

County asks residents to conserve water

BY WALI PITT
CHRONICLE INTERN

Nearly all of North Carolina was placed on alert July 12 as Gov. Mike Easley called on the federal government to designate 54 counties, including Forsyth, disaster areas due to severe drought. Easley's designating the state a disaster area moves counties one step closer to getting federal emergency-credit loans for those critically affected by the drought. Federal livestock assistance program dollars may also be available to farmers in designated counties.

Easley is now encouraging mandatory water restrictions for the state.

"We cannot predict what kind of rainfall we will get this

summer and fall, so we (must) conserve now to ensure that we have adequate water supplies through October," the governor said recently.

The City/County Utilities Division has been watching the water consumption rates closely. Forsyth County receives about 80 percent of its water supply from the Yadkin River. Although that body of water is at a historic low, it is fulfilling the county's need for water. Forsyth County officials said.

With the central portion of North Carolina under an "exceptional drought," the City/County Utilities Commission is complying with Easley's request for conservation for the Yadkin.

Residents can significantly reduce their water usage by

taking simple efforts to conserve. Avoid watering your lawn from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., limit vehicle washing, repair any leaking faucets, stay in the shower five minutes or less, operate dishwashers and washing machines on full loads only, and do any other water-saving ideas you might think of along the way, according to county officials.

This prolonged drought has caused conditions to be so arid that there are excessive agricultural losses to such crops as corn, tobacco, soybeans, pasture, hay and produce. The conditions of drought are so varied throughout the state that counties are placed in categories of damage. The category of "excessive losses" is given to a county if one or



More and more counties are turning the sprinklers off as the drought drags on.

more of the aforementioned crops has suffered at least a 35 percent reduction in its normal yield.

Many counties in the Tar Heel state have reported losses as high as 75 to 80 percent on their crops. The preliminary

estimates from the N.C. Department of Agriculture report monetary losses that exceed \$170 million.

CAT-TV

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same way that CAT-TV does," said Vance Cabiness, co-organizer of the concert and vice president of the CAT-TV board of directors.

Racial and cultural acceptance may be one of the subthemes for the event, but making money is the primary objective.

CAT-TV, founded in 1994 after a group of community residents lobbied for such a station, no longer gets about \$140,000 a year from Time Warner Cable. As the cable company was renegotiating its contract with the city earlier this year, aldermen, over strong objections from CAT-TV users, opted not to push for the company to continue to fund CAT-TV directly.

Instead, aldermen will determine how much money should go to the station from Time Warner money set aside for not only CAT-TV but also TV-13 (the city station) and the school system station (cable channel 2).

Earlier this year, aldermen agreed to give CAT-TV \$12,500 a month for a six-month period that will end in September. Members of the Board of Aldermen also asked station officials to come up with ways that the station can be more self-sufficient.

Fund-raiser organizers hope a successful KAT Jam concert will show aldermen that the station is trying to stand on its own - not looking for a handout but a helping hand from the city.

"We are looking for ways to get some money coming in," said Paul Tomlinson, co-organizer of the concert and longtime station volunteer. "We want to have everything in place before we go back to the city in September to apply for new money to show them that we can do something with (CAT-TV)."

They hope that at least \$20,000 will be made through the selling of tickets for the concert, tickets that organizers say have been selling steadily at \$8 each.

"We may not get that, but anything is better than nothing," Cabiness said.

Fleming El-Amin, the new chairman of the CAT-TV board, said the concert is the first of many fund-raisers that the station will hold. He agrees with some aldermen that the station had become too dependent on the Time Warner money. The station is trying to walk on its own a little more, he added.

"These are our first baby steps toward that. We will also be doing

the reign of the former station manager. An audit is being conducted and should be complete next month.

El-Amin said he doesn't believe that funds have ever been misused at CAT-TV.

