



State officials shown quarry set to expand near Benson

The state environment chief got a look at Martin-Marietta's Benson-area quarry and an estimated \$2.4 million expansion-allowing stream-location project under way last Thursday.

N.C. Department of Environmental Quality Secretary Donald van der Vaart was joined on the visit to the Raleigh Road quarry by Deputy Secretary John Evans, Assistant Secretary Tom Reeder and Communications Director for Environmental Protection Mike Rusher.

Van der Vaart told Martin Marietta officials during an office conversation before a tour by van that he wanted to make sure they were aware of state air-quality-permit exemption for which Martin Marietta facilities might qualify.

In addition, van der Vaart said when asked later, "We think it's pretty important to go out and look at people we regulate." This is on top of the regional staff of the Department of Environmental Quality, or DEQ, which already makes visits to fulfill regulatory and customer-service functions, he said.

Plus, van der Vaart said after touring the quarry, viewing the stone-extraction, -crushing and -distribution and other equipment and visiting the new-streambed-construction area, "As an engineer anyway, I love this type of stuff."

"Those crushers are pretty amazing," he had said.

Martin Marietta Senior Environmental Engineer Nuwan Wijesuriya said the stream relocation from next to the existing quarry to the rear of the leased expansion area will give around 17 more acres from which to dig up stone.

It will eliminate acreage loss from having two pits instead of branching off the existing one, he said.



Standing at the bottom of the Martin Marietta Benson Quarry pit as a piece of equipment moves stone are, from left, the company's Arlen Carpenter and Nuwan Wijesuriya, the N.C. Department of Environmental

Quality's Tom Reeder, John Evans and Donald van der Vaart and the company's Brian North. (Staff photo by Mike Dart)

In addition, Company Division Environmental and Land Manager Brian North said, "The wider the

opening is, the deeper we can go."

Plant Manager Arlen Carpenter said, with the quarry opened in 1985

producing a million tons of stone a year, the expansion area will extend its life 30 to 40 years when it was

within a year or two of closing. The last hard-rock quarry from here to the coast, it is filling 250 to 300 trucks per 10- to 11-hour day and on track this year to match pre-Great Recession, 2006-2007 levels of output, Carpenter said.

"We have about 18 employees here full time," he said.

North said quarries east of Interstate 95 mine limestone and hard rock was not supposed to exist as far east as Benson, but Martin Marietta testing discovered it at the quarry site.

Wijesuriya noted another advantage of the relocation of Stoney Fork will reduce the noise neighbors hear compared to if the quarry expansion extended closer to the property line.

Carpenter said the quarry blasts once a week, loosening 40,000 to 60,000 tons of stone each time.

Saying S.T. Wooten Corp. workers are constructing the steam diversion, Wijesuriya said, "They started doing this back in April, so they're almost halfway."

An approximately 10-minute video for prospective employees, contractors and other visitors to the quarry the DEQ visitors viewed before the conversations and tour emphasized required safety measures. Plus these and environmental measures were pointed out during the tour.

"This is really impressive," van der Vaart said.

Noting the importance of products from the quarry and similar operations to society, Carpenter said, "If it can't be grown, it has to be mined."

After he said the quarry has a day it hosts earth-science students from nearby South Johnston High, van der Vaart said, "I love the fact that you're having school kids come out here."

Education is also a part of his department's job, the secretary said.

— Mike Dart

Four Oaks Dollar General is to move into old Walmart

The Four Oaks Dollar General store is to move into the former Walmart Express store on the other side of West Wellons Street this year.

The Walmart Express, one of 41 Dollar General said it bought in 11 states to relocate 40 existing stores and enter one new market, closed in January after being open 34 months.

Announcing last Thursday that it had completed the purchase, Dollar General said it anticipates opening the relocated stores by October.

Asked for a more definite date the Four Oaks store will open, Dollar General Corp. Senior Manager of Public Relations Crystal Ghassemi

said a specific time frame for the grand opening celebrations has not been determined.

"We're excited to offer Four Oaks customers ... expanded offerings, including meat, produce and fuel, at the new location at 6043 U.S. Highway 301 South," Ms. Ghassemi said.

"The new stores are approximately 12,000 square feet," she said, "which is about 3,000 more square feet compared to our traditional stores that are approximately 9,100 square feet."

"This will allow us to provide fresh meat and produce, in addition to the value of America's most

trusted brands and our own private brands that customers expect from Dollar General."

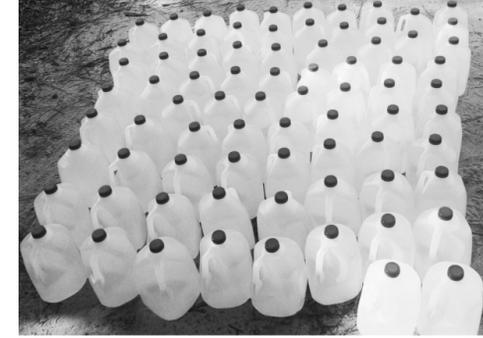
The current Four Oaks Dollar General is at 6064 U.S. 301 South.

"All current employees will transfer to the new stores once construction is completed and additional career opportunities will be posted online at (World Wide Web site) www.dollargeneral.com/careers," Ms. Ghassemi said.

