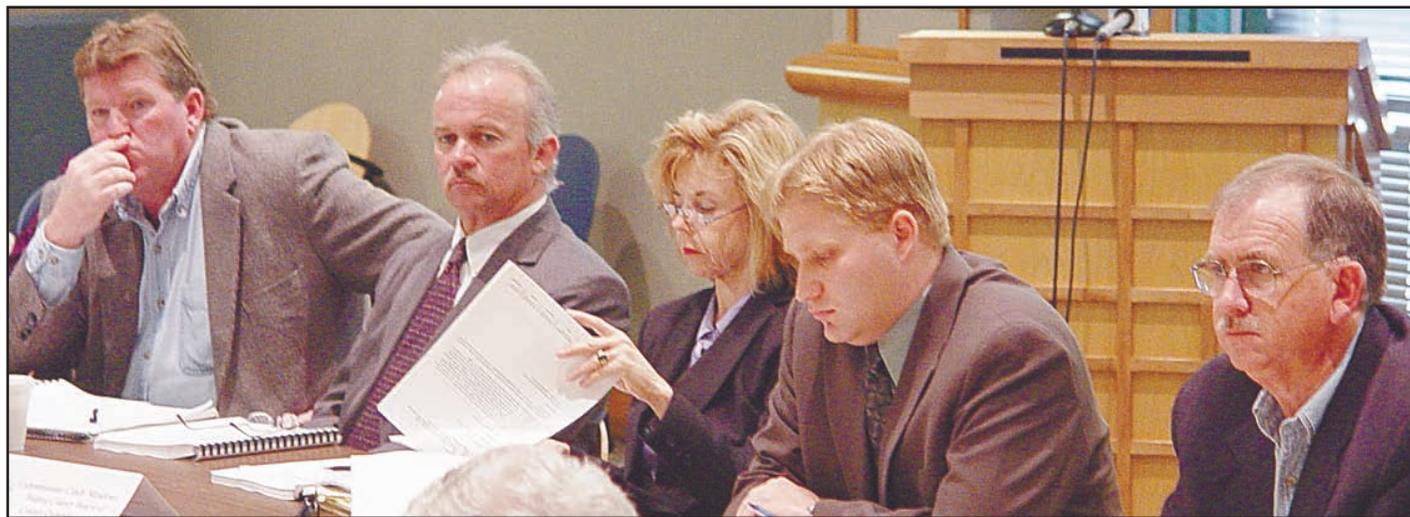


Officials deny 'hit list'

■ Mike Lane and Latilda Henninger are the latest in a list of county employees to leave since the November election



Pasha Carroll/The Sun

Walton County Commission recently addressed allegations that there is a list of county employees whose jobs are in jeopardy.

By PASHA CARROLL
SUN REPORTER

County officials are denying the existence of a "hit list" of key county employees who are being targeted for removal from their jobs.

The Sun received a copy of a note that various sources say is being circulated on the Internet. It is the correspondence that has led to speculation on the part of many, including officials, as to its origin and validity.

The document alleges County Administrator Ronnie

Bell was "operating under the request of" County Commissioner Kenneth Pridgen in removing a list of county personnel from their positions.

It also accuses Commissioners Ro Cuchens and Scott Brannon of being indirectly involved.

The information has become so widespread that commissioners specifically addressed the statement at the Feb. 1 County Commission meeting as well as at a

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Community input needed for Scenic Gulf Drive

By PASHA CARROLL
SUN REPORTER

"Roads are not paved with asphalt, they are paved with taxpayer dollars," Russ Barry, Director of Walton County Public Works said about the need for public support to give Scenic Gulf Drive a major overhaul.

"We are taking citizen input now," Barry said. "A lot of people will be affected by this (project.)"

He stressed the importance of community support for the project. To date there has not been as much input as he hoped for, he said.

While residents in the area have made a public outcry to fix the tattered streets and do something about poor parking, not many showed up at the two community meetings for it.

Barry said about 10 residents attended the preliminary meeting and about 35 people voiced opinions on Jan. 27 at the second community meeting.

At that meeting Cliff Knauer from Preble-Rish Engineering explained what could be done to improve Scenic Gulf Drive.

Some residents felt as though the meeting was not an effective way of informing the community.

"I would have liked more information but I wasn't willing to sit around listening to griping," Avalon Dunes resident Ralph Smith said. Throughout the meeting residents complained about parking and safety issues.

Between resident's complaints, Knauer explained the gist of what Preble-Rish hopes to accomplish for the county on Scenic Gulf Drive. The cost for the project is estimated at \$7 million, not including another \$15 million for underground utilities, Knauer said.

"The first issue we are

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Teaching, it's a family tradition

By JOYCE OWEN
SUN REPORTER

FREEPORT – When Kristen Rhodes, Walton High School's nominee for Teacher of the Year, learned Jan. 27 that she had been selected the district's 2006 Teacher of the Year, she was just keeping it in the family.

Rhodes' father, South Walton High School social studies teacher Ron Pugh, is a previous winner of not only the local Teacher of the Year award, but a regional winner as well.

Her mother, Marsha Pugh, was recently promoted to Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction for the school district.

Rhodes graduated from WHS in 1998 and has

Walton County 2006 Teachers of the Year

<p>Sue Bozeman – West DeFuniak Elementary Charlotte Cuchens – Maude Saunders Elementary Constance Rogers – Butler Elementary Krisy Spence – Freeport Elementary Marie Laurino – Freeport Middle School Charles Trotman – Freeport High School Tommy Pittman – Paxton Elementary</p>		<p>Cindy Neale – Paxton Middle/High School Robin Langford – South Walton Middle School Anita Sloan – South Walton High School Heather Hall – Walton Middle School Kristen Rhodes – Walton High School Stacey Morrison – Bay Early Education Center Lewis Thorn – NAFI Brad West – Walton Vocational/Technical</p>
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taught 9th and 10th grade English there for three years.

"I feel like I'm back home where I'm supposed to be," Rhodes told the teachers, friends and family gathered at the Thursday evening ceremony.

During the ceremony to honor winners of the 2006 Teacher of the Year and the 2004 – 2005 Educational Support Professional of

the Year held at Freeport High School, School Superintendent Carlene Anderson said, "There's nothing more honorable than being selected by your peers."

"We are here to honor these impressive educators," she continued.

"It's a most pleasant job, awarding achievement. After all, we are in the achievement business," Anderson said. "The one

job we have is to educate successful students."

Dixie Burge, Walton County Educational Association president of ESP's, announced the district's Educational Support Professional winner was Becky Hurly, who works at the DeFuniak Springs bus

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