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FBEMC Rate Increase Is Postponed

Several hundred people attended the annual meeting of the French Broad Electric Membership Corporation (FBEMC) at Madison H.S. on Saturday. The annual meeting also featured an Energy Fair where various energy-saving products were exhibited.

FBEMC General Manager Charles Tolley delivered a report to the membership. Tolley told the members that FBEMC and Carolina Power and Light Co. (CP&L) have reached agreement on a compromise on a proposed two-part rate increase that fixes the wholesale rate FBEMC pays CP&L at the level of the increase put into effect in Oct., 1963.

Tolley received a round of applause when he told the members that the agreement means that a planned May 1 rate increase will be cancelled.

Tolley said that cooperatives are good policy for rural counties. "A cooperative is an organization that is formed by people who want to do things together they cannot do as individuals. I visited an area last week in this county that did not have any electric service in 1940. Ninety-six percent of our people did not have electric power. We now have almost 3,000 miles of distribution line, 30 miles of transmission line, 12 substations and meters are in place, and power companies would like to take over the facilities." (Continued on Page 14)



ZENO PONDER

Hot Springs Seek Grant

Hot Springs officials have given approval to a request for community development grant funds administered through the Community Development Block Grant program.

Hot Springs has submitted applications for funding for two projects.

The first, a request for \$39,230, would fund the remodeling of the old drug store into a new community center. The second project would resurface portions of the town's streets and asks for a grant in the amount of \$137,470.

Streets that would be repaved include Serpentine Ave., North Spring St., River Dr., Avenues A and B, Mountain Hgts., Jackson, Lawson and Short Sts. and Meadow Lane.

The grant program is administered by the N.C. Dept. of Natural Resources and Community Development.

The town will not learn if the projects are to receive funding until sometime in June.

Ponder Tells Convention

County Democrats Should Vote Together

By ROBERT KOENIG

Madison County Democrats need to unite behind one candidate in the May 8 primary. That was the message Zeno Ponder delivered Saturday to a gathering of some 200 Democrats at the county convention held in Marshall. As he has for the past few months, the Democratic Party county chairman suggested that D.M. "Lauch" Faircloth was the candidate they should unite behind.

Ponder was the keynote speaker at the county convention. He told the meeting, "For a hundred years, Madison County had a reputation as a rock-ribbed Republican county. We also earned the reputation of 'Bloody Madison' because we had more killings than anywhere in the state. We also had another reputation. Madison County became known as the bootleggingest county in North Carolina. Bootlegging in Madison County was a way of life. That's what the good Republicans did for Madison County in the hundred years they were in control."

Ponder recounted the 1950 election victories of Woody Ammons and Dr. W.A. Sams and told the convention the 1954 election brought him "more criticism than I've

ever had in my life."

"We've come a long way," Ponder said. "We can brag about having the Speaker of the North Carolina House, Liston Ramsey. We have only one-third of one percent of the population of North Carolina, but we have the second most powerful man in state government."

Ponder told the delegates to the convention, "There's been a lot of improvements here in the last few years. We're no longer known as 'Bloody Madison' and Madison County is no longer a bootlegging county. What we've accomplished didn't happen by accident. It required good planning and good politics."

The county chairman then made his case for Faircloth. Ponder predicted that both Buncombe and Haywood Counties would be split, with Faircloth and Knox receiving the most votes. He said that if Madison County could deliver 70 percent of an expected 3,500 votes for Faircloth that Madison County could provide the difference in the 11th District.

Ponder urged a unified county vote because, "If we neutralize ourselves, we have simply wasted our franchise at the ballot box."

Following Ponder's address, Hot Springs mayor

Debbie Baker called the roll of delegates and opened the convention for nominations for positions on election committees. Swan Huff and Woodrow Boone were elected to serve on the Judicial District Committee.

County commissioners Ervin Adams and Virginia Anderson nominated each other to posts on the State Senatorial District Committee and were elected.

Swan Huff and Doug Robinson were also elected to positions on the State House District executive committee.

The convention then selected 12 delegates to the 11th District convention in Waynesville on June 2. The convention elected Terry Gunter, Johnny Payne, Colin Bishop, Mr. and Mrs. Harold Wallin, Doug Robinson, J.L. Rice, Zeno Ponder, Marion Ball, Mr. and Mrs. Bill Boone and Marie Ponder.

Robert Edwards and Liston Ramsey were also nominated, but declined to be elected.

The convention concluded with the election of delegates to the state convention in Raleigh on June 16. Roger Haynie, Mr. and Mrs. Seth Metcalf, Betty Payne, Ruby Wallin, Johnny Payne, James Rice, Mr. and Mrs. Harold Wallin, Mr. and Mrs. Zeno

Ponder and Bill Boone were elected as delegates to the state convention.

