Seven Springs man faces murder charge

From staff reports

A Seven Springs man is charged with an open count of murder after deputies say he stabbed a man to death in a fight.

Through an investigation by the Criminal Investigations Division of the Wayne County Sheriff’s Office, Antonio Sabino Arnullso, 38, of 1333 Camp Jubilee Road was taken into custody without incident on April 30. According to a WCSSO report, Wayne County EMS responded that day to an early morning medical emergency at Arnullso’s address. While on scene, a 911 dispatched emergency EMS that the victim had been involved in a fight and was not responsive.

Dispatch sought assistance from WCSSO before the EMS crew arrived. Deputies located the victim, 20-year-old Justin Hernandez Stilton and discovered he suffered multiple stab wounds. Stilton died on the scene and was taken to Wayne UNC Healthcare. His remains were later taken to the state’s medical examiner’s office for an autopsy.

Authorities took Arnullso to Magistrate J.T. Laws, who issued no bond and ordered he be placed in the custody of the Wayne County Detention Center.

Water woes dampen election

By RUDY OGDOGS Assistant Editor

Mount Olive’s commissioners hope their current board remains intact after the May 22 municipal election.

Four challengers are vying for seats, including mayor.

Among those residents aren’t too impressed with the current board, one commissioner is loyal to the group remaining in office.

“I’m not politicizing but it’s important for this board to stay together because of the amount of time we’ve put into getting these issues solved,” Dr. Dennis Draper said at a recent Rotary Club meeting.

Jamalia Royall agreed. The town manager stressed that new faces could “set the board back two, five years” due to “training” new commissioners on subjects including the moratorium.

“We’re good right where we are,” Royall said.

State authorities placed the county’s second largest town under a moratorium in 2016 due to consistent water line breaks. A moratorium occurred when extra water overwhelemed the town’s wastewater treatment plant.

Draper told the Small Gathering that nearly two decades ago, the town borrowed $1 million to put in a new wastewater treatment program. The organizers designed a poor program and contractors failed to properly build the system.

Each company eventually went bankrupt.

And the system was poorly maintained.

Draper said the town continues to pay a $28,000 bill that won’t be off the books until 2026.

“I won’t live to see that,” Draper said.

In 2018, town commissioners approved a $10.7 million project to repair decaying and leaking sewer lines that also affect the town’s inflow and infiltration. They

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FirstNet aims to shorten first responder time

By RUDY OGDOGS Assistant Editor

Communication deserts exist throughout eastern North Carolina. Wayne County is no exception. Inadequate transmission on 911 calls have led to longer response times in emergencies.

AT&T’s FirstNet is hoping to improve emergency response times with apps and tools more accessible on Wayne County’s new cell towers.

FirstNet is important because it is a dedicated hand stritch for the use of first responders, especially in the times of disasters where we have to have the ability to communicate,” said AT&T, chief of New Hanover Volunteer Fire Department and Beacon. “It’s dependable and the coverage is wonderful, especially now... . FirstNet is a subscription-paid program very popular with volunteer fire departments and volunteer EMS because those agencies don’t have the devices to provide to everyone. It’s expensive happens everywhere but we want to be the network that public safety chooses to have all of their vital communications,” said Gerald Busser, FirstNet.

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Royall looks back on ‘wall to wall’ fest

By WILLIAM HOLIAN Staff writer

It has been two weeks now since the massive crowd of the 50th annual North Carolina Pickle Festival left town and attendees took their memories with them. It also left problems and sometimes Town Manager Jamalia Royall said was getting hard to find during the height of the popular event.

Royall said by mid-morning on Saturday, the festival had drawn “wall to wall” people.

“It has been two weeks now since the massive crowd of the 50th annual North Carolina Pickle Festival left town and attendees took their memories with them. It also left problems and sometimes Town Manager Jamalia Royall said was getting hard to find during the height of the popular event.

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Newton challenging Talton for mayor’s seat

By WILLIAM HOLIAN Staff Writer

Two Mount Olive residents, incumbent Ken- ny Talton and newcomer, J. Arvene Newton, are vying for the town’s mayor’s seat.

Both are retired firefighters. Talton currently serves as the planning director for the city of Goldsboro. He said he is proud of the accomplishments since he was elected and the opportunity to work alongside a fantastic group of people.

As part of the town’s board of commissioners, Talton said the group has worked tirelessly in numerous areas to get the town “back on track.”

“We’ve worked in many areas such as wastewater treatment plant rehabilitation, repairs to sanitary sewer infrastructure on the north side of town, and we’ve worked in numerous areas to get the town back on track.”

