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In County Made Rich by Golf, Some Enclaves Are Left Behind

By SHAILA DEWAN

PINEHURST, N.C., June 2

Golf has made Moore County rich. There are spas, country clubs and new \$2 million homes. The United States Open, to be held later this month on the most famous of the county's 43 golf courses, is expected to bring \$124 million to the state.

But as developers rush to provide "resort quality" amenities in the newest subdivisions, some neighborhoods have been left behind -- without sewers, police service, garbage pickup or even, in some cases, piped water.

These enclaves, Jackson Hamlet, Midway and Waynor Road, are virtually all black. They butt up against, or are even completely surrounded by, affluent towns that are mostly white: **Pinehurst**, Aberdeen and Southern Pines.

The 500 residents of these unincorporated enclaves are close enough to point out sewer lines that run past their properties en route to new developments, or to watch garbage trucks trundle past without stopping.

Though the towns have not annexed these hamlets about 60 miles southwest of Raleigh, and their residents cannot vote in municipal elections, they are subject to the towns' land use and zoning rules under what is called extraterritorial jurisdiction.

When asked about extending basic services, the towns' officials say they must take care of those within their existing boundaries before taking on new neighborhoods. The county, on the other hand, says that many of its rural constituents do not have the services the enclaves are requesting, and that the problems of these more densely populated areas can be better addressed by towns.

Excluding heavily minority areas from town boundaries is a common but little examined practice, particularly in small towns in the South, civil rights advocates and geographers say. With the U.S. Open beginning on June 16 on the **Pinehurst** No. 2 golf course, residents of the three black neighborhoods and their advocates are making a concerted effort for the first time to win more services, holding news conferences and giving tours.

Historically, they are the very people who provided much of the labor that built the hotels in the Sandhills, as the area is known, tended the greens at the golf courses or worked on the all-black crew of caddies, long since replaced by electric carts.

Ida Mae Murchison lives in Jackson Hamlet, a shady neighborhood of dirt roads hemmed in by Aberdeen and **Pinehurst** but claimed by neither. On one corner, a new apartment complex juts in; it was annexed by **Pinehurst**, which often expands to include areas where a developer has already paid for the infrastructure. At the rear, a place once called Buckety Ford, where Jackson Hamlet children fetched water, has been dammed to create a 200-acre lake surrounded by houses, also part of **Pinehurst**.

"I get the feeling that we're just forgotten, put on the shelf or the back burner or something," Ms. Murchison said. "But like I say, I don't want to offend anyone. I don't want to cause trouble."

Ms. Murchison was the first black chambermaid at the Carolina Inn, the gracious centerpiece of the 110-year-old **Pinehurst** resort, where she worked for nearly 50 years. Now 84 and retired, she lives alone, worrying because there are no police officers for her to call in case of trouble. Despite two nearby municipal police forces, her neighborhood is the responsibility of the county sheriff -- whose deputies, she says, take at least 10 minutes to appear.

In Midway, a black community almost surrounded by Aberdeen, the yards are teeming with flowers, grapevines, statues and birdbaths. But the languid perfume of honeysuckle is punctuated by an equally heavy stench of raw sewage.

Randy Thomas, a food service manager at the Department of Corrections who has just adopted four young children, said he had to haul in sand every two months to cover the septic system leaks that trickle down his driveway.

Mr. Thomas's neighbor James McDougal said his mother had to move out of her house down the street when she got too old to use the outhouse. The county will not allow a septic tank because the lot is too small, Mr. McDougal said.

County Commissioner Michael Holden says the residents' request for services puts the county in a "delicate situation," in part because of competing demands for resources.

"I will admit Moore County waited way too long and should have been doing this stuff 20, 25 years ago," Mr. Holden said, pointing out that in the past 10 years the county has used grant money to extend water or sewer service to some minority communities. But, he added, "It's a matter of biting it off little by little, and doing chunks of it and moving forward."

In 2000, the state allotted a federal development grant to pay for water and sewer lines for a black enclave called Monroe Town. Every well there was substandard; county officials found a dead possum in one. But Monroe Town, which lies inside the subdivision that surrounds the **Pinehurst** No. 6 golf course, remains unincorporated and lacks other services, like garbage pickup.

