

Two Marines Killed, One Critical After Head-On Crash Tuesday

Two U.S. Marines en route to Camp Lejeune were killed and another was critically injured Tuesday morning after a head-on collision with a tractor-trailer truck on U.S. 17 outside Bolivia.

The names of the two dead men were not released Tuesday pending notification of their families, said investigating trooper B.D. Barnhardt of the N.C. Highway Patrol. One of the victims was dead at the scene, while the other was pronounced dead at New Hanover Regional Medical Center in Wilmington.

So far 14 people have been killed on Brunswick County roads this year. That is twice the number record-

ed in the first six months of 1991, said highway patrol spokesperson Ruby Oakley.

James Edmond Eyley, 21, was listed in critical condition after surgery Tuesday, said Iris Baker, a public relations assistant at the hospital.

Eyley's rank and home town were unavailable, but Barnhardt said he was assigned to the 2nd Marine Division of the 2nd Amphibious Assault Battalion at Camp Lejeune. Eyley's mother lives in Herminston, Ore., and his father lives in Florida, the trooper said.

It was shortly before dawn when Eyley, driving a 1988 Volkswagen convertible north on U.S. 17, apparently crossed the center line and crashed head-on into a

southbound 18-wheel truck loaded with 51,000 pounds of hot asphalt, Barnhardt said.

One of Eyley's fellow Marines was sitting in the front seat and another in the back seat, Barnhardt said. The three were returning to base from Myrtle Beach, S.C., when the crash occurred at about 5 a.m.

Barnhardt said only the front seat passenger was wearing a seat belt. But because of the intensity of the impact, "it wouldn't have made much difference" in the outcome, he said.

The truck driver, William Hugh Gooding, 54, of Goose Creek, S.C., was not hurt in the crash, Barnhardt said. The truck was owned by Merritt Trucking Co. of

Greensboro.

The truck's load was not spilled in the wreck, but about 25 gallons of diesel fuel leaked from a damaged tank, Barnhardt said. Fire trucks and Brunswick County Emergency Management personnel were on the scene to contain the spill.

Barnhardt said alcohol was involved in the accident, "but not to a serious extent."

There was an estimated \$20,000 damage to the truck. The Volkswagen was declared a total loss with \$5,800 damage.

No charges have been filed. However, an investigation is continuing, Barnhardt said.

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Hug Me Goodbye

Shallotte Middle School was the scene of high emotions last week, with teachers waving vigorously as busload after busload of students departs for the last time until September. Kids did a lot of hugging, too, saying farewell to friends they may not see all summer. Hope Stout and Dawn Johnson (facing camera) exchange a goodbye hug.

STAFF PHOTO BY MARJORIE MEGIVERN

Ocean Isle Beach Board Proposes 3-Cent Tax Hike

BY MARJORIE MEGIVERN

After six years without a tax increase, Ocean Isle Beach property owners may face a 3-cent hike in city taxes this year if a proposed budget is adopted June 23.

Mayor Betty Williamson stressed in an OIB town board meeting Tuesday that the entire 3 cents is needed for beach renourishment and erosion control.

"The U.S. Corps of Engineers study of beach renourishment that began in 1986 should be completed this summer," she said. "We have appropriated funds for renourishment from previous occupancy tax revenues, and we expect about \$80,000 from that fund this year. With \$92,000 raised from a 3-cent tax increase, we will have \$271,000 for erosion control."

She announced the "good news" that the town has received its long-awaited permit for the dredging of Shallotte Inlet, a permit that expires Dec. 31, 1995.

Mrs. Williamson added that the corps will begin regular maintenance of the inlet including dredging and placing the fill on the island's east end, where erosion has been a constant and increasing problem over the past year.

Board member Kendall Suh said, "People must realize that if there were no erosion problem, we'd have no tax increase; that's the sole reason for it. It's a bitter pill, but necessary."

The new tax figure of 20 cents per \$100 evaluation will fund a \$3.2 million budget, \$1 million of that in the general fund. The budget includes a \$402,282 water fund and a \$1.2 million sewer fund.

There will be no new airport project this year, Mrs. Williamson said, but all other town services remain at past and present levels.

A public hearing on the proposed budget will be held at 9 a.m. June 23, after which the board will take action on it.

The mayor read a letter from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) informing the town that, because of its exceeding minimum standards of flood insurance plans, property owners will receive a 5 percent reduction in new or renewed flood insurance that is in place by October 1. The town receives a Class 9 rating, and additional points may be awarded the town on March 1, 1993, resulting in further insurance rate reductions.

The board approved a resolution to the N.C. General Assembly requesting legislation to restore all essential local revenues back to an automatic allocation with growth. The resolution specified the elimination of the inventory tax, compensation for abolition of part of the intangibles tax, the utility franchise and beer and wine taxes.

These taxes, collected by the state and distributed to local governments,

were cut by 6.2 percent in 1990 and now have been frozen at the 1990 levels to balance the state budget.

