THE DAILY CLIPS

January 21, 2009

News, commentary, and opinion
compiled by the East Carolina University News Bureau from:

The Greenville Daily Reflector
The Raleigh News & Observer
  The New York Times
  The Wall Street Journal
  USA Today
  The Charlotte Observer
  The Fayetteville Observer
  The Greensboro News & Record
  Newsweek
  U.S. News & World Report
  Business Week
  Time

East Carolina University News Bureau
E-mail to durhamj@ecu.edu  Web site at http://www.news.ecu.edu
252-328-6481 FAX: 252-328-6300
Supporters celebrate the inauguration

BY KATHRYN KENNEDY
The Daily Reflector

A poster board at Mrs. C's restaurant on Deck Street listed the grand lunch that President Barack Obama and his family would enjoy Tuesday as part of his inauguration: duck breast, pheasant, molasses whipped sweet potatoes.

Underneath, it listed what Mrs. C and her staff prepared for diners: baked chicken with vinegar sauce, a choice of collards or steamed cabbage. Humbler, but equally delicious, according to the dozen locals and employees who attended the restaurant's inauguration celebration.

"I'm having macaroni and cheese," said one man. "(Obama's) not having that."

More than 30 had pledged to join Tuesday's celebration, but the blustery weather kept many at home in front of their own televisions. A group of East Carolina University professors were undeterred.

"Several of us go to lunch every day, so we decided to come here so we can be together and watch it," said Mary Crozier, who helped organize the Mrs. C's luncheon. "It's about getting a Democrat in, and a man of vision and fairness."

Crozier worked with the local campaign office, canvassing neighborhoods, posting signs, cleaning the office and transporting voters to the polls. The tiring but enjoyable work paid off the moment Obama was sworn in, she said.

Others have waited and fought for much longer to see the nation's first black president take office.

"I never thought I would live to see this day," said Elaine

See LOCAL, A7
Hightower. "I'm 56 years old, grew up in Williamston. I remember being a child and seeing 'white only' signs, 'black only' signs."

Hightower moved to Greenville less than two years ago after living in Washington, D.C.

She visited the nation's capital last weekend, but said she had no interest in being there Tuesday morning.

"Normally, it's a hectic city," she explained. "A day like this? I knew it would be overwhelming. So I chose to stay here in my newfound home with my friends. It's still as emotional and exiting as if I were there. I've been crying since 6:30 this morning."

The small group was still and silent, eating an American flag-themed Obama sheet cake and sipping sweet tea, as they watched history unfold on the small screen. Noise erupted each time a tradition or performance finished.

Then Obama took his oath. All rose to their feet, listening intently with huge smiles and glances at one another. They giggled when he stumbled over the words. There were high fives, hugs and maraca-shaking upon the completion of his speech and swearing-in.

"Whew," sighed Isabel Terry, removing her glasses to blot her tear ducts. "It happened."

Mrs. C said her expectations for his presidency are simple. "Just to see a change," she said. "Here in the U.S. we need jobs, people being able to keep their homes and unity between communities. Between blacks and whites. That's what we had here today."
Rising seas a serious threat to N.C. coast, feds say

BY WADE RAWLINS  STAFF WRITER

With its long low coastline and large land area less than 2 feet above sea level, North Carolina is among the states most vulnerable to sea-level rise, a new federal report warns.

The report, "Coastal Sensitivity to Sea Level Rise: A Focus on the Mid-Atlantic Region," focuses on the coastal states from North Carolina to New York where the rates of sea-level rise are moderately high. The region has extensive coastal development, a high population and is likely to be at increased risk.

After Florida and Louisiana, North Carolina and Texas have the largest land areas threatened by sea-level rise.

"You're vulnerable," said Jim Titus, project manager for sea-level rise for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and a lead author of the report. "The people whose land could be permanently submerged aren't even flooded today."

A rise in sea level increases the vulnerability of development in coastal floodplains and diminishes the rate at which low-lying areas drain. It will result in a loss of wetlands in the mid-Atlantic.

Rising temperatures cause ocean waters to warm and expand, like water heated in a tea kettle. In addition, rising temperatures near the poles cause massive ice sheets to melt, adding to the volume of water.

The report predicts that coastal erosion will occur at higher rates as sea level rises. Particulary in the sandy shore of the mid-Atlantic coast, the report says, it is nearly certain that barrier islands, spits and coastal headlands will erode faster because of sea-level rise. The Outer Banks area is particularly vulnerable.

The report, produced by a collaboration among agencies including EPA, the U.S. Geological Survey, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Department of Transportation, offers three scenarios for sea-level rise by 2100: A rise of about 16 inches; of about 2 feet, and of about 3 feet.

In 2007, an international scientific panel projected that sea level would likely rise between 7 inches and 2 feet by 2100. Those estimates do not take into account any contribution from rapid changes in ice flow from Antarctica or Greenland.

Rising sea levels might be especially disastrous to North Carolina, as some sections of the coast are slowly sinking, magnifying the effects of rising seas.

Tide-gauge readings in the mid-Atlantic indicate that relative sea-level rise (the combination of rising waters and sinking land) was generally higher — by about a foot — than the global average during the 20th century.

If sea level should rise more than 3 feet during the 21st century, the report says, "it is likely that some barrier islands in this region will cross a threshold" destabilizing and breaking apart.

Rob Young, director of the

SEE SEA LEVEL, PAGE 2B
Program for the Study of Developed Shorelines at Western Carolina University, said the report underscored that sea-level rise is a real management concern.

"There is some very important stuff in here that North Carolinians should take seriously," said Young, who said state policymakers and coastal communities should use a 3-foot sea-level rise by 2100 as a target.

"Whether sea level is rising is not something scientists argue about it," Young said: "It is. It's different than an argument about whether humans are causing global warming. We have directly measured an acceleration ... over the last two decades."

As sea level rises, the most basic decision that states and beach communities must wrestle with is whether to try to hold back the sea or let nature take its course. Both have costs. Replenishing sand on eroding beaches allows houses and businesses to remain in place for a period of time but is expensive to maintain. Retreating from the rising sea avoids the costs but concedes a loss of land and, in a worse case, entire communities, the report notes.

Greg Rudolph, shore protection officer for Carteret County, said people generally accept that sea level is rising. But planning for something that is occurring over decades is difficult.

"Let's face it, we live on four-year cycles when people are elected," Rudolph said: "Not many people are going to plan out 14 years or 21 years in advance."

Beach towns representing about a third of the North Carolina's 325 miles of coastline are seeking to replenish the sand on their beaches. But holding the beach may be an increasingly expensive response if erosion rates increase.

"One size does not fit all," Rudolph said.

Titus, of the EPA, said the report shows it is rational to take into consideration the risk of accelerated sea-level rise.

"A reasonable hope is people making decisions will start factoring it in, rather than continuing to assume that sea level is stable," Titus said: "Anyone who is making an investment, a regulation or a policy, has good reason to ask: How does sea level change the outcome of my decision?"