

# THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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## ONE WAY OR ANOTHER

# Seven-Digit Dialing Throughout County Expected

BY ERIC CARLSON

Are you tired of dialing as many numbers to make a telephone call within Brunswick County as you would to reach Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan?

Within a few months, the state's local telephone companies are expected to ask the N.C. Utilities Commission to approve a plan that would pave the way for variable-rate, seven-digit dialing throughout the county.

Russell Price, general manager of Atlantic Telephone Membership Corp. in Shallotte, said in an interview last week that a Local Exchange Carrier Industry Committee is working on a proposal that would provide a "radically different" level of telephone service to the area.

The new proposal would allow a local telephone carrier to offer customers a variety of long-distance subscription packages within its service area.

For example, a business in Calabash that makes frequent calls to Southport could arrange to pay a flat rate for unlimited seven-digit dialing to that area.

At the same time, another Calabash resident who rarely calls Southport could make an occasional seven-digit call there and pay the long-distance fee on a per-call basis while keeping a lower basic service rate.

Or a subscriber could sign up for a limited number of calls each month at a rate that would be less than the per-call fee and pay a bit more for basic service.

In other words, telephone customers would be able to

customize their local long-distance rates to suit their calling preferences.

The new industry proposal comes at a convenient time for Brunswick County government, which was planning to renew an effort to ask the state Utilities Commission to approve Extended Area Service, or toll-free dialing, within the county.

If approved, EAS would allow unlimited seven-digit calling throughout the county, but it would mean a higher basic telephone rate for all customers regardless of whether or not they used their extended calling ability.

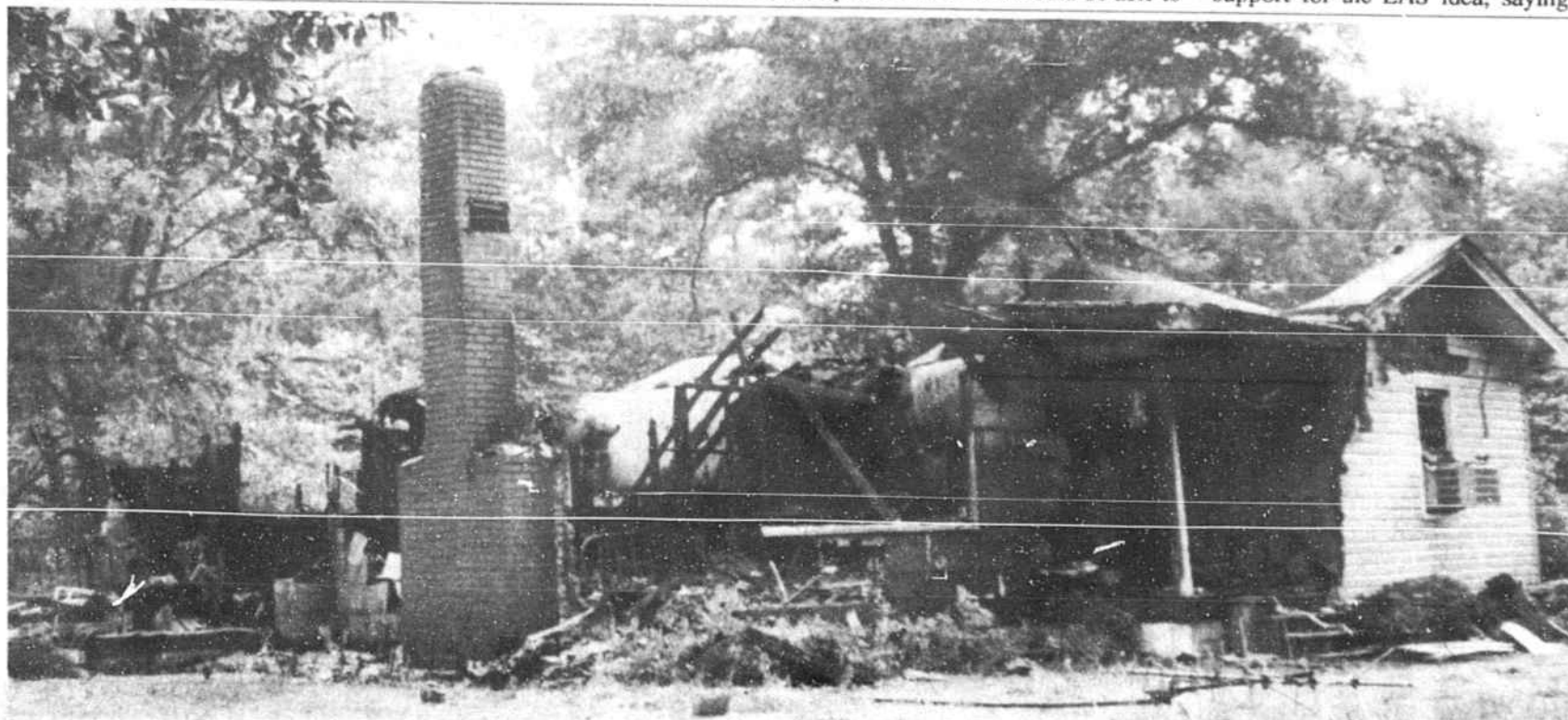
County officials, area chambers of commerce and most Brunswick County municipalities have expressed support for the EAS idea, saying it would encourage

