

CP&L LEADS TOP 10 LIST

Property Tax Bills Due Monday

BY TERRY POPE

Brunswick County property owners will have until Monday to pay their 1991 taxes without facing a penalty.

Tax statements indicate the deadline is Jan. 5, which happens to fall on a Sunday this year. The actual deadline is Monday, Jan. 6, by 5:30 p.m., said Tax Collector Nancy Moore.

Through the end of November, just 16.3 percent of Brunswick County residents had paid their taxes, said Ms. Moore. For the same period last year, 19.6 percent had paid.

"Considering the economy, that's not bad," she said. "The bulk of it is going to come in within the next two weeks."

If paying by mail, the letters must be postmarked on or before Jan. 6 to avoid a 2 percent penalty. Metered mail must arrive at the office on or before the 6th to avoid added costs.

Approximately 95,000 tax statements were mailed to Brunswick County property owners in August, a month later than normal. Brunswick County Commissioners delayed the mailing until a decision was reached not to charge property owners a parcel fee to help pay for trash disposal.

Business was brisk at the tax office Friday. The period following Christmas is the busiest time of the year for the tax collection department.

The office hopes to improve on its 95.06 percent collection rate for 1990. That figure was down slightly, from 95.31 the previous year, said Ms. Moore.

"We're certainly going to strive and push for it," she said.

Garnishment Works

A policy approved by commissioners in February gives the tax department authority to garnish wages

10 Largest Taxpayers For '91

SOURCE: BRUNSWICK COUNTY TAX ADM.

PROPERTY OWNERS	VALUATION	TAX AMOUNT
Carolina Power & Light Co.	\$634,034,319	\$4,595,299.24
E.I. du Pont de Nemours & Co.	264,921,455	1,814,711.97
N.C. Eastern Municipal Power	181,456,261	1,315,557.89
Archer Daniels Midland	66,204,085	479,979.61
Cogentrix	34,829,626	252,514.79
Odell Williamson	27,715,430	189,895.10
Federal Paper Co.	24,626,640	168,706.12
Bald Head Island Ltd.	21,010,146	152,323.63
Brunswick Electric Membership	21,862,203	151,431.99
International Paper Co.	21,066,000	144,302.12

(Tax figures include any Doshier Hospital district taxes for which the taxpayer is responsible.)

and to attach bank assets of those who owe back taxes. From April to Nov. 7, the department had collected \$260,180 in back taxes from delinquent accounts.

"So if they don't pay by the 7th, we still have the authority to go in and garnish their wages," Ms. Moore noted. "We don't give them any warning."

Property owners have quickly become aware of the policy, said County Manager David Clegg.

Before, persons said there was no incentive to pay on time when the county wasn't taking quick action to collect delinquent taxes. State law allows counties to collect for taxes that are no more than 10 years past due.

"It should make everyone happier about paying their taxes this year," said Clegg. "They know it's not an issue anymore."

County commissioners adopted a \$35 million budget based on a tax rate of 68.5 cents per \$100 in valuation for the 1991-92 fiscal year, the same tax rate as the previous year. Facing state funding cuts, commissioners trimmed the county budget to keep from raising taxes.

"We're dealing with a steady rate that hasn't wildly fluctuated as it has in other counties," said Clegg. "But 1992 is going to be interesting."

Persons who pay after the 6th will be charged a 2 percent penalty until Feb. 1, when it will increase to 2 3/4 percent. For example, a person who owes \$300 in taxes will pay \$306 after the 6th, a figure that will increase monthly thereafter.

Annually, about 85 percent of taxpayers pay before the deadline each year. About 15 percent end up paying a penalty. The names of delinquent taxpayers are published in local newspapers in April.

The Top 10

The names are the same, but the order has shifted slightly for Brunswick County's "Top 10 Taxpayers" list for 1991.

According to Brunswick County Tax Administrator Boyd Williamson, there were no new additions to the top 10 list of county property owners. The list is dominated by corporations and businesses except for one individual, Ocean Isle Beach developer Odell Williamson, who maintained his number six spot on

the list again this year.

Once again, Carolina Power and Light Co., with its Brunswick nuclear plant in Southport, heads the list of taxpayers released last week by the tax office.

At \$634 million, CP&L's 1991 valuation increased by about \$15 million from its 1990 level. That figure fell last year, said Williamson, because of a scheduled adjustment for public utility companies.

The result is that CP&L's \$4.5 million tax bill is about \$110,000 more than last year. The Du Pont company will pay about \$300,000 more than last year.

