

New buses start work on Monday

By JEFF BOWERS
Staff Writer

Chapel Hill Transit has received two of the 16 buses ordered from General Motors Corp., and Transportation Director Bob Godding said he hoped they would go into full service Monday.

"We'll spend the remainder of this week in driver training and mechanical orientation," Godding told the Transportation Board at its meeting Tuesday night.

Delivery of the 16 buses was delayed, but the transportation department requested two buses to be sent in advance on an "emergency basis," Godding said.

"We wanted to start driver training and introduce them to the public," he said.

The department had contracted Fleet Carriers of Pontiac, Mich., to deliver the buses, but Fleet delayed the delivery because of a backlog in its orders.

Godding said the delivery date for the remaining buses was still uncertain. "We won't have all 16 here until about the second week in November," he said.

The new buses have improved steering, brakes and driver visibility, making them easier to drive than the older buses in operation now, Godding said.

"They're much more comfortable for the driver," he said.

The buses are equipped with a "kneeling" mechanism, which allows the right side of the bus to be lowered so steps are closer to the curb.

Wheelchair lifts at the rear doors are also included.

Godding said the fiberglass body made the buses more durable since they could absorb minor bumps without being damaged.

"They're designed so that you can repair any body damage quickly and cheaply," he said.

The windows of the buses are "completely unbreakable" and the body paint can easily be cleaned of any graffiti, Godding said.

Since the new buses are heavier than normally allowed, the Town Council must issue a permit for the buses to go into service. The council will consider the permit request at its meeting Monday.

Caffeine in food

More study planned

By MARK ANCONA
Staff Writer

Recent government research linking caffeine with malformed offspring of rats does not warrant warning labels on foods containing the drug, a doctor at the UNC School of Medicine said recently.

While no concrete evidence has been found linking caffeine with problems in human offspring, further research will be conducted on the effects of the drug by Dr. Robert C. Cefalo, director of maternal fetal medicine at the UNC School of Medicine. "There is enough concern that studies should be conducted," Cefalo said. "We will be looking at it."

According to the Food and Drug Administration's studies, the rats tested were given caffeine in very large doses. The report stated that a

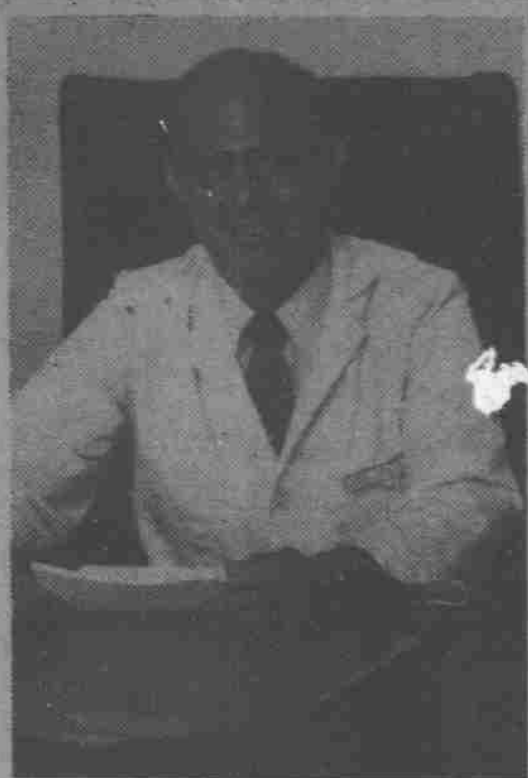
person would have to consume 12 to 24 cups of coffee daily to experience the same effects as the rats.

Cefalo said he opposed the use of warning labels because recent research was not conclusive with respect to humans.

Another factor supporting Cefalo's stand is the difference in which the two species' bodies use the caffeine. "The rats do not handle the caffeine as humans do," Cefalo said. Rats break down caffeine differently than humans.

Cefalo, who also acts as chairman of the committee of obstetrics practice for the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, said that anything taken in excess was dangerous and caffeine was no exception.

Cefalo's staff advises pregnant women to use caffeine sparingly. "Many women don't consider



Dr. Robert C. Cefalo

caffeine a drug," Cefalo said.

Cefalo and his staff advise pregnant women to use these products in moderation and warn that excessive use could be harmful to both mother and child.

Cobey stops speeches to work on raising funds

Republican candidate for lieutenant governor Bill Cobey has canceled most of his remaining speaking engagements and will spend the last two weeks before Election Day raising money, according to a Cobey campaign worker.

The money raised will help finance a series of television ads aimed at increasing name recognition, the worker said.

