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Rangers Fight Fires In West

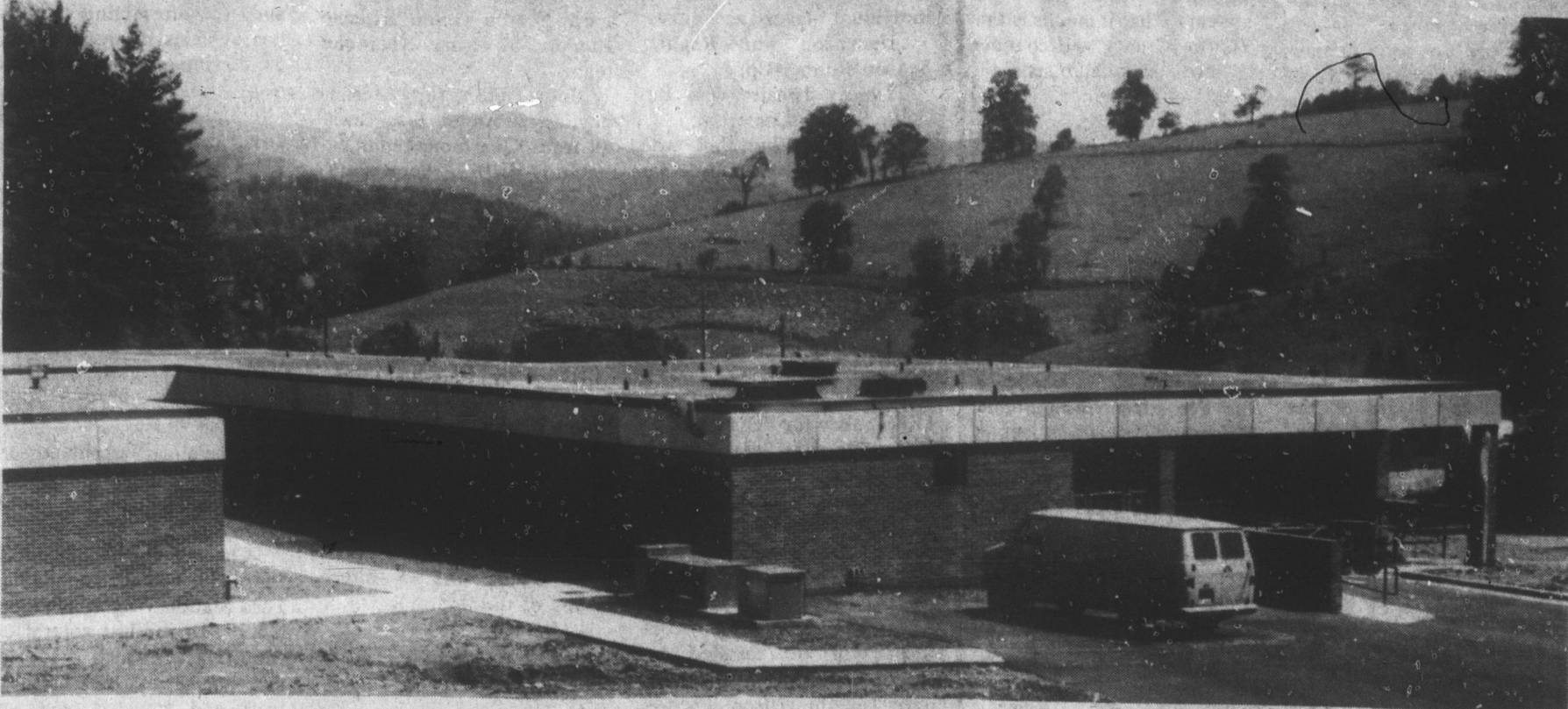
The US Forest Service, Toecane Ranger District announces that there has been a crew detailed to help fire fighting efforts in Western United States. These men include Johnny McLain, District Ranger; Doug Francis, Rick Wilson, Clifford Peterson, Steve Whitson, Dayton Biddix, Mike Howell and Kenny Dayton.

The crew first was assigned to the Marble Cone Fire which covered 173,793 acres in Southern California, Los Padres National Forest. To date, a total of 156 miles of line has been built around the fire and 893,200 gallons of retardant dropped. The suppression cost of the fire to date is \$10,659,258.00.

Fire fighting efforts were hampered because the northern end of the fire was located in the Ventana Wilderness Area, mechanized fire fighting equipment is not permitted in the wilderness area. It is felt that any type of mechanical equipment in an area of this type will detract from the wilderness atmosphere. The fire was started by lightning and classified as a brush fire.