"I think it was more smoke than there was fire. I think it was more management style than (misappropriation) of funds," El-Amin said, referring to the allegations that have been leveled at Davis. "When people didn't have access to accounts and could not verify what was there...that sort of generated a lot of questions."

Although part of CAT-TV's mission is to bring people closer together, people associated with the station freely admit that they have not always seen eye to eye. For example, the name of the concert is KAT Jam instead of CAT Jam because initially the station's board of directors did not give the concert fund-raiser the thumbs up. The board has changed since then and Cabiness said the concert now has enthusiastic support of board members.

Cabiness said a movement is also under way to bring CAT-TV users and board members closer together. He credits Thomas Adkins, the station's interim station manager, with leading the way in that effort.

"He has a rapport with everyone. He is real concerned about making everybody happy," Cabiness said.

Despite the need for some tweaking here and there, El-Amin says the current state of the station is as good as it has ever been. He says it will be difficult for CAT-TV to function completely on its own, without any money from the city. The station, however, has no qualms with being active partners, with the city to ensure that public access television stays in Winston-Salem.

"We want to show the general public that we want to be here and we will do whatever we have to do to raise funds, become more diversified and to be a truly community access TV station," El-Amin said.

<p>The Talent</p> <p>Country & Bluegrass 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. Bobby & Mark Atkins Distant Thunder (Bill Brown) Night Train</p>
<p>Gospel 2 p.m. until 6 p.m. Downhome Quartet (Ken Welborn) Gospel Faith (Minister Joyner) Deliverance Future Promise James & Alveta Byers</p>
<p>Blues & Jazz 6 p.m. until 9 p.m. Davis Tucker Band Dixon Brothers</p>
<p>Rock & Metal 9 p.m. until midnight Storm Meat Rocket Sabre Tooth Running With Einstein (Patrick Murphy)</p>

The concert is Aug. 3. Tickets are \$8 in advance and \$10 at the door. For tickets, call 725-6676 or 208-0883

some grant writing as well. The concept is to be more self-sufficient. We can't rely on the funds anymore as we did before," El-Amin said.

Several other efforts are afoot at the station, efforts aimed at making CAT-TV run more effectively. El-Amin said soon a part-time executive director will be hired to coordinate ongoing fund-raising efforts and to act as a community public relations person. The new position will free up the station manager to just concentrate on production, El-Amin said.

He added that one of the reasons the last station manager, Todd Davis, may have left his job was because he was burned out. There were also allegations that station funds were misused under

A celebration for all



Lanterns of Hope Multicultural Festival will be held Saturday at Winston Lake Park, Shelter 2. The event is free and open to the public. Light refreshments will be served. Entertainment for this year's event will include Chinese and Mexican folk dancers. There will also be a number of arts and crafts activities for children. The event, which is sponsored by the Forsyth County Public Library, the Hispanic League of the Piedmont Triad and the city's Parks and Recreation Department, will be held from 6 to 8 p.m.

Bill

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for the bill during the congressional break.

Already the bill has found support among several criminal justice organizations such as the Center for Community Corrections, the National Association of Blacks in Criminal Justice and the International Community Corrections Association. The Congressional Black Caucus and many other members of Congress are also supporting the bill wholeheartedly.

"The level of support is picking up every day," Davis said.

Davis recently returned from New Orleans, where his



Davis

bill received the support of the National Association of Black County Officials. The NAACP also enthusiastically endorsed the bill during the civil rights group's recent national convention in Texas. Operation PUSH supports the bill as

well. The re-entry of ex-offenders into society is a hot topic these days. The U.S. Justice Department recently announced \$100 million in grants to help cities help ex-offenders readjust to life on the outside.

Although the bill has yet to have its day on the floor of Congress, Davis is already looking ahead. He believes the bill would help lower the recidivism rate for ex-offenders, thereby helping to decrease the number of people incarcerated.

"It would significantly reduce those numbers. I think it would more than cut in half (the number of ex-offenders re-incarcerated), Davis said.

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