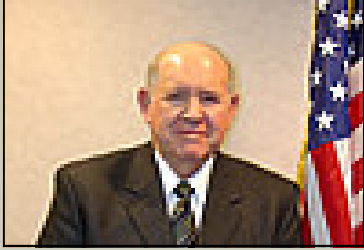# WAYNE COUNTY NEWS

Comments from the Chairman

**Wayne County Commissioner
Chairman Roland M. "Bud" Gray**

Statistics gathered from the North Carolina Highway Patrol accident reports show the amount of accidents at the Beston Road and U.S. Highway 70 intersection have decreased dramatically over the past year (see story on page 1).

There has been some confusion regarding the number of accidents at this intersection and we wanted to get the correct information to the public.

Installing a directional crossover at Beston Road was an unpopular decision. However, making tough decisions is part of my job as a Commissioner of Wayne County.

Though there were some people who thought the new crossover would cause more accidents, the Commissioners believed it would improve safety at the intersection. We are glad to see the number of accidents has declined over the past year at that intersection.

Citizen safety—whether it be on the roads, in shopping centers, at home or anywhere in our county—is of utmost importance to the county.

Less accidents at Beston Road

Accidents at the Beston Road intersection have decreased by almost 50 percent since the North Carolina Department of Transportation installed a leftover directional crossover in 2007, according to reports from the North Carolina Highway Patrol.

"Wayne County is concerned about the safety of citizens and we are continuing to monitor the safety aspect of the changes at Beston Road," said Wayne County Chairman Roland "Bud" Gray.

Before the crossover was installed in March 2007, there were about 20 accidents yearly on the 1.7 mile stretch between Walnut Creek and Piney Grove Church Road on U.S. Highway 70.

Statistics from the North Carolina Highway Patrol show that number has almost been cut in half since the crossover was installed in March 2007.

A detailed review of accidents reports over the past 15 months for the 1.7 mile stretch of highway reveals that five of the 11 accidents were single vehicle accidents. Three were due to deer jumping out onto the highway and two were single car accidents in which the driver lost control of the vehicle and ran off the road.

Another three accidents were attributed to a vehicle switching lanes and hitting a car in another lane; a vehicle crossed an eastbound lane to enter a public driveway, hitting a car and a vehicle swerved to avoid hitting a car and crossed into the median.

Of the three remaining accidents, two occurred while vehicles attempted to enter the turn lane from the Beston Road intersection and one occurred when a car was turning right from the Handy Mart parking lot and hit a car traveling on the highway.

None of the 11 accidents in the past 15 months have caused serious, severe or life-threatening injuries, and there have been no fatalities in that 1.7 mile stretch.

Statistics from the previous years show the following:

March 2004 to March 2005: 27 accidents from Walnut Creek to Piney Grove Church Road. Two of the accidents resulted in fatalities and two caused serious injuries.

- Eighteen of the 27 accidents in the 1.7 mile stretch occurred when drivers had difficulty crossing Highway 70 at Beston Road.

- Two accidents were caused by animals entering the highway.

- Two accidents were caused when drivers left the convenience store and turned in front of oncoming traffic.

Less accidents at Beston Road

March 2005 to March 2006: 16 accidents from Walnut Creek to Piney Grove There were no fatalities during this time period, but there were two accidents causing serious injuries

- Six of the 16 accidents occurred when drivers had difficulty crossing Highway 70 at Beston Road.

- Three accidents were caused by animals entering the highway.

- Three accidents were caused by driver losing control and running off the highway.

- One accident occurred when a vehicle turned in front of oncoming traffic when exiting shopping area.

- Two accidents occurred when drivers sideswiped other cars when changing lanes.

- One accident occurred when a driver ran other car off the road while changing lanes.

March 2006 to March 2007: 19 accidents from Walnut Creek to Piney Grove. None of the accidents caused serious injuries or fatalities.

- Seven of the 19 accidents occurred when drivers had difficulty crossing Highway 70 at Beston Road.

- Two accidents occurred when drivers had difficulty crossing Highway 70 at Creekside Drive and Walnut Creek Road.

- Five accidents occurred when drivers lost control of vehicle on highway.

- Two accidents were due to problems with vehicles.

- One accident occurred when a vehicle failed to stop for traffic stopped because of another accident.

- Two accidents occurred when drivers missed a turn into a parking lot or a driveway.

Accident reports for the 1.7 mile stretch of highway between Walnut Creek Road and Piney Grove for the past four years are available for viewing in the Wayne County Manager's Office.

March 04 – February 05	Mile Marker/Distance	Number of Crashes
SR 2200 Creekside/Walnut Creek	19.250	1
	0.390	5
SR 1719/Beston	19.640	18
	1.190	2
SR 1788/Fussell	20.830	0
	0.170	1
SR 1731/Piney Grove	21.000	0
TOTAL	1.750	27
March 05 – February 06		
SR 2200 Creekside/Walnut Creek	19.250	0
	0.390	2
SR 1719/Beston	19.640	6
	1.190	6
SR 1788/Fussell	20.830	0
	0.170	0
SR 1731/Piney Grove	21.000	2
TOTAL	1.750	16
March 06-February 07		
SR 2200 Creekside/Walnut Creek	19.250	2
	0.390	3
SR 1719/Beston	19.640	7
	1.190	7
SR 1788/Fussell	20.830	0
	0.170	0
SR 1731/Piney Grove	21.000	0
TOTAL	1.750	19
March 07 – June 19 2008 (Crash data below reflects time period after Beston road left-over was opened to traffic)		
SR 2200 Creekside/Walnut Creek	19.250	0
	0.390	4
SR 1719/Beston	19.640	2
	1.190	5
SR 1788/Fussell	20.830	0
	0.170	0
SR 1731/Piney Grove	21.000	0
TOTAL	1.750	11

Spotlight on the Planning Department

Since March 2003 the Planning Department, along with Environmental Health and Building Inspections, have used a Central Permitting System. This computer system allows for the status of permits to be easily followed in many ways including address, owners name, subdivision or contractor. The Planning Department has a goal of making this information available online over the Internet.

