



June 2006 Newsletter

Island Notes:

Sams Point Road Development. Conceptual approval has been granted for development of 8.5 acres located on Sams' Point Road opposite the Royal Pines' community. Upon completion, the development will consist of 16 homes. What remains to be settled is the matter of whether sewer should be required for all of the homes. The developer desires to install sewer only on the waterfront homes and put the remainder on septic tanks.

A special thanks to Pat Harvey and Jim Palmer for coordinating the recent LIBPA sponsored political rally and Bill Rice who not only served as chef but also provided the equipment and expertise in regard to preparing and serving the food.

A matter of location! The good news is the City of Beaufort recently added a number of palm trees at the Wood's Bridge entrance to Lady's Island. The bad news is they put a palm tree so it appears to be directly in front of the "Welcome to Lady's Island" sign.

Pleasant Point Expansion. The new owners of the Pleasant Point PUD are adding approximately 35 multifamily units to the community on the property located near the entrance. This was approved in the original 1969 development plan.

Membership Report

At the end of May we concluded the phase of our membership campaign that, in addition to recruiting new members, placed emphasis on retention of current members from 2005. Our membership committee has sent 2 notices requesting renewal dues for 2006, attempted to personally contact each delinquent member and recently mailed a final notice. As of June 1 the membership roles, both web site and mailing list, will be adjusted to reflect only members in good standing. Our present membership consists of 203 business members and 58 residential members for a total of 261. The fall membership drive is scheduled to start in August.

WHAT THE VOTERS HAVE TOLD ME ARE THE ISSUES!

By Paul D. Sommerville, Candidate for District 7 County Council Representative:

On June 13th District 7 voters will select a candidate to represent them for the next four years on Beaufort County Council. I am one of those candidates.

For the past two months I have been knocking on doors throughout Lady's Island and the rest of District 7 to talk and listen to voters. The issues that have come up time and time again are – annexations, over development, taxes, traffic congestion and an overall loss of our quality of life.

ANNEXATIONS

While the main focus of attention here is currently the McLeod/Clarendon annexation, this issue is not new. Mayors and city councils from Myrtle Beach to Beaufort seem to be in a footrace to see who can grow their municipalities the most. It is not always clear just what each municipality's motivation is but this is clearly a statewide issue. Our state legislators are supposedly looking at the issue but I am not optimistic that much will come of it. They (the state legislators) are talking about at least narrowing down what "contiguous" means. As it is currently being interpreted, "contiguous" means that if a municipality can imagine it they can annex it. The City of Beaufort has "cherry picked" many of the prime commercial properties on Lady's Island which will make it all the more difficult for Lady's Island to support itself financially should incorporation ever be decided upon.

So what is the solution? Barring any unlikely action by the state, the only real option we all have is to sit down with the municipalities and negotiate some standstill agreements. How likely is this to happen? I believe that if we can elect council members who are not lightning rods, we have a real shot at this. Poor relations between the county council and the municipalities has made this challenging. I can change this. For the past 30 years I have been a management consultant in labor relations. I do arbitrations, mediations and negotiations and I do these things well. I can sit down at a table with someone with whom I disagree and forge a consensus.

OVERDEVELOPMENT, TAXES, CONGESTION AND FADING QUALITY OF LIFE

The problem and the solution to all of the above is the same. For years, your county and in some cases municipal councils (through annexation) have been approving developments in Beaufort County with little if any thought to what infrastructure would be required to support this massive development and how we would pay for it. As a result, Beaufort County has gotten further and further behind the development curve until we currently find ourselves facing massive infrastructure deficits, sky high taxes (and rising), traffic congestion that would make Myrtle Beach blush and schools that are bursting at the seams and more and more classrooms which have license plates on them and are registered with the department of Motor Vehicles.

