

**From:** Barbara H. Marzetti  
**Sent:** Monday, June 13, 2011 12:16 PM  
**To:** CCA  
**Subject:** news articles

FROM THE DAILY ADVANCE

Tourism dollars help pay for new water system

By **Cindy Beamon**

Staff Writer

Sunday, June 12, 2011

Currituck will loan itself \$5 million for a new water system on the Outer Banks and spend \$2 million to advertise its beaches thanks to tourist dollars generated from the county's occupancy tax.

The county expects to collect \$8.9 million next year in occupancy taxes paid by vacationers through the 6 percent tax on hotel rooms and beach rentals. The room tax is mostly used to provide beach services but also for other "tourism-related" activities on the mainland.

The state requires that a third of those dollars go toward promoting the Currituck Outer Banks, but the tourism department has a surplus sitting in its coffers.

This year, the county plans to loan itself \$5 million in advertising dollars for the purchase of private water systems on the Outer Banks. Residents who hook up to the new county-owned system will pay back the loan — with interest, said County Finance Director Sandra Hill. County officials say the end result will be an end to bad-tasting water at the resort and 2.5 percent in interest for tourism promotions as the loan is paid back over the next five years.

Under the proposed 2011-12 budget, about two-thirds of the occupancy tax revenue goes toward tourism-related expenditures. Much of the spending is concentrated on the beach, but the state allows the county to use the funds elsewhere for economic development and recreation.

Next year, a portion of the occupancy taxes will go toward ongoing beach services, from lifeguards to beach access ramps, from rescue services to contributions to the Whalehead Club and the Corolla Wild Horse Fund.

The Currituck mainland would benefit as well. This year the Rural Center in Powells Point, the Historic Jarvisburg Colored School, and a commerce park in Maple will be among the recipients.

Occupancy taxes will pay for a \$547,000 expansion of the Rural Center's park facilities.

The upgrade includes a board walk trail, kayak and canoe pier, playground, picnic shelters and parking at the North Spot Road site.

Two historic sites, the Historic Jarvisburg Colored School and Old Currituck Jail would receive funding through the occupancy taxes.

The funds will also be used for economic development in the Maple area near the Currituck airport.

The county plans to use \$1 million toward building a new wastewater treatment system to serve the county's new YMCA/Community Center (funded by occupancy taxes in previous budgets) and a new commerce park in Maple. The three projects are part of the county's multi-million-dollar plan for a business and recreation complex in the area.

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**Corolla Civic Association <CorollaCivicAssn@embarqmail.com> 6/11/11**

to Corolla

**PLEASE TRY TO ATTEND**

(see previous newspaper articles on budget - pasted below)

**COUNTY OF CURRITUCK  
PUBLIC NOTICE**

The Currituck County Board of Commissioners will hold a work session on Tuesday, June 14, 2011, at the Historic Courthouse beginning at 4:30 p.m. The meeting will be to discuss the Outer Banks Waste Water System, and any other items that may come before the Board in a public meeting. There will also be a closed session according to GS 143-318.11(5) to discuss land acquisition.

*FROM THE DAILY ADVANCE*

*Currituck spending more than \$50 million*

*By **Cindy Beamon***

*The Daily Advance*

*Saturday, June 4, 2011*

*At a time when most counties are cutting back on expenditures, Currituck County is proceeding with new projects and initiatives, spending millions in the process.*

*The price tag exceeds \$50 million for projects on-go or on-tap from Moyock to Corolla. Better than half that amount will be paid up front for projects that other cash-strapped counties can only envy. County Manager Dan Scanlon credits a pay-as-you-go fiscal policy, some wise decision-making and a little luck for Currituck's financial position.*

*One glance at the county's capital outlay projects could lead one to believe Currituck is a big spender compared to other counties in the Albemarle: Thirteen million dollars for a new recreational complex. Ten million dollars for a water system and possibly double that amount for a new sewer system on the Outer Banks. Four million dollars for a new 800 megahertz communications system.*

*The big purchases are contrasted, however, by the county's reputation as tight on spending — and borrowing.*

*Next year's \$45.3 million general fund budget is "pretty flat" on spending, asserts Scanlon. The county's debt is low compared to what counties like Pasquotank and Dare counties are paying, he said.*

*Scanlon said conservative spending has paid off.*

*"Here we are today with very little debt, all without having to raise taxes," he said. Scanlon said the projects, mostly paid for with land transfer taxes and state sales taxes, should help Currituck compete with other counties for business dollars in the next decade.*

*County Commissioner Butch Petrey agreed. Plans for the Currituck County Airport and nearby facilities in Maple is an "investment in the future," Petrey said.*

