

# EMERALD TIDINGS

**Island Review**

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Emerald Tidings, composed monthly by Town Manager Frank Rush, is the official newsletter of the Town of Emerald Isle.

## **Coast Guard Road Traffic Improvements Project Set To Begin**

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The Town has awarded contracts for the construction of traffic improvements on Coast Guard Road near its intersections with NC 58 and Reed Drive. The project will involve the construction of longer and additional turn lanes at the intersections in an effort to relieve chronic summer traffic congestion in this area.

The project includes the construction of a longer, dedicated left turn lane from Coast Guard Road onto NC 58, a dedicated right turn lane from Coast Guard Road onto NC 58, and new turn lanes at the intersection of Coast Guard Road and Pebble Beach. The project will also straighten the curve in this location, resulting in safer traffic movement. The project also involves the installation of landscaped islands in Coast Guard Road and the initial construction of a safer, dedicated bicycle path along Coast Guard Road in the vicinity of Reed Drive and NC 58.

Work on the project will begin in early January with the relocation of power, telephone, and cable utilities. Actual road widening construction will begin in mid-January and will continue for approximately 2 months. The specific area of Coast Guard Road impacted by the project extends from the Carteret- Craven Electric Cooperative substation all the way to its intersection with NC 58.

Coast Guard Road will remain open to traffic throughout construction, however, there may be limited periods of time where one lane will be temporarily closed during daytime hours, with flagmen employed to direct traffic. Two lanes of traffic will remain passable at all times in the early morning, evening, and night hours. Adjacent businesses in Bell Cove Village shopping center and in the Valero / Emerald Isle Wine Market / Watson-Matthews Real Estate building will remain open during construction and should have continuous access from Coast Guard Road.

Barnhill Contracting Corporation, Wilson, NC is the prime contractor for this project. Yardworks, Inc., a local company, will construct retaining walls and landscaping features associated with the project.

The Town appreciates our residents', property owners', visitors', and businesses' patience during construction of this important project. The Town has intentionally limited construction to the winter months to avoid major traffic impacts, and will work closely with the contractors to minimize any inconvenience during construction. The end result

of the project should improve traffic congestion in this area in the future.

### **Carteret County Tax Office Releases Revaluation Totals**

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Carteret County recently announced the 2007 tax value totals for the County and its municipalities. The 2007 revaluation will be used in June 2007 by the Carteret County Board of Commissioners and Emerald Isle Board of Commissioners to establish the FY 07-08 tax rates, and will take effect for calculation of tax bills due in September 2007.

The last tax revaluation occurred in 2001, and all real property values currently in use reflect 2001 market values. Significant real estate appreciation has occurred over the past six years, and the 2007 revaluation assigns tax values based on current market conditions. As noted in the last edition of Emerald Tidings, the purpose of a tax revaluation is to insure tax equity among property tax payers, and periodic revaluation is required at least every eight years under North Carolina law.

Overall, Carteret County's total tax value has increased by 123%, from \$8.7 billion (based on 2001 values) to more than \$19.4 billion. In Emerald Isle, the total taxable value has increased by 192%, from \$1.5 billion to \$4.4 billion. Because Emerald Isle's total tax value increased more than the overall County increase, Emerald Isle's property tax payers will bear a larger portion of the County tax burden in the future. Under the 2001 values, Emerald Isle represented approximately 17.4% of the total County tax base. Under the 2007 values, Emerald Isle now represents approximately 22.8% of the total County tax base.

It is interesting to note that Emerald Isle is by far the largest town in Carteret County in terms of tax base, and is approximately \$1 billion larger than the combined tax base of Morehead City, Beaufort, and Newport combined (\$3.4 billion). Overall, the island of Bogue Banks (Emerald Isle, Indian Beach, Salter Path, Pine Knoll Shores, and Atlantic Beach) represents nearly 46% (\$8.9 billion) of the County's total tax base. In Emerald Isle, the direct oceanfront properties alone have a total tax value of \$1.2 billion, or 26.7% of the Town's total \$4.4 billion tax base. Surprisingly, Emerald Isle's total tax base is now larger than that of the cities of Greenville, Goldsboro, Kinston, and New Bern.