Beaufort County is one of the most desirable places on earth to live and raise families. There is no other place that is so beautiful, pristine and in such demand where developers can come in and buy large tracts of land to develop with minimal impact fees. We are selling Beaufort County on the cheap! Look at the study commissioned by the county at the Strom Thurmond Institute of Clemson University to determine infrastructure costs for the proposed Clarendon/McLeod development. Their findings took my breath away. For schools alone, the Strom Thurmond Institute determined that the cost per house would be about \$10,000.00. I want to be sure that any future development pays for its impacts to the extent permitted by law.

A recent study of southern Beaufort County determined that it will take nearly a half a billion dollars in infrastructure (and that number is rising daily) just to bring southern Beaufort County infrastructure up to its current needs. The numbers for northern Beaufort County are still being calculated but no doubt those numbers will be staggering as well. And guess who gets to pay for all this! Our taxes are high and rising in large part because Beaufort County has done practically no financial planning or strategic planning. If we don't do a much better job of planning soon, northern Beaufort County will join southern Beaufort County as one big overtaxed parking lot.

Someone asked me recently at a candidate forum just what I meant by "controlled growth". I answered this way. First of all, future development needs to follow the comprehensive plan as amended as well as the zoning ordinances that support it. Second, any future development in Beaufort County must pay for itself. No more free rides on the backs of Beaufort county taxpayers.

Unfortunately, our comprehensive plan has been plagued by controversy. Municipalities contend they were not given sufficient input as do many landowners such as the McLeods. This will change. Note that state law requires us to rewrite our comprehensive plan every 10 years. This process has already begun with work on both the southern and northern regional plans. When our comprehensive plan is rewritten it must have meaningful input from all interested parties. This must include the county, the municipalities, landowners and anyone else who wishes a seat at the table. Once our new comprehensive plan is complete, it will have the support of the very groups who are not supportive of our current plan. Again, all this requires County Council representatives who have good negotiation skills and who are not lightning rods.

What lies ahead for Beaufort County are challenges as far as the eye can see. There is an old saying that goes: "If you keep doing what you are doing you will get what you've got." **IT'S TIME FOR A CHANGE.**

WHAT THIS ELECTION IS ABOUT:

By Mark Generales, District 7 County Council Representative and Republican Candidate For Re-election:

First of all "Thank You" for the privilege of serving you for the past two terms. I've gained valuable experience which I have tried to apply with fairness, balance, and honesty on your behalf. Now allow me to state my case as to why you should give me another term to protect your interests and our shared Island way of life.

This election comes down to three central elements: Leadership, Experience, and Commitment.

Leadership: I live on Lady's Island and my opponent lives in the City of Beaufort. When he ran and lost for Beaufort City Council, he was all about what he would do for the city. Today he claims he's all about what he'll do for District 7. He has NO elective office experience. This is a job that requires considerable learning. I have an eight-year public voting record and a reputation for doing my homework, being fair, and putting in the long hours of meetings and constituent work. I'm known as a strong advocate for our District and I've proven I can put six or more council votes together on a given issue. I chair two committees, Finance and Technology, and serve on six others.

It's time for Lady's Islanders to seriously talk about incorporation. Do we become our own Town or continue to be nibbled at by patchwork annexation? We don't need another Walgreen building that looks like something out of a Florida strip mall. Not to decide is a decision in favor of the City of Beaufort. Mayor Rauch gets it. As he recently told us at our April meeting, annexation "is about the money." He has a business to run for city taxpayers. It's hard to blame him for

taking advantage of this state's outdated annexation laws. My opponent says, "I own a (rental) house on Lady's Island but do not live there so I will not be voting on this issue."

I do. I will take a strong leadership position in favor of a thorough and very public examination of how we should control our future. Through intergovernmental agreements the county would continue to provide services to us as a town. My preliminary figures show an initial two mils (or \$8 per \$100,000 of assessed value on your home) could cover costs. I will support a referendum for incorporation.

