

Officials seek updated radar system

By KATIE WOLFE
Staff Writer

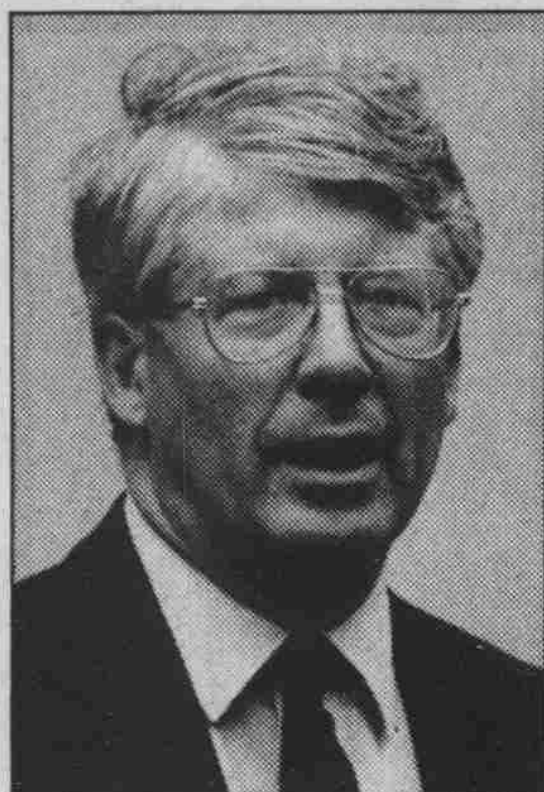
The failure of the weather radar system at Raleigh-Durham International Airport (RDU) to detect a Nov. 28 tornado that tore through Raleigh was unavoidable, but officials say the system needs to be updated to prevent future disasters.

Officials met at a field hearing March 3 to discuss the problem. U.S. Reps. David Price and Tim Valentine from North Carolina organized the hearing.

"We came to the conclusion that the fact that no warning was issued prior to the tornado was really no one's fault," said Edward Brota, UNC-Asheville professor of meteorology.

Price and Valentine, members of the Natural Resources, Agricultural Research and Environmental Subcommittee, will use the evidence gathered at the hearing for the reauthorization process of the National Weather Service.

The subcommittee will make a recommendation to the House



David Price

Appropriations Committee for a funding increase for the National Weather Service.

"Price and Valentine gathered a good deal of useful information for

the reauthorization process," said Rachel Perry, press assistant for Price. "They will put a priority on getting the Doppler radar."

The controversy surrounding the effectiveness of the present radar system has emphasized the need for the improved Doppler radar.

"There was no way for the present radar to pick up the tornado because the storm was in the system's blind spot and ground clutter such as buildings interfered with the radar's capability," said Joe Pelissier, deputy meteorologist of the RDU weather station. "However, the Doppler's capability would be significantly greater."

The Doppler or Next Generation radar, like the present system, detects precipitation to identify storms, but Doppler can measure wind speed and precipitate direction for greater effectiveness in storm detection.

The RDU airport weather service is scheduled to receive one of the \$2 million Doppler units in 1992 which is not soon enough for North Carolina, according to a press release from

Price. "We must move quickly to get the best technology on line," Price said in the release. "It's a matter of setting our priorities."

Representatives from local governments, colleges, the media, the U.S. House and the National Weather Bureau participated in the March 3 hearing.

"They asked for our information on the tornado's effects on our counties and our comments on the weather service's response," said Raymond Boutwell, manager of Franklin County. "Representative Price and Representative Valentine will be pushing for appropriation for an updated radar system."

The purpose of the meeting was to review the tornado's destruction, examine the National Weather Service's performance during the crisis, reveal new forecasting technologies and discuss the necessity of better communication between organizations in dangerous weather conditions.

N.C. schools to add religion to courses

By KIMBERLEY MAXWELL
Staff Writer

After two years of research, the N.C. Board of Education decided in January to integrate religious topics into subjects such as literature, economics and U.S. history. The decision follows current trends across the nation to add religion into school curriculum.

The N.C. decision follows moves by both the California Department of Education and the Arizona Board of Education to change their educational programs.

In 1987, the California Department of Education announced it would gradually add sections about major world religions and ethical traditions on statewide tests. The following year the Arizona Board of Education chose an outline of specific knowledge and skills elementary and secondary students should have — an outline which included topics such as ethics and cultural differences.

In November 1987, the N.C. Textbook Commission presented national reports which said the influence of religion on American culture is not represented accurately in textbooks. The N.C. Board of Education appointed a task force in May 1988 to look into the matter.

The national reports the Textbook Commission presented included a study from the People for the American Way, a group formed specifically to counter the religious right. Their 1986 study stated textbooks did not show how religion has influenced American culture.

The N.C. Board of Education's

decision to add religion topics to the educational curriculum will not take effect until 1992. New textbooks will be purchased, but the purchases will take a long time because of the sensitive nature of the issue, said Michael Radz, assistant superintendent for instruction in Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools.

