

'DOT North' May Do Highway Work At Hot Springs

A retired state transportation official's consulting firm has hired so many former Department of Transportation employees that it is known in government circles as "DOT North."
The state Board of Transportation will be asked Friday to award a \$220,399 road design contract to the firm, Frank Coleman and Associates. Coleman, the principal owner, was the Division of Highways' chief engineer until his retirement last year.
"I retired April 30, 1986, and started the company May 1, 1986,"

Coleman said. He said he had hired 10 to 15 former DOT employees, including five who came straight to Coleman & Associates without working elsewhere. The firm has about 30 full-time employees.
The Division of Highways will ask the Board of Transportation to award Coleman's firm the design work for a 6.5-mile stretch of U.S. 25-70, from Hot Springs to the Tennessee line. That would be the firm's first North Carolina highway contract.
"The majority of our work is out of state," Coleman said. "We've got work in Virginia, Georgia and

Alabama. The Department of Transportation contract amounts to less than 10 percent of the work that we've got to do within the next 12 months."
Coleman said all but one of the DOT employees who have come to work for his company approached him first. The exception — Robert M. Walker, a former project engineer in the Roadway Design Unit — helped Coleman & Associates win the U.S. 25-70 job.
"Bob Walker is the only one I went after before he announced his retirement," Coleman said. Walker retired

March 1.
George E. Wells, state highway administrator, said Walker was "one of our best" employees at DOT.
Wells said a new company — with personnel unfamiliar to DOT officials — is at a disadvantage when it tries to get a state highway contract.
"But in this instance, he (Coleman) had people that the guys knew — in particular his project engineer, Bob Walker. Bob was a good mountainous-terrain design engineer. I'm sure this had something to do with him (Coleman) getting this particular project."

"We have lost some good people that went with Frank," Wells said, "but they made the contact. We couldn't tolerate it if the industry would come in and hire our people away to do work for us."
Wells said Walker's departure "didn't surprise us that much because Bob already had his 30 years. We consider us fortunate to retain any of our engineers once they get to retirement age and get time in, because there's so many opportunities outside right now."

Design contracts are not awarded by low bids. The winning company is selected by a committee headed by W.G. Marley, the Highway Design branch manager, from a list of companies that express interest in a particular job. The price then is negotiated.
Wells said 21 firms expressed interest in the U.S. 25-70 job.
From the 'Under the Dome' column of The News and Observer.

Cary Woman Drowns When Raft Overturns On River

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Carolina Wilderness Adventures of Hot Springs. Her drowning is apparently the first commercial white

water death in North Carolina, rafting experts said.
Michael Tousey, a co-owner of Carolina Wilderness Adventures,

said the section of the river where the accident occurred, often called "Entrance Rapid," is a Class III, or intermediate level, rapid.

"Boats have had problems with that rapid before, but we've never had a problem with a person in that area," Tousey said.

cooperation bodes well for river-related efforts in the future," he said.
Richard West, in charge of Carolina Wilderness Adventures personnel involved in the rescue, agreed.

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Big Bad Wolf Remembers

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In Haywood County he worked under Jule Welch and his son, Bob Welch. Then in Cocke County, he worked under Mack Harper, Charles Runnion, Charles Fisher, Dr. Smith and Ken Holt.

with the man he shot in Hot Springs in 1917 — Foster remembers that vividly.

Eventually, the rum-running "industry" petered out. Foster thinks it was not so much what he did, or even that times got better, but that the traffic simply got so thick that rum-running was no longer practical.

Long was a passenger in a "self-guided" raft traveling in a group of four rafts, with a guide in the lead boat and a guide in the last boat, Tousey said. Most outfitters on the French Broad run self-guided trips, he said.

Members of the Carolina Wilderness Adventures staff — as well as other outfitters that run the French Broad River — are still in shock over Saturday's fatal accident.

The leading cause of rafting accidents is the use of alcohol on a trip and the lack of life jackets, he said.

Foster was out on the mountain at night with a search warrant for a man's car, and his prey found out he was there. The man came with two boys and two more men, including one from Ohio, Foster recalls, and tried to kill him. In the fight which resulted, Foster killed one of his assailants, shot two more and the others ran away, he says. All this happened right on the Madison-Haywood county line.
The man he killed was from a prominent family in Waynesville and they wanted the trial to be there. Foster wanted it in Madison. The judge moved the trial to Yancey.
There were 13 lawyers, he recalls, seven for prosecution and six for the defense. The trial took seven straight days and Foster was on the stand three hours and 35 minutes.
The jury declared him not guilty, and turned him loose to "sheriffing"

Foster was not one to stay in a rut. In addition to "sheriffing," he was a policeman in Hot Springs for a while, and a land appraiser for the government. He appraised land for the Rocky Bluff camping and picnic area: appraised price \$2.65 an acre.
In 1940, he became commissary and "sheriff" of the Grace Lumber Company of Cold Springs in Haywood County, guarding the payroll. He also worked for a year as a security guard for the atomic bomb plant in Oak Ridge, Tenn.
Foster, who grew up in the Meadow Fork section of Madison County, came back to the county permanently in 1948 and raised cattle and ran a store in Sleepy Valley. He is now retired.

