



PHOTO BY JOSIE JOHNSTON

CLEANING UP SKULL CREEK

On Friday, May 26, state and town representatives, in conjunction with Friends of the Rivers, presented a video at the old Hilton Head Seafood Company dock site. The video and accompanying interviews were used to raise awareness and provide information regarding the removal of

several derelict and sunken shrimp trawlers in Skull Creek. The town awarded a \$173,000 contract to Cape Romain, a company from Wando, South Carolina, to remove a total of nine boats. This removal prevented potential environmental damage, in addition to improving the navigability of the waterway. The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Quality will utilize funding from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to award a matching \$50,000 grant through the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management.

Month in **REVIEW**

We look back on May, one last time, for news highlights and local developments.

Lowcountry **NEWS**

TOWN PURCHASES LOCAL THEATER

The Town of Hilton Head recently announced its plan to buy the old Dunnagan's Alley Theater from the Arts Center of Coastal Carolina for \$635,000, as part of a plan to redevelop the area. The theater is located at the southwest corner of Arrow Road and Dunnagan's Alley, directly across the street from another town-owned property – the former site of Remy's Sports Bar. The .42-acre area is currently used by the Arts Center as a warehouse for costumes, props, and set pieces, as well as a place to paint set pieces and backdrops. The purchase agreement allows the Arts Center to continue renting the building from the town until September 30, 2007, then the Arts Center hopes to use the purchase money to either lease or build a warehouse. Once the property is vacated, the town plans to pull down the theater and use the land it currently occupies to add to the growing "bridges to the beach" initiative.

MERCHANTS COMMIT TO RETAIL STORES, RESTAURANTS IN OKATIE CROSSING

Horne Properties, a Tennessee-based developer handling the construction and creation of a new shopping center, Okatie Crossing, at the intersection of U.S. 278 and S.C. 170, announced that three unnamed banks have purchased land in the complex, as well as home furnisher Ethan Allen, Wendy's, and Zaxby's. Five other large retailers are currently in negotiations to build on the property as well. Okatie Crossing will be built in two stages, and when finished will be nearly 300 acres. Its size has grown since the center was originally planned, due mostly to the large growth recently seen in the Okatie area. While it is still unclear when construction will begin, Horne Properties hopes to have stores open before October 2007.

AUDIT REVEALS WIDESPREAD ABUSE OF COUNTY CREDIT CARDS

An audit of Beaufort County's purchasing department recently revealed that county employees were abusing county credit cards. The cards were implemented to help with purchasing and were set with a \$500 limit, but the audit revealed that many were splitting purchases to avoid the limit and even neglecting to turn in receipts. One case in particular showed one county employee making over \$1,000 in purchases at an area Staples in the course of a single day. In response to the audits, county administrator Gary Kubic prepared a memo to various Beaufort County officials cancelling several cards. As our cartoon shows, it's important to hang onto those receipts.

Drawn to the **NEWS**



ILLUSTRATION BY MATT ANDERSON



PHOTO BY BARRY KAUFMAN

TOGETHER FOR BEAUFORT LAUNCHED

At a meeting in the Palmetto Electric building in Hardeeville, civic leaders, including Weston Newton (pictured), announced a new initiative designed to improve the quality of life for everyone in Beaufort County. Titled “Together for Beaufort,” this initiative will address four issues: diversifying the county’s economy, raising literacy rates, breaking the cycle of poverty and balancing growth against environmental concerns. The four areas of focus were constructed through the use of focus groups and personal interviews over the last eighteen months. Over the next six years, private and nonprofit agencies will work to address these issues, meeting set goals established by this initial report. Among agencies involved are the Beaufort County Alliance for Human Services, Beaufort County, the Community Foundation of the Lowcountry and the United Way of Beaufort County.

LOCAL PRIMARY RESULTS

Despite an endorsement from Hilton Head Town Council, Tom Herbkersman was not quite able to garner enough votes to unseat incumbent Rep. Richard Chalk in the June Primaries. Town council supported Herbkersman due to Chalk’s stance on controversial billboard legislation, which they say damaged home rule. After his victory, Chalk credited his track record over the last two years in Columbia, as well as his campaign team, with his victory. County-wide, three incumbent Beaufort County Council members were ousted by their challengers. Because of this, Jerry Stewart, Steve Baer and Paul Sommerville will be sworn into county council in January, unless petition candidates emerge. Many felt that the across-the-board ousting of county council members reflected a general feeling that growth in the county has been poorly managed, especially along the U.S. 278 corridor.

Statewide NEWS

SANFORD VETOES \$6.6 BILLION BUDGET IN ITS ENTIRETY

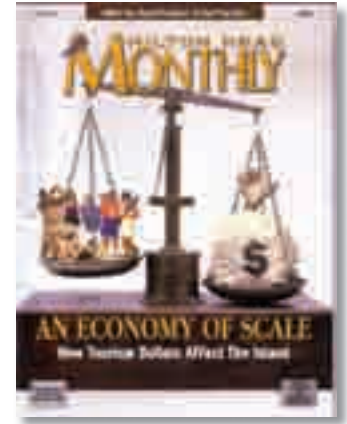
In a rare move, Gov. Mark Sanford bypassed the standard line-item veto allowed to governors under South Carolina rule and took the unprecedented step of vetoing the entire budget altogether. In what some are applauding as a stance against pork spending and others are claiming as political grandstanding, Sanford sent the budget back claiming that \$400 million would need to be cut to bring it to a sustainable level. Several highlights of programs cut were a performing arts center to be located miles away from the university for which it was allocated and \$9.3 million in competitive grants that had been turned into festival funding. Sanford claimed that much of the money, to be spent on private institutions that had other forms of revenue, would be better spent on programs for the Department of Corrections and Juvenile Justice, which rely primarily on support from the state.

ALBERTO KICKS OFF HURRICANE SEASON

By the time it came to South Carolina, Alberto had been downgraded to a mere tropical depression, but after washing the state in heavy rains and spinning off a handful of tornadoes, it was evident that hurricane season had arrived. In the Pee Dee region, Alberto brought about flood watches, lightning and hail, with tropical storm warnings all down the coast. The highest wind reported from the storm was a sustained 51 mph gust in Edisto Beach, while at least ten tornadoes were reported statewide.

SOLUTION FOUND TO SALT INVASION

After it was discovered that saltwater had been seeping into underground aquifers, which provide Georgia and South Carolina with drinking water, officials from both states began a war of words as to who was to blame. Georgia officials blamed South Carolina’s rapid development for the intrusion, while South Carolina officials filed a complaint against a Georgia plan to manage fresh water. Now, it seems a solution has been found, which benefits both states. In a Savannah press conference, Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue announced a plan to restrict the amount of water that Chatham County and parts of Effingham County draw, by five million gallons a day or more, by the end of 2008. **M**



Ten years ago in Monthly: In 1996, Monthly took an in-depth look at the tourism business, both its impact on the island and how it had grown. We also focused on the growing trend of ‘ecotourism’ and offered a how-to guide for those looking to get onto the Internet for the first time.