



## EMERALD TIDINGS

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

### Beach Nourishment Project Set To Begin in January

The Board of Commissioners has awarded a contract to Great Lakes Dredge and Dock, Inc., Chicago, IL, to nourish approximately 5.3 miles of ocean beach beginning in January 2007. The project involves the replacement of approximately 570,000 cubic yards of sand that was lost during Hurricane Ophelia in September 2005.

Two distinct reaches will be nourished as part of this project. The first reach consists of approximately 2.6 miles of beach located between Conch Court and Lee Avenue.

Approximately 262,000 cubic yards of sand will be placed at a rate of approximately 20 cubic yards per linear foot. This additional sand is expected to widen the beach by approximately 50 feet. The second reach consists of approximately 2.7 miles of beach located between Connie Street and 6th Street. Approximately 308,000 cubic yards of sand will be placed at a rate of approximately 23 cubic yards per linear foot. This additional sand is expected to widen the beach by approximately 60 feet. These locations were documented by the Town and the Federal Emergency Management Agency as having suffered the greatest erosion losses as a result of Hurricane Ophelia.



The sand source for this project is the US Army Corps of Engineers offshore disposal site

for sand removed from Beaufort Inlet. This sand source was used by the Town in 2004, and the sand is of excellent quality.

The total amount of the contract is \$6.57 million, and will be financed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the NC Division of Emergency Management. Coastal Science & Engineering, Morehead City, NC, is the design engineer and coordinated the permitting process over the past year.

Construction will begin in early January. Work is expected to begin in the Conch Court - Lee Avenue reach, and then proceed to the Connie Street - 6th Street reach. Construction is expected to require 30 - 45 days, after which Great Lakes will complete similar projects in Indian Beach and Pine Knoll Shores.

The Town's Eastern Ocean Regional Access will be used as the staging area for Great Lakes' operations in Emerald Isle, and will be closed for the duration of the project. Certain areas of the beach will also be closed to beach driving and pedestrians during construction. For safety reasons, residents and visitors are urged to stay away from the discharge area.

The Town is pleased to see this project move forward. The replacement of sand lost during Hurricane Ophelia will provide important storm protection for future storm events and restore a wider recreational beach for our residents and visitors.

### **New Solid Waste Collection Schedule Takes Effect on January 2, 2007**

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Effective January 2, 2007, the Town's solid waste collection schedule and services will change. The Town's new contractor, Simmons & Simmons Management, will begin its new 5-year contract with the Town at that time. The new contract includes several improvements designed to improve aesthetics and make collection more convenient for our residents, property owners, and vacation rental companies.

The most significant change is that residential trash will now be collected twice per week all year long, and that the collection days will change for some residents and property owners. Beginning January 2, all residents and property owners located on the north side of NC 58 (Emerald Drive) and Coast Guard Road will have trash collected on Tuesdays and Fridays each week, all year long. Beginning on January 4, all residents and property owners on the south side of NC 58 (Emerald Drive) and Coast Guard Road, including The Point, will have trash collected on Mondays and Thursdays each week, all year long. (IMPORTANT NOTE - There will be no trash collection anywhere in Emerald Isle on January 1, 2007.)

Trash dumpsters at condominium complexes will continue to be emptied every Monday

throughout the town, with additional collections scheduled for every Friday, only if necessary. Waste Industries, the Town's current contractor, will continue to provide dumpster service for the Town.

The weekly collection day for recyclables will also change. Beginning January 3, recyclables will be collected throughout the entire town each Wednesday.

Another feature of the new contract is that Simmons & Simmons personnel will also roll-BACK all trash and recycling containers after collection. Houses located within 50 feet of the right of way will have the container rolled back to a location underneath or adjacent to the house. The containers for houses located more than 50 feet back from the right of way will only be rolled back to a location approximately 30 - 50 feet back from the right of way. The initial roll-OUT is still the responsibility of the resident, property owner, and/or vacation rental company.

The Town looks forward to a positive working relationship with Simmons & Simmons over the years, and is excited about the service improvements. As is the case in any transition, there are likely to be some initial glitches, and the Town requests your patience as we work diligently to resolve any issues. Please report any service problems to Town Hall at 354- 3424. Town staff and Simmons & Simmons will correct any issues as quickly as possible.

**More New Sidewalks On The Way**

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At its November 14 meeting, the Board of Commissioners approved a contract with Johnson Construction Company, Maysville, NC, for the construction of more new sidewalks. The \$37,700 contract will result in an additional 1,300 linear feet of 6 ft. wide concrete sidewalks in Emerald Isle.



The contract includes the construction of a 700 linear ft. sidewalk segment on the north side of NC 58 between Lee Avenue and the Town Hall complex. This new segment will connect with the existing 2+ miles of sidewalk on the north side of NC 58, and will enable a safe pedestrian and bicycle travel way from the Archer's Point area to the center of town.