At the conclusion of the convention, Ponder distributed sample ballots to the delegates with his own choices checked off. In addition to Faircloth, Ponder said he endorses Gov. Jim Hunt for the U.S. Senate seat; Thad Eure for Secretary of State; James E. Long for Commissioner of Insurance; Dick Barnes for Commissioner of Labor; Henry Frye for Associate Justice of the Supreme Court and John C. Martin for Judge of the Court of Appeals.

When asked why he had not chosen a candidate in the race for lieutenant governor, Ponder said, "I wouldn't want to touch that one."

The News Record conducted an informal straw poll at the conclusion of the convention. In the race for governor, those voting in the straw poll favored Faircloth. Of the 15 votes cast, Faircloth received nine, Lieutenant Gov. Jimmy Greer received three votes, Attorney General Rufus Edmisten received one vote, as did Gary Hart and "undecided." In the lieutenant governor's race, the delegates were split between the two major candidates. The straw poll gave both State Sen. Bob Jordan and former Speaker of the N.C. House Carl Stewart seven votes each.

News Record Suit Is Continued

The lawsuit brought by The News Record against the Town of Marshall, the Marshall Board of Aldermen and Mayor Betty Wild was continued Monday afternoon when defense attorney Forrest Ball asked the court to drop the complaint.

Ball based his request for a dismissal on the grounds that the complaint was improperly filed. Ball told the court that "The Madison County Publishing Co." named as a complainant in the suit, does not legally exist. He called Madison County Register of Deeds Jena Lee Buckner to the stand.

(Continued on Page 10)

Rabid Skunk Found In Laurel

The Madison County Health Department has reported that a rabid skunk was found last week in the Laurel community. Health director Ed Morton reported that the rabid animal was first reported on Wednesday night of last week.

A skunk suspected to be carrying rabies had attacked a cow and been killed by a dog. Carlie Gunter brought the

dead skunk to the Madison County Sheriff's Dept. on Thursday morning. Morton said he took the animal to Asheville to a laboratory and then sent it on to Raleigh for testing.

On Friday afternoon, the laboratory notified Morton that the animal was rabid.

Morton said that both the

dog and the cow have been isolated and are being inspected daily for symptoms of the disease. He said that county residents should be on the alert for excited animals of any kind. He recommends shooting any wild animals that appear to be carrying rabies, but cautioned not to shoot the animal in the head if possible.

The Madison County Health

Department and Dr. Bud Allen conducted rabies clinics on Saturday and Sunday at White Rock. Morton reported that Dr. Allen vaccinated approximately 100 animals during the two-day clinic.

The county Board of Health has planned a meeting for Wednesday at which time additional rabies clinics will be scheduled.

Longshot Gubernatorial Candidates Offer Wide Range Of Positions

By ELIZABETH LELAND
The News and Observer

Andy Barker campaigns as "the man with the plan." Bob Hannon's slogan is "Don't get rob-vote for Dr. Bob." For J.D. Whaley, it's "God and country and abolition of the Internal Revenue Service."

Barker, Hannon and Whaley are running for governor, entered as candidates in the May 8 Democratic primary. A fourth candidate is Ku Klux Klan leader Glenn Miller, who says the first thing he will do if elected governor is host a cross-lighting ceremony on the grounds of the Governor's Mansion.

Each man says he's just as serious about his politics as are the six major Democratic candidates. So is Ruby Hooper, a 59-year old dietician from Morganton, who's running for governor on the Republican ticket against U.S. Rep. James G. Martin.

On her days off, Mrs. Hooper crisscrosses the state in her "flying machine" - a 1960 white Pinto - proclaiming that "it's time for a change" and urging the many Democrats she meets to tell their Republican friends to vote for Ruby.

Democratic candidates won over the major contenders for governor - Republican Martin and Democrats Rufus L. Edmisten, D.M. "Lauch" Faircloth, Thomas O. Gilmore, James C. Green, John R. Ingram or H. Edward Knox.

History offers little hope for the fringe candidates. Bruce "Bozo" Burleson, a former professional wrestler from Asheville is a case in point. Burleson was a perennial candidate in the '60s and early '70s. But in the 1960 Democratic primary for governor, Burleson got just 2,445 votes out of a total of 830,000-plus votes cast. In 1972, he switched to the American Party, but it didn't help. Of the more than 972,000 votes cast in the gubernatorial primary, Burleson got a grand total of 251.

As in past elections, this year's minor candidates are not widely known across the state, have raised little money and depend more on personal energy than on campaign staffs and slick advertising.

So why do they run? For some, it has been a life-long dream. For others it's "practical religion," or "white rights" or a feud with the Internal Revenue Service or just because "it's a good time to run."

