

County Surviving Economic Slump

BY TERRY POPE

An ailing economy is taking a bite out of Brunswick County's budget, but most departments are surviving perhaps the worst financial conditions in 20 years.

"I think we've seen it get just about as bad as it's going to get," said Lithia Hahn, Brunswick County's finance director.

Last year, she earned 8 percent to 9 percent interest on Brunswick County's investments. Two months ago, that rate plummeted to 4.5 percent. Today, the rates have fallen even lower, to 3.9 percent.

"I've never seen them so low," said Ms. Hahn, who has worked in finance for 20 years. "I hope I didn't overestimate our investment earnings."

Brunswick County operates on a \$35 million a year budget. A lot of that money is invested with local banks. Finance directors must add to the budget what they believe the county will earn in interest each fiscal year.

County departments that often feel the crunch when the economy is bad are starting to feel the pinch. The Brunswick County Register of Deeds office, Building Inspections and Health Department's environmental health section operate partly on fees generated from real estate sales, the filing of deeds and permits for new home construction and septic tanks.

While those departmental budgets are not in any danger now, said Ms. Hahn, the figures are down for the first half of 1991-92.

"I'm not seeing anything that's dropping below where it should be," she said.

Brunswick County Commissioners committed to several building projects before the economy took a turn. Those included a \$2.3 million Emergency Operations Center for the 911 program that will begin in April; a \$7.5 million Phase III of the water system to Shallotte Point and Seaside; and a \$168,000 water line project to the Jennifer subdivision near Leland.

"We're putting millions of dollars into the local economy," said Kelly Holden, chairman of the Brunswick County Commissioners.

A positive side to the ailing econ-

omy is that it is a buyer's market. Competitive bids the county has received in recent months have come in below expected figures. Holden said companies know that Brunswick County is still a growing county despite the economic forecasts.

"The companies that are hungry are putting in the bids," he said.

Bids for part of the Phase III water system, at \$2.2 million, came in well under the expected costs, said County Engineer Robert Tucker. Also, last month, commissioners were pleased with bids received for the painting of county owned water towers and a five-year trash disposal contract.

"Those construction people are a little bit hungry," said Ms. Hahn. "But I'm not seeing any competitive bids on investments."

Interest rates for mortgage loans have fallen to about 8 percent. It means good news for persons who have a good credit history or have not exceeded their credit limits and can take advantage of the low rates, said Ms. Hahn.

"If there were more people out there that could take advantage of it being in a recession period, it could help the economy," she said. "The sad part is, I don't think there's enough people out there to take advantage of it."

Brunswick County's economy usually follows the national trend, with an increase in buying and selling activity in the spring months. Ms. Hahn, who considers studying the economy her hobby, is tentatively predicting another increase in activity this spring.

"I just hope it's not a false improvement," she said.

Since 1992 is also a national election year, consumers are likely to feel good about buying again once the campaign season starts. But, that "pumped up" feeling often lasts just a few months, she noted.

"It's like eating sugar," said Ms. Hahn. "You get pumped up, but after a little while, it sort of goes away."

As a business, Brunswick County's finances are in good shape, she said. But some local residents and businesses are hurting.

"I've had people talk to me about their personal finances," said Ms. Hahn. "It just breaks my heart."

LIBRARY CONSOLIDATION MOVING AHEAD

County Awards Second Bid For Water Project

Brunswick County Commissioners Monday awarded a second bid for the Phase III and III-A water expansion project to the Shallotte Point and Seaside communities.

Carmichael Construction Co. of Long Beach submitted the lowest of 13 bids and will install a main water line down Thomasboro Road and N.C. 904 to Seaside, said County Manager David Clegg.

Last month, commissioners accepted a low bid of \$2.2 million from Bryant Electric Co. of High Point for another portion of the \$7.5 million project. Bryant will install the main line that runs from Shallotte to Grissettown.