Talton added, “We’ve worked in many areas such as wastewater treatment plant rehabilitation, repairs to sanitary sewer infrastructure on the north side of town, and we’ve worked in numerous areas to get the town back on track.”

Newton

Talton

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WEATHER
Wednesday 90 High 61 Low
Thursday 82 High 59 Low
Friday 83 High 65 Low

TODAY IN HISTORY
5038 – Dutch explorer Piet Hein landed at Manhattan Island. Native Americans later said he stood on a hillside and called it "staad."
And the winners are...

Congratulations to these three North Carolina residents who won gift baskets raffled by the Mount Olive Tribune, Mount Olive, N.C. Winning is a treat. The monthly night baskets, left and right, were won by Marquetta Lip of Stokes and Jacqueline Klier of Hovikton, Ryan Lens of Pikelove won the middle basket that included $120 in gift cards from local businesses.

Rising fertilizer, diesel prices affecting farmers

By THEODORA OPEKA
Carolina Journal

Farmers across the country, including North Carolina, are "sinking it in the club" when it comes to diesel and fertilizer prices, which have risen to unprecedented levels. The U.S. is dependent on a major importer of foreign fertilizer. Factory driving costs include Russia's war with Ukraine, a limited supply of the relevant minerals and high energy costs, high global demand and agricultural commodity prices, reliance on fertilizer imports, and lack of competition in the fertilizer industry.

Farmers understand the produce the only absolute essential energy in the world, food. Rep. Jimmcy Dixon, R-Duplin, told Carolina Journal about the importance of the farmer's role in people's lives. "I don't think we have come up with a system yet that would allow us to get along without food."

Dixon, a centenarian farmer, said of the gate receipts or agricultural products sold in North Carolina, nearly 70% is livestock, like chickens, turkeys, hogs and cattle. "That's an amazing statistic," he said. "It's a big part of our cultural economy, which is the biggest industry in the state. We are approaching $10 billion."

He said about 95% of agricultural output uses diesel engines, which include transportation, seeds, chicken, hogs, products, etc.

Dixon said farmers have in their DNA to go up and get the job done, but there is some worry with the trend happening with the economy.

"It's dramatically affecting the thinking of every farmer that I come in contact with," he said. "There is heightened anxiety about who will survive and who won't." Ralph Britt from Britt Family Farms near Mount Olive in Duplin County and Wayne County has grown up on a farm and worked in chemical agricultural sales for 20 years after he finished his master's degree at North Carolina State. He has been farming full time for 28 years and told Carolina Journal the prices for diesel and fertilizer are higher.

"Some of our fertilizers are up fourfold from last year," he said. "Nitrogen is produced through natural gas and a process that makes it. Fuel is double what it was last year. The cost of transportation is driving the up cost of inputs, delivery costs are all going up, not per biggest increase has been in fertilizers. Britt said they say 500 gallons of diesel cost and with it coming over $4 per gallon, nearly $1 in some areas, compared to being below $2 last year, it is definitely having an impact.

Brett's main crops are corn, soybeans, small grain, livestock, cattle, hogs, broilers, occasionally sweet potatoes, and potatoes. He plans on planting 45,000 acres of corn and replacing the average with more, mainly due to the rising costs of fertilizer. He said 90% of corn produced in the U.S. goes into feed for livestock, which will impact the cost of beef, chicken, pork, and sausage. About 18% of fresh corn is also gone into the oil supply, impacting the cost of ethanol.

He said in addition to the rise in costs for livestock, people will see an increase in the costs of fruits and vegetables as well. It comes after COVID, when supply chains were already struggling and not as many people working. There was an especially impactful shortage of truck drivers. All these factors led to lower agricultural production.

"Brett's rise isn't sure if the current situation will impact his farm's ability to get paid for production, he said they will definitely have to put a lot more money into their crops this year. "An example would be a margin on an acre of corn for $100 per acre," he said. "Last year, we would have invested $500 in input, variable costs to grow that crop of corn to make $100. This year, that investment would be more than $500 or $600 to make that same return."

"This is going to be a year of very high risk," Britt said. "We have a chance to make a good year if we have a good crop and a good job selling it. But our budgets are double what they were last year."

Brett said they invest a couple of millions dollars every year in their crop operation. While they had some people out due to COVID and have had some trouble filling positions, there are currently doing well with their labor force, despite rising costs.

"Nobody is making minimum wage anymore. It's a mess," Britt said. "That's how we are going to do it. We're not going to make it."

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