

THE NEWS RECORD

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Black Hawks.
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Computer Age Comes To Madison / In School System

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Editor

Visitors to the office of the Madison County Board of Education might think it's just an oversized IBM typewriter setting there along with the secretaries' other typing machines, but there's a lot more to it than just the familiar typewriter keyboard. It's a computer terminal, and the board of education acquired it recently to save worktime for the county's largest employer — the school system.

School superintendent Robert L. Edwards explained in a recent interview that this particular computer terminal would be used to handle the school system's payroll.

"Right now, I have two girls that work six days (a total of 12 work days) in getting the payroll out. When this thing is hooked up, the job can be done in 15 minutes, I'm told," Edwards said.

Once the computer has been programmed with information such as each employee's social security number, his pay scale and all related deductions including social security, state and

federal withholdings and retirement payments, the operator of the terminal needs only to key in their employee's name and social security number and print out the check for the proper amount on or just before payday.

Edwards said when dealing with numerous line items related to the payroll it's easy to lose concentration and make an error when the operation is done by hand. The computer is capable of handling such tasks with practically no errors if the information is correctly programmed into it.

With the volume of bookkeeping involved in the system's payroll, Edwards said he has "seen them (the office staff) work three days looking for two pennies, and if you're off even two cents on social security, it takes you three months to even get it cleared up."

Madison's entry into the computer age came about when the Western Regional Education Center, located in Canton, conducted a survey in the 19 administrative units served by Region 8 as to some of the urgent needs in the district. As a result of the survey, Edwards, who serves as president of the district, submitted a request to

the federal government for a grant to purchase the computer. According to Edwards, the central computer in Canton was purchased by the regional center with a cost of only \$1,500 per year to the district for the "hardware."

Each of the administrative units is to receive two terminals "to be placed wherever the educational need is," Edwards said. One of Madison's two terminals is at Madison High School where it is being used to teach mathematics by Mr. Rex Sprinkle.

With the central computer located in Canton, the two local terminals which allow access to the computers memory banks and data are connected to it by telephone lines. The terminal operator "communicates" with the computer through the typewriter-like keyboard much the same as someone would place a telephone call to Canton.

Edwards said the terminal located in his office would save the school system time, money and headaches in getting the payroll out. This electronic addition to the school system is part of what Edwards calls "making great strides" in the county's educational system.



Photo by N. Hancock

SCHOOL BOARD SECRETARY Sandra Fowler stands behind the recently acquired computer terminal which will aid the office in getting the school system's payroll out.

Truck Wrecks, Papers Delayed

Spreading the news is one of the main functions of a newspaper company, but the manner in which last week's edition of the News-Record was spread over Madison County was not exactly what the company had in mind.

The delivery truck hauling some 3,500 papers to Marshall from the printing plant in Waynesville overturned just South of Mars Hill on U.S. 19-23 scattering the freshly printed edition along the roadside in a heavy rain which destroyed 950 copies and subsequently delayed mail delivery to subscribers on five Marshall routes.

The accident occurred at 7:15 p.m. last Tuesday when the vehicle hit a large puddle of water on the highway 1.4 miles south of Mars Hill near the old Beech Glen Road. The wheels of the truck hydroplaned on the water causing the driver, seventeen-year-old Steve Hipps of Waynesville, to lose control of the north-bound truck. The vehicle crossed the median of the four-lane highway and the two southbound lanes, struck an embankment, overturned and came to a rest on its right side.

According to trooper Robinson of the

State Highway Patrol, neither Hipps nor a passenger, Tracy Cobb, were seriously injured in the accident. Cobb received minor cuts on his head.

Patrolman Robinson said no charges were filed regarding the wreck, but damages to the 1979 Ford pickup were estimated at \$1,800. The windshield of the vehicles was broken and the camper cover over the bed of the truck was thrown from the vehicle and practically destroyed.

All of the News-Record's Dec. 11 edition were thrown from the truck when it overturned. Approximately 2,000 news papers were protected by mail sacks, but the remaining 1,500 copies were soaked by the heavy rainfall. About 950 papers, those scheduled to be delivered to five different Marshall mail routes, were damaged to the point of being unusable.

Postal authorities in Marshall and Hot Springs allowed most of the air-soaked copies to remain in their offices Wednesday so they would be dry enough to mail out late Wednesday afternoon. The News-Record reordered the printing of the 950 copies to replace



Photo by Scott Lunstorf

NEWS-RECORD DELIVERY TRUCK rests on its side after accident last week which damaged nearly 1,000 newspapers (foreground) causing a delay in

those ruined in the wreck, and those papers were mailed to subscribers late Thursday afternoon. Most subscribers received their papers in Friday's mail.