Because of logistics, the project must be bid in sections, said Clegg.

County Engineer Robert Tucker said Monday's low bid from Carmichael was about 20 percent under the anticipated cost. The company has been hired on a number of county Special Assessment District (SAD) water line projects since 1988.

Others submitting bids Monday were: Zeigler Construction Co., \$549,187; Mark H. Johnson Inc., \$584,772; East Coast Construction Inc., \$586,300; H.B.S. Contractors Inc., \$591,513; Bryant Electric Co., \$595,863; T.A. Loving Co., \$603,365; Wright and Lopez Inc., \$653,271; R.H. Moore Co., \$697,046; Yates Construction Co., \$763,104; State Utility Contractors Inc., \$793,401; Hobby Construction Co., \$807,647; and Herring-Rivenbark Inc., \$1,034,835.

Other Business

In other business Monday, commissioners:

■ Held a public hearing on an ambulance franchise ordinance with few comments. The county's 10 rescue squads and a private medical transport unit in Columbus County have agreed to provide mutual aid under the county's 911 system that will begin in April. The non-controversial franchise agreement is a requirement for the 911 program, said Doug Ledgett, Emergency Medical Services director.

■ Met Crystal Williams of Leland, 1992 Miss Brunswick County, who thanked the board for county involvement in the Miss Brunswick County Scholarship Pageant. "My pride in Brunswick County will be my motivation to excellence," she

said.

■ Accepted a low bid of \$29,958 for an articulated trencher for the Water Department from Prime Equipment Co. of Wilmington.

■ Accepted a low bid of \$129,000 from Rivenbark Construction Co. of Bolivia to do street improvements in the Leland Industrial Park with funds available through a state grant.

■ Set a public hearing for Tuesday, Jan. 21, at 6:20 p.m., on a road name change from Somerset Road to Shady Forest Drive near Calabash. A Somerset Drive already exists in Calabash, said Ledgett. Residents chose the new name, he said.

■ Voted to support, by letter, State Rep. Walter Jones' attempt to encourage the N.C. Department of Transportation to apply for federal funds to improve the state's ferry service as a tourist attraction.

■ Readopted an October 1990 resolution by request of Ocean Isle Beach asking the U.S. Corps of Engineers to take over maintenance and dredging of the Shallotte Inlet.

■ Instructed Clegg to meet with librarians and town officials from Shallotte and Southport to move toward consolidation of the county's library system and to bring an agenda back to commissioners later for approval.

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

Established Nov. 1, 1962
Telephone 754-6890
Published Every Thursday
At 4709 Main Street
Shallotte, N.C. 28459

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

IN BRUNSWICK COUNTY	
One Year	\$10.36
Six Months	\$5.55
ELSEWHERE IN NORTH CAROLINA	
One Year	\$14.86
Six Months	\$7.90
ELSEWHERE IN U.S.A.	
One Year	\$15.95
Six Months	\$8.35

Second class postage paid at Shallotte, N.C. 28459. USPS 777-780. Postmaster, send address changes to:

P.O. Box 2558,
Shallotte, N.C. 28459-2558

Grand Opening



CAROLINAS' WELLNESS

Health & Fitness Center

Bringing You the Wealth of Health

Saturday, Jan. 18

Come by for a tour of our new facility and meet our staff of health and fitness professionals.

Register for drawing for **One-Year Free Membership**

Enjoy refreshments & register for prizes from our Pro Shop!

Grand Opening Special **6-Month Membership \$150**
Available thru Jan. 25



Carolinas' Wellness offers:

- Nautilus
- Free Weights
- Instruction
- Aerobics—Low impact and step classes
- Karate and Kung Fu—Children & Adults Beginner & Advanced
- Computerized Weight Control
- Men's & Women's Whirlpools
- Support Groups ...and much more!
- Dolphin Spring Water in our Pro Shop
- New Sound Hearing Center will offer services beginning in February.
- Classroom available for public meetings by special arrangement—call.