A community's political orientation will affect the way the changes are accepted, said Warren Nord, the director of UNC's humanities and human values program. Liberals tend to be against religion in the schools and say religion entraps students into certain beliefs; conservatives tend to support religion in schools and say students may lose their commitment to their belief if exposed to different views.

But liberals who support teaching religion say it promotes religious pluralism through diversity.

The program's effect on communities will depend on how it is implemented, Nord said. "If it's done well, it'll have a positive effect."

The new trend of adding religion to educational curriculum is partially a result of conservative Christians who believe religion has been left out of public schools for over a half-century and has been replaced by secular humanism. This argument was dismissed by courts in Tennessee and Alabama in cases dealing with the content of textbooks.

Even though the U.S. Supreme Court has outlawed religious exercises in public schools, its rulings still allow religion to be discussed in a broader sense.

House bill proposes minimum wage hike

By GLENN O'NEAL
Staff Writer

Despite objections from the Bush administration and House Republicans, a bill has been proposed in the U.S. House to raise the minimum wage from \$3.35 to \$4.65 an hour.

The bill, introduced by Rep. Augustus Hawkins, D-Calif., and Rep. Austin Murphy, D-Penn., would also create a Minimum Wage Review Board that would make recommendations on future changes in the minimum wage.

"The bill is a modest attempt to restore some of the purchasing power of the minimum wage," said Jim Riley, staff director and chief counsel of the Labor Standards subcommittee.

Today \$3.35 is equal to \$2.41 in purchasing power after being adjusted for inflation. People are making a dollar less in respect to what they can buy, he said.

"The minimum wage has historically been set at half the average wage of the country. Right now it is 35.5 percent of the national average," he said.

The bill provides exceptions for small business owners who only gross \$5,000 a year, said Jay Butler, press secretary for the Education and Labor Committee.

The bill also provides for tip credit which allows hotel and restaurant owners to apply a portion of an employee's tips to the minimum wage, he said.

The increase of the minimum wage would occur over a three-year period with an initial increase of 50 cents followed by two years of 40-cent increases, Riley said.

The final increase to \$4.65 would still be 59 cents lower than is needed to reach the present level of inflation, he said.

The Bush administration recom-

mends an increase in the minimum wage of 27 percent over three years. The minimum wage would increase by 30 cents a year until the wage reached \$4.25, said Paul Williams, spokesman for Secretary of Labor Elizabeth Dole.

The administration also wants to establish a training rate of \$3.35 for the first six months of work for all new employees, he said.

Dole has recommended the president veto any increase over \$4.25, Williams said.

Riley said the training wage doesn't have any viability in the House. The sponsors of the bill are considering

an amendment that would allow a training wage for 30 days at 85 percent of the proposed minimum wage, he said.

Riley said the Bush administration has requested a training wage for six months so people can learn how to get up in the morning, dress appropriately and smile on the job.

"We don't feel people need six months to learn the proper personal hygiene for work," he said.

Ed McDonald, press secretary for Rep. Howard Coble, R-N.C., said Coble supports Bush's proposal to raise the minimum wage to \$4.25 and his training wage.

If the minimum wage is raised to \$4.65, it will force employers to eliminate some jobs, he said. Economic advisors have said 500,000 to 2 million jobs could be lost if the minimum wage is raised, he said.

The Congressional Budget Office has estimated 200,000 jobs will be lost if the minimum wage increase goes into effect, Riley said. But 5 million workers with increased purchasing power will be able to spend more money, and this will benefit society, he said.

The bill will be debated on the House floor either Wednesday or Thursday, Riley said.

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is probably a desire to make a statement about the aspirations of the school by recruiting a nationally prominent person. There's also the desire to establish that the school will go outside (to find a dean), since at least the previous four searches resulted in internal deans."

Turnier also said the lack of an obvious candidate in the law school led the committee to consider outside candidates. "There's no real consensus in terms of one person who should be dean."

Hazen agreed. "I think there was no natural fully-declared candidate," he said.

But Link said there were probably strong candidates in the school.

One of the candidates is a woman, Turnier said. If chosen, she would be the first woman to serve as dean of the UNC School of Law. Nationally, most law school deans are men, Link said.

But both Link and Turnier said they expect the number of women serving as deans of law schools to increase. "There are a number of very good women coming onto the scene," Link said. "It's a question of getting experience and maturity. You look for somebody who's an established scholar with at least some administrative experience—that takes time."

The age and education required of law school deans means universities are choosing from a candidate pool with few women, said Turnier. "There were not a lot of women in law schools in the past. You're looking for someone in a certain age group, say, 40-plus. You're also looking for someone with a certain education."

The committee may not submit its recommendations to Hardin immediately after the interviews are finished, but may ask for more information on candidates, Turnier said.

But Hardin may not choose the new dean immediately, Turnier said. "He could take a month or two in dealing with him."

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