And they are indignant about being lumped together as minor candidates.

Hannon said he wanted voters to know of his objections.

"Tell your readers that Bob Hannon doesn't want to be here," said the 68-year old retired college professor from Greensboro. "He doesn't want to be written up with Ruby Hooper and that Klansman. He thinks he ought to be with the major candidates."

Andy Barker doesn't mind being identified as a minor candidate - at least he says he doesn't.

"I know me better than most people know me and consequently it doesn't hurt my feelings when you put me with the lesser candidates," Barker said over salad at the Shoney's Restaurant in Greenville, where he had gone for an interview on a local television show.

"I'm not a career politician. There are only two things I want in Raleigh - that's the Governor's Mansion and the governor's job."

Barker, 59, has wanted the job since he was a youngster growing up in rural Lincoln County.

"I don't know why," he said. "All my life I said there were two things I was going to do - build a western town and be governor of North Carolina."

He's batting 500. In the 1950s, Barker developed the mock western town of Love Valley (Population 78) in the foothills near Statesville, and has served as mayor for eight terms. He's best remembered for hosting a rock festival in 1970 that attracted 75,000 people and a lot of national attention for the cowboy town.

Barker is as a friendly man who greets visitors with a hug, a warm smile and a twinkle in his blue eyes. He's got a shock of white hair, and beneath his three-piece suit are a pair of big, brown cowboy boots. A pipe is always in his hand or mouth.

With a budget of only about \$3,000, Barker does most of his campaigning out of his home in Love Valley. No forums or rallies. No ads - unless supporters want to buy them. And no special interest groups.

"If you go and make promises and get endorsements, and receive money from special interest groups, you're bound by your word," Barker said. "I want to help all the people in North Carolina...I don't want to be governor except the way I want to be."

As governor, he would put prisoners to work, increase pay for good teachers and fire incompetents, institute a statewide lottery, diversify industry and boost tourism - the only industry in which "you don't have to educate the children, keep up the roads and build sewers."

He'd also put North Carolina into the brandy-making business.

"This is something that the Baptists aren't going to like," Barker concedes. "But we've got millions of fruit going to waste every year...and illicit brandy from Wilkes County is selling for \$50 a gallon. Why not legalize it and get revenue?"

This is Barker's second bid for the governor's job, and he says it's his last. In 1976, he ran for the Democratic nomination and got about 5,000 votes to Gov. James B. Hunt's 360,000.

"I'm offering myself this time and this is it," Barker said. "Last time, I knew Jim had it in the bag, but I did it for exposure and experience."

Robert L. Hannon also has run before. In 1972, he campaigned for lieutenant governor on the slogan, "Christmas is every day of the year." Two years later, he unsuccessfully vied for a U.S. Senate seat, advocating, "a chicken in every pot - regardless of race or creed."

With this year's slogan, "Don't get rob, vote for Dr. Bob" - he says he's telling voters, "Don't go out there and vote for these other candidates who won't give you nothing but a bad deal. You vote for Bob - he'll take care of you. He's going to provide jobs, good housing, clean water and clean air free of noise pollution."

If he doesn't win, Hannon says he'll run while and then run again for the U.S. Senate.

Or perhaps he'll become a Baptist minister. He's already doing a lot of campaigning from church pulpits.

"Each Sunday, I'm in the pulpit somewhere," Hannon said in a recent interview in his garage turned into an office. "I tell them that the Bible said, 'Let your light so shine so men can see your good works.' This is Bob Hannon, I'm letting my light shine by running for office. It's practical religion. I tell them, 'You can let your light shine by registering and voting.' And, of course, I say, 'by voting for Bob Hannon.'"

A native of Scotland Neck, Hannon is the only black in the race of governor. He has an undergraduate degree from North Carolina A&T State University in Greensboro, a master's degree from Harvard and a Ph. D. from the University of Michigan.

He has taught or been an administrator at several colleges, including A&T and Fayetteville State University in North Carolina. He's also been a principal of a three-teacher school in Halifax County, extension agent in Rockingham County and director of an agriculture experiment station in the Virginia Islands.

His political mission came to him in a vision.

"I woke up one night and saw Bob Hannon running for lieutenant governor," Hannon



ANDY BARKER

recalled. "The angels were saying, 'Run, Bob, Run, Bob.' The Lord said, 'Go out and get an example for these young blacks. Let them see you running. They don't have money and they don't have any education. You're the only man who has the money to run, Bob, run.'"

Hannon doesn't put stock in statewide polls that form the six major candidates, so he's taking his own poll to determine the level of support. "I'm taking the number of telephone calls I've made since Sept. 8," he said. "You're the only man who has the money to run, Bob, run." (Continued on Page 10)