Carolinas' Wellness, a member of IRSA The Association of Quality Clubs, pledges to provide quality health and fitness services in a professional environment.

The following information provided by and presented with the permission of IRSA:

"For the first time, we have scientific evidence to support what has always seemed true: regular exercise helps prevent many diseases, lengthens lifespan, and improves quality of life." James Rippe, M.D., Director, exercise Physiology Laboratory, University of Massachusetts Medical School, 1991.

BENEFITS FOR EVERYONE

"A sedentary lifestyle constitutes the greatest single risk to the collective hearts of America," Center for Disease Control, U.S. Public Health Service.

Premature death: Physically fit men are 53% less at risk of premature death, and physically fit women are 98% less at risk of premature death than sedentary men and women, taking into account many risk factors including cholesterol levels, blood pressure, weight, smoking, heart disease history, etc. (Dr. Steven Blair, Dr. Harold W. Kohl, et al., "Physical Fitness and All-Cause Mortality," Journal of the American Medical Association, November 3, 1989)

Cancer: Physically fit men die four times less often from cancer, and physically fit women die 16 times less often from cancer than unfit men and women. (Dr. Steven Blair, Dr. Harold W. Kohl, et al., "Physical Fitness and All-Cause Mortality," Journal of the American Medical Association, November 3, 1989)

Cardiovascular disease: Men and women who are physically fit are 8 times less likely to die from cardiovascular disease than unfit persons. (Dr. Steven Blair, Dr. Harold W. Kohl, et al., "Physical Fitness and All-Cause Mortality," Journal of the American Medical Association, November 3, 1989)

Cholesterol: Regular exercise helps raise the percentage of beneficial HDL cholesterol and lowers the TC/HDL-C ratio (total cholesterol divided by HDL cholesterol) to a low-risk profile. (Dr. William Castell, Director, Framingham Heart Study, as reported in "In With the Good," Runners World, December, 1987)

High blood pressure: Regular exercise helps reduce systemic arterial blood pressure. (Dr. William Haskell, Heart Disease Prevention Program, Stanford University Medical Center, "Developing an Activity Plan for Improving Health," Exercise and Mental Health, 1987)

Body weight and composition: By burning calories more efficiently and allowing the body to burn calories while at rest, regular exercise helps maintain optimal body weight and composition. (Dr. William Haskell, Heart Disease Prevention Program, Stanford University Medical Center, "Developing an Activity Plan for Improving Health," Exercise and Mental Health, 1987)

Osteoporosis: Men and women who remain physically active into old age are not likely to suffer from osteoporosis. (Dr. Keith Johnsgard, San Jose State University, The Exercise Prescription for Depression and Anxiety, 1989)

Insomnia: Regular exercise typically causes more continuous and restful sleep. (Dr. James Wasco, University of Massachusetts Medical School, "Diseases Exercises Can Help," Womens Day)

Healthy skin: Regular exercise increases blood flow to the skin, helps protect it from the sun, and keeps it healthy. ("Environmental Nutrition," Running and Fit News, February, 1988)

"Regular physical activity enhances both personal health and the vitality of our society. Establishing such activity as a habit for all of our citizens must be a national priority." Jimmy Carter.

BENEFITS FOR FORTY PLUS

"Physically fit people generally live longer, perform better, and get more out of life." Arnold Schwarzenegger, Chairman, President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, 1991.