The Planning Department is the first agency involved in the permitting process. After receiving an application Planning must determine if the project is within the County's jurisdiction. If not, then the applicant must receive approval from the appropriate municipality. If the property is in the County's jurisdiction an address is assigned to the property. In 2007 the Planning Department assigned over 800 new addresses. The staff then reviews the proposed use for compliance with the zoning, stormwater, flood, billboard and noise overlay ordinances. If a manufactured home is proposed for the site, the Planning Department verifies the age and previous location of the home. Over 1,000 development permits were issued in 2007.

When considering zoning as part of the County's permitting process the Planning staff looks at whether the property is in a zoned area (not all parts of the County are zoned), and if the proposed use is allowed in the existing zone. The areas around the airports and schools are zoned for residential, commercial, and/or industrial. If the proposed use is not allowed in existing zones, the property owner may request a rezoning. The Board of Commissioners holds on average about 3 rezoning public hearings a year.

The Stormwater and Water Supply Watershed ordinances are designed to control the runoff from a rainfall event. The Planning Department reviews site plans to ensure that runoff after development does not exceed predevelopment. If the runoff does exceed the predevelopment rates then the developer is required to retain a portion of the runoff. In 2007 nearly 50 stormwater site plans were reviewed.

The flood ordinance is designed to require construction methods that will reduce damage to structures that are built in the 100 year flood plain. As part of the development permit process the Planning Department looks at location, anticipated flood elevation and velocity of the water. Twelve structures were built in the flood plain in 2007.

Billboards along highways in the county are controlled based on size, spacing, and proximity to a business, church or residence among other factors. The signs are prohibited along controlled access highways.

For structures that are built in areas subject to high noise from aircraft the noise overlay ordinance provides minimum construction standards. These standards, which apply to both residential and commercial buildings, establish maximum noise levels inside the structure. The building plans are reviewed to ensure that the windows, doors, siding, etc. will be sufficient to meet the minimum noise reduction standards. Ten structures were built in this area in 2007.

In addition to the ordinances described above, an application for a development permit will occasionally cross the threshold for the subdivision or manufactured home ordinance implementation. When a land owner is proposing to divide property into smaller lots they must comply with the requirements of the County Subdivision Ordinance. This ordinance specifies those items that must be installed prior to selling lots. In 2007, 575 new lots were approved by the Planning Board.

Once a Development Permit has been issued, along with necessary permits from other departments, construction may begin. Our office is then involved in the implementation of the ordinances. The Zoning Ordinance specifies permitted uses, parking, setbacks, and signage that are allowed for various uses. The Stormwater Ordinance may require detention ponds, grass swales or other devices be built. It may also require a payment into the NC Ecosystem Enhancement Fund. The Enforcement Officer will verify that these items, in particular setback from property lines, are taken care of prior to a Certificate of Occupancy being issued. In the case of a manufactured home the skirting must be in place prior to the electricity being turned on.

The Enforcement Officer is also responsible for implementation of the Junkyard Ordinance. A person wanting to establish a junkyard or a person that has established one and wants to become legal must comply with the ordinance. The Enforcement Officer verifies location, distance to other uses and screening are in place prior to approval being given.

Annual inspections help ensure ongoing compliance with County ordinances. Stormwater devices, billboards, junkyards and manufactured home parks are each inspected. In 2007 over 200 manufactured home parks were inspected, 80 plus stormwater devices, over 100 billboards, approximately 15 junkyards.

Geographic Information Systems – Chip Crumpler, GIS Coordinator

Geographic Information Systems is a process, through the use of computers, to physically apply geographic coordinates to raw computer data in order to replicate information spatially in a map environment. GIS plays an enormous part in the day to day functions of local government; the way this information is distributed to other agencies and organizations, and how it is distributed to the public.

The GIS Department offers database design, maintenance and technical support to all county departments. We also provide technical assistance with installation and support of mapping software applications, map configurations and custom programming. We also maintain and support the central GIS server environment that empowers the enterprise GIS system. The GIS department also provides assistance and or manages outside GIS subcontractors that provide services with regards to the County GIS infrastructure. We also perform custom map creation production for other local government departments/agencies and the public. Some of our current initiatives are:

Cadastral Base Tax Mapping: GIS helps agencies meet their primary responsibilities of ownership registration, parcel mapping, real property valuation, and data access. GIS provides the tools to more efficiently collect, convert, and improve map data; accurately assess properties; and provide Internet and Intranet access to this data for the public, business, and other organizations.

Economic Development: Our community through its Internet mapping application using GIS technology allows our county's information to be available 24/7 allowing access to information that developers may be in search of from other areas of the world. This public access to GIS allows Wayne County to turn our unique resources into economic success, ultimately advancing the quality of life of our citizens and strengthening the economic base of our community by retaining and growing existing businesses and attracting new investments.

LET'S MOVE THIS MOUNTAIN TOGETHER

Working Together is
the key to safety

Do your part in making the County of Wayne

A Safe Place to Be