*"We have an asset we want to take advantage of and grow it," he said.*

*The construction projects are mostly focused in three areas of the county: Moyock, Maple and the Outer Banks:*

*At the county's center, Maple and the Currituck County Airport on Short Cut Road (U.S. Highway 158) have drawn some high-dollar attention. Combined, the projects total more than \$22 million in upgrades and new construction. They include:*

- New taxiway at the airport — \$2.4 million (in mostly state and federal funds);*
- YMCA/Community building — \$13.5 million (paid with occupancy taxes);*
- Phase I of a new wastewater treatment plant — \$1.9 million;*
- Roads and drainage for a new 100-acre Commerce Park — \$1.7 to \$2 million;*
- New aviation training facility in partnership with College of The Albemarle — \$3 million; and*
- 47 acres of land acquired from the state — \$52,000.*

*Scanlon said the county already has funds available to pay for these projects. No borrowing will be necessary.*

*For the other projects, the county plans to borrow money but later recoup the cost from users.*

*In Moyock, the county is planning to build a new wastewater treatment plant for \$2 million to \$3 million to serve commercial customers.*

*On the Outer Banks, the price for water, sewer and stormwater run-off systems is the most costly. All the projects combined — at a possible cost of \$25 million or more — would be paid by landowners possessing some of the highest-priced real estate in Currituck.*

*"The mainland folks won't be paying for any of this," Scanlon said.*

*The most costly of the projects will be replacement a 30-year-old wastewater system for Ocean Sands. The county is studying the possibility of going beyond the subdivision's needs to extend services to other potential customers on the Outer Banks. Replacing the Ocean Sands system would cost between \$10 million to \$15 million.*

*A new study estimates the cost of developing a regional system could cost between \$20 million and \$60 million. Under pressure by the state to replace the old system, the county will need to make a decision soon on what's next, Scanlon said.*

*The county is also seeking to become the Outer Banks' sole water provider with a \$5.5 million buyout of existing private systems and a \$5 million upgrade to its reverse-osmosis water treatment plant. The county is awaiting approval from the state Utilities Commission for the purchase.*

*Some property owners opposed to paying fees for the upgrade have complained to the state agency. Scanlon said the \$75 fee that residents will be required to pay for the next five years will not have as much impact as some property owners fear. The county will be charging less for water than the previous private water supplier charged, which means the average customer will pay only about \$35 more a month for services, Scanlon said.*

*Another multi-million-dollar project is the ongoing stormwater drainage system in Whalehead subdivision. The first of the three-phase project cost \$1.7 million. The county is currently polling residents to determine support for increasing their district's tax from 4 cents per \$100 valuation to 10.5 cents. The increase will continue the upgrade and allow the county to offer door-to-door trash pickup. The remaining phases of the project could cost more than \$4 million, according to cost estimates from County Engineer Eric Weatherly.*

*Petrey said the projects on the Outer Banks are driven by necessity.*

*Poor quality drinking water, storm-flooded beach cottages and an aging wastewater system all needed solutions, he said.*

*"On the beach, we didn't have a choice," he said.*

*Currituck budget raises trash fees by \$15*

**By Cindy Beamon**

*The Daily Advance*

*Saturday, June 4, 2011*

*Although property taxes are expected to remain the same, Currituck residents will be paying a little more for trash collection if Currituck's proposed \$66 million spending plan is approved.*

*Since the mid-1990s, property owners on the mainland have paid \$99 for trash pickup at collection sites. The fee could go up \$15 to \$114 if the proposed fee increase is adopted by commissioners later this month.*

*For property owners in Corolla, door-to-door trash collection will also go up \$15 — from \$235 a year to \$250.*

*The trash fee is part of the county's annual bill to residents. That bill includes property taxes as well, which are not expected to increase.*

*According to the proposed budget for 2011-12, the property tax rate of 32 cents per \$100 valuation would remain the same.*

*Some wastewater and water customers may also see an increase in rates this summer.*

*Wastewater customers in Ocean Sands and Newtown Road wastewater districts are slated for rate increases.*

*Ocean Sands, which will need to replace its aging wastewater system, will face the most dramatic increase. Wastewater bills could double.*

*Customers now billed at 50 percent of water usage would be billed at 100 percent of their water usage.*

*Customers in the Newtown Road Wastewater District would face a \$6 increase in their flat monthly rate. The flat fee would go up from \$20 to \$26.*

*Water rates may also go up for commercial water customers on the mainland — including county government offices and the school system.*

*The county's largest users will no longer benefit from a cost freeze for commercial customers using 15,000 gallons or more a month. Now rates will go up \$1 per 1,000 gallons for customers using more than 15,000 gallons a month and will increase \$2 per 1,000 gallons for customers using more than 20,000 gallons in the month.*

