

Chamber's Annual Dinner Set Friday

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

The South Brunswick Islands Chamber of Commerce 15th annual dinner is Friday night. Are you going to be there? I hope so, 'cause if you're not, you'll miss a good time. This year the format is quite different. No long speeches (yawn), just a great dinner, a few very important awards, passing of the gavel, and then on to the dance! What fun!

Since it's my first annual meeting, I'm very excited. I hope to see some new faces as well as the usual supportive ones. I'm looking forward to all of the festivities, as I'm sure you are, too. Things begin at 6:30 and continue through the evening, as you dance the night away. (Word has it this promises to be the social event of the season. Wonder what Annette will wear?)

Another first for me is hearing the band, Crossroads, a local favorite. Rumor has it that they have a new female lead singer that is out of this world. If you're like me, and not heard the band, you'll just have to be there and find out for yourself. So get out of the house, hire a baby-sitter, and meet and greet your business counterparts for an action-packed event.

Speaking of meeting and greeting, don't forget our Business After Hours. These after-work functions have been so well attended in the past that this year we decided to hold them bimonthly. Our next one is coming up on Thursday, Feb. 27. Our friend and former board member, Ed Jones will be hosting, along with Cellular One of Coastal Carolina at Jones Ford on Highway 17. What a combination, car phones and cars. Wonder who thought of that? Please call the chamber if you'd like to attend.

There's another place you might want to stop by and greet. That's the newly-opened Southeastern Welcome Center on the by-pass. The grand opening is set for Feb. 14. Stop in and say hello to Sabrina Hodges and the staff. I'm quite sure that you'll get a big welcome.



RICHARDS



STAFF PHOTO BY DORI C. GURGANUS

Received Marketing Awards

Melody Gause (left) and William Head, members of West Brunswick High School's DECA Marketing Association, proudly display the awards they received at the Marketing Competitive Events Conference at UNC-Wilmington recently. Ms. Gause was named runner-up for a performance event in the general merchandising occupational area. Head's trophy is for having the highest score on the written test in the apparel and accessories occupational area.

BAROMETER ON THE ECONOMY

More Working, Seeking Work

In the last quarter of 1991 unemployment in Brunswick County fell slightly but stayed above the 12 percent mark, while employment rose slightly.

Those figures are included in the latest *Barometer on the Local Economy* produced by the Center for Business and Economics Services at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington.

Employment in the county rose 0.7 percent between October and November 1991, from 16,960 to 17,084. The November level was 0.8 percent above the November 1990 level, when 16,953 people were employed.

Unemployment in the county fell 1.7 percent between October 1991 and November 1991, from 2,514 people (12.9 percent) seeking jobs to 2,472 (12.6 percent).

The November 1991 level was 37.9 above the November 1990 level, when 9.6 percent of the workforce, or 1,793 people, were job hunting.

The November 1991 unemployment of 12.6 percent was below the October 1991 rate but above the November 1990 rate.

From October to November 1991, employment statewide fell 0.7 percent and unemployment fell 1.7 percent.

Retail Sales Sluggish

Retail sales in Brunswick County fell 4.3 percent between July and August 1991, from \$30.2 million to

\$28.9 million. That August level was 1.7 percent below the August 1990 level of \$29.4 million.

For the year ending August 1991, retail sales in the county were 4.5 percent above the comparable year-earlier level, \$354.9 million compared to \$339.7 million.

Figures for July and August were estimates by the N.C. Department of Revenue staff, according to the center's report.

Statewide, retail sales fell 1.5 percent between July and August 1991.

For the year ending August 1991, retail sales in the state were 0.9 percent above the comparable year-earlier level.

Gain Noted

New vehicle registrations rose 10.1 percent in Brunswick County between October and November 1991, from 138 to 152 vehicles.

The November 1991 level was 27.3 percent below the November 1990 level of 209 registrations.

For the year ending November 1991, new vehicle registrations were 19.6 percent below those of the year that ended November 1990. Last year 1,678 new vehicles were registered in the county, compared to 2,088 the year before.

Statewide new vehicle registrations rose 1.9 percent between October and November 1991. For the year ending November 1991, they were 15.6 percent below the comparable year-earlier level.