businesses to keep their purchasing within the county.

"It would certainly cut down on the cost of doing business within the county," said County Manager David Clegg. "As it is now, someone in Southport who needs a widget has to pay for a toll call whether he calls Wilmington or Shallotte. It's no wonder so much of our business is going north."

Most county departments have toll-free 800 numbers to allow citizens free access from all areas of the county. Clegg estimated that by eliminating the need for the 800 numbers, EAS would reduce the county's annual telephone expenses by one third.

The Public Utilities Commission must approve all re-  
(See COUNTYWIDE, Page 2-A)



STAFF PHOTO BY SUSAN USHER

## Shallotte Point Blaze

Lightning struck the Roy W. Mintz home during a fierce early-morning storm Monday while all family members were away. The house was fully involved in flames before the fire was noticed by a neighbor. Story on Page 3-A.

# Bolivia Bypass Open To Traffic

BY SUSAN USHER

Through travelers now have a clear shot of four-lane highway to travel from Wilmington to just north of the N.C. 211 intersection at Supply.

The state Department of Transportation turned traffic loose on the U.S. 17 bypass of Bolivia shortly after 9 a.m. Tuesday, DOT resident engineer Allen Pope said Tuesday afternoon.

"South traffic has two lanes open, but we're working on grade problems with the two north lanes," he said. "We're running on the shoulder."

Mayor Ida Mae Mintz spoke optimistically of the impact of the bypass on the small town she has served for more than a dozen years.

"Some people are pessimistic about it, but I'm not," she said.

"I'm sure there will be a difference," she said. "All the tourists will bypass us."

"But I'm sure the local people will continue to use this stretch of road," she said, noting that the strip of U.S. 17 Business will continue to handle traffic to South Brunswick Middle and High schools, Carolina Power & Light's Brunswick Nuclear Plant and ADM, as well as other destinations.

"I think it will really be a good thing for us, at least in some respects," said Mintz, noting that traffic should be able to turn from Danford Road onto U.S. 17 without long waits.

Traffic was normal through the middle of the day in Bolivia; in fact, Mintz said she hadn't been aware that the bypass had opened to traffic.

"I went to the post office and the bank, and I still had to wait to turn," she said. "I don't know that I can tell any difference."

Pope said a crew was expected to complete the "tie-in" or connection with U.S. 17 at the south end of the bypass Tuesday or early Wednesday, while about three weeks of work remain on the north tie-in.

"We're going to have to take out the temporary connector and build the field up more so we can tie-in," he said.

Once on the bypass, cross-over access to U.S. 17 Business is limited at this point.