Experience: I've been waiting to find out just what my opponent is for. The big idea now seems to be "No New Taxes," according to the stickers plastered on his big campaign signs. Is this his local version of "Read My Lips"? While this may be populist sentiment at its finest, it just shows his inexperience in understanding how to put together a county budget. On May 22, the combined School District— County Council Finance Committee understood the impact of a potential \$15 million state tax cut to our school district and its impact on taxpayers. No one at the meeting that day took a stand for "No New Taxes." I think that position is dangerously uninformed. I leave it to you to decide for yourself. If the state legislature does succeed in providing some last minute tax relief, will they stop taking money from the "wealthy" counties or make significant changes to the school funding formula? Based on past history, no one knows. Would you agree this is not the time to grandstand, but a time for judicious and measured decision making?

Will my opponent vote NO on the Critical Lands referendum? Does my opponent advocate closing libraries? Which ambulance would he have us take off the road? Or dirt road do we not pave? Over 70% of the County and 80% of the school districts' operating budgets are represented by the salaries and benefits of teachers, librarians, deputies, assessors and the rest of the people that perform the critical work of daily government operations. Is my opponent unaware that 3 years ago a County study found our wages are \$6 million/yr below fair market wages? We discussed this in several public committee meetings and it was widely reported by the press.

In our new budget – by far the toughest one of my eight years at this – we include a modest 2.61% cost-of-living increase for school district employees and a similar increase for those at the County. Would he deny this modest increase in light of 3 year old findings? The district needs 38 new teachers. We need new Sheriffs deputies and workers in our 911 center. And we need to adjust salaries to keep our good people. Grandstanding and sloganeering are not appropriate. Experience does count!

Commitment:

- As my friend Jim Hicks, Lady's Island Representative to the Planning Commission, says: "It is time for governmental cooperation not competition to guide growth in Beaufort County." As a voting member of the Northern Regional Plan, I pledge to work for that cooperation.

- As chairman of the Finance Committee, I'll never forget who pays the bills around here. My goal continues to be to make sure every tax dollar raised is put to the best possible use.

- I'll work even harder to find fair and balanced solutions for our traffic and growth issues.

- I want more parks and recreation for our District, especially on Lady's Island. And we should someday have a library to call our own.

- I'll be a vigorous advocate for a referendum on incorporation of Lady's Island.

Once again, thank you for the privilege of serving you and for the great service LIBPA gives in providing a professional framework and focus for our Island. I'd like your vote on June 13th based on my leadership, experience, and commitment.

Thanks for your consideration.

ELECTIONS AND THE MISSING VOTERS

First it should be said that LIBPA, as an organization, supported approval of the recent school bond referendum and believes that building the necessary new schools for our children is in the best interest of everyone. Now that the referendum to build new schools in Bluffton (with extra money for construction of the Seabrook High School) has been approved, we look forward to addressing the overcrowding problems in the schools on Lady's Island. However, sometimes you really wish that we, the voters, were not so predictable that individuals who make a living from providing guidance as to how to win elections would be wrong. The recent school bond referendum was not one of those cases.

The so called "experts" on referendums said that if you hold an election on a Saturday in the spring (good weather) the vast majority of potential voters will simply ignore the election and enjoy the weekend. In the case of school bond referendums, those that strongly support the issue (parents of the children in overcrowded schools) will go the polls and the chances of winning will be significantly increased. It worked.

The referendum was approved with a total vote of 6286 voting for the referendum and 4,108 voting against it. On Lady's Island the vote was 422 against and 228 for the referendum. The LIBPA survey on the question of the referendum, conducted on this web site (www.liba.org), had predicted the Lady's Island vote would be 60% against and 40% in favor with the actual results being 65% against and 35% in favor. In Beaufort County only 13% of the registered voters cast a ballot. On Lady's Island only 1 of every 10 (10.3%) registered voters actually cast a ballot in the School Bond referendum. The best voter turn out in the District 7 area was the Dataw community with 18% voter participation. As to how District 7 participated in the election it is impossible to tell since St. Helena 2A and Beaufort 2 contain voters for precincts other than District 7 and are not separately identified in general elections such as the referendum. The following chart shows the statistical voting story of District 7 in the School Bond Referendum election held May 20.

