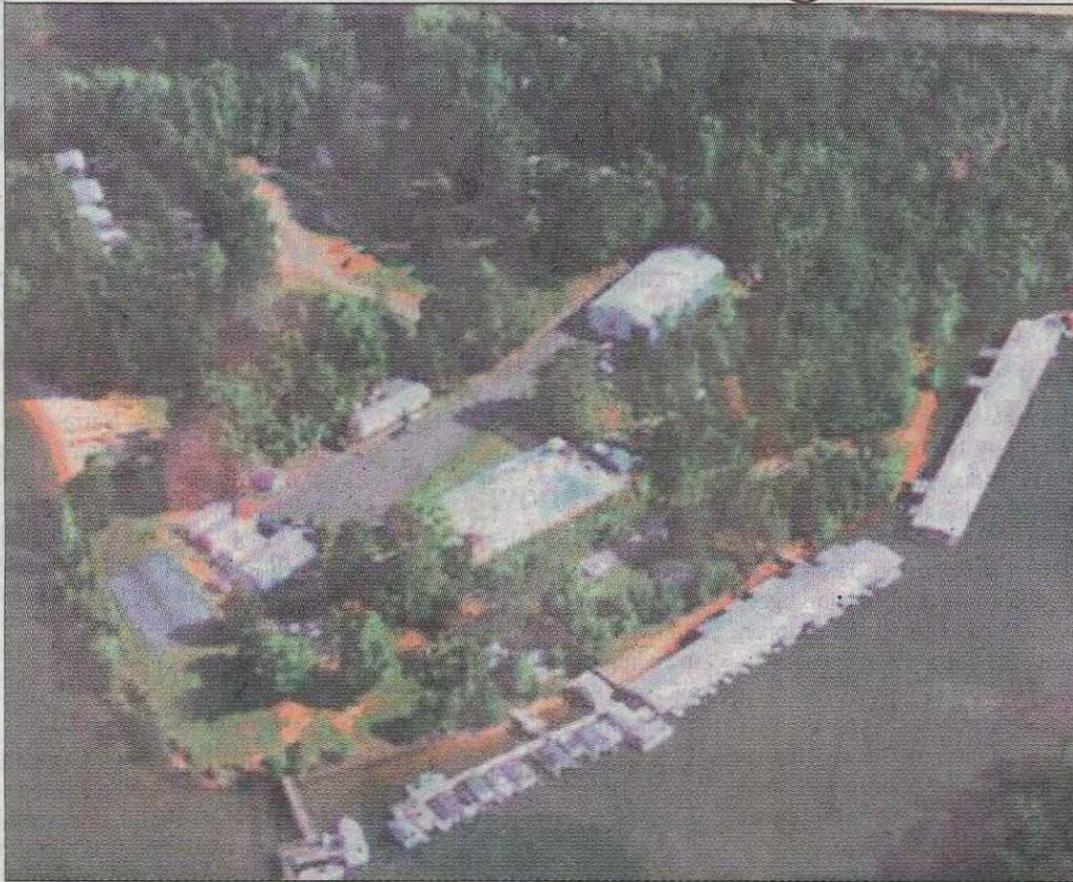


# Lake Wylie Pilot

Clover teachers band together to help feed students ■ 3A

## PRIME PROPERTY



- COURTESY OF JOYCE PRESLEY REALTY

The Long Cove Marina property in Steele Creek is now listed as for sale, though current operators say they aren't interested in leaving.

## Marina for sale; lessee disagrees

■ Long Cove lease date stirs concern for marina's future

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STEELE CREEK — According to the family operating it, Long Cove Marina & Yacht Club isn't planning on changing hands anytime soon.

"Long Cove Marina is not for sale," said Diana Grubenhoff, manager for more than two decades. "We have no intention of selling the business or getting rid of the marina."

Yet a real estate listing in Homes & Land and online at JoycePresleyRealty.net suggests otherwise. Joyce Presley Realty lists the 14629 Rainbarrel Road site for sale at \$2.75 million. The property is listed online as active, with a description of 14 acres and 3,065 feet of shoreline with 92 boat slips. Noted is a lease on the property through Dec. 31, 2013.

Grubenhoff says her family's lease on Long Cove runs through 2029.

"It means nothing as far as I'm concerned," Grubenhoff said of the real estate listing.

Presley told the *Lake Wylie Pilot* last week that the Grubenhoffs have an option to extend their current lease, which runs through 2013, to the 2029 timeframe at

a "substantially higher lease than they've been accustomed to paying." The triple net lease — an arrangement where the lessee pays rent along with taxes, insurance and maintenance costs — requires a bump to 12.5 percent of the current appraised value of more than \$3 million for a renewal past 2013, Presley said.

The result could be an operating cost for the Grubenhoffs of more than 20 times what the previous lease agreement cost.

"I have to go by what the paperwork says," Presley said. "Whether they renew that is up to them."

Mecklenburg County's property information system, POLARIS, shows the 14629 Rainbarrel Road address belonging to ABC Investment Properties following a sale from Crescent Resources on Jan. 2, 2009 for \$725,000. A copy of that deed transfer at the county Register of Deeds includes mention of a Jan. 9, 1979 lease between Crescent Land and Timber Corp. and Long Cove Yacht Club among its easements and restrictions. It doesn't provide a date for when the lease expires.

Efforts to obtain comment from ABC Investment &

See MARINA ■ 6A

## Weigh in on water rate hike

■ Residents can voice views Aug. 4 about proposed 80 percent increase

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LAKE WYLIE — At this rate, the church folks may have to roll out a few more chairs.