The crew was later sent on the Hog Fire in northern California and then on to a fire located in Idaho.

Lee Thompson, Recreation and Fire Control Technician on the district has been assigned to dispatching crews and equipment for all the many fires in the Western United States.



Burnsville Health Care Center; Formerly Burnsville Extended Care Facility

Photo by Brian Westveer

Yancey Gets New Hospital

BY CAROLYN YUZIUK

To the uninformed or disinterested it may be only a name change, but to Yancey County doctors and thousands of Yancey citizens, the planned opening of the Burnsville Health Care Center is a cause for rejoicing.

Formerly named Burnsville Extended Care Facility, which was designated and constructed as a Skilled Nursing Facility for the elderly—our health care building which is very near completion on the Pensacola Highway, has been transformed on the planning board into a multi-functioned unit encompassing a 24-bed acute care hospital, a 26-bed extended

care facility, a fully equipped emergency room, laboratory and X-ray department.

On October 1, 1977, target date for the opening of the Burnsville facility of the Blue Ridge Hospital System, the doors will open to patients who need hospital care. And the doctors and staff of the present Yancey Hospital will be there to take care of them.

Only a few short weeks ago the future of health care in Yancey County was bleak. Proponents of the health care merger between Burnsville and Spruce Pine, which took place almost six years ago giving birth to the Blue Ridge Hospital System, said that this area was privileged to be part of a pilot project unique in North Carolina. The expansion/construction program that Mitchell and Yancey County were embarked upon showed "progressive medical care thinking," they said. Most Yancey citizens, however, including the local doctors, could not see beyond one hard fact: Yancey County

was losing its hospital, and in its place, Burnsville Extended Care Facility, a nursing home, was to be Yancey County's "piece of the action" within the Blue Ridge Hospital System.

Yancey doctors, especially, staged a prolonged fight for a hospital, stating that Yancey Hospital—which could no longer operate when the new facility opened—had proven time and again that this county has a need which will not be filled by additional beds in another hospital 15 miles away. The fight had seemed futile; the plans remained unchanged.

Yancey Countians were lulled, during recent years, by lack of news about the health care arrangements, but in the fall of 1976 a large group of concerned citizens met with local doctors. They had just been galvanized into action by the imminent closing of Yancey Hospital, and wanted to see what they could do to keep a hospital here. The answer was....nothing.

It seemed the plans set in

motion in 1971 were basically unalterable in their intentions. The Extended Care Facility in Burnsville was set to open sometime in 1977. Yancey County had already been given an emergency treatment area over and above initial nursing home plans, and this, with six "observation" beds in the ER, had to be enough. Local doctors had a choice of admitting patients to Spruce Pine Hospital and driving there to see them, thereby cutting office hours down or out; or turning their patients over to the Spruce Pine doctors to treat while in the hospital there.

At this point, the Yancey County Chamber of Commerce became involved. Feeling that a local hospital facility was a strong selling point in bringing business and industry to Yancey County, and knowing that Yancey County could not bring in new doctors without a hospital here and might very well lose some of the doctors who have been serving this area for many years; the Board decided it would be in the best interests of the citizens for

them to work toward retaining a hospital facility locally.

After writing to hospital authorities in Raleigh and to Mr. Don Carlisle, Administrator of the Blue Ridge Hospital System, to find out just what the situation was in regard to plans for health care in Yancey County, the Chamber Board of Directors met late in July, 1977, with Mr. Carlisle and stated their determination to work for the assignment of hospital beds in the Extended Care Facility. During the nearly two hours of discussion, Mr. Carlisle proposed a plan for Spruce Pine Hospital to give up 18 of its assigned hospital beds to the Burnsville Unit. These beds, combined with the six ER beds which we already had, would bring to Yancey County 24 acute-care hospital beds. That number of extended care beds would simply be eliminated, said Mr. Carlisle.

The Administrator went on to say that although the reassignment of beds would simply not have been possible even six months ago, recent legislation which held Medi-

(Cont'd on page 2)

Permit Required

Hunters Can Park On Some Overlooks

Joe Brown, Superintendent of the Blue Ridge Parkway, reminded sportsmen recently that certain Parkway overlooks may be used for hunter parking during the hunting seasons on Pisgah Game Lands in Western North Carolina.

"Hunter parking will be permitted in most Parkway overlooks from Buck Creek Gap, milepost 344.1, to Richland Balsam, milepost 431.0," stated Brown. "All overlooks where hunter parking is not permitted will be signed accordingly."