District 7 Precincts	Registered Voters	Voter Turnout	Percentage Of Eligible Voters
Lady's Island			
1A	1109	97	9%
2A	1074	97	9%
3A	1305	163	13%
1B	1027	115	11%
2B	901	77	9%
3B	835	101	12%
St. Helena			
2A	851 (76 District 7)	50	6%
1C	1346	239	18%
Beaufort			
2	961 (87 District 7)	103	11%
TOTAL	9,409	1,042	11%

On Tuesday, June 13 the primary election will be conducted and unless an independent candidate decides to enter the District 7 Council race, on that day we will elect the Lady's Island/District 7 Council representative who will serve for the next 4 years. PLEASE TAKE THE TIME TO VOTE TUESDAY, JUNE 13.

Editor's Note: A special thanks to Ms. Francina Small and Ms. Kris Weith of the Beaufort County Board of Elections and Registration for their assistance in regard to the data utilized in this article.

THE FIRST STEP IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CRYSTAL PARK:

The initial meeting of the members of the Lady's Island Community Preservation Committee and representatives of Land Plan Inc. who are doing the design for Crystal Lake Park was held at the airport conference room on May 15. The purpose of the meeting was to provide the committee and members of the Lady's Island community with an orientation of the Crystal Lake property and to solicit proposals for the general nature desired for the future park. The results of the meeting included the following:

- The property surrounding the lake was purchased with funding via the Rural and Critical Land Program and as a result must be utilized in a passive nature versus active (athletic fields). Since the actual lake was contributed to the county it is not under a similar status as to use.
- The location of the park which adjoins property belonging to the Beaufort County School District and St. Peter's Catholic Church supports the design and development of the park as a joint effort.
- The primary entrance to the park will most likely be in the vicinity of the present Boat Busters facility. Possible additional access points include (1) from the rear near the parking lot owned by the school district and (2) in the front from Highway 802 if the proposed Highway 802/21 connector road results in a stop light in front of the property.
- Any permanent building should be located in the vicinity of the present commercial operation. At this point no decision should be made as to a specific use of the building. The remainder of the property should be dedicated to recreation.
- To promote use of the water there should be a dock. Also there should be a walking trail around the lake.
- Use of the lake in a storm water management role should be evaluated.
- The park should be designed with emphasis on the family and include a children's playground.

This initial Crystal Lake planning meeting pointed out the need for the existence of a special committee to serve as a steering committee for the design and development of the park. Accordingly, the Crystal Lake Park Steering Committee, in addition to the members of the Community Preservation Committee, will include representatives of Beaufort County School District and St. Peter's Catholic Church. The next meeting of the steering committee with the consultant is scheduled for 10AM, Monday, June 19, 2006 in the conference room of the Lady's Island Airport. It is open to the public.

NEW CAR RENTAL:

Affiliated Car Rental, LLC., America's #1 rated auto rental franchise opportunity, is pleased to announce the opening of a Sensible Car Rental Franchise owned and operated by Executive Flight Training, LLC. of Beaufort, S.C.

Sensible Car Rental of Beaufort is located at the Beaufort County Airport and offers customers late model cars, trucks, and vans for rent at very competitive prices. Sensible Car rental offers GM cars and vans.

For more information contact Sensible Car Rental of Beaufort at (843) 521- 9498

COOSAW RIVER ESTATES:

The Coosaw River Estates development located in the Marsh Hawk community adjacent to Springfield Road on Lady's Island is presently undergoing site preparation in the form of clearing of the property. Many of our members and residents of the Marsh Hawk community have requested information regarding the history of the subdivision due to the impact it will have on their area.

The history of this project is worthy of note. It is said this property was at one time owned by Sheriff Ed McTeer, for whom the McTeer Bridge is named and it was he who gave it the name Coosaw River Estates. In 1972, when the population of Lady's Island was approximately 2,211 residents (1006 white, 1203 black and 2 other) a developer requested and received approval from Beaufort County to build 190 homes on his 123 acres. The approval of the project required that the developer build roads, provide water and a waste treatment plant. For a variety of reasons, after starting construction of the roads and treatment plant, the project was stopped and the property placed on the market. From 1972 until the present time the property has been periodically evaluated for development and on each occasion the decision was against developing the subdivision. Most likely it was a "money" thing in that the cost to install the required infrastructure exceeded the profits which could reasonably be expected from the sale of 190 homes.

