is \$250,000, he said.

"Look for costs to be out of sight, and it's getting worse," said Curling.

Some Pros and Cons

Curling outlined some pros and cons of a regional authority:

- Elected officials of the landfill's host community will

be blasted by the public:

- One opponent can create discord and doubt about the entire system;
- The rate setters are also the rate payers on the board of directors;
- Such systems generally improve the appearance of trash collection sites at a time when the garbage business has a "terrible reputation"; and
- In addition to dealing with trash problems, elected officials that form an authority will often work together on other issues.

New Hanover County Commissioner Fred Retchin said forming an authority is "only an attempt to hold those costs down, in whatever way we can."

He continued, "It is cheaper to operate one landfill than it is four landfills. Although we have good facilities now, they will not last forever."

Brunswick County's Supply landfill, purchased by the county in 1989, is permitted to operate until it is full, which may be fewer than 10 years.

"A landfill isn't something you can assume is going to be there and is going to work," said Clegg.

Even with new mandated federal and state landfill regulations, the Supply site is in good shape, he added.

Last week, Columbus County Commissioners asked the Chambers Development Corp. to draw up a list of sites in Columbus County that may be suitable for a regional landfill.

New regulations have cut the life of the Columbus landfill to about three years. A new 100-acre landfill would last an estimated 12 years to 15 years and cost approximately \$20 million. It would be in operation by November 1994 and could serve 11 counties.

Kelly Holden, chairman of the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners, said he believes a regional authority is "something we should take a look at."

Indian Summer Temperatures Remain In Weather Forecast

The area should experience a "very nice period of Indian summer" for the next few days, according to meteorologist Jackson Canady.

The temperatures should stay mild and near normal and precipitation should be normal for this time of year, said Canady.

He said that he expected no Arctic blasts of air to reach the South Brunswick Islands area for at least a few days.

The outlook, Canady predicted, calls for evening low temperatures in the low 40s and daytime highs in the mid 60s.

He said he expects less than a

half-inch of rain to fall in the next week, which is slightly less than normal for this time of year.

For the period of Nov. 12-18, the maximum high temperature for the area was 77 degrees, which Canady recorded on Nov. 16. He recorded the minimum low temperature of 36 degrees on Nov. 14.

The average daytime high was 67 degrees, and the average evening low was 42 degrees, making for a daily average temperature of 54 degrees, he said, which is one degree below normal.

Canady said he measured no rainfall during the period at his home in Shallotte Point.



STAFF PHOTO BY SUSAN USHER

New Supply Post Office Open

A new and larger U.S. Post Office opened in Supply Tuesday afternoon at the northeast corner of the intersection of N.C. 211 and Blanton Road. The postal service closed at 12:30 p.m. Tuesday in its old location on U.S. 17, and reopened for business in the new facility at 2 p.m. Postmaster Normal Rachels said an open house will be held in early 1992. Meanwhile, two former postmasters, Evelyn Hawes and Lottie Tripp, were invited to be among the first to buy stamps at the new facility Tuesday.

Horse Killed By Vehicles

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A horse was killed last Thursday when it was struck by two different vehicles on Lanvale Road two miles west of Leland.

Harry Dale Benton, 40, of Leland was traveling south on Lanvale Road (S.R. 1438) when the 1989 Mazda he was driving struck a horse that was in his lane, according to Trooper D.A. Lewis' report.

The Mazda then ran off onto the left shoulder of the road. The horse was knocked into the northbound lane, where it was struck by a 1990 Dodge van, said Ms. Oakley.

The northbound van was operated by Nelson Edward Norwood, 39, of Leland.

The horse was owned by Danny Bollinger of Wilmington, reported Trooper Lewis.

Benton was taken to New Hanover Regional Medical Center in Wilmington, where he was treated for serious injuries, Ms. Oakley said. No other persons were injured.

Trooper Lewis estimated the damage to the Mazda at \$8,000, and the damage to the Dodge van at \$500.

No tickets were issued in the accident, Ms. Oakley said.

Unsafe Movement

A Yaupon Beach man was

charged last Friday morning with a safe movement violation when he attempted to make a U-turn on N.C. 211 less than two miles west of Southport, the state Highway Patrol reported.

Robert Chapman Sellers, 75, of Yaupon Beach was traveling east on N.C. 211 in a 1982 Cadillac Friday at 11:40 a.m. when he pulled the car onto the right shoulder in preparation to make a U-turn, according to a report filed by Trooper D.B. Harvell.

As Sellers made the turn, Ms. Oakley said, the Cadillac struck the back of a motorcycle which was traveling east also.

Christopher George Lee, 21, of Supply was driving the 1984 Honda motorcycle. Lee slid with the motorcycle across N.C. 211 and hit the front bumper of a westbound 1989 Chevrolet driven by James Weldon Jackson, 70, of Long Beach, Harvell reported.

