

Marshall Talks about Ferry Party

 by Gerrick Brenner

(07/27/06 -- RALEIGH) - Secretary of State Elaine Marshall is speaking with Eyewitness News about a scandalous party cruise.

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A large state ferry was taken out of service, causing traffic problems, so lawmakers and others could enjoy a private party cruise around Beaufort during this month's sailing festival. Food and booze was served on the boat during a tall ships parade.

Marshall, the highest-ranking state official on board, was photographed at the party.

"Taking a large ferry off on 4th of July weekend was a mistake," Marshall said.

She says she had no idea of the ferry's size and the traffic headaches caused with the boat out of service.

"I regret deeply that that ferry was taken off. I think that's the biggest aspect. We were told it was a space-available situation," Marshall said. "We were told it was one of the smaller boats.

"I, in good faith, relied on another state agency to do that kind of activity correctly. I went. I'm guilty of going. I did no planning."

Marshall says she and her husband have always been fans of the tall ships, and she saw the event as a chance not to indulge on the taxpayers' dime, but as a opportunity to help promote the state.

"My job is economic development. My job is to make North Carolina a better place to live and a better place to do business," she said.

Marshall says she has since sent to N.C. Ports Authority a check for \$200. She believes is the going rate for a harbor dinner cruise.



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