In 1999, a developer requested that, in view of the passage of the Comprehensive Plan in 1997, he be provided the official status of Coosaw River Estates' project under current regulations. At the time of the evaluation, in 1999, the

property was zoned Rural Residential. The present zoning of Community Preservation would not become effective until 2000. The results of the requested evaluation of the projects included the following:

- Sewer and roads would be required and must be provided at the expense of the developer.
- Since the subdivision was approved prior to the approval of the Comprehensive Plan no lots would be rendered undevelopable as a result of the new standards. In other words, as to the number of lots (density) - the project was "grandfathered".
- Exceptions to the "grandfathered" status were that current regulations regarding flood hazard, river buffer, specimen tree protection and other basic standards would apply.
- No increase in density would be allowed unless the development was re-platted in compliance with the new Development Standards Ordinance.

After receiving the requested evaluation, the prospective developer decided not to pursue the project. Developers continued to review the feasibility of the Coosaw River Estates project until February 2004 when Ultima Holdings purchased the property with the announced intention of development and projected offering new homes in the \$200,000 to \$250,000 range. After 2 years of studying the project with emphasis on the financial feasibility (LIBPA assisted by providing basic island data) Ultima decided against development and sold the property to Coosaw Investors, LLC of Charleston. At the present time the property is being developed and the required infrastructure installed by the new owners under the 1999 approved agreement.

Gregg Bennett of Exit Realty of Beaufort, which is marketing the lots on the project, reports that phase one will consist of 97 homes and that the lots for these homes have already been purchased by contractors. This first phase consist primarily of interior lots and will be followed by development of the waterfront property at a later date. The clearing that is presently being done is for the purpose of meeting the storm water requirements. Greg indicated that further clearing of land, other than that required to install roads, water and sewer, will be limited to the clearing deemed necessary by the individual contractor on each lot. He indicated that the projected selling price of homes in the subdivision would be in the \$300,000 to \$500,000 range. At the present time, completion of installation of the infrastructure (roads, sewer and electrical) is anticipated by this fall.

NEW REAL ESTATE SCHOOL:

Jerry Marlow, who each month shares his knowledge of the Beaufort County real estate market through an article in the LIBPA newsletter, has retired from his role as Broker in Charge of Coldwell Banker Keyserling Real Estate and has established his own school for realtors. Named Success Plus School of Real Estate it offers a course which provides the mandatory 30 hours of training for each realtor who has passed the realtor test and received a provisional license. In addition, the school will periodically offer courses designed to meet the minimum 8 hours of continuing education each active realtor is required to have every 2 years. If you are interested in attending either of these courses, additional details are available 278-2631.

Editor's Note: Jerry has indicated that he intends to continue his monthly article in the LIBPA newsletter but needs to take a temporary break to ensure the new school is exactly what he desires in regard to quality professional education. We, in LIBPA, wish Jerry great success with the new venture and appreciate his willingness to continue sharing his impressive knowledge of the real estate market with LIBPA members and the Lady's Island community.

TO THE EDUCATORS OF LADY'S ISLAND CHILDREN - THANK YOU

By Ken Bush, President, LIBPA

While we, as a community, search for ways to cope with planning for population growth, a group of individuals demonstrates their commitment to growth every day - the intellectual growth of our children. Each morning of the school year, 4000 students walk through the doors of our schools on Lady's Island. They are met by a group of teachers, administrators and staff members that consistently demonstrate concern and compassion for each child and professionalism as an educator.

Allow us, as members of LIBPA, to extend our sincere appreciation and admiration to those educators for their commitment to our children. Best wishes for a great summer!