Just more than a week away from the only local hearing in Carolina Water Service's rate increase case with the South Carolina Public Service Commission, and all signs point to a significant turnout. Several calls and e-mails came in to the *Lake Wylie Pilot* last week inquiring about the Aug. 4 meeting at the River Hills Community Church life center. Some wanting specifics on the meeting, others how they and lawyers could be guaranteed an opportunity to speak.

"The people up there have a lot of interest," said C. Dukes Scott, executive director of the South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff. "They've been effective with their testimony in the past."

Earlier this year Carolina Water applied for a rate increase of 80 percent for its South Carolina customers. Company officials say it's a difficult request, but one that fairly represents investments already made in water systems and current operating costs. More than \$10 million in capital improvements have taken place since the last increase proposal, according to the company.

"We acknowledge that an 80 percent increase is a large percentage increase, especially in these economic times," wrote Don Sudduth, company vice president, in a May letter to County Manager Jim Baker. "While the rate increase is without a doubt significant, we feel it does accurately represent the fair cost to operate and maintain those systems."

Since initial news of the increase, service users in Lake Wylie haven't taken to it kindly. Dianne Kehler, Allen Nason and Ron Wanless are three of 80 local residents who already petitioned the Public Service Commission in opposition to the proposed increase. Wanless called current rates "excessive in light of the service provided." Kehler called the proposed increase "completely out of line."

"It is unconscionable to request an increase of this magnitude or any magnitude at this time," she wrote in her petition letter.

All three residents echoed complaints common to previous rate increase hearings for Carolina Water Service in Lake

See WATER ■ 6A

## ■ PENNIES

continued from 1A

"If there's any danger in this election," Helms said, "it's complacency."

### Why vote no?

While many organized groups have taken a stance in favor of Pennies, there are critical voices. The first two Pennies projects included cost overruns that delayed completion. Of the 25 items listed on the current project, six have some sort of carry-over from their inclusion in the 2003 Pennies program. Those efforts do include upgraded plans, such as the Pole Branch Road project, S.C. 160 West to the state line and S.C. 557 to Kingsbury Road where the 2011 list calls for five lanes, compared to three in 2003.

Online comments on the Herald's Web site, [heraldonline.com](http://heraldonline.com), split fairly evenly

on several recent stories written on 2011 Pennies list projects. Comments from people saying they'd vote "no" on Aug. 2 include what they call mismanagement of past programs, a need to rely on state road funding rather than a local tax and slowed economic growth from past Pennies votes to where the county should "just finish up the current projects, and then be done with it."

"It is now time to stop and see where the dust settles," read one. "We cannot continue to just expand and expand and expand. This type of roadwork has attracted nothing but chain businesses, and traffic lights."

### Making a decision

In addition to the July 28 public meeting, specifics on what road projects are included in the Pennies vote and other information on the program are available at [penniesforprogress.net](http://penniesforprogress.net). Also linked to

that site is the presentation given by county staff to Lake Wylie Civic Association June 27, historical data on the 1997 and 2003 projects and contact information for county engineers overseeing Pennies.

As for the vote itself, York County Registration and Elections Director Wanda Hemphill said all polling locations, eligible voters and election processes remain the same from any other vote. Precincts will be open 7 a.m.-7 p.m. There isn't any magic number supporters have to reach, Hemphill said. It's simply which side gets the most votes, regardless how many people turn out or how narrow the margin.

"It's basically 50 percent plus one," said Hemphill. "It's just got to tip that 50 percent."

For more information on polling locations based on residence, visit [yorkcountygov.com](http://yorkcountygov.com) and search "registration and elections."

## ■ WATER

continued from 1A

Wylie - the high cost of water, poor service and a lack of infrastructure maintenance. All three expressed a desire to participate in the Aug. 4 meeting.

"Carolina Water representatives admitted they had no idea what maintenance, if any, they had previously done on the infrastructure near my house," wrote Nason, citing a recently settled claim against the company following a water and sewage back-up into his home.

Those are the types of comment, Scott said, that will be of interest to the commissioners on hand Aug. 4. The Public Service Commission is the decision-making body in utility matters like the Carolina water request, while the state Office of Regulatory Staff handles the "investigative, legal, prosecutorial and educational roles" of utility regulation. In addition to his current role, Scott is a former PSC commissioner.

His advice for Lake Wylie? Show up,

and speak.

"First, be present," Scott said. "Second, testify. Their presence will be noted by the sheer volume, but testimony is key. Even if someone has said something similar, it's important."

The issues commissioners will be looking for Aug. 4 are billing problems, inaccuracies, service issues, "people complaints" and, yes, the impact that the proposed increase would have for customers. Any documentation of those issues would be helpful, also.

Carolina Water Service as a hot button issue in Lake Wylie isn't new. In the spring, York County offered to take on the company's system in the area at no cost to the county. That proposal met a response from Utilities, Inc., the parent company of Carolina Water Service, declining the offer and asking the county for proof that the bulk water rate charged to the company is in line with previous agreements. That effort was the latest in what County Manager Jim Baker called ongoing negotiations for "the better part of the last two years."

"I don't think there's any surprise," said

River Hills resident Don Long, "except I guess I was hoping they'd give it a little more thought than they did."

Long testified in previous rate increase cases for Carolina Water Service, and plans to testify again this time. He's also worked with similar efforts in Tega Cay with fellow Utilities, Inc. subsidiary Tega Cay Water Service.

While residents hope to have their say at the Aug. 4 meeting, they'll also be waiting to hear yet more news of possible utility rate increases. Earlier this month Duke Energy requested an electric rate increase for its North Carolina customers of 17 percent for residential users, 14 percent for commercial and industrial. The company also stated plans to file for an increase in South Carolina.

"We are planning on filing an increase proposal in South Carolina on or around Aug. 5," said Jason Walls, company spokesman.

The extent of that proposed increase hadn't been determined. A final decision on the Carolina Water increase isn't expected until September.