In company announcement, Chief Executive Officer Todd Vasos said, "Dollar General is excited to add these locations to our existing store (See MOVE, Page 2)



N.C. Alcohol Law Enforcement said officers found the still, above, and moonshine, below, when they



raided a Benson-area home last week.

Area man faces moonshine, marijuana, related charges

A Benson-area man was arrested on moonshine and drug charges after a still raid on his home Wednesday

of last week, the N.C. Alcohol Law Enforcement Branch and Johnston County Sheriff's Department say.

A search warrant was executed at the 1715 Creek Bridge Road, Benson, home of Billy Ray Jackson, said Jeff Lasater, special agent in charge of ALE District 4, which includes Johnston County.

Jackson, 60, was charged with felonious manufacture of non-tax-paid liquor, felonious possession of marijuana and five misdemeanors, La-

sater and the Sheriff's Department Internet site said.

The other charges were conspiracy to possess and manufacture non-tax-paid liquor, possession of equipment or ingredients intended for manufacturing an alcoholic beverage, possession of non-tax-paid liquor, possession for sale of non-tax-paid liquor and possession of drug paraphernalia, Lasater said.

Jackson possessed an approximately 600-gallon still, 143 gallons of non-tax-paid alcohol and 4,402 gallons of mash, the fermented mixture of usually corn, sugar, water and

yeast that is distilled to create moonshine Lasater said.

"Non-tax-paid liquor was being made as we arrived," he said. "There was about 2 ounces of marijuana and seeds were also found in a freezer, indicating he grew marijuana."

Jackson has a previous conviction for manufacturing non-tax-paid alcohol, so that makes subsequent charges for that offense a felony, Lasater said.

"This was a joint investigation between Alcohol Law Enforcement and the Johnston County Sheriff's Office," Lasater said.

Swearing in and apartment and barn pleas facing board

The Four Oaks Board of Commissioners is to swear in a new member and hold public hearings on zoning requests for apartments and an over-size barn at 7 p.m. Monday.

Andy Hardy, whom the board appointed July 11 to replace the late Commissioner Sandy Lee, is to take the oath of office.

Then the board is to hold hearings on zoning actions that town Planning

and Zoning Administrator Pauline Ketchum said the Four Oaks Planning Board recommended after its own public hearings July 21.

Sam Alan Thornton of U.S. 301 South, Four Oaks, seeks a special use permit to remodel a building he has nearby at 6786 U.S. 301 South, Four Oaks, for two apartments, Mrs. Ketchum said.

The table of uses for Residential-

Agriculture, which the property is zoned, would be amended to allow apartments as a special use, Mrs. Ketchum said.

The two-story, brick building, which was used as apartments many years ago, has an upstairs apartment and downstairs apartment, she said.

Mickey Shawn Lamm of Clayton is asking for a special use permit (See BOARD, Page 2)

Information-session, meeting focus is sewer projects, loan

By Mike Dart

The Benson Board of Commissioners is to decide whether to move forward with all four sewer projects it tentatively approved last Thursday and hold a public hearing on zoning requests for a solar farm at 7 p.m. Tuesday.

An informational session will precede the meeting, starting at 5 p.m., so the board can be versed in all the options before acting on a required resolution for a federal loan that must be approved then to meet the deadline.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has declared the town eligible for a loan for the \$2,801,825 in projects with possibly USDA's all-time-lowest interest rate of 1.625 percent and a term as long as 40 years, Town Manager Matt Zapp said.

One project includes replacing a pump station on South Walton Avenue in danger of failing, which serves the site there that is to get about an \$8.25 hotel in the next year and possibly two \$1 million restaur-

rants in the future, Zapp said.

It also involves installing gravity lines to improve sewer service in nearby Eastwood subdivision and other work.

This project has been a priority for the board and is seen as even more essential with the hotel to open in November 2017.

Other projects are eliminating Boardwalk and Lakeshore subdivision-area pump stations no longer needed to provide service.

A new project that Zapp said was previously set aside but that now is up for discussion is upgrading the Carolyn Drive pump station and force main.

This would allow it to serve newly proposed developments along N.C. 242 North between North Wall Street and Interstate 40, town staff said.

Under discussion there is a residential development that is considerably larger than usual in Benson, Assistant Town Manager Braston Newton said.

Any of the work is to require a

bump in the monthly sewer base rate to make the loan payment.

In other business Tuesday, ESA Renewables has requested rezoning and a special use permit for slightly more than 32 acres Jennifer D. Johnson of West Palm Beach, Fla., owns on Benson-Hardee Road, a town notice says.

If approved, this property in the town's extraterritorial planning jurisdiction, or ETJ, would be rezoned from Residential 20, low-density residential, to Industrial 2, or heavy industry, Special Use District and a permit issued for a solar-energy facility.

Most of the land sits off the road behind much smaller R-20 lots.

The Benson Planning Board was to hold public hearing and make recommendations on the requests Tuesday of this week.

Also last Thursday, the Board of Commissioners approved a Police Department request to send for the second time a potential officer through Basic Law Enforcement Training this fall.



Police treat and socialize with children

Children attending the St. James Disciples Church, twice-weekly Community Court lunch-and-games program Tuesday of last week got to view a Benson Police Department vehicle as well as interact with officers and other officials. Benson police pro-

vided the food and volunteered at the event on Woodall Street, which program organizer Cleo McKinnon shows the good police-community relations that exist in Benson at a time when they are strained elsewhere in the nation.