"Galloway Road is the only one that I can think of that ties in right now," said Lee Currie, DOT county maintenance supervisor.

S.T. Wooten Construction Co. went to work in late August 1991 and is completing its part of the job months ahead of a Dec. 1 deadline. At one point the company had expected to finish the job by early July. Grading of the tie-ins at either end of the bypass and paving its 7.5-mile length around Bolivia is expected to cost \$3.6 million.

The first work on the bypass was begun in May 1989 by W.E. Blackmon Construction Co., the grading, drainage and culvert contractor. That work was completed by April 15, 1991, at a cost of \$5.26 million for the 6.8 miles.

The bypass is part of an effort to four-lane U.S. 17 from the Virginia line to the South Carolina line. Work in Brunswick County is due to be finished sometime in 1994.

# Proposal Would Grade Mobile Parks

BY LYNN CARLSON

Brunswick County Board of Health members took their first public look Monday at a draft ordinance to grade mobile home parks and campgrounds for the sanitation of their premises, water supply, sewage and solid waste disposal, animal control and general maintenance.

The board discussed a draft proposal to require certification of restaurant managers, and possibly eventually food service workers, to assure that they have been trained in safe food handling practices.

At the same time, health officials acknowledged that they currently lack the staff to fully implement either program.

Andrew Robinson, county environmental health supervisor, presented the draft mobile home park ordinance and proposed inspection evaluation, saying "Brunswick County has 250 to 300 mobile home parks, including some of the best and some of the worst in North Carolina."

He added that health department staff this summer had discovered mobile homes being occupied by a dozen or more migrant farmworkers who are charged \$50 per person per week to live in them. He estimated that 50 percent of mobile home parks are suffering from some level of groundwater contamination and that 25 percent contain

*"Brunswick County has 250 to 300 mobile home parks, including some of the best and some of the worst in North Carolina."*

—Andrew Robinson  
Environmental Health Supervisor

malfunctioning sewage disposal systems.

Robinson's proposal would apply to any tract of land where three or more mobile homes are located, whether the owner rents the property or the homes. It would focus on five areas:

■Premises, including drainage, proper storage of materials, proper maintenance of vegetation, numbering of yards, properly located signs, manufactured homes located as shown on approved plans, and no junked motor vehicles.

■Water supply, including a properly operating system and approved source, well and pump area which are clean and free of storage, no hazardous chemicals or pollutants in the well area,

adequate water pressure, proper piping, adequate water storage and backflow prevention.

■Sewage disposal, including approved and properly functioning septic system with leak-proof connections, no open sewer connections, and no manufactured home within five feet of a septic tank system.

■Solid waste, including garbage which is removed by approved vehicle and transported to an approved disposal site at least once weekly, plus adequate number of dumpsters provided;

■Animal control, in which no animals are allowed to run loose and only ordinary house pets are allowed.

■General maintenance, including garbage in approved containers, yard free of refuse and excess vegetation, and animal waste properly disposed of.

The proposal would use a demerit system of grading, Robinson said. He suggested a 60-day "grace period" for existing mobile home parks in which health officials would be available to work with the owners toward compliance.

Under the ordinance as proposed, parks would be graded in much the same manner as restaurants. They would be inspected twice a year by environmental health specialists, receiving a  
(See PLAN, Page 2-A)

# State, EMTs Work To Get System Back On Line

BY ERIC CARLSON

State officials will meet with local Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) tonight (Thursday) to outline plans for bringing Brunswick County's recently suspended Advanced Life Support system back on line.

The program was suspended Aug. 3, after state inspectors discovered serious deficiencies in EMT training and course recordkeeping.

Suspension of Advanced Life Support (ALS) means ambulance personnel can no longer use a defibrillator to restore heart rhythms or administer intravenous injections.

In preparation for tonight's meeting, N.C. Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Regional Coordinator Pam Lookabill said Tuesday she has been meeting with local EMTs to determine the status of their training and files. Without documentation of completed course work, EMTs will have to make up courses and perform additional intern work.