Not only was it the first time that Ramsey, a Democrat from Madison County, was not on hand to preside over the House, it was also the first time he had missed a House session since 1969, said Dot Barber, Ramsey's administrative secretary.
Filling in for Ramsey was Speaker Pro Tem. J. Jack Hunt, a Cleveland County Democrat.

Tousey echoed Fox's comments on the cooperation between emergency teams and rafting experts. "This

"I'm not sure yet what caused it or why it happened," Tousey said. "I really need more time to think about it and study the situation."

"The guides have always been careful, but now they're even more cautious about everything," West said. "It was truly tragic that this happened, but we all learned a lot about our abilities."

Pool To Open Next Week

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now be the responsibility of town officials.

The cost of admission this summer will be 75 cents for children aged 4 to 12 and \$1.25 for ages 13 and older. Children under 3 get in free. Season

passes will be sold.
The town is also trying to obtain new fiberglass lifeguard stands, and will hire lifeguards for the pool.



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Ramsey Misses 1st Session

Liston B. Ramsey missed his first session of the N.C. House of Representatives since becoming House Speaker five years ago.
Ramsey broke his string of perfect attendance, dating back to at least 1969, last Thursday when he flew to Asheville for the funeral of his brother-in-law, William Weaver Pritchard.

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State To Probe Chandler Case

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Supporters sent copies of the petitions, along with a summary of their concerns, to Gov. James Martin's office last Monday, said Gunter, a friend of Chandler and a cousin of Chandler's wife.
The supporters had also met last month with the Madison County Board of Commissioners to voice their concerns. But, after being told by the commissioners that county government has no direct control

over DSS operations, the group set up the meeting with the Social Services board.
Board members agreed after a nearly 90-minute meeting with the group from Revere to ask state officials to step in and evaluate the department's handling of two cases, said Anita Davie, DSS director. One of those cases is the Chandler sexual abuse case. Davie would not say what other case is involved.

"We're just concerned about the way that things have been handled in the past year or two," Gunter said.
Chandler's friends are pleased with the Social Services board's decision and will now simply "play a waiting game," he said.
"We want to hear what the investigation turns up," Gunter said. "We've got everything done that we can do right now. We've got our petitions in to the governor. It's just a matter of wait-and-see."

Chamber Of Commerce Forms

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"The whole idea is to promote the county," Phillips said. "The fact that we have a chamber of commerce shows people that we can get together and that we're working for a common goal."
The group agreed that there should be a high quality promotional display for trade shows to present the county in its best possible light.
"We want to attract quality

businesses," Hoffman said. "We don't need businesses that will fall apart in a couple of years."
Former Madison County resident Gil Ramsey compared the potential of the mountains to Disney World.
"When they bought that land in Florida, no one imagined what it would become," Ramsey said. "You folks in Madison County are on the right track."
Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce

member Selma Nix Norton cautioned the group to be careful about letting politics interfere with the goals of the chamber.
"Anyone using the chamber for personal goals or political gain will be asked to leave," said Hoffman.
Members of the infant organization say they are prepared for a long haul, but feel the work will pay off in the end.

Grand Jury Indicts Thorsen On Murder

A Madison County grand jury has indicted Jon C. Thorsen of Marshall on charges of second degree murder resulting from the March shooting of a girl in Swain.
The grand jury, after reviewing testimony by 20th Judicial District Judge J. Thomas Hunter, returned a bill of indictment against Thorsen with slaying his victim, a 12-year-old girl.
The grand jury also indicted Thorsen on three counts of witness tampering.
Indictments charge Thorsen with

having been a suicide, but have since determined Mrs. Thorsen's fatal wound was not self-inflicted, said Madison County Sheriff Dedrick Brown.
She had been shot once in the head at close range with a .22 caliber pistol, authorities said.
A trial date has not yet been set.
The grand jury also indicted James W. Rice on three counts of witness tampering.
Indictments charge Rice with

falsely obtaining \$2,610.70 in aid to Families With Dependent Children, \$991.41 in Medicaid and \$700 in food stamps from April 1986 to March 1987.
In other court action this week, a Madison County Superior Court jury found Ricky Reeves of the Swain County area not guilty of slaying a 12-year-old girl with a deadly weapon. He had been charged with assaulting his mother in 1985.

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