"Cobey is still working hard raising money, and he seems very optimistic about his chances," said Jean Nuzum, Orange County coordinator of the campaign.

Ads linking Cobey with Republican presidential candidate Ronald Reagan began airing in the Triangle area this week. The spots are similar to earlier ads for Republican Senate hopeful John East and are financed by the Congressional Club.

The Congressional Club, a conservative political action group, is handling finances for the Cobey campaign and also is coordinating the campaigns of East and Republican gubernatorial candidate I. Beverly Lake Jr.

Ward on taxes

Republican candidate for the state Senate Alice Ward has blasted three-term incumbent Sen. Charles Vickery, D-Orange, for statements he has made about taxes.

Ward said Vickery stated at a meet-the-candidates forum in Asheboro that tax funds raised by the N.C. intangibles tax were not returned to counties and municipalities.

"That remark demonstrates an appalling lack of knowledge of the financial structure of our state and local governments, especially for a man who has occupied a seat in the state Senate for three terms," Ward said.

Ward further criticized Vickery's proposal to repeal the tax. "What is

even more astonishing is the fact that Mr. Vickery, a lawyer, and a member of the state Senate for six years doesn't know or understand the tax and finance structure of our state."

Negative approach

Sen. Robert Morgan, D-N.C., charged this week that his Republican opponent has stressed what the senator opposes and nothing about what programs he supports. Morgan also predicted he would carry 93 of North Carolina's 100 counties in the Nov. 4 election.

Countdown to November



Morgan continued his counterattack on Republican senatorial candidate John East at the Democratic Party's 6th Congressional District rally at the farm of former Gov. Bob Scott at the Haw River.

"What they're trying to do is put together an image of Robert Morgan as soft on communism and soft on defense without saying one word about what they are for," Morgan said.

He was joined in his criticism of East's campaign tactics and reliance on television advertising by Gov. Jim Hunt. Hunt charged that there have been distortions of Morgan's record by the Republicans and he included his own reelection opponent, I. Beverly Lake Jr., in his criticism.

Morgan told supporters in Wilmington Monday that his polls show he leads East by 25 percentage points. "I know I'm not in trouble," Morgan said. "I can't see where my opponent has picked up (any votes)."

New ZIP code: 9-digit confusion?

By LEE DUNBAR
Staff Writer

Although Rep. Richardson Preyer, D-N.C., has called on the U.S. Postal Service to delay implementation of its nine-digit ZIP code, that has not stopped the Chapel Hill Post Office from beginning preparation.

Preyer said he wanted the Postal Service to study the proposal more extensively. "To date there appears to have been little, if any, consideration by the Postal Service of the social impact of the plan, no real consideration of the cost to mailers and no coordination with existing, pre-sort business mail programs," Preyer said in a letter to Postmaster General William F. Bolger.

But the officer-in-charge of the Chapel Hill Post Office, Bob Cassell, is not discontinuing preparations for the use of the new ZIP code in February. "There has been no effect locally," Cassell said. "I don't know the impact at the national level, but we have received no notification and are proceeding as we have been."

One of the major contentions of the leaders of the "zap the zip" movement is the confusion it may cause.

"A nine-digit ZIP will drive people crazy. It's preposterous and ridiculous," Ray Geiger, editor of the Farmers' Almanac, said at a House government operations subcommittee hearing.

Michael S. Coughlin, assistant postmaster general in the Postal Service's mail processing department, said the new ZIP code would allow the post offices to process the mail easier, more quickly and more accurately.

Another factor of the new ZIP code is the cost. Geiger said the firm that published the Farmers' Almanac, Geiger Bros., would have to pay up to \$30,000 to change ZIP codes. The four new numbers are intended to direct each piece of mail to the appropriate letter carrier by pinpointing the destination right to the street location. Cassell said the new ZIP could cut many costs. "The post office's major cost is employees' salaries. It is approximately 86 percent of our budget," he said.

Another problem the ZIP code might cause is discriminatory practices, said Lewis H. Goldfarb, assistant director of the Federal Trade Commission's

division of credit practices. He said banks and credit firms use the five-digit ZIP codes to determine the geographical area where applicants live. If people could be identified as residents of a single block or apartment house, then they might also be used "as a proxy for the race of applicants. That could be a violation of the Equal Opportunity Act," he said.

Cassell said that was not necessarily true. "In some areas business can be selective about who they mail to, but by the same token, on rural routes and across county lines they (businesses) are required to send mail to every box holder," he said.

So far now, the battle continues. But Cassell said he believed the nine-digit ZIP code would be accepted. "Eventually people will just become accustomed to it, just like a lot of things," he said.

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