Hunters wishing to use these designated Parkway overlooks to gain access to Game Lands must secure a special Hunter Parking Permit. These permits may be obtained at Parkway Headquarters in the Northwestern Bank Building in downtown

Asheville, from park rangers and the South District Office of the Parkway at Oteen, and from the Pisgah Forest District Ranger's Office near Brevard, North Carolina.

Permits must be secured in person by each hunter! No mail or telephone requests will be accepted. "We will begin issuing permits on September 1," said Mr. Brown.

"Each hunter using the overlooks for parking must carry his permit on his person. We will provide a special identification sticker for each vehicle as we did last year," concluded Brown.

Those desiring further information concerning the hunter parking program should contact the District Ranger's Office (258-2850, extension 701) or Headquarters Ranger personnel (258-2850, extension 760).

ID Wanted

The Buncombe County Sheriff's Department and the State Bureau of Investigation has requested help on a current investigation.

On August 16, 1977 the skeletal remains of a human body was found at the head of Sugar Creek near a ridge known as "Old Frosty" in the Barnardsville section of Buncombe County. Examination of the remains in the state laboratory have determined them to be that of an approximate 50 year old or older negro male approximately 6' in height. The teeth were in poor condition with the top front 4 teeth missing. This person at time of death was wearing a 17-34 light colored long sleeved shirt with 2 button cuffs, a pair of K-Mart brand polyester and cotton med. blue pants, size 36, and black smooth toe leather lace-up shoes size 10 to 11.

No identification was found on the body but bills and coins were found in the wallet with the latest date being 1975. No evidence of any foul play has been uncovered to this date, however identification of these remains are vitally needed so the investigation can continue.

If you know of anyone fitting this description who has been missing within the past 2 years please contact the Buncombe County Sheriff's Department 254-9751. Your information will be held in strict confidence.



Test Crop Shown

Carlisle Bledsoe, County Extension Chairman, Yancey County, left, and Furney Todd, Extension Professor of Plant Pathology, NCSU, discuss the System Test at the Lawrence Grindstaff farm. Burley growers will have a chance to view this test on Wednesday, August 31, at 9:20 a.m. The Tour will continue into Madison to the Roy Ammons farm, have lunch at Holiday Inn West, Asheville, and a visit to the Mountain Research Station near Waynesville. The final stop on the Tour is an excellent crop of Burley tobacco at the Caldwell farm in Haywood County at 4:00 p.m.

Tobacco Tour For Yancey Growers

The Agricultural Extension Service will be conducting a Research on Wheels Tobacco Tour next week, according to County Extension Chairman W.C. Bledsoe. It will begin in Pilot Mountain, N.C. on Monday and end at Waynesville Wednesday afternoon. A number of experimental tobacco plot cooperators will be recognized for their work at a Banquet in Boone, 8:00 p.m. August 30, Bledsoe commented.

The following day, Wednesday, August 31, the tour will visit the farm of Lawrence Grindstaff at 9:20 a.m. Mr. Grindstaff's research plot is a classical example of the part that variety, rotation and multi-purpose chemicals can play in a tobacco disease situation.

"We cordially invite all Yancey tobacco growers to join the tour at Mr. Grindstaff's and continue with us to a farm in Madison before lunch in Asheville (free)," Bledsoe continued. "I believe our growers can benefit from the afternoon program which covers the tobacco research work at the Waynesville research station," he added. Those planning to attend

should call the Agricultural Extension Office to make reservation for lunch, 682-6186.

★ ★ Cattle Sale Set

Graded cattle sales, sponsored by the Agricultural Extension Service, the State Department of Agriculture, and North Carolina Cattlemen's Association, will soon be underway. It is estimated that in excess of 20,000 yearling steers and 24,000 feeder calves will be consigned throughout the state. Yearling Steer Sale dates at the WNC Livestock Market in Asheville are: September 20, September 27, and October 18. Feeder Calf sales will be held October 4 and November 1. All sales are at 10:00 a.m. Cattle are weighed in the previous day. Additional sales are held on other days in nearby towns of Boone and Canton. If you need additional information, please call the Agricultural Extension Office at 682-6186.



Little League Field Ready

Yancey County Little League field was completed recently at Lincoln Park. The project, which was begun by the County almost one year ago, was completed with the help of the Town

of Burnsville and WAMI Summer Youth Program. Funds were provided through several different federal grants.