Blood pressure: Regular exercise is as effective as medication in reducing blood pressure. (Dr. Michael Kelemen, Director, FreeState Health System, Columbia University, Journal of the American Medical Association, 1988)

LDL cholesterol: Regular exercise reduces harmful LDL cholesterol while increasing beneficial HDL cholesterol. (Dr. Joseph Patsch, Baylor University, quoted from "Keeping Fit for Life," Newsweek, August 6, 1984)

Body composition: Regular exercise promotes fat loss while preserving muscles. (Dr. Peter D. Wood, et al., Physical Activity and the Risk of Coronary Artery Disease," The New England Journal of Medicine, November 3, 1988)

Arthritis: Regular exercise helps keep joints flexible, helps build and preserve muscle strength, and helps protect joints from further stress. (Arthritis Basic Facts, Arthritis Foundation, June 1989)

Bone loss: Regular exercise can potentially prevent most forms of bone loss which accompany aging. (R. Bruce Martin, biomedical engineer, West Virginia University, quoted from "Keeping Fit for Life," Newsweek, August 6, 1984)

I.Q.: Improved circulation from regular exercise typically increases I.Q. in older people. (Walter Bortz, M.D., We Live Too Short and Die Too Long, 1991)

Oxygen in the bloodstream: Regular exercise creates a 40-year offset in oxygen carrying capacity—in other words, a fit person of 70 years has the same oxygen carrying capacity as an unfit person of 30. (Walter Bortz, M.D., We Live Too Short and Die Too Long, 1991)

Sickness: Exercisers feel sick almost 30% less often than non-exercisers. (Joel Gurin, T. George Harris, "Taking Charge, The Happy Health Confidants," American Health, March, 1987)

Diabetes: Programs of regular exercise can help diabetics cut down on the amount of insulin they must use. (Dr. William Haskell, Heart Disease Prevention Program, Stanford University Medical Center, "Developing an Activity Plan for Improving Health," Exercise and Mental Health, 1987)

Stress Management: Exercisers are 100% more likely to find ways to relax and are 300% more likely to be able to relax when under stress. (Joel Gurin, T. George Harris, "Taking Charge, The Happy Health Confidants," American Health, March, 1987)

Bowel irregularities: Regular exercise is helpful in relieving constipation, irritable bowel syndrome, indigestion and other gastrointestinal disorders. (Dr. James Wasco, University of Massachusetts Medical School, "Diseases Exercises Can Help," Womens Day)

"Physical fitness is the basis for all other forms of excellence." John F. Kennedy.

BENEFITS FOR WOMEN

Breast cancer: Physically fit women have a 50% lower rate of breast cancer than sedentary women. (Dr. Rose Frisch, Harvard School of Public Health, quoted from the American Association for the Advancement of Science Annual Meeting, February, 1988)

Osteoporosis: Regular exercise delays bone loss and promotes bone formation in women most at risk of osteoporosis. (Dr. Keith Johnsgard, San Jose State University, The Exercise Prescription for Depression and Anxiety, 1989)

Pre-menstrual Syndrome: Regular exercise reduces the likelihood of extreme PMS. (Dr. Jerilyn Prior, University of British Columbia, Women's Sport and Fitness, 1987)

Infertility: Regular exercise reduces the risks of endometriosis—a cause of infertility by 50%. (Dr. Daniel Cramer, Harvard Medical School, "Fitness and Infertility," Women's Sports and Fitness, August, 1986)

Blood pressure: Physically fit women tend to have healthier blood pressure levels—with higher systolic blood pressures and lower maximum diastolic blood pressures than unfit women. (Kenneth H. Cooper, M.D., The New Aerobics For Women, 1988)

Diabetes: Physically fit women have diabetes 66% less often than unfit women. (Dr. Rose Frisch, Harvard School of Public Health, quoted from the American Association for the Advancement of Science Annual Meeting, February, 1988)

Varicose veins: Regular exercise eases leg spasms and leg fatigue and improves circulation so that blood doesn't pool in leg veins. (Dr. James Wasco, University of Massachusetts Medical School, "Diseases Exercises Can Help," Woman's Day)

Sellers Road (behind Resort Plaza) • Shallotte • 754-A SPA (2772)
Hours: Mon-Thurs 10 am-10 pm; Friday 10 am-9 pm; Sat & Sun 1-6 pm