The County will mail each property owner a notice of the new 2007 tax value for individual properties in January. It is important to remember that the new tax value is only half of the equation to determine whether or not your property tax bill will increase or decrease. The Carteret County Board of Commissioners and the Emerald Isle Board of Commissioners will establish the tax rate, the other part of the equation, in June 2007. The new tax rates will be reduced significantly at that time.

Under NC law, local governments are required to publish the "revenue-neutral" tax rate (the rate at the new values that will generate approximately the same amount of revenue as the old rate at the old values) when establishing a new post-revaluation property tax rate. In Emerald Isle, the "revenue-neutral" tax rate for the General Fund is expected to be in the 5.5 - 6 cent range, compared with the current rate of 15.5 cents. The "revenue-neutral" tax rate for the special oceanfront district is expected to be in the 15 - 16 cent range (compared with the current 48 cent rate), while the special non-oceanfront district is expected to be in the 1 - 1.5 cent range (compared with the current 3 cent rate). Carteret County's "revenue-neutral" rate is expected to be in the 20 - 21 cent range (compared with the current 44 cent rate). There will likely be

additional adjustments to the 2007 revaluation totals as a result of appeals and adjustments over the next several months, and the exact "revenue-neutral" tax rates will be published in June 2007.

Until the new property tax rates are established, you can get a rough idea of the impact on your annual tax bill by using the following formula: new 2007 tax value divided by 100, then multiplied by the estimated "revenue-neutral" tax rates noted above (be sure to include the decimal point - for example, a 6 cent rate would be .06). Your actual tax bill will depend on the actual adopted tax rates by the Carteret County Board of Commissioners and the Emerald Isle Board of Commissioners in June 2007, however, this calculation will provide a quick estimate of how your annual tax bill will change in 2007.

**Make Sure Emergency Responders Can Find You - Order a Reflective Address Sign from Emerald Isle EMS**

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Every second counts in an emergency, and the Town wants its emergency responders to be able to find our residents and visitors as quickly as possible in their time of need. A quick emergency response depends on many factors, however, one way to help promote a quick response is to make sure that the address of your residence is clearly visible from the street – either on your structure and/or near your driveway.

To help make it easier to find the correct address, Emerald Isle EMS is currently sponsoring a Reflective Address Sign program for Emerald Isle residents and property owners. For a \$15 donation, Emerald Isle EMS will have a reflective address sign manufactured with your house number in 3" reflective white numbers on a 6" x 18" green background. The signs will be mounted by Emerald Isle EMS volunteers at the street in front of your house, preferably on your mailbox or newspaper box stand, and installation is included in the \$15 donation.

For more information, visit Emerald Isle EMS at their station at 218 Cedar Street or call 252-354-2249. Please take a moment and drive down the street to your residence and put yourself in the shoes of an emergency responder who is trying to find your residence at night, in a rainstorm, etc. and who doesn't have a prior understanding of which residence is yours. Ask yourself if you've made it as easy as possible for an emergency responder to find you or your guests without wasting precious time. If identifying your residence may take up that precious time, then contact Emerald Isle EMS and order your reflective address sign today!

**New Solid Waste Collection Schedule Begins January 2**

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Beginning January 2, Emerald Isle's contractors will now collect residential garbage twice per week, year- round. The collection schedule will change, so please make a note of the collection days for your area.

All residential properties on the north side (sound side) of NC 58 and Coast Guard Road will now have trash collected on Tuesdays and Fridays each week. All residential properties on the south side (ocean side) of NC 58 and Coast Guard Road, including The Point, will now have trash collected on Mondays and Thursdays. Recycling collection will occur on Wednesdays in the entire town.

All condominium complex dumpsters (regardless of location) will be emptied every

Monday and also on Fridays if necessary. Condominium recycling will also be collected each Wednesday.

**Tom Hoover Appointed to Board of Commissioners**

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Commissioner Pete Allen, who served on the Emerald Isle Board of Commissioners since January 2005, was elected to the Carteret County Board of Commissioners in November and was seated in December. At its December meeting, the Emerald Isle Board of Commissioners appointed Tom Hoover to replace Pete Allen. Tom Hoover will serve the remainder of a term that expires in December 2007.

Commissioner Hoover resides on Bogue Sound Drive in central Emerald Isle, and previously served as a Town Commissioner from 1995 - 1999. We look forward to working with Commissioner Hoover, and also look forward to working with County Commissioner Allen in his new role.