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## State Trooper, License Examiner To Be Assigned To Hot Springs

Hot Springs residents can expect to see more of the Highway Patrol in the near future. Those drivers needing to renew their license won't have to make a trip to Marshall or Clyde anymore, either.

Both developments were announced last week at a Madison County Courthouse conference by Wayne McDevitt of the governor's western office. McDevitt and Highway Patrol officials made the announcements at a gathering of Hot Springs residents.

In announcing the changes, McDevitt said that a change in Highway Patrol administration in the county will allow for an additional trooper to be stationed in the Hot Springs area.

Highway Patrol Capt. Charles Long said that he is actively recruiting a trooper to relocate in the Hot Springs area. Long said that he thought a trooper could be found for the new position. If no one volunteers for the assignment, a trooper will then be assigned to duty in the Hot Springs area. Long said the new assignment would "greatly improve our response time in the Hot Springs and Spring Creek area."

The new trooper assigned to the Hot Springs area will not affect Highway Patrol operations in the rest of the county. The new assignment was created by shifting one trooper assigned to the county to perform breathalyzer examinations and equipment

maintenance to the troop headquarters. Two troopers will continue to be stationed to Mars Hill and Marshall patrols.

The arrival of the driver's license examiner will be a first for Hot Springs. McDevitt pointed out that Hot Springs at one time had a trooper assigned to the town. McDevitt introduced examiner Kathy Ramsey, the examiner assigned to Madison County.

He said that the office for driver's tests will be donated by the Hot Springs Lions Club. The club will also be furnishing desks, lights and heat at the testing site. Beginning on Feb. 20, Ramsey will test Hot Springs residents applying for licenses on the first and third Monday of each month. The Marshall test office will be closed on these days. Testing will continue to be conducted in Marshall on Thursdays and Fridays and on the second and fourth Mondays of each month. Testing in Mars Hill will continue unchanged, with the tests being offered each Tuesday and Wednesday.

In announcing the agreement, McDevitt credited the Hot Springs Lions' Club and town officials for their cooperation. "This is a perfect example of the partnership between state and local government and a private organization." Hot Springs mayor Debbie Ponder also thanked the Lions for their assistance in obtaining the examiner.



FORMER HOT SPRINGS POLICE CHIEF Leroy Johnson, right, will have more time to sit on the front porch swing with Mrs. Johnson now that he has retired.

## Leroy Johnson Retires 30-Year Career As Hot Springs Police Chief

By ROBERT KOENIG

A part of Hot Springs history came to a quiet end last week when police chief Leroy Johnson officially retired. Johnson had served as the town's sole policeman for the past 30 years.

Johnson announced his retirement plans at the January meeting of the town's Board of Aldermen. His last day on the job was Jan. 20 ending a career that began on Aug. 17, 1953.

Johnson succeeded Jasper Treadway as the town police chief and wasted no time in making his presence felt. A week after taking on the job of enforcing the law in Hot Springs, Johnson crowded the

town's jail with 41 people for drinking in public. "I went downtown my first Saturday night on the job, and warned them that there'd be no carrying on in public. The next Saturday night, I went back and they were still carrying on. I arrested 37 men and seven women that night. They were stacked in the jail like cordwood."

Fortunately for the new police chief, matters quieted down after the mass arrest. As a one-man police force, Johnson was expected to be on call 24 hours a day. In addition to providing police services, Johnson also served as the town's maintenance man. A native of Madison County,

Johnson was born in Hot Springs in 1910. He went to work at the age of nine for J.D. Hensley, stocking groceries. Johnson said he worked for Hensley until he turned 18. In 1929, he married the former Frankie Sands of Shelton Laurel and found work with the state highway department, maintaining the road through Hot Springs.

In 1936, Johnson visited West Virginia for what he thought would be a couple of weeks. The couple of weeks became almost 18 years. Johnson went to work as a coal miner and remained in the mines until 1953, when black lung disease forced him to look for another line of work.

It was then that the job in Hot Springs came open and the native son returned home. Johnson took the police chief's job, which then paid \$150 a month. "I had to supply my own uniform and gas for the car," Johnson remembers.

During his many years as Hot Springs' police chief, Johnson was never called upon to deliver a baby. He did, however, have to rush a premature baby to Asheville. Richard Johnson, no relation to the retired police chief, was born weighing only one and half pounds, Johnson recalls that he sped the tiny infant to Memorial Mission Hospital in

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## Marshall Begins Crackdown Speeders To Be Cited

In response to residents' complaints, Marshall police last week began a crack-down on speeders on Main Street. Marshall mayor Betty Wild announced that the town's police officers stopped more than 30 speeding drivers last week and issued warnings.

