

Aldwin's Tops!



Aldwin Lance is Brunswick County's prep football player of the year. For the

run-down on the '91 all-county squad, see Page 6-B.

Moving In



County employee Bobby Mills puts final touches on expanded quarters for the Brunswick County Health Department. The story's on Page 9-A.

More Listings



Two more popular channels have been added to the weekly

TV schedules, Pages 4B and 5-B.

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New House Plan Puts Northwest Tip Of Brunswick County In Minority District

BY SUSAN USHER

A corner of northwestern Brunswick County would be part of a multi-county minority district under a plan approved by the state House of Representatives Tuesday on third and final reading.

The rest of Brunswick County would become part of a two-member district, that would also encompass portions of Columbus, Robeson and New Hanover counties, said Rep. E. David Redwine, D-Brunswick.

The General Assembly was expected to adjourn Tuesday, reconvening later this month to consider a new congressional redistricting plan. At that time the Senate and House are each expected to vote on the other's legislative redistricting plan and hammer out any compromises required.

The U.S. Justice Department re-

jected the state's original plans, saying more minority-dominated districts are needed in Southeastern North Carolina. Filing for state and local offices has been delayed until Feb. 10, when new plans are expected to be in place.

As a result of redistricting, Redwine said Monday, "One thing people will have to remember is that geographic lines don't mean anything anymore."

"None of us liked having to do this, we were forced to," said Redwine of the split districts. "People don't live in nice little squares."

Districts ramble across and through counties, townships, precincts and streets. In some instances, he said, neighbors may vote at the same polling place, but for candidates seeking different seats.

Anchored by Wilmington's north side, the proposed minority district, District 98, extends in a strip across northern Brunswick County through Navassa and the Hood's Creek area, as well as north into part of Pender County and west into Columbus County. Roughly, Redwine estimat-

"In terms of our geographic area we are in pretty good shape."

—Rep. E. David Redwine
On House redistricting

Brunswick voters would only find themselves in two House districts with three representatives.

"It's so large a district it will take more time and more money to campaign, but it should be a good district to run in," he continued.

Redwine said he plans to file for re-election "unless something changes between now and filing day".

This redistricting plan would leave Redwine and Mercer with a two-member district that is about 80 percent white, 18.5 percent black, with about 1 percent American Indian, a mix of coastal/urban and rural areas.

It would include "what's left" of Brunswick (48,356 residents) and Columbus (31,558 residents) counties after creation of the minority district, plus Orrum and Sterlings precincts in Robeson (2,771) and six precincts and part of a seventh in New Hanover (23,188 residents in

Masonboro 3 and 4, Wilmington 4, 5, 11, 16 and part of Wilmington 8).

In terms of political affiliation of current registered voters, the numbers run about 39,000 Democrats to 16,600 Republicans.

Under the original plan approved by the General Assembly last July, Brunswick would have formed a two-member district with Columbus County and a portion of New Hanover County. Rep. Leo Mercer, D-Columbus, represents Columbus County.

Wilmington also anchors a proposed minority Senate district, District 7, which would snake north and east to Kinston, taking in portions of four other counties. The rest of New Hanover County would become part of a conservative coastal district, District 4, reaching up into Carteret County.

Brunswick County would remain in a revamped Senate District 18, represented by Sen. R.C. Soles Jr. of

(See HOUSE, Page 2-A)

SAYS COMPENSATION NOT AN ISSUE

Deeds Advisory Board Strikes Back

BY TERRY POPE

An advisory board abolished by Brunswick County Commissioners last week says it will continue to meet, even if members receive no pay for their service.

The Register of Deeds Advisory Board held its last official meeting Monday under a charter formed by commissioners and Register of Deeds Robert J. Robinson in 1987.

Commissioners voted 4-0 last week to abolish the charter, saying the advisory board was no longer needed and that the \$35 per diem plus travel paid to its members for monthly meetings was an unnecessary county expense.

But board members Monday told Robinson they will continue to meet even if they are not paid. Robinson said he will draft a new charter, one that excludes the county commissioners' participation.

"I'm not aware of any law that does not allow me to have an advisory board," he said.