Mrs. Williamson reported that the town's land use plan update had been approved at the recent meeting of the Coastal Resources Commission.

Building Inspector Druid Roberson said there were few changes from the previous update in 1987.

"We changed the way we figure density, making it more accurate," he said. "Now, the number is based on inclusion of streets in the acreage units. In single-family areas now, the density requirement is 6.8 units per acre instead of 8 units as previously figured."

This is the first land use plan update that covers the extra-territorial area (ETA), Roberson pointed out. The town took in about 1,900 acres on May 1, 1990, which is nearly the limit allowed by state statutes. The town's ETA goes west to Brunswick Builders and east to, but excluding Bent Tree Plantation.

Roberson also reported that last week's rainstorm brought Ocean Isle 6 inches of rainfall in a 24-hour period, the most the town has received since it has kept records.

His building inspection report showed total fees of \$1,209.59 collected this month, with six permits issued on valuations totaling \$164,149.

TAX RATE TO DROP BY 1/2 CENT

New County Budget Includes \$1.5 Million For Four-Site Library

BY ERIC CARLSON

The Brunswick County Library will get new branches at Leland and Oak Island, renovations at the Shallotte and Southport branches, a computerized filing system and \$200,000 worth of new books and materials as part of a \$1.5 million addition to the county budget adopted Monday by county commissioners.

The board approved a half-cent cut in county taxes, despite adding nearly \$2 million to the budget proposed by the county manager last month. Money to cover the additional spending will be taken from the county's unappropriated fund balance of \$12.5 million. The budget adopted by the commissioners sets a tax rate of 68 cents per \$100 property valuation. That means that the owner of a \$100,000 home would pay \$680 in annual taxes.

It was the first budget adopted by unanimous vote in four years.

The commissioners also upped the proposed spending for volunteer fire stations, the Southport Maritime Museum, the Brunswick County Literacy Council and the Volunteer and Information Center and reallocated funds for the Marine Crescent.

Items added to the budget Monday include \$150,000 for new baseball fields at Town Creek and Shallotte district parks and a \$5,000 appropriation for the Miss Brunswick County Scholarship Pageant.

Calling his proposed allocation for the library a "large contribution to the educational infrastructure of the county," Commissioner Gene Pinkerton said it would quickly give the county a "state-of-the-art" library system.

Pinkerton's plan calls for spending \$400,000 each toward building the Leland and Oak Island branches,

\$125,000 each to add book space and computer filing to the Shallotte and Southport branches and \$300,000 for operational expenses, including more librarians and longer opening hours.

"If we piecemeal this system it will take us 10 years to get what we need," said Pinkerton. "All we really have now is enough to say we have a library."

The board voted unanimously to approve each of the other funding increases. Pinkerton said he was pleased that the commissioners had agreed to spend more for the library and other educational programs.

"I'm kind of proud of the way Brunswick County is going," he said. "We're doing some things that will make us more than just the land that holds New Hanover and Horry counties together."

The board agreed that at its next meeting on June 15, a nine-member library board will be created to oversee the expansion and operation of the four-branch system. One member will be chosen from each district, with four at-large members. The commissioners plan to include one member of their own board and at least one representative of central Brunswick County.

Pinkerton emphasized that as part of the expanded system, all assets held by or raised for the four branches will become part of the library department's budget. Fund-raising campaigns in Leland and on Oak Island have collected money to build new library branches there. Land has also been donated, although in some cases deed restrictions have yet to be worked out.

"In order to be 25 percent of this game, you got to put your money in the pot," said Pinkerton. "If only three branches want to be part of the system, then that's OK."

Other changes made Monday to the proposed budget

(See BUDGET, Page 2-A)



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—Commissioner Gene Pinkerton

Building Plans Review Offered

BY SUSAN USHER

Property owners, builders and contractors concerned that a house might not satisfy sewage system requirements can ask the Brunswick County Health Department to review their plans before they start to build.

The voluntary review, offered at no charge, is one of several steps the Brunswick County Board of Health is taking in an effort to address a problem of septic systems burdened by overcrowding of homes, particularly rental properties along the Brunswick County coast.

"People are asking, 'If we build this, what kind of problems are we going to run into,'" said Health Director Michael Rhodes, adding that he thinks the department should be able to answer the question. "They're making an effort to solve a problem before it becomes a problem."

The decision to offer the advance reviews comes after the department suspended the septic tank permit for a four bedroom, five-bathroom house at Holden Beach last month after a final inspection of the on-site sewage disposal system. Local and state health officials contend the

beachfront house has six bedrooms, including rooms designated as an "office" and a "den" in the house that was built as a rental property rather than a permanent residence.

While the department doesn't want to get into routine or required review of all house plans because of the time and staffing required, Roberson said something is needed to address rental properties with under-designed septic tanks.

"This would be a step in the right direction," said Dr. Harry Johnson, a new board member.