Making the top 10 list were: CP&L; E.I. du Pont de Nemours & Co., a manufacturer of polyester fiber in Leland; the N.C. Eastern Municipal Power Agency, a consortium of municipalities which owns part of the Brunswick Nuclear Plant's production capacity; Archer Daniels Midland, formerly Pfizer Inc., a citric acid producer in Southport; Cogentrix, a cogeneration plant that sells processed steam to Archer Daniels Midland and uses surplus steam to make electricity for sale to CP&L; Odell Williamson; Federal Paper Board Co., a timber producer; Bald Head Island Ltd., a Bald Head Island development company; Brunswick Electric Membership Corp., a local power cooperative; and International Paper Co., a timber producer.

International Paper slipped from eighth in 1990 to 10th this year. Bald Head Island Ltd. moved up one position to eighth, and Brunswick Electric moved from 10th to ninth this year.

The top 10 taxpayers account for \$9.26 million in tax payments based on more than \$1.29 billion in property values, or about a third of the county's tax base.



STAFF PHOTO BY DORIC GURGANUS

Feast For The Birds

A hungry seagull snatches bread from the hand of Lisa Reynolds of Xenia, Ohio, while she and her family enjoy a Christmas afternoon on Ocean Isle Beach. This is the Reynolds' last Christmas stateside for a while, as Lisa's husband, Ash, has been stationed in England for four years by the Air Force. They visited family here and brought twin daughters Katie and Kristy to see the ocean for the first time.

State Legislature Delays Local Filing Period

BY TERRY POPE AND DOUG RUTTER

State lawmakers have delayed the filing period for candidates in the 1992 elections while they work out bugs in new state House and Senate and U.S. Congressional districts.

The N.C. General Assembly postponed the start of the filing period from Jan. 6 until Feb. 10 after reporting to Raleigh Monday for a special session.

State Rep. David Redwine said the delayed filing period is scheduled to end March 2, "assuming everything goes all right" with the redistricting plans.

The U.S. Justice Department's rejection of a state redistricting plan for congressional and state races has thrown the 1992 election process in turmoil.

Legislators have convened for a short session to draft a new plan to suit the Justice Department. The federal agency says districts approved last summer favor incumbents in office while "refusing to accommodate the community."

Redwine said proposals to redraw district lines could leave Brunswick County divided.

"I'm up here now trying to minimize the damage to Brunswick County," said Redwine, who is vice chairman of the Congressional Redistricting Committee.

The Brunswick County Board of Elections was notified by letter Friday to delay filing for local seats until further notice.

Locally, filing was to have opened Monday, Jan. 6, for three seats each on the Brunswick County Board of

"I'm up here now trying to minimize the damage to Brunswick County."

—State Rep. David Redwine

Commissioners and Board of Education—(Districts 1, 3 and 4), as well as county coroner and register of deeds.

Incumbents on the board of commissioners in Districts 1 and 3, Kelly Holden and Gene Pinkerton, have announced they will not seek re-election.

District 4 Commissioner Frankie Rabon has not announced his plans. Neither have school board incumbents Doug Baxley, Robert Slockett and Donna Baxter of Districts 1, 3 and 4 respectively; Coroner Greg White; or Register of Deeds Robert Robinson.

Filing had already been delayed for state House and Senate seats pending approval of a redistricting plan.

"Hopefully, the primary election will still be conducted on the regular scheduled date," said Alex K. Brock, director of the state Board of Elections.

Under that schedule, the primary election would be held Tuesday, May 5. Filing was to open Jan. 6 at noon and close Feb. 3 at noon.

All elections will now depend on approval of the redistricting plan. The plan devised by the General Assembly this summer was rejected by the Justice Department in December, saying new district lines

weaken minority voting strength as protected in the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

The state revised the 14th House District, which now includes Brunswick and Columbus counties and Cape Fear I and II precincts in New Hanover County, by expanding its territory and turning it into a two-member district. Columbus County is presently represented by Rep. Leo Mercer and Brunswick County by Rep. E. David Redwine.

Locally, the 18th state Senate district also was reconfigured, dropping a portion of Cumberland County and picking up a portion of New Hanover County.

Boundaries of the 7th Congressional District now represented by Rep. Charlie Rose were modified as well.

Because of population growth, the state added a 12th congressional district in the Piedmont and a minority district from Durham to Elizabeth City.

On Monday, Redwine said there is a possibility that portions of Brunswick County will be included in new state and congressional minority districts.

He said the Navassa, Woodburn and Hoods Creek communities may be included in a new state House minority district along with commu-

nities in New Hanover, Columbus and Pender counties.

The Justice Department also wants another congressional minority district in North Carolina. Redwine said a district running from Charlotte to southeastern North Carolina is one of the possibilities being considered.

"Right now nobody knows," he said. "We'll probably get a clearer view next week."

