

County Hires Veterans Service Officer

BY TERRY POPE

Starting Monday, Brunswick County will have a new Veterans Service officer.

Virgil Batten, 54, of Route 2, Supply (Holden Beach community), a 30-year U.S. Air Force veteran, will report to work March 23, said Brunswick County Manager David Clegg.

Brunswick County's new recycling coordinator, Mary McCarley of Long Beach, will also start work Monday on her new job. She is presently an environmental health specialist with the Brunswick County Health Department.

Batten, a 1960 graduate of N.C. State University, has also obtained a master's degree in business from Webster University in St. Louis, Mo.

He will replace Jess Parker, who resigned and moved to Washington State last October. Batten was chosen from among 207 applicants.

"He is very well-versed in veterans issues," said Clegg. "He certainly has an appreciation for veterans' affairs."

Batten retired from the Air Force in September 1990 as a colonel and moved to Brunswick County where he built a home. At the time of his retirement, he was chief of staff for the Air Force Reserves, which includes 70,000 soldiers.

The Columbus County native and Hallsboro High School graduate served a tour of duty in the Vietnam conflict from 1971-72, flying in 105 combat missions aboard C-130 gunships.

"I'm excited about being selected for the position," said Batten.

The veterans director, he said, should pursue the best possible services for county veterans, their spouses and dependents.

"I'm convinced that the squeaky wheel is where the grease goes," said Batten. "I want Brunswick County Veteran Services to be known as the best office of its kind throughout the state. That is one of my goals."

The director is also responsible for investigating veterans' status for eligibility for admittance to Veteran Administration hospitals and advises persons serving in armed forces of their disability provisions and other procedures. Also, the officer assists pensioned veterans and widows. The full-time position pays \$23,444 per year.

"If veterans out in the county are eligible for benefits," said Batten, "then they should be receiving them. Veterans benefits are also a benefit to the community."

Following Parker's resignation, county veteran organizations lobbied Brunswick County Commissioners, asking that a veteran be hired. Clegg said the application process was open to veterans and non-veterans to avoid discrimination. The most qualified person for the job, he said, happened to be a veteran.

"He has dealt with personnel," said Clegg. "He has dealt with organizations. He is certainly qualified."

Acting Veterans Service Officer Julia Hayes was among the finalists for the position.

Ready To Recycle

As recycling coordinator, Ms. McCarley will work with County Engineer Robert Tucker's office. Her job is to meet with private industries, local governments and individuals to establish a unified recycling program to "capture the 25 percent goal," said Tucker.

By state law, counties must cut the amount of garbage entering landfills by 25 percent through recycling efforts.

"She has a lot of work to do," said Tucker.

Ms. McCarley has a degree in environmental health from East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tenn., where she also studied solid waste management. She was also involved in recycling programs in Tennessee.

She will finish a two-week notice this week with the Health Department, where she has worked for two years as a registered sanitarian, performing field work as an on-site soil evaluator.

"While working the job for the Health Department, I've seen first hand what the solid waste problems are in Brunswick County," she said.

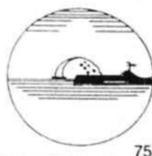
Part of the groundwork for her job has been established, she said. Waste Industries will operate at least 10 recycling stations in Brunswick County under its five-year contract agreement.

"We're going to see if we can get everybody involved," said Ms. McCarley. "I feel recycling should have been started years ago."

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MEETING MARCH 26 & 27

Holden Beach Land Use Plan Returns To CRC Next Week

A revised land use plan update for Holden Beach goes before the Coastal Resources Commission for consideration when the CRC meets March 26 and 27 at Wrightsville Beach.

Sessions begin both days at 8:30 a.m. at the Holiday Inn in the Nor'Easter and Cape Faire rooms. All are open to the public.

The land use plan is scheduled to go before the Planning and Special Issues Committee Thursday, and before the full board Friday, with certification expected.

The Holden Beach Board of Commissioners will hear a status report on the findings of a DOT study of options for state-maintained coastal roads subject to long-term erosion; preliminary results of a marine sewage pump-out study; a status report on Coastal Zone Management 309 strategy; and a status report on pending National Flood Insurance Program legislation.

Two standing committees are to meet in concurrent session Thursday morning. In addition to land use plans for Holden Beach and two other communities, the planning committee will discuss also land use plan certification in general as it relates to consistency with CRC rules; procedures for nominations for areas of environmental concerns (AECs) and a draft policy statement regarding near shore sand disposal.

Parker developed the revisions with the assistance of Haskell Rhett, a planning and access coordinator

with the state agency. Most of the changes simply brought wording of the plan into consistency with CRC rules.

In other CRC business, the state panel has set a public hearing at 4 p.m. Thursday, March 26, to discuss proposed amendments to several rules that regulate development within the estuarine system.

According to a news release from the N.C. Division of Coastal Management, the proposals do not reflect a major change in CRC policy.

Thursday at 1 p.m. the full commission will hear a status report on the findings of a DOT study of options for state-maintained coastal roads subject to long-term erosion; preliminary results of a marine sewage pump-out study; a status report on Coastal Zone Management 309 strategy; and a status report on pending National Flood Insurance Program legislation.

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Gene Tomlinson of Brunswick County chairs the Implementation and Standards Committee, which will continue its discussion of the proposed "Dawson Amendment" that would change setback criteria for large structures; several proposed rule clarifications; a proposed declaratory ruling option for public project proposals; a proposed definition of submerged aquatic vegetation; and techniques for determining the sizes of oceanfront structures.

The CRC designates areas of environmental concern (AECs), adopts rules and policies for coastal development and resource protection, and certifies local land use plans. The Division of Coastal Management in the Department of Environment, Health and Natural Resources administers the program.

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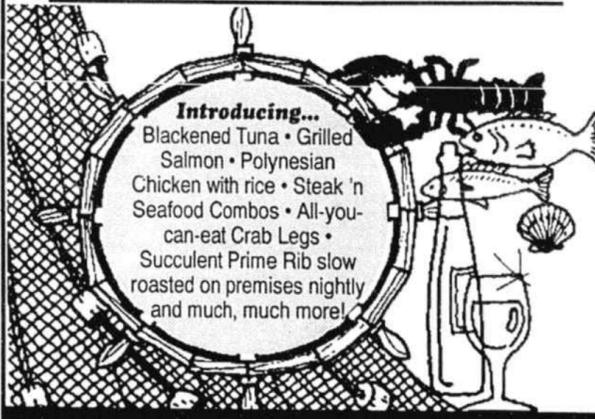


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For further information contact The Greater Holden Beach Merchants Association, 842-3828.