The officers stopped delivering warnings and began writing citations on Monday. Wild said that the police will be enforcing a 20 mile per hour speed limit on Main Street and will also cite drivers failing to

stop at the traffic light in front of the Madison County Court House. Wild said the law will "be enforced for everyone."

Wild warned drivers that the light in front of the courthouse is now in operation 24 hours a day. The light formerly was switched to a flashing light during evening hours.

Speed limit signs designating the 20 mile per hour speed limit have been ordered from the state Department of Transportation.

## Explosion Kills Hot Springs Teenager

A 16-year-old Hot Springs resident was killed last Tuesday when gasoline he was using to clean a toy train ignited and exploded. Timothy West of Hot Springs died as a result of inhaling flames from the explosion according to Madison County Sheriff E.Y. Ponder.

According to the police report, West was cleaning a toy train some 18 inches from

a portable kerosene heater. Ponder believes that the heater ignited the gasoline. The gasoline spilled, covering a four-foot square section of the floor.

The victim was found by his mother when she returned from work Tuesday afternoon. Ponder said the teenager was dead when officers arrived at the scene.

## DWI Cases Are Heard

Judge Phillip Ginn sentenced a number of defendants charged with driving under the influence during last Thursday's session of District Court in the Madison County Court House. One defendant was convicted under the old DUI law, while four other defendants were sentenced under the terms of the tougher state law enacted on Oct. 1.

Judge Ginn found Love Gunter guilty of driving under the influence and issued a prayer for judgement until Feb. 10. Gunter was convicted under the old DUI law.

In cases involving the new law, the court accepted guilty pleas from Larry Dwayne Rice, Mark Bradford Pace, Jerry Lamar Worley and Richard Hugh Ball.

Mars Hill police officer Rick Haynes testified against both Pace and Rice in unrelated cases. Haynes testified that both men registered .10 readings on breathalyzer examinations. The court decided on level 5 punishment in both cases. Both Pace and Rice were ordered to pay a \$100 fine

and court costs, perform 24 hours of community service and attend Alcohol Drug Education School (ADES). In addition, both men received 90-day suspended jail sentences and were ordered to surrender their drivers licenses. The court will allow both defendants to apply for restricted driving privileges.

The court ordered a level 3 punishment for Ball after finding that his dangerous driving constituted an aggravating factor. Ball received a six-month suspended sentence and was ordered to serve two years supervised probation. Ball was also ordered to pay court costs, perform 72 hours of community service. Ball was given until Feb. 10 to pay the fines and will be eligible for limited driving privileges.

Jerry Lamar Worley received a seven day jail sentence after the court decreed level 2 punishment after finding that he registered a .20 in the breathalyzer test. Worley received a one-year sentence, with all but seven days suspended. He was also ordered to serve two years supervised probation, attend ADES, pay a \$250 fine and court costs and consult with the Blue Ridge Mental Health Center. Judge Ginn ordered Worley to comply with any treatment recommended by the mental health program.

Roger Whitson of Hot Springs entered a guilty plea to a charge of driving with a revoked license. The court sentenced Whitson to two years in jail, suspended on the condition that Whitson serve two years supervised probation. The court also fined Whitson \$200 and ordered him to attend the Multiple Offenders Program at the Blue Ridge Mental Health Center and to follow any treatment the program may recommend.

The court appointed Marshall attorney Stephen Huff to defend John Betts, charged with larceny of an automobile. Donald Lee Frady entered a guilty plea to a charge of driving while consuming a malt beverage. Frady received a two-month suspended sentence and was fined \$110.

Ricky Burch Chandler pleaded guilty to a charge of driving with a revoked license. The court sentenced Chandler to two years supervised probation and a \$100 fine. Chandler was also ordered to pay court costs, perform 24 hours of community service and attend Alcohol Drug Education School (ADES). In addition, both men received 90-day suspended jail sentences and were ordered to surrender their drivers licenses. The court will allow both defendants to apply for restricted driving privileges.

## WNC Tomorrow Honors State Legislators

The Leadership of Western North Carolina Tomorrow honored legislators for their work to secure a ridge law and hear Speaker of the House Liston B. Ramsey plead for more community development block grant proposals from western communities.

Legislators representing the 24 western counties who supported the ridge law received plaques naming them "keeper of the ridge tops" and expressing the appreciation of the 17-county citizens leadership council.

In addition to Speaker Ramsey, Reps. Marie Colton, Gordon Greenwood, Charles M. Beall, and Martin Nesbitt, and Sens. Dennis Weaver, Robert Swain, and Charles Higgs attended the meeting at Mars Hill College on Jan. 30 to receive the awards.