N. C. Grange Trying To Organize County Chapter

BY DORI C. GURGANUS

A local branch of the North Carolina Grange, an independent grassroots group promoting the needs of rural residents may be organized soon in Brunswick County.

Glen Thomas, field service representative for eastern North Carolina, said that the state organization is looking for farmers and rural businessowners from this area to express interest, or lack thereof, in having such a group nearby.

Thomas is attempting to bring these people together with the help of Milton Coleman, county agricultural extension officer, and Wilton Harrelson, owner of a farm and garden supply business in Shallotte.

Through their contacts, the state Grange should be able to form a chapter that "operates on a local level to get issues across to state and national legislators," said Thomas.

The Grange is "the oldest agricultural fraternity in the world," he said, and can form local resolutions that are passed to the state and national Grange representatives. Then, the national chapter contacts mem-

bers of Congress to bring such issues to light, Thomas said.

An advantage of having a local chapter, he said, is that a farmer can call the local representative and have specific concerns passed on the state and national representatives.

To form a local chapter, 13 people are needed. Thomas said that he's working with Coleman to schedule an organizational meeting around the end of February with a free dinner for prospective members.

If all goes well, officers may be elected at that meeting, Thomas indicated. "It depends on what they want to do."

Persons interested in attending an organizational meeting can call Thomas at 1-919-228-1482, or the N.C. State Grange office at 1-800-432-4857.

Coleman said that although the county is working with the Grange on a referral basis for local contacts, he would welcome questions about the formation of a Grange in this area. Call him at the county agricultural extension office in Bolivia, 253-4425.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Hospital Elects To New Trustees To Board

The Brunswick Hospital Board of Trustees elected two new trustees and reappointed three others at its



EVANS REAVES

recent annual meeting. Joining the board are Don Evans and Michael Reaves, said Earl Tamar, the hospital's chief executive officer.

Evans is vice president and co-owner of Coastal Insurance & Realty and a graduate of Campbell University. A county native, he and his wife, Judy, have a grown son, Scott, and live in Ash.

Reaves has served as president of Brunswick Community College for the past four years. A graduate of N.C. State University, he was formerly dean of continuing education at Sampson Community College. He and his wife, Gloria, and their daughters Ingrid and Ashley live at Caswell Beach.

Evans and Reaves replace Alan Holden and Percy Bray, whose terms expired in January. Holden served the board five years, including two terms as chairman. Bray served six years.

Members reappointed for additional three-year terms are Debbie Fox of Ocean Isle Beach, Robert Hassler, M.D., and Stephen Candela, M.D.

Other trustees are Mushtaq H. Khan, M.C., Lee Langston, M.D., vice chairman; David Batten, chairman; and Tamar, secretary-treasurer.

Robinson Reappointed
Harold C. Robinson of Route 2,

Supply, has been reappointed to the Fire Ant and African Honey Bee Advisory Committee of the American Farm Bureau Federation.

The committee makes recommendations on issues in relating to fire ants and African honey bees to the Bureau's board of directors for consideration.

Growers To Meet

Issues that affect the role of tobacco in the economy are on the agenda when the Flue Cured Tobacco Cooperative Stabilization Corporation holds its annual District 4 meeting at the Columbus Court-

house Annex in Whiteville Monday, Feb. 10, at 2 p.m.

Topics will include the strength of the tobacco program, the strength of domestic and export markets and of the anti-tobacco movement. Representatives of Stabilization, Tobacco Growers' Information Committee, Tobacco Associates Inc. and USDA's Tobacco Division, Agricultural Marketing Service, will participate.

Improve Phone Skills

A three-hour workshop offered Feb. 11 by the Small Business Center at Brunswick Community Coll-

ege will provide tips and techniques for improving telephone communications.

Led by Beverly Dickson, a human resources consultant, the 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. session will cover six steps for communicating accurately on the phone; valuable tips for handling irate customers; how to eliminate irritating speech habits; how to check that you're getting the message; and finer points of the art of listening.

The seminar is provided free of charge through a state grant. However, preregistration is required. To register, contact the Center at 754-6900, 457-6329 or 343-0203.

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