New-Record personnel were kept busy Wednesday and Thursday answering telephone inquiries from subscribers who had not received their

delivery to Marshall mail-route subscribers. The overturned vehicle sustained extensive damage, however, the occupants of the truck escaped without injuries.

papers in Wednesday's mail.

The News-Record is printed each Tuesday at the Mountaineer Press in Waynesville. The papers are delivered to Marshall on Tuesday night where the bundles are sorted for distribution to mail subscribers and newspaper racks in the county.

Bridge To Be Replaced With New Structure

The surveying crew is already at work, and in a few weeks much of the material and equipment needed to construct a new Southern Railway bridge spanning the French Broad River will be brought to the construction site two and one-half miles south of Marshall at River-view.

The new 695 foot bridge will replace the old existing structure which was built in 1909. The new bridge will be a modern, low profile steel structure located a few yards downstream from the existing bridge and once completed, the old bridge will be removed from the waterway.

Larry Boatwright, engineer for Turner Engineering of Nashville, Tenn., said recently that the project would take about one year to complete and that Turner Engineering would be the consulting engineers throughout the project.

Boatwright said a new bridge has been headed at the location for a long time. The old bridge, while having new crossies installed periodically, had begun to shift on the piers supporting it, causing a



Southern Railway Bridge Built In 1909 At Ivey River

Photo by N. Hancock

hazard to the heavy train traffic which uses it daily.

"A crew had to come in here and jack the bridge back into place on the piers a few years ago," Boatwright said. "New

the bridge is shifting again." The engineer explained that the two curves in the railroad track at either ends of the bridge caused the force of the trains to literally pull the

bridge from the piers. The new bridge will be somewhat longer and at a different angle to the river in order to reduce the arc of the curves at the ends of the bridge.

The prospect of building a massive structure of steel and concrete over a flowing river produces numerous problems, but Turner Engineering has figured out several innovative

methods to carry out the task.

Boatwright said connerdams would be built to divert the flow of the river so that construction crews can build the six piers in the river bed. It will take 11,600 cubic yards of gravel faces with sandbags to create the cofferdams for the first stage of the construction. Once the six piers and the north abutment of the bridge is completed, building materials would be moved across the river to begin the second stage of construction. Stage II calls for dumping 6,800 cubic yards of gravel into the south side of the river in order to create the cofferdam which will allow the building of two more piers and the south abutment of the new bridge.

The piers will be anchored by 36-inch-diameter caissons set in bedrock at the bottom of the river. Once the piers are erected, the steel bridge and the new section of track will be put into place.

Boatwright said if all goes well the new bridge should be completed in the late fall of 1981.

Grave Robbery Trial Delayed

Trial of grave robbery cases arising from forced entry last June 13 into a private mausoleum in Hot Springs was continued Dec. 8 in Madison County Superior Court.

New indictments were drawn and presented to the grand jury that added a fourth defendant, Kevin Sams, 20, of Greeneville, Tenn.

Sams and two other defendants, Luther Aikens, 28, of Hot Springs and Lewis Bollo, 21, of Jacksonville, Fla., are each charged with conspiracy and six counts of felonious grave robbery.

Stanley Lewis, 58, of Hot Springs, originally indicted for grave robbery, was charged with conspiracy and with being an accessory before and after the fact in each of the six grave openings.

Lewis and Aikens have been in the jail here since Oct. 20 in lieu of posting \$50,000 bond each. Bollo was said by Sheriff E.Y. Ponder to be in jail in Jacksonville and willing to waive extradition to North Carolina.

Officers reported that valuables such as rings, necklaces and other items estimated to be worth about \$30,000 along with skulls and teeth had been removed from the above-ground burial place.

Names Submitted For Magistrates

The names of eight persons were submitted to Superior Court Judge Ronald W. Howell to be considered for four magistrate positions in Madison County last week.

In accordance with North Carolina General Statute 7A-171, the clerk of Superior Court, James Cody, submitted the following names of individuals for Judge Howell's consideration:

Elymas Yates Ward, Ruth Kent Deal, William Roberts, Elymas Payne and Sidney Peck, all of Marshall; and Martin Fox, Owen Ball and Harold B. Ammons, all of Mars Hill.

The four positions will be appointed on Jan. 1, and each of the appointed magistrates will serve for a term of two years.