Robinson said Monday he hadn't decided whether to legally challenge the commissioners' vote that abolished the board. According to the charter, any amendments or revisions must be approved by both the register of deeds in office and the commissioners.

"I don't think they had authority to do what they did," said Robinson.

However, the charter also indicates that commissioners must appoint four of the board's five members. A fifth person is chosen by the register of deeds. Members are appointed to 13-month terms, with their last official day the second Monday in January.

"Money is not why we serve here," said Billy Carter, chairman of the advisory board. "I feel that we have accomplished something. If they (commissioners) had communicated back and forth, maybe they would have a better understanding of what we do."

Board members Janet Shires,

Thomas Morgan and Joan Thorpe said they would be willing to serve on an advisory board if chosen. The Brunswick County Bar Association had nominated Joseph Causey of Shallotte to replace Ms. Shires, and the Brunswick Islands Board of Realtors had nominated William Robertson of Sunset Beach to replace Ms. Thorpe.

Those nominations were placed last week before commissioners, who instead voted to abolish the board.

"I think the matter of compensation exists because the county has opted to pay its boards," said Robinson.

The advisory board charter indicates all members "shall receive benefits and compensation in accordance with other county boards." Other boards whose members receive per diem payments include: Board of Elections, \$50; Social Services, \$35; Board of Health, \$35;

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STAFF PHOTO BY DORIS GURGANUS

Putting Old Trees To Good Use

Danny Harris, full-time preacher and temporary municipal employee for Sunset Beach, secures old Christmas trees along the beach at the west end of the island last Friday. Used to rebuild eroded dunes and build new dunes, the trees are donated by the truckload from local communities as well as towns as far away as Lumberton and Fayetteville. The trees from Christmas 1990 are almost covered with sand, evidence of the program's success.

Health Board Eyes Complaints Stemming From Septic Permits

BY TERRY POPE

Problems with septic tank permits dominated the discussion at the Brunswick County Board of Health meeting Monday and has apparently led to a restructuring of personnel within the department's Environmental Health Services.

H.J. "Skip" Davis of Ocean Isle Beach says he gets numerous complaints from property owners whose dream home is lost when a once valid septic tank permit is no longer good.

Homeowners panic, he said, when they go to update the permit and the lot that had once passed inspection no longer perks. Those who have called to complain, he said, include developers, real estate agents, contractors and acquaintances.

"It does nothing for the credibility of this department to lay down the rules and have the rules followed," said Davis, "and then the rules change. I know it's happen-

"I don't want someone permitting a lot and all of a sudden, two years down the road, it doesn't perk. It's not good for this board to be put in that position."

—H.J. "Skip" Davis,
Health Board Member

ing. I'd like to know why."

Some of the personnel responsible for issuance of septic tank permits have been reassigned in recent weeks.

Environmental Health Supervisor John Crowder voluntarily stepped from his supervisor's position, said Health Director Michael Rhodes, to accept a job doing site evaluations in the field.

Crowder, a 10-year veteran of the department, is making the transition this week to environmental health

specialist, said Rhodes. "All I can say is, there was an opening, an application was made, we conducted an interview and he was hired."

The department has advertised for a new supervisor, with applications due last Friday. Rhodes said he will interview candidates for that position next week.

"Until someone is hired, I will be more involved in environmental health and animal control," said Rhodes.

In addition to doing soil tests for septic tank permits, Crowder will also be responsible for staff development

for the health specialists, said Rhodes. Employees require continuing education programs to keep up to date on state regulations.

"It's an opportunity to have an individual with enormous expertise in that area," said Rhodes.

The Health Board instructed Rhodes to "examine the legal channels" the department might have to honor valid septic tank permits that property owners may have for lots that will no longer perk under newer guidelines.

"This board is aware that rules are subject to change," said Davis, who was appointed to the health board last year. "I don't want someone permitting a lot and all of a sudden, two years down the road, it doesn't perk. It's not good for this board to be put in that position."

Rhodes said he doesn't know how often a property

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Public Funds Won't Pay For Party When Transportation Board Meets

BY SUSAN USHER

Local towns and economic development organizations will be asked to pay part of the cost of holding a state Board of Transportation meeting here, but the money won't go toward a cocktail party planned as part of the event.