Without a grant, the county is disinclined to pay for infrastructure for the enclaves. Those seeking services are quick to point out that the county ranks 18th out of 100 in the state in median income, even though it has no major urban center, and that its tax burden is low, with a rate in the bottom 10 percent. In the past 10 years, the county's property tax revenue has more than doubled, and it ended the 2004 fiscal year with a \$9.3 million surplus.

Asked if the county could just pay outright for the pipes and other necessities (one estimate is that it would cost \$1.5 million to \$1.75 million to establish sewer services for Jackson Hamlet), Mr. Holden said, "Then where do you stop?"

Officials also say that these enclaves have been wary of annexation in the past, fearful of the higher taxes that come with being part of a municipality or of the potential destruction of their communities by developers. "Some of the ones who are really pushing all this don't have everybody on board like they would like you to think," said Bill Zell, the town manager of Aberdeen.

Once services are established, the costs seem modest. A family in Jackson Hamlet that pays \$270.96 a year in property taxes now, on a \$50,000 home, would pay \$382.56 if annexed by **Pinehurst** and \$452.64 if annexed by Aberdeen. According to figures provided by the University of North Carolina Center for Civil Rights, which is helping the black communities, the actual cost to these families could decrease because they would no longer pay for septic tank maintenance, private garbage pickup and other expenses that their municipal taxes would cover.

Andy Wilkison, the town manager of **Pinehurst**, said Jackson Hamlet and Monroe Town declined to consider being annexed in 1990 and 1991, respectively, in part to avoid higher taxes. "I know what the maps look like and stuff," Mr. Wilkison said, "but the annexations have largely been places where people have come to us wanting to be annexed."

Waynor Road, which has neither sewer nor water service, is seeking annexation by Southern Pines, and the town is studying the economics of such a move. To officials, town boundaries are not a matter of race but money. Parcels are annexed after a developer pays for sewer and water hookups or if the area's tax base is likely to generate enough revenue to pay for itself.

When Frank Quis, the mayor of Southern Pines, was asked about racial exclusion, he said: "Are you telling me everyone on Waynor Road is of a certain race? I mean, that's kind of odd."

But Anita S. Earls, a lawyer with the University of North Carolina Center for Civil Rights, said that even if officials were not motivated by racism, historic racial inequities were part of the equation. "We have not found a densely populated, small lot size, poor white community on the edge of a town," Ms. Earls said.

The exclusion of minority neighborhoods, sometimes called municipal underbonding, occurs across the country. In Modesto, Calif., Hispanics have exchanged visits with the Moore County residents and are suing for services. In 2003, a black community outside Zanesville, Ohio, got tap water after filing a civil rights complaint. But civil rights advocates say it is most prevalent in small towns across the South.

"I don't think it happens even in larger cities in North Carolina because the political dynamics are so different," said Allan Parnell, the vice president of the Cedar Grove Institute for Sustainable Communities in Mebane, N.C., which did a study of racial exclusion by North Carolina towns. "In larger towns there may be a larger black population that has some say in running the community."

Underbonding denies blacks political power while putting them at the mercy of politicians who do not represent them, Ms. Earls said. All of the Moore County Commissioners, elected at large, are white, and black officials, elected or appointed, are scarce in the three towns.

Several elected officials said the lack of diversity in government was not an issue because they treated their constituents equally.

"Honey, I work with blacks and I love to work with the blacks," said Virginia Saunders, in her 10th year as a county commissioner. "I wish you could talk to some of the black people that I have helped."

But Maurice B. Holland Sr., who lives in Midway and is the only black member of the Aberdeen planning board, had a different view.

"There's no one in power to address the issues of the black community," Mr. Holland said. "The attitude seems to be, 'We know what's good for you.'"

Images: Photo: While predominately white areas of Moore County, N.C., like **Pinehurst**, top, are thriving, some black areas lack even basic services like sewers and garbage collection. Maurice B. Holland Sr., who lives in one such area, Midway, empties his trash at the dump. (Photographs by John Loomis/The New York Times)(pg. A19)

Chart/Map: "Pockets of Poverty"

Some minority communities in Moore County, N.C., lack municipal services as surrounding areas have been incorporated into wealthy municipalities.

Map of North Carolina highlighting minority communities in Moore County.

(Source by Cedar Grove Institute for Sustainable Communities)(pg. A19)

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