Plaques were also awarded to former Secretary of the N.C. Department of Natural Resources and Community Development Joseph Grimsley, Lt. Gov. Jimmy Green, Dr. Milton Heath of the Institute of Government, and Ed Israel, district manager of the Asheville Office of the Department of Natural Resources and Community Development.

In his address, Ramsey told the group that the western part of the state is receiving a lower percentage of community development block funds

because our cities and towns are not making application for these funds. According to Ramsey, in 1982, \$45.6 million was distributed statewide, of which only \$3.3 million went to the area represented by WNC Tomorrow. Of 256 applications filed statewide, only 23 were from this area. Only 10 of the 17 counties here filed an application. In fiscal year 1983, 230 applications were filed statewide, with only 19 from the 17 western most counties.

Ramsey suggested that WNC Tomorrow and the lead regional organizations could be of more assistance to "dozens upon dozens of small towns that are eligible to participate."

According to Penn Dameron, chairman of the WNC committee on natural resources, erosion and sedimentation resulting from poor development practices are the top environmental problems for western North Carolina. The committee and the WNC subcommittee on environmental protection, chaired by David Huskins, heard discussions from Joe Phillips and Charles Gardner of the N.C. Sedimentation Control Commission, and Bill Baker of the Land of Sky Regional Council. Increases in soil erosion and will threaten to lower the quality of our drinking water and destroy trout

and other aquatic life in streams and rivers. A task force will be formed with representatives from Development, the regional councils of government, county planning boards and local government, Trout Unlimited, the League of Women Voters, TVA, the health service, and many others.

The task force will study the N.C. Sedimentation Pollution Control Act of 1973 to see if it needs to be strengthened and will examine design and construction practices for large subdivision development. Recommendations for action will be prepared in time for the next WNC meeting in April.

Pollution Prevention Pays is the name of a second project undertaken by the natural resources committee. Awards will be made to industries, businesses, and municipalities that have taken action to prevent or reduce pollution in the region. Nominations must be received by May 1, 1984. Criteria for the awards include environmental benefits, economic benefits, technological achievement, innovation, and leadership. Any business, industry, or municipality within the 17 westernmost counties that has taken steps to protect the quality of the air, water, or soil, along with improving efficiency and reducing energy

consumption is eligible for consideration. More information is available from Margie Allison, WNC, Box 222, Cullowhee, NC 28723 or call 704-227-7492.

A Cultural Arts Hall of Fame for western North Carolina was proposed by Ed Spears of Asheville to the WNC subcommittee on Cultural resources, chaired by Dr. Newton Smith, N.C. representative Marie Colton told the subcommittee of the work of the legislative committee on cultural resources. The education committee, chaired by Joe Nanney, president of Haywood Technical College, endorsed the concept of a math and science school for gifted high school students to be located in the western region and called for higher salaries for all public school teachers.

WNC also announced the 1984 Pride in the Region Essay Contest. High school students in the eleventh grade are eligible to enter and win a scholarship to one of the 17 colleges and universities in the 17 westernmost counties. For more information, contact your high school essay coordinator or Clyde Ray at 704-227-7492.

Members of Western North Carolina Tomorrow from Madison County are Dr. Fred Bentley, Jennie Hoffman, and Graver Angel.

## Route Numbers To Be Replaced

Route and box numbers are being eliminated and replaced by house numbers and road names. A list of road names supplied by the Department of Transportation is currently being used to name roads. Residents are being asked to check the name of their road if they have not received a change.

If residents wish to have the road name changed, a name will have to be submitted to the county commissioner for an official change. If the road does not have a name, a name can be submitted through the same process for official naming. Before new names are submitted, residents need to check with their local post office to assure that road names are not duplicated.

If you do not know the name of your road, contact the mail carrier serving your residence.

## Chandler Withdraws

The Democratic field for the Madison County register of deeds office attracted a temporary candidate last week. William Chandler of Walnut entered the race for the job last Friday when he paid the \$185 filing fee with the Madison County Board of Elections.

On Monday, Chandler reconsidered and withdrew his name from consideration. The Board of Elections announced by filing fee in 1983, Chandler was an unsuccessful candidate for the county board of commissioners.

Chandler's aborted campaign leaves incumbent Jena Lee Buckner unopposed in the Democratic primary. As of Monday, no Republican candidates have filed for the primary election.

In the other county races, incumbent county tax collector remains unopposed for the Democratic nomination. Republican Dewey Grigg, Jr. filed for the Republican nomination last week.

The filing period for all other races ends Monday, Feb. 6 at noon. Several candidates' names are expected to file.