Lookabill said only about half the 100 or so affected EMTs have contacted her to discuss the files. She plans to send letters to all EMTs in the county, stressing the importance of documenting their course work.

Not only are Brunswick EMTs no longer authorized to perform ALS procedures, but they may also be liable to civil action from a patient who recognizes their intermediate rating identification. Local EMT-I's lost their rating when the ALS program was suspended.

"I can't tell you to take off your patch, but I would," Lookabill said last Thursday at a meeting of state EMS officials and about 50 local EMTs.

"By keeping that patch on you are representing yourselves as something you are not."

Brenda McLamb, ALS nurse liaison at Doshier Memorial Hospital, criticized state officials for not doing a better job of overseeing the fledgling program, which went on line March 6. By then, local EMTs had spent thousands of hours in class and field work to qualify for the intermediate rating required for an ALS program.

"Why did it take a year to review those files?" asked McLamb. "Why couldn't the coordinator have come here last year instead of letting things get out of hand?"

Mike Eddinger, deputy chief of the state EMS office, admitted that the state shares some of the blame for letting Brunswick's ALS program get off track. He said his office has not been fully staffed and that state supervisors have been covering the region by telephone.

He said the area should get better attention under Lookabill, who lives in Wilmington.

"However, the ultimate responsibility falls on the sponsor hospital," Eddinger said.

The Brunswick Hospital is the sponsor for the county's ALS program under the direction of Dr. Harry L. Johnson. It was his responsibility to select the program coordinator/instructor and to verify that all ALS students have met their course and internship requirements for state certification.

"As medical director, I have to say that I'm responsible," Johnson said in an interview last week. "But with the caveat of 20-20 hindsight I would add that I was being misled. I wasn't keeping on top of things like I should have."

Johnson has said that he delegated the respon-

sibility of maintaining the training records to program instructor John Davis. In his letter notifying the state about suspending ALS, Johnson said Davis had "grossly misled" officials about the status of emergency medical training.

Davis is no longer associated with Brunswick's ALS training. The county will be advertising for a new training officer, Johnson said.

Lookabill told the EMTs at Thursday's meeting that some of their training files "are pretty empty" and some show no record of any training or continuing education.

She said that while Brunswick Community College supplied classroom space and paid Davis, the school was not to blame for the lax record keeping. She said BCC's classroom records were "clean as a hound's tooth."

Most of the deficiencies found so far were in the internship portion of the training program, Lookabill said. Before being certified as intermediates, EMTs must demonstrate their ability to apply their classroom training in the field by working under other EMT-I's in ambulances and hospital emergency rooms.

Unfortunately, much of the field internship hours went undocumented, she said.

Neither Johnson nor Lookabill would speculate about when the Brunswick ALS program might be restored. They were planning to meet with other state and local EMS officials to develop a procedure to train and recertify the county's EMT-I's.

"Hopefully what we'll be able to say to people Thursday is what we need to do and how we plan to get it done," Johnson said.



DR. HARRY L. JOHNSON explains the recent suspension of the county's ALS program to emergency medical technicians at a meeting.

# Schools Budget Amended

BY MARJORIE MEGIVERN

A week after hearing from the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners that there was sufficient money in the county school budget for systemwide computerization, the Brunswick County Board of Education amended its budget accordingly.

Monday night the board approved the transfer of \$500,000, derived from half-cent sales tax money given the school system for capital expenditures, from a Supply Elementary School contingency fund. Finance Officer Rudena Fallon recommended the move, noting that the money had not been needed for the new school.

This amount completes the \$1.25 million needed to purchase computers for all county schools this year. In a July 28 meeting, the board had already transferred \$250,000 originally ticketed toward construction of a new central office, and another \$250,000 from the fund balance. Still another \$250,000 had already been budgeted for computer purchases.

Fallon warned board members, "This leaves very little in the capital reserve fund for next year."

The full and immediate complement of computers was deemed necessary because of a state requirement that students be "computer lit-

(See SCHOOLS, Page 2-A)