A PLAN FOR FUTURE BEAUFORT COUNTY LIBRARIES:

The 2005 Beaufort County Library Master Facilities Plan is designed to provide a road map for providing adequate libraries to serve the projected population of Beaufort County. It is based on a combination of the status of existing library facilities and the projected population growth. This plan lists projects in the order of need, is evaluated annually by the Beaufort County Library Board of Trustees and forwarded for inclusion as part of the Beaufort County Capital Improvements program. In Beaufort County, libraries and their operation is a function of county government. So the libraries, we all enjoy, will have to compete for tax dollars with the other areas of county government. County Council, as part of the budget process, is charged with making the final decision regarding allocation of funds. Following, in order of priority, is the 2006 list of Beaufort County library projects. Obviously, the priority can significantly change in the future with unexpected residential development due to municipal annexation of rural property such as occurred in the Bluffton area and may occur in the Seabrook area.

1. St. Helena. A new 28,000 square foot library on St. Helena Island to be located on land donated by Penn Center. Even with the land being donated the estimated cost is \$7.2 million. By the year 2020 St. Helena is projected to have a population of 17,637 residents (this includes Dataw, Harbor, Hunting and Fripp Islands). This project is presently winding its way through the approval process as part of the 2006 Capital Improvement Plan.
2. Burton. A new 56,993 square foot library located as part of the Burton Wells Park complex and designed to serve the Burton, Laurel Bay, Shell Point area and to serve as the Headquarters of the Beaufort County Library Department. Even though the land is presently owned by the County the cost of construction is projected to be \$14.5 million. By the year 2020 the projected combined population this library would serve is 46,000 residents.
3. Hilton Head. Renovation and expansion of 42,000 square feet of the Hilton Head Library (built in 1998). Again no purchase of property would be required but the cost of construction is estimated to be \$10.7 million. By the year 2020 Hilton Head is projected to have a population of 55,000 residents.
4. Beaufort. Renovation of Beaufort Branch Library located in the City of Beaufort. This building was constructed in 1992 and presently has 21,783 square feet of space on the ground floor and 12,000 square feet on the second floor. The estimated cost of the desired renovations is \$4 million. Not including the Clarendon and McLeod pending annexations the projected population of the City of Beaufort in 2020 is 15,683 residents. However, the current customer base for the Beaufort Library includes the 13,000 residents of Lady's Island to bring the total potential users to at least 29,000. By 2020 population growth is expected to bring the total potential users to at least 31,000.
5. Lady's Island. A new 25,000 square foot library on Lady's Island designed to support the 2020 projected island population of 16,000 residents. To construct the actual library facility and not including the cost of the land, the price tag is 6.4 million.
6. Bluffton. By the time construction of the Lady's Island library is approved, Bluffton is anticipated to need a new library at Okatie followed by one at Pritchardville (both 29,000 square feet in size and an estimated cost of \$8 million each, not including land which is anticipated to be available). Upon completion of the construction of the 2 new Bluffton libraries the present Bluffton library (completed in 2002) is anticipated to need a \$1 million renovation/expansion.
7. Lobeco. The library at Lobeco, completed in 2003, is anticipated to need a \$2 million renovation/expansion after completion of the projects in the Bluffton area.

The total bill for future libraries comes to \$64 million. As can be seen, just as in the case of roads, schools and parks - growth has also overwhelmed our library facilities.

Editor's Note: A special thanks to Mr. Woldek Zaryczyny, Director of Library Services for Beaufort County for not only the information contained in this article but his professional presentation to the public of the need for a continued support of our libraries.

HIGHWAY 802/HIGHWAY 21 CONNECTOR ROAD:

Dan Robinson, the Kimley-Horn Project Manager of the team presently in the process of developing the design for the proposed Highway 21/Highway 802 connector road, presented a project status report to our members in attendance at the May monthly LIBPA meeting. Following the meeting he and his team along with Colin Kinton, Beaufort County Transportation Engineer, met with the Lady's Island Community Preservation Committee to review the project in more detail. Following is a summary of the information discussed during the meetings.