The board plans to meet April 30 and May 1 at Sea Trail Plantation, Sunset Beach, with approximately 24 board members and 51 staff members in attendance. In addition to business meetings, several social functions are planned to allow board members to mingle with local residents and to tour the county.

"We are not going to use any public funds for the cocktail party," said Annette Odom, a member of Brunswick County Travel Package, which is hosting the meeting. Travel Pac, as the group is often called, is not a part of either local chamber of commerce. However, it was created by the South Brunswick Islands and Southport-Oak Island Chambers of Commerce to promote travel and tourism to the Brunswick Islands area and receives funds from the county annually for that purpose.

"Not Travel Pac, the chamber or the municipalities, we have decided," said Mrs. Odom. "We will use private funds or a cash bar."

Travel Pac's governing body will decide that source of funding, as well as giving formal approval to a pro-

posed agenda and budget for the two-day meeting when it meets later this month. The travel group will also set the guest lists for various activities on the agenda.

Both the agenda and budget for the meeting must also be approved by the N.C. Department of Transportation, she said.

Tentative items on the agenda include, on Thursday, a fashion show and luncheon for board members' spouses and an equal number of local women, followed by a tour of the area and a social function to meet residents of the Southport-Oak Island area. That evening a cocktail party and dinner are planned at Sea Trail for board members, staff and guests.

"The guest list hasn't been decided by Travel Pac yet, but obviously it's going to be your community leaders from Brunswick County," said Mrs. Odom. "Hopefully about two times more people from Brunswick County than are from DOT."

Dinner will be at the guests' own expense. For board members the agenda includes a meeting tentatively scheduled from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Thursday and a business session Friday from about 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Continental breakfasts are planned both mornings.

Last Monday, Jan. 6, Sunset Beach Town Council was the first local municipal governing board to discuss the funding request. Members voted 3-2 to participate, while questioning the cost of the event they were being

asked to fund, which was characterized as "a cocktail party" by the mayor.

"I do agree the numbers seem very expensive," said new Sunset council member Cherri Check. "But I do feel like if we can get the DOT board in this area that we would benefit from it."

That's why Brunswick County Travel Package accepted the invitation to host the meeting—needs that range from better signage on U.S. 17 to widening of secondary roads and installation of traffic signals, said Mrs. Odom.

"It's not as much benefit to the chamber as it is to the communities. It's a benefit to Brunswick County."

"We were getting lots done here in Brunswick County for the first time and still have a lot more that needs to be done," she said. "We haven't got the road systems other counties have and with the growth we're experiencing we need a road system to serve the people coming here."

"We felt if they were here and could see what is going on that we would have a better chance in the future of getting what we need."

At their meeting last week, Shallotte aldermen tabled consideration of the request until they have a chance to review their budget and discuss the matter.

The request was not on the agenda of the Ocean Isle Commissioners Tuesday.

Total budget for the event is estimated at \$14,800, of which the state is expected to pay about \$9,500 toward food and lodging at Sea Trail for 24 board members and 51 staff people.

Local contributors will pick up the difference in what DOT pays and the actual cost of food and lodging, about \$2,470, plus another \$2,800 in amenities. These are expected to include a Wednesday hospitality suite with food and beverages, the ladies' luncheon and fashion show, the social function in Southport, flowers and fruit baskets, plus about \$700 in "miscellaneous" expenses.

According to the tentative budget, the towns of Sunset Beach, Ocean Isle Beach, Shallotte and Holden Beach are to be asked to chip in \$750 each, while Travel Pac members have said they expect to solicit contributions of \$1,500 from the Southport-Oak Island areas.

Mrs. Odom said Calabash would also be asked to contribute, as will the Southport-Oak Island Committee of 100.

In addition to Sunset Beach, other groups that have already agreed to participate in funding the meeting include the South Brunswick Islands Committee of 100, the Resources Development Commission of Brunswick County and Southeastern Welcome Center.

Should the final budget for the event be less, or DOT agree to pay a larger share, Mrs. Odom said local contributions would be scaled down proportionally.