*Scanlon said the biggest customers to be affected will be county governmental offices and schools, but some other big commercial users will also be affected.*

*Scanlon is scheduled to present his budget proposal on June 6 and a public hearing is set for June 20.*

*The \$45.3 million general fund budget is "pretty flat" with no proposed increases in staffing or county pay for the coming year, said Scanlon. For the second straight year, the county's 360 employees would receive no cost of living increases. The county has also switched health care plans to keep costs for health insurance the same. For some county employees, the change could result in increased deductibles for health care.*

*Scanlon said the proposed budget includes basically the same level of county services with a "little belt tightening." Some of the routine operating expenses, such as replacing six cars within the sheriff's department, will remain the same.*

*The school system would receive close to the same from the county as last year — even as the system braces for deep cuts in state funding. For several years, the county has determined its contribution using a funding formula based on the number of students and the consumer price index. With the number of students down and the consumer price index up slightly, the formula increases only slightly the coming year's contribution. The county's \$8.74 million contribution would be up about \$25,000 from 2010.*

*The county also plans to provide \$990,000 for school capital outlay to fund repair projects, equipment purchases, bus replacements and other similar expenses.*

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**From:** Barbara H. Marzetti  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 12, 2011 2:08 PM  
**To:** CCA  
**Subject:** news articles

FROM THE DAILY ADVANCE

No tax hike in Currituck budget

By **Cindy Beamon**

Staff Writer

Thursday, May 12, 2011

CURRITUCK — A draft spending plan for Currituck County includes no property tax increase and some big-ticket purchases for water and sewer upgrades, economic development, and a new emergency communications system.

During a budget work session Wednesday, County Manager Dan Scanlon recommended no change to the county's 32 cents per \$100 valuation tax rate.

If approved by commissioners, the tax rate would remain the same it's been since 2005 when the county revalued property. For a property owner with land valued at \$100,000, taxes would remain at \$320 next year.

Scanlon is also recommending the purchase of a new \$4 million communications system over the next two years. The 800-megahertz system would replace towers and update equipment for law enforcement, emergency services and other county offices, he said.

To pay for the upgrade, the county could suspend saving \$1 million each year for new school buildings over the next two years, Scanlon said. He said the school system has no immediate building plans, and the upgrade is needed because of "critical public safety concerns."

Another shift in funding would create new dollars for economic development incentives. During the budget work session, Currituck commissioners agreed to shift \$2 million earmarked earlier for county land purchases and farmland preservation to a new economic development fund.

For the past 10 years, the county has saved \$100,000 toward a federally supported program for preserving farmland. However, no farmer has taken advantage of the program over the past 10 years, Scanlon said. The program essentially allows farmers to sell their rights for developing their property. Now, the \$1 million in reserves and annual \$100,000 payments once earmarked for farmland preservation would be used to extend water or sewer lines or install new fire hydrants. Commissioners said the county could "sweeten the deal" for new businesses to locate in Currituck by offering those incentives.

The budget draft would also include allowances toward big infrastructure projects in Moyock, Maple and the Currituck Outer Banks.

Scanlon has proposed using the county's portion of the state sales tax to pay for roads and stormwater drainage at the new Maple Commerce Park. Prepping the site will allow the county to market the property to potential businesses, he said.

The county has also earmarked funds for a new wastewater treatment plant to serve the commerce park, the new YMCA/Community Center, and the surrounding area. The low bid for the plant set its construction cost at \$1.94 million.

The proposed budget also allocates funds for designing a new aviation training facility in the same area. The county recently announced plans to partner with College of The Albemarle in building the facility near the county airport on U.S. Highway 158.

In addition to improvements in Maple, the county budget also includes financing plans for user-paid water and sewer systems on the Outer Banks and in Moyock.

In Moyock, the county has begun design plans for a new \$3.3 million sewer system to serve businesses at the northern end of the county along N.C. Highway 168. On the Outer Banks, the county is considering options for replacing the aging Ocean Sands sewer system at an estimated cost of \$13 million. The county plans to borrow money for the upgrades, but users — not other taxpayers — will be responsible for paying back the debt, Scanlon said.

In addition, the county is awaiting approval from the state Utility Commission for its purchase of two water systems on the Currituck Outer Banks. That \$5.5 million purchase would make the county the sole water-provider for the area. The county is also planning a \$5 million upgrade of its reverse-osmosis plant to serve the new customers. Water customers will be expected to pay the cost for the water system purchases and upgrade, Scanlon said.

During Wednesday's work session, Scanlon said he will formally present his recommended budget in June after receiving input from commissioners.