- A traffic study conducted by the Kimley - Horn team indicates that the amount of traffic projected to utilize the McTeer Bridge, Lady's Island Drive and Sea Island Parkway cannot be accommodated by improvements to the Highway 21/ Highway 802 intersection without major impacts on adjacent developed properties. The study supports the need for the connector road to be built.
- Both the McTeer Bridge and Lady's Island Drive are planned for expansion to 4 lanes in the future as separate projects from the connector road.
- Even if the decision is to build the connector road with only 2 lanes initially, it is recommended that right of way be purchased to allow future expansion to 4 lanes.
- The Kimley- Horn team has evaluated 4 basic routes with 2 alternative connections to Sea Island Parkway on each route. One of these 4 basic routes appears to be less desirable than the others, based on cost, disruption to the existing neighborhood and environmental concerns.
- A major difference in the three choices of routes involves selection of the entrance (Club Road or Hazel Farm Road) and exit points (Dow Road or a new point opposite the entrance to the Lady's Island Middle School) which naturally modifies the individual routes.
- The alternative remaining 3 routes will be further evaluated in more detail and presented to the Lady's Island community for comment at a public meeting planned to be held on June 20th at the Sea Island Presbyterian Church. Following the public meeting and evaluation of the community comments, a recommendation as to the best route will be made to the Beaufort County Engineering Department.

Editor's Notes: A special thanks to Colin Kinton, Beaufort County Transportation Engineer and Dan Robinson and his team from Kimley – Horn for taking the time to provide LIBPA and the Community Preservation Committee a status brief of the Highway 21/Highway 802 connector road project.

THE \$300,000 HOUSE?

Recently a developer indicated that the homes in his Lady's Island project would sell in the \$300,000 and above price range. This brings up the question of how many potential buyers are available for houses priced in that category. If you utilize any of the programs on the internet designed to tell you how much house you can afford most of them indicate a household income of about \$74,000 is needed to get a 30 year mortgage on a \$300,000 home. It is fully recognized that there are presently a variety of ways in the mortgage field to get more house with less income but regardless, the average household income on Lady's Island falls in the \$60,000 range.

Assuming there are a large number of buyers coming to the Beaufort area from some cold place out of town with lots of money from the sale of their snow covered home the question is, in the last couple of years, how many of those folks have chosen our island to purchase a home? In 2004 there was a total of 334 homes sold on Lady's Island of which 72 or 22% brought \$300,000 or more. In 2005 there was a total of 438 homes sold on the island and of these 129 or 29% were in the \$300,000 + range. Of the 118 homes sold to date on Lady's Island this year 42 homes or 36 % have sold for over \$300,000. Thus it does not appear unreasonable to predict that there will be a viable market for approximately 164 "high end" (priced over \$300,000) homes on Lady's Island in 2006.

For the last decade Lady's Island has seen an average of 185 new homes placed on the market each year. For the last couple of years, the number has risen to 200 new homes each year. So if the cost of land, materials and labor (or greed) has driven the price of a new home on Lady's Island to over \$300,000, we are building 200 new homes each year and have a proven historical market for selling only 129 to 164 homes (new and older homes) in the \$300,000+ range, the possibility does exist that we could end up with more homes than buyers in the near future or as a minimum the "time on market" could significantly increase. Accepting that there is truth in the saying that figures lie and liars figure, the statistics would still appear to indicate there is a limit as to how high housing prices can rise and still have an adequate number of potential buyers. The numbers also hint that on Lady's Island that limit may be in the \$300,000 + range. How much over the \$300,000 mark is anyone's guess. Hopefully, for every future home seller there will continue to be a qualified buyer and any concern regarding the real estate market on Lady's Island will be proven unjustified.

A TIME FOR CHANGE:

By Dan Durbin, Principal, Beaufort County High School

If you were to stand in the middle of a room and notice flames creeping up the walls, it would be foolish to ignore it or choose to believe that nothing was wrong. Such has been America's reaction to its out-dated education system. We continue to rely on a system that has little chance of keeping up with our ever-changing world. Sure, we have made some minor adjustments over the years. But, for the most part, the structure has remained the same. The Beaufort High School learning community has been working diligently to go beyond superficial change and deal directly with the root of the problem – the structure.