(See BUILDING, Page 2-A)

Fifth Grade Stays At Shallotte, Supply Lines Changed Again

BY MARJORIE MEGIVERN

Fifth graders in central Brunswick County who were slated to move to Union Primary School next year will remain at Shallotte Middle School, following action Monday by the Brunswick County Board of Education.

Also, a new map of the Supply Elementary district was approved, with lines changed to remedy overcrowding at Union Primary School.

Assistant Superintendent William Turner reported that the original plan, to make Union a K-5 school, would result in 879 students there, leaving 636 at Shallotte Middle, which would serve sixth through eighth graders.

"The state department recommended 725 students for Union," Turner said, "so our committee tried to find a way to reduce the enrollment there. We found that if we retained Shallotte Middle as a 5-8 school, it would have 785 students and, as a K-4 school, Union would have an enrollment of 730."

The board approved the change with little discussion. Board member Robert Slockett asked Turner, "Will this give the commissioners the message that we need that new elementary school in Calabash sooner than we told them?"

Turner answered, "Yes, it certainly does."

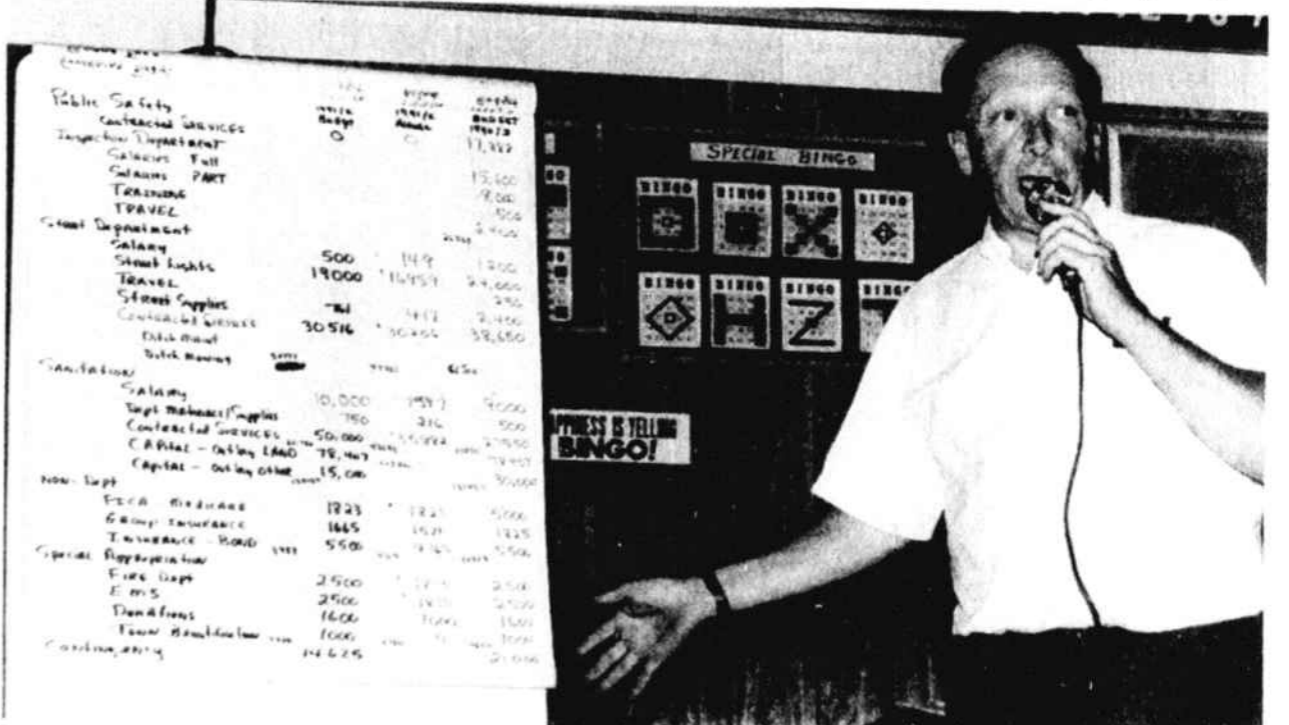
Union Principal Zelfia Grissett said she endorsed the K-4 concept at her school.

"It will give us room to breathe," she said, "and we can get rid of some of our trailers."

Concerning the question of fifth graders included in a middle school, Assistant Superintendent Mose Lewis, who had served on the planning committee, said, "There is no evidence that there is any negative academic impact when fifth graders are part of a middle school."

Administrators at Shallotte Middle were not overjoyed, however. Assistant Principal William Detrie spoke of the crowded conditions and said, "We hoped we could

(See SUPPLY, Page 2-A)



Line By Line

Calabash Commissioner Jon Sanborn explains spending proposals included in the 1992-93 draft budget at the town's hearing. A report on the budget is on Page 8-A.

STAFF PHOTO BY ERIC CARLSON