The contract also includes the construction of new sidewalk "connector stubs" at the Town's 4 signalized intersections along NC 58. The "connector stubs" will be installed from the edge of the existing bicycle path and sidewalks to the edge of the NC 58 travel lanes in the vast NC 58 right of way. These "connector stubs" will improve the safety and convenience of crossing NC 58 at the signalized intersections, and are a necessary feature in order for the Town to secure pedestrian signals at these intersections from the NC Department of Transportation. The Town has formally requested the installation of pedestrian signals, and we are hopeful that the pedestrian signals will be included in an upcoming traffic signal improvement project that is planned by NCDOT.

This sidewalk project is partially funded by Carteret County, which provided a \$15,000

contribution for this project. The Town greatly appreciates the County's assistance with this project. Construction is expected to begin in late December / early January.

**Tax Revaluation Notices to Be Mailed in January**

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The Carteret County Tax Department is nearing completion of work on the 2007 revaluation of real property for tax purposes. The updated 2007 tax values will be mailed by the Carteret County Tax Department to all real property owners in January, and the new values will be the basis for property tax bills due in September 2007.

Under NC law, each County is required to periodically reassess all real property in its jurisdiction and assign a tax value that is consistent with the property's fair market value. The revaluation process is intended to insure an equitable sharing of the property tax burden in Carteret County and its municipalities, including Emerald Isle.

The tax values used by the Town of Emerald Isle are determined by the Carteret County Tax Department, and the Town does not utilize alternative tax values for Town property tax purposes. If you disagree with the new tax value assigned to your property, there are both informal and formal appeals processes in place. Please contact the Carteret County Tax Department at 252-728-8485 to learn more about the revaluation and appeals processes.

Due to the significant appreciation in real estate prices over the past few years, it is expected that the tax values in Emerald Isle will increase dramatically. Residents and property owners should note that a higher tax value does not necessarily result in a higher tax bill or the same percentage increase in your tax bill. The annual tax bill is a function of both the tax value assigned by the Carteret County Tax Department and the actual tax rates established by the Carteret County Board of Commissioners and the Emerald Isle Board of Commissioners.

Most elected bodies will reduce the tax rate significantly after a revaluation to a level that generates approximately the same amount of revenue as the old rate and old values or an amount somewhat higher than generated by the old rate and old values. Until the Carteret County and Town of Emerald Isle tax rates are established in June 2007, a quick way to gauge the potential impact of the tax revaluation on your property tax bill is to compare the percentage increase in your new tax value to the average percentage increase in the County and Town. If the percentage increase in your tax value is more than the average, then it is almost certain that your 2007 property tax bill will increase. If the percentage increase in your tax value is less than the average, then there is a possibility that the amount of your 2007 property tax bill may actually decrease.

Despite the perception by some, the intent of a tax revaluation is not to increase tax revenues. The intent is merely to assign tax values that are consistent with the fair market value of the property so that the property tax system is as equitable as possible. Under NC law, local governments are required to publish the "revenue-neutral" tax rate after a tax revaluation. The "revenue-neutral" tax rate is the tax rate using the new values that generates approximately the same amount of revenue as the old tax rate and the old tax values. This requirement to publish the "revenue-neutral" tax rate allows the public to clearly determine if a tax revaluation has resulted in a tax rate increase or decrease.

Future issues of Emerald Tidings will include commentary on the potential effect of revaluation on the Town of Emerald Isle's tax rate so that our residents and property owners can develop a better understanding of this issue. As noted earlier, the Emerald Isle Board of Commissioners will make the final decision on the amount of your 2007 tax bill when they establish the Town's new tax rate in June 2007.

**Town Seeks Grant to Construct Improvements at Planned New Soundfront Park**

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The Town has submitted a Public Water Access Grant application to the NC Division of Coastal Management to secure funds to begin development of McLean Park, a new soundfront park located near mile marker 18 adjacent to the Chapel By The Sea.

The Town is seeking approximately \$109,000 that would be matched with \$36,000 of Town funds. These funds would be used to construct a new +/- 500 ft. soundfront pier and picnic gazebo / bathhouse on the property. The non-profit Emerald Isle Parks and Recreation Association, Inc., which actually holds title to the park property, has reached a separate agreement with Chapel By The Sea for the construction of a dual-use parking lot to be used by both park patrons and church visitors.

The Town will enter into a separate agreement with the Emerald Isle Parks and Recreation Association, Inc. for the development of the new park if the grant is awarded. Grant awards are expected to be announced in early 2007.

**Seasons Greetings - Town of Emerald Isle Holiday Schedule**

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It's that wonderful time of the year again, and the Mayor, Board of Commissioners, and staff of the Town of Emerald Isle wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season. We hope that you will all remember those less fortunate this season, and give special thanks to those who are currently serving in our armed forces at home and abroad. Please cherish the blessings in your own personal lives, and give thanks for this wonderful place that means so much to us all - Emerald Isle!

Please note that Town Hall will be closed on December 25 and 26 (Monday and Tuesday) for the Christmas holiday. Normal office hours will resume on Wednesday, December 27. Town Hall will also be closed for New Year's on Monday, January 1, 2007. Have a great holiday season!