Lee was taken to Doshier Memorial Hospital in Southport by ambulance and was treated for serious injuries. No other injuries were reported.

Trooper Harvell estimated damages to the Cadillac at \$200, damages to the motorcycle at \$1,000, and damages to the Chevrolet at \$200.

Main Line Water Customers To Pay

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Phase III will route a new transmission line along U.S. 17 south of Shallotte to N.C. 904. The line will travel N.C. 904 to Seaside and tie in with an existing line there on N.C. 179. Phase III-A will route a line down Village Road to Shallotte Point.

Bids will be opened Friday for the N.C. 904, Thomasboro Road and U.S. 17 project, said Tucker. Bids for the elevated water tower, pumping station and line to Shallotte Point will be opened the first week in December, he added.

Commissioners voted unanimously to ask the UOB for a new policy.

Commenting Tuesday, Holden said the policy will help the county move toward equity. "But there is no way to make it equal for everyone and it be legal," he added. The county has no state authority to make those who live along the trunk lines tap on to receive county water, while it can compel those in SADs to do so.

Holden, who discussed the need for more parity with UOB members more than a year ago, suggested the new policy would also take some of

the pressure off that board.

"I'm tired of UOB members getting beat to death at every public hearing," he said. "I see this as one way of stopping the criticism."

Robert Nubel of Boiling Spring Lakes, vice chairman of the UOB and a longtime member of that board, said Tuesday that it has generally been the UOB's position that a policy of this type was needed.

"It's something we hear at most of the public hearings," he said. "We've always told them it was something that was done a long time ago, at a time when the county didn't know what the future would bring."

"The county never envisioned being in the retail water business and now it is in the retail water business with thousands of customers."

Those early decision-makers can't be faulted because decisions were made on that supposition, he said. "However," he continued, "we should correct the mistakes of the past and I think this was one."

"I think a majority of the board felt that it would have been a difficult position to react to that at a public hearing—to have to tell them that they were going to have to pay an assessment while someone around the corner didn't have to."

Other Business

In other business Monday, the board:

- Approved a public participation plan for the Brunswick County Land Use Plan update, as presented by Don Eggert, a county planner, and Glenn Harbeck, consultant. It design-

ates the Brunswick County Planning Board as the steering committee for the plan mandated by the N.C. Coastal Area Management Act. Plans call for a series of community meetings in January.

- Gave final approval for placing flouridation equipment at the county's Malmo and N.C. 211 water treatment plants. The county will begin adding fluoride to the drinking water within four weeks, said Clegg.

- Accepted a \$50,000 N.C. Industrial Renovation Grant, to be given to Telecron, a manufacturer relocating to the Leland Industrial Park.

- Set a public hearing for Dec. 2, 6:30 p.m., in the commissioners' chambers to consider a list of road names that Clegg called "the latest batch of discoveries" by county workers who are erecting road signs for the 911 program.

- Approved a budget amendment returning \$273 in unused funds to the Cape Fear Substance Abuse Program youth services.

- Made the following appointments: William Millard, Catherine Gates and Marty Cooke, to the Aging Advisory Board; Bob Miller, James Minette and Bill Fairley to the Brunswick Airport Commission; Don Hughes to the Industrial Facility Board; Paul Austin to the Keep America Beautiful Board; Billy Kirby and Ben DeBlois to the Transportation Steering Committee; John Ramsey as chairman of the Brunswick County ABC Board; and Walter Hill and Patricia Helms as extraterritorial members of the Long Beach Planning Board and Board of Adjustment.

Seafood Ordinance On Hold

(Continued From Page 1-A)

The health board does not have the authority to hire an inspector to enforce the ordinance. That lies in the hands of county commissioners.

In Other Business

In other business Monday, the board:

- Met in executive session to discuss personnel, but took no action afterwards.

- Accepted a \$23,000 federal grant for the Baby Love maternal health program, which will be used to hire an outreach worker. The position is funded for five years.

- Accepted state funds for an additional 50 percent position in maternal care coordination, a program aimed at reducing infant mortality.

- Revised a policy for its well monitoring program, which had been idle since June, said Rabon. It will allow placement of ground water test wells for homeowners who request them.

- Met new Animal Control Supervisor Charlie McClain, who replaced Zelma Babson, who has appealed her firing to the State Personnel Commission.

- Heard that Melissa Hill has been hired. She is an authorized environmental health specialist with four years of experience, said Environmental Health Supervisor John Crowder, and will be capable of doing soil tests for placement of septic systems following a minimum of in-house training.

- Heard from board member Maliston "Mo" Stanley, who has recruited a number of minority males as volunteers to participate in a high blood pressure screening program for the health department.

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