After two-years of planning and preparation, Beaufort High School will open the 2006-07 school year with a small schools model. There will be four distinctive academic schools: Freshman Academy, School of International Studies, School of Arts, Communication & Technology, and the School of Health Professions. Although the project has been extremely positive at both local and state levels, several questions are asked repeatedly. The following are the answers to those questions.

WHAT IS A SMALL SCHOOLS MODEL? According to the Gates Foundation, a small school is a "school of choice" designed to serve 400 or fewer students. It has a designated space and entrance. These schools are autonomous and retain primary authority to make decisions affecting both academics and school climate. They are distinctive and focused rather than comprehensive. Small schools are not designed to be all things to all students.

WHY TRANSFORM TO A SMALL SCHOOLS MODEL? The small schools model addresses many of the concerns and issues experienced by large high schools: negative social behavior, classroom disruptions, vandalism, truancy, security and a lack of curriculum focus. Each of these concerns directly affects academic performance. Small schools promote personalization. Through positive interpersonal relationships, student attitudes and academic achievement improves – especially among students from minority and low socio-economic backgrounds. Research shows that fewer students dropout of school, and graduation rates increase. The small schools model ensures that not only is "no child left behind," but also, no child is left unknown as a learner and as a person.

WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF THE SUCCESS OF SMALL SCHOOLS? Three such examples presently exist at Beaufort High School: Freshman Academy, Advanced Placement (AP) and the International Baccalaureate (IB). These programs have cohorts of students taking a common curriculum with the same specially trained teachers in small learning communities. Traditionally, students in these programs express high satisfaction with the advantages of smaller, focused and personalized courses.

HOW ARE SMALL SCHOOLS STAFFED? Each small school is staffed with a permanent administrator, teaching staff, counselor, secretary and hall monitor. The staff works collectively to routinely review academic and social progress. This holistic approach personalizes the student's education. The model provides a cadre of caring adults that is committed to the academic and social success of each student.

WHAT ARE BEAUFORT HIGH SCHOOL'S SMALL SCHOOL OFFERINGS? The foundation of the small schools model for Beaufort High School is a stand-alone freshman academy. Before the beginning of the tenth grade year, students and parents will select one of three academic small schools: School of Arts, Communication & Technology; School of Health Professions or the School of International Studies and Education. Each small school will offer a variety of majors. Majors are defined as four (or more) prescribed sequential courses in a subject or skills area. In addition to earning a high school diploma, students may earn Seals of Certification. A business major will be offered in each small school. The major will reflect the specialty of the small school while maintaining the standards required by the South Carolina State Department of Education.

Which electives are Available? Although all electives are not available outside of a specific small school, all "specialty programs" (visual & performing arts, JROTC and physical education) are available to all students. Small school staffs may agree to offer shared courses in a neutral location of the Beaufort High School facility.

Which Small School will Best Prepare Students for College? Students have access to college preparatory curriculum and standard Advanced Placement (AP) courses in each small school. To ensure high standards are maintained, each small school will use the same end-of-course examinations in core subject areas. These areas include English, math, social studies and science. Subject area teachers will develop and utilize common examinations for those courses that do not have state constructed end-of course examinations. In order to more effectively monitor student achievement, all small schools will use the same grading policies.

What is the Process for Changing Small Schools? Students requesting a change of small school enrollment must

appeal to the Small Schools Appeals Board. The Appeals Board will consist of at least one of the following categories from each small school: teacher, student and parent. The Head of School and counselor from the schools involved with the appeal will also serve as voting members of the board. A parent or guardian must be present during the presentation of the case for changing schools.

As the answers indicate, the Small Schools model is not only a change in curriculum, but also a change in structure, academic focus, and relationship dynamics. Granted, it will require our community to change how we view "school"; however, it will also promote continuous accountability and partnership among students, teachers, families, and the community at-large.
