

Emerald Tidings / Island Review – April 19, 2006 Print Edition

Town of Emerald Isle Receives First “Public Sector Star” Designation from NC Department of Labor

The Town of Emerald Isle has been selected by the NC Department of Labor as the very first recipient of the “Public Sector Star” designation. The “Public Sector Star” program is designed to recognize and promote effective safety and health management in the workplace, and is specifically designed for public sector employers who provide a diverse range of services for the public. A similar program, “Carolina Star”, is in place to recognize private sector workplaces.

The Town is extremely proud of its employees for achieving this designation. The Town’s Safety Committee, consisting of representatives from all Town departments, has worked very hard to cultivate an organizational culture that places a high priority on employee safety and led the effort to achieve the “Public Sector Star” designation over the past 3 years. The Safety Committee is led by Senior Fire Engineer Dean Griffin and Fire Chief Bill Walker, and their leadership has been key to this accomplishment.

The Town benefits greatly by achieving the “Public Sector Star” designation. First, and most importantly, the Town’s employees have demonstrated a commitment to workplace safety that will help to prevent future injuries. In fact, in 2005, the Town’s workforce had ZERO reportable injuries and no lost work time due to on-the-job injuries. This enhances employee morale and productivity, and enables the Town to provide services in a more cost-effective manner. Second, the commitment to workplace safety will reduce workers compensation insurance costs, which can be significant. Finally, the Town is entrusted with greater responsibility from the NC Department of Labor’s safety and health inspectors, allowing us to reduce or eliminate any fines levied for unsafe conditions that may occur in the future.

NC Labor Commissioner Cherie Berry presented this designation to the Town at a special luncheon on March 20. The Town was presented with a special plaque and flag to display at the Town Hall complex. Commissioner Berry expressed her pride in the Town’s employees, and encouraged continued emphasis on workplace safety and health. The Town was also pleased to have State Representative Jean Preston on hand for the luncheon.



Western Ocean Regional Access Temporarily Closed for Parking Lot Improvements

Work is underway to pave the parking lot at the Town’s flagship beach access, the Western Ocean Regional Access (WORA) located on Islander Drive. As a result, the WORA is temporarily closed

to the public. The Town expects to reopen the WORA by early May. In the meantime, visitors are encouraged to utilize the Town's other beach access parking areas at the Eastern Ocean Regional Access near mile marker 15 on NC 58, on Ocean Drive near 3rd Street, and on Station Street near The Point.

We appreciate your patience as we complete these improvements. The new parking lot will enhance the aesthetics, storm water management features, and order of the parking lot, and we look forward to reopening an even better WORA!

Celebrate the 1-Year Anniversary of the Bogue Inlet Channel Project at a Community Pig-Pickin' on Friday, April 21!

Coastal Planning & Engineering (CPE), the Town's consultants for the Bogue Inlet Channel Project, will sponsor a FREE Community Pig-Pickin' at The Point on Friday, April 21 at 12 noon! The event will commemorate the 1-year anniversary of the completion of the project that created a new main channel in Bogue Inlet, nourished the western oceanfront beaches, and has resulted in the accretion of more than 400 feet of new beach in front of the sandbags at The Point over the past year. The Pig-Pickin' is open to all interested citizens, and special arrangements for parking will be made in the vicinity of The Point. Come on down to The Point at the end of Inlet Drive and join the celebration!

Town Working on Plans for New EMS Building and Expanded Police Station

The Board of Commissioners recently participated in an all-day budget and capital planning session on February 17. The Board discussed their priorities for the upcoming FY 06-07 budget and the capital needs facing the Town over the next five years. The Board expressed their desire to maintain the Town's current General Fund tax rate of 15.5 cents heading into the next budget year, and also expressed that their top two priorities for capital projects are a new building to house Emerald Isle EMS and a new or expanded Police Station.

The current EMS building on Cedar Street is increasing in age and is too small to adequately house all of the vital EMS vehicles and equipment. The Town and the non-profit Emerald Isle EMS will be working cooperatively to construct a new EMS building over the next couple of years, likely on Town-owned property adjacent to the Fire Station. The Police Station located in the Town Hall building is also increasing in age and is extremely small, resulting in very cramped conditions in the Police Department. The Town will consider expanding the Police Station into the Town Hall administrative offices and Board meeting room, and then construct new administrative offices and a new Board meeting room at another location at the Town Hall complex.

Current financial projections indicate that the Town can complete these vital projects with no or minimal impact on the Town's tax rate. Town staff, the Mayor, and Board of Commissioners will be working diligently over the next several months to move these projects forward in a cost-effective manner that is sensitive to our taxpayers' concerns.

May is National Bike Month!

Join the Town in celebrating National Bike Month all during the month of May! Get out on your bike and enjoy the great weather coming our way. Take a ride on the new bicycle path along NC 58, stop for some ice cream, pick up an Emerald Isle t-shirt or gift, or head on out to the beach. For

those of you heading off to work, the third week in May (May 15-19) is Bike-To-Work Week! If you're not up to biking to work all week, Friday, May 19 is Bike-To-Work Day!

The Town is continually striving to improve facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians, and the Town's Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee works hard to improve facilities and organize events to promote bicycling and pedestrian activities. For more information about the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee and planned events, visit www.emeraldisle-nc.org/bikeped/bikepedmain.htm or contact Alesia Sanderson, Parks and Recreation Director, at 252-354-6350. For more information about National Bike Month, visit www.bikemonth.com.

Be Mindful of Water Usage

Many parts of North Carolina continue to experience varying levels of drought, and interest is high in conserving water in many places. Here in Emerald Isle and Carteret County, we have fared much better in recent years, and our local water company, Bogue Banks Water, has not had to implement restrictions on water usage. The NC Drought Management Advisory Council has recently designated Carteret County and several other eastern NC counties as "experiencing abnormally dry conditions", and has advised these counties to carefully monitor water supplies as a precautionary measure.

Fortunately, Bogue Banks Water informs the Town that Emerald Isle's water supply is in good shape heading into this summer season, and they do not anticipate any problems. Bogue Banks Water always experiences their highest usage during the week of July 4, and they encourage people to temporarily refrain from watering lawns that week. Sometimes the little things go a long way, and this is one way you can help!

For more information about Bogue Banks Water, please contact their office at 354-3307. Their Board of Directors and staff do a great job managing our water supply, and are always happy to help!

North Carolina Beach, Inlet, and Waterway Association Seeking New Members

The North Carolina Beach, Inlet, and Waterway Association (NCBIWA) is a coast-wide organization whose focus is on the key issues affecting coastal local governments and citizens. Issues that NCBIWA is involved in include beach preservation, waterway maintenance, public beach and estuarine access, balanced coastal development, flood protection, environmental protection, and others.

The NCBIWA was formed out of several groups in order to become a more effective voice for coastal issues. The new group incorporated the former NC Shore and Beach Preservation Association, the Alliance for NC Inlets, and the NC Coastal Communities Coalition, and emerged as NCBIWA in 2005. NCBIWA continues to grow, and is always seeking new members. For more information about NCBIWA and to secure a membership form, visit www.ncbiwa.org.