Redwine said the state legislature's two redistricting committees will start meeting next Tuesday and develop plans to present to the full General Assembly when it reconvenes Jan. 13.

If lawmakers pass redistricting plans incorporating Justice Department recommendations, Redwine said it should only take a few days to get federal approval.

"We feel like we can get it all cleared up and changed by Feb. 10," Redwine said.

New boundaries are drawn every 10 years to reflect population growth based on the U.S. Census.

Brunswick County's local redistricting plan set new boundaries for the county's five residential districts for school board and county commission and was approved by a majority of voters in November.

That plan did not displace any incumbent commissioners or school board members now holding office.

New district lines, drafted by Brunswick County Commissioners, affect residency requirements for candidates only. Voters countywide nominate and elect candidates from all districts.

VA Officials May Help Pick County's Officer

Brunswick County Manager David Clegg says he will get help from the state Veterans Affairs division when interviewing candidates for the county's vacant Veterans Service position.

Clegg said Friday that he will ask someone from the state office to assist him once the pool of 207 applicants has been narrowed down for interviews. He hasn't indicated when those interviews will be held.

The seat became vacant in October when Jess Parker retired and moved to Washington. His longtime assistant, Julia Hayes, a veterans service officer, was then named acting director.

Brunswick County veterans organizations have lobbied Brunswick County Commissioners, asking that a veteran fill the post. Commissioners haven't discussed the controversial position at their meetings or said when they would like the matter resolved.

"They haven't indicated it to me," said Clegg.

Ms. Hayes, a non-veteran, has applied for the county-funded position and was endorsed by Parker as the logical candidate to fill his shoes.

The candidate chosen will be "very oriented to Veterans Service issues," said Clegg.

"Those applicants will have to be well-versed in veterans issues," he

said. "We will be looking for a benchmark of competence in dealing with veterans and their families."

According to the District 4 Veterans Service office in Wilmington, Brunswick County is home to an estimated 5,990 veterans.

Steve Guthrie, senior veteran service officer of District 4, said the Veterans Administration estimated \$4.8 million in benefits would be distributed in Brunswick County in 1991 to veterans, their dependents and survivors.

"A lot of industries in Brunswick County don't generate that kind of income," said Guthrie. "It's like a little industry."

Debate has also focused on whether to shut the Brunswick County office down and have veterans rely on the Wilmington District 4 office, which also serves New Hanover, Columbus, Onslow, Pender and Bladen counties.

"It would be a huge mistake," said Guthrie.

His office is one of 15 district offices statewide. Ninety of the state's 100 counties also have their own full-time local Veterans Service officer.

County officers are responsible for day-to-day interface with clients while district offices provide technical assistance. (See VA OFFICIALS, Page 2-A)

Here's What South Brunswick Leaders See For '92

BY DORIC GURGANUS AND DOUG RUTTER

South Brunswick Islands officials have vastly different forecasts and predictions for the year ahead.

Some are starting the year with plans to complete big projects, while others are hoping to keep a good thing going or to simply improve on 1991.

Wastewater management will likely be a key issue in at least three of the six area towns, and probably more.

Ocean Isle Beach plans to expand its sewer plant this year, and Calabash and Sunset Beach will consider building systems.

Here's a brief look at what local leaders expect in the year ahead:

Varnamtown

Mayor Judy Galloway said she knows of no big



GALLOWAY

up the building and its grounds.

Ocean Isle Beach

Betty Williamson, who was elected to her third full term as mayor of Ocean Isle Beach in November, said that 1992 will "continue to be busy" for the community.

plans for the upcoming year, except for the paving of the town hall parking lot.

The mayor said she would wait until the new board, which includes two newly-elected aldermen, settles in and see what they decide to tackle next.

Mayor Galloway was in office when the previous Varnamtown board purchased the town hall in 1989 and proceeded in 1991 to fix

She lists several projects that the town plans to consider or pursue in the year ahead such as regular recycling service and taking bids to expand the sewer system to the island's east end.

The town also expects to hear whether it is eligible for reduced flood insurance rates that the town applied for in 1991.

Mrs. Williamson said the police department will continue with its crime prevention program this year.

Police officers are currently engraving owner identification on valuable appliances and household items and keeping serial numbers on a computer at the station.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers should play an important role in Ocean Isle's progress in 1992.

Mayor Williamson said she is "very excited" about the Corps' dredging project in the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway that will place 90,000 cubic yards of sand on the east end of the island.



WILLIAMSON

vision lines to be relocated underground. Once this project is finished, Mrs. Williamson said the town will be able to build sidewalks along more of

(See SOUTH BRUNSWICK, Page 2-A)