

DU PONT TARGETED FOR BURNER

Clegg: COG Should Light Fire Under Area Incineration Talks

BY TERRY POPE

News that a private firm wants to build a three-county trash incinerator at the Du Pont plant in Leland is a surprise to Brunswick County officials.

But the Cape Fear Council of Governments should "get a fire under itself and assist its member governments" in any ensuing incinerator talks, said Brunswick County Manager David Clegg.

COG pulled together representatives from Brunswick, New Hanover and Pender counties last year to discuss a possible regional solid waste authority.

Under that proposal, trash from the three counties would be burned at a Wilmington incinerator with ash dumped at a local landfill, but nothing concrete has come from those meetings. Now the regional solid waste picture is changing.

Vedco Energy Corp. of Houston has proposed building a steam-generating plant on Du Pont's property in northern Brunswick County. The unit would burn household trash from Brunswick, Pender and Columbus counties to heat several large steam-producing boilers.

Du Pont would purchase the steam to power its polyester fibers plant in Leland.

"At this situation in the game, as far as the solid waste picture is concerned, nothing is out of the question," said Clegg. "It's probably a good exercise for the

board (of commissioners) to explore those things."

To make the deal work, Vedco would need agreements to receive household garbage from all three counties to keep the incinerator operating continuously. The company would build and operate a large recycling center in Columbus County, where recyclable materials would be sorted out from the garbage.

Each county would be responsible for collecting and hauling garbage to the Columbus County station. The goal is to eliminate about 25 percent of the waste for recycling. Two-thirds of the remaining garbage would be burned while the rest would be buried at the Columbus County landfill.

Brunswick County begins March 1 under a five-year contract with Waste Industries Inc. of Raleigh, a contract that requires the firm to haul the county's garbage to the landfill in Supply.

"It would necessitate a change in that relationship," said Clegg. "It wouldn't mean the landfill would be closing. We'd have to maintain a landfill."

Vedco is also reportedly working on similar deals with other Du Pont companies in the North and South Carolina region, including sites in Bladen County, Pitt County, Lenior County and Florence, S.C.

The firm's reliance on area garbage to make a profit "probably puts the counties in a good bargaining position to tell them how we want the process to be done,"

said Clegg.

The county would issue local building permits while the state would issue air quality control permits and monitor emissions. The proposed \$32 million plant would also add to the county's tax base. But Clegg said an eye should also be kept on its environmental impact.

"I never have liked incineration," he said. "Simply to incinerate is not the point. I have a real serious problem with particulate emissions."

On the plus side, the company would already have a built-in customer for the steam plant and would help to extend the life of the county's landfill in Supply. Counties would pay dumping fees per ton of garbage while recycling profits would be split between the counties and Vedco.

"If the waste stream is cut that dramatically, we could probably continue to 1999 without having to line any new (landfill) cells," said Clegg.

The concept of steam-generated power is not new to Brunswick County. The Cogentrix plant in Southport

generates steam power for the Archer-Daniels Midland Corp., but it doesn't burn garbage.

Brunswick officials say they want to learn more about the proposal, which so far has only been presented to the Columbus County Solid Waste Citizens Advisory Committee.

The committee is also considering a proposal from Chambers Development Corp. of S.C. to build and to operate a 100-acre regional landfill in Columbus County that would last an estimated 12 to 15 years and cost approximately \$20 million.

"The bottom line is, it's something that we should look at," said Clegg. "We can't continue to handle garbage in a 1940s mentality in the 1990s with all of the new regulations that are in place."

State laws mandate that counties cut the amount of garbage entering landfills 25 percent by 1993. For counties that fail to meet that guideline, fines will likely be imposed.

"The taxpayers are not going to stand for that," said Clegg.

Holden Owners Will See Dip In Flood Insurance

Holden Beach homeowners can expect to see another dip in flood insurance premiums starting in October.

Discounts through the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Community Rating System will jump from 5 percent to 10 percent this fall, said Building Inspector Dwight Carroll.

That means anyone who renews a flood insurance policy or takes out a new policy after Oct. 1 can save 10 percent on their premiums.

Holden Beach qualified for a 5-percent reduction last October through the Community Rating System, which is designed to reward homeowners in communities that go

beyond minimum federal flood protection requirements.

Towns can earn points and qualify for larger reductions in insurance premiums by taking steps to lower the risk of flood damage.

Holden Beach Commissioners approved a repetitive flood loss program Monday night as part of the effort to further reduce insurance costs.

Carroll said only 3 percent of the buildings on the island have sustained flood damage more than once. The program is designed to keep floods from damaging the same building over and over.

The building inspector also has sent out brochures on hurricane

safety to Holden Beach homeowners and set up a section in the local library on flood protection.

Sunset Beach homeowners also were rewarded with 5-percent discounts last fall, but the town didn't qualify for a larger reduction this year.

Town Administrator Linda Fluegel said the town can't get enough points to qualify for a bigger discount.

"We would have to do something like retrofitting, and I don't have anything to retrofit," she said.

Ocean Isle Beach has applied for a 5-percent reduction in flood insurance premiums that would take effect this fall.



THE N.C. BOARD OF TRANSPORTATION is expected to transfer \$4,000 in emergency funds Friday to protect and repair Ocean Boulevard East at Holden Beach.

STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER

Fund Transfer On DOT Agenda

A fund transfer involving emergency repairs made last fall at the eastern tip of Ocean Boulevard at Holden Beach should receive formal approval this week from the N.C. Board of Transportation.

The board will be asked to transfer \$4,000 from its emergency reserve fund to the secondary road maintenance fund when it meets Friday at 9 a.m. at the Holiday Inn Bordeaux in Fayetteville.

The state spent \$4,000 in October for additional sandbags and repairs to the street following a severe storm and series of abnormal high tides, said Doug Bowers, division engineer with the N.C. Department of Transportation.

Waves have been eroding Ocean Boulevard East and threatening homes in that area for several years.

Part of the road is closed to traffic.

Town Manager Gary Parker said a dredge company contracted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is expected to pump about 80,000 cubic yards of sand onto the east end before winter ends.

Parker said the project should get

under way in late February or early March. Sand will be taken from Lockwood Folly Inlet and pipelined to the strand near the end of the road.

"With that sand going out there both the DOT and homeowners may get some protection for a little longer," Parker said Tuesday.

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