

Connections

Low-tech charity When your conscience calls, try conscience calling

BY KAY MCFADDEN

When we talk about getting technology to work for nonprofits, the benefits usually fall in the cash-reduction column. Less time plus less labor equals fewer expenses.

But how about shifting the benefits to the ledger's other side by using technology to make money? Don't be scared; this doesn't involve computers. It's a low-tech method probably sitting at your elbow right now — the telephone.

TECHNOLOGY

In the obvious sense, telephones are a basic fundraising tool for many nonprofits. Now, here's something not so obvious: Thanks to advances in technology and some shrewd marketing by some long-distance companies, people can donate a percentage of their monthly billings to nonprofits.

Generally known as "affinity programs," these services began in the late 1980s and have since split into several different approaches. Most commonly used is the program developed last year by Raleigh-based BTI, which provides long-distance service to small- and medium-sized businesses.

Here's how the BTI Organization Contribution Program for nonprofits works: For every supporter of a nonprofit who signs up for BTI service, that nonprofit receives a monthly check equal to 5 percent of that member's monthly long-distance bill. Participating members also get a long-distance discount.

"It's a triple-win situation," says Kim Chapman, vice president of marketing at BTI. "The members get to lower their long-distance bills, BTI gets new customers and charitable

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Saving the Cape Fear

Team effort studies state's largest river

The University of North Carolina at Wilmington, with help from N.C. State University's broadcast services, is producing a television documentary about the Cape Fear River Basin to be aired on UNC-TV. The video will be used to help raise money for university-based research on the river basin.

BY KATHERINE NOBLE

Its journey from Mermaid Point to the sea is nearly 200 miles. Its streams and tributaries flow in 29 counties for more than 6,000 miles, draining an area larger than Kuwait.

It is home to fish, alligators, beavers and water fowl. It provides drinking water for thousands of people and a source of recreation for many more. And it is the lifeblood of industry along its shores.

But despite its importance as North Carolina's largest river, public knowledge of the Cape Fear River and its basin is shallow. The last state study of the river was completed in 1984, and there is no coordinated, ongoing effort to examine the river's environmental health.

River experts agree that the Cape Fear River Basin seems to be in good shape. But they also agree that not much is known about the river, or the impact of recreation, industry and other potential pollutants on its water quality and life.

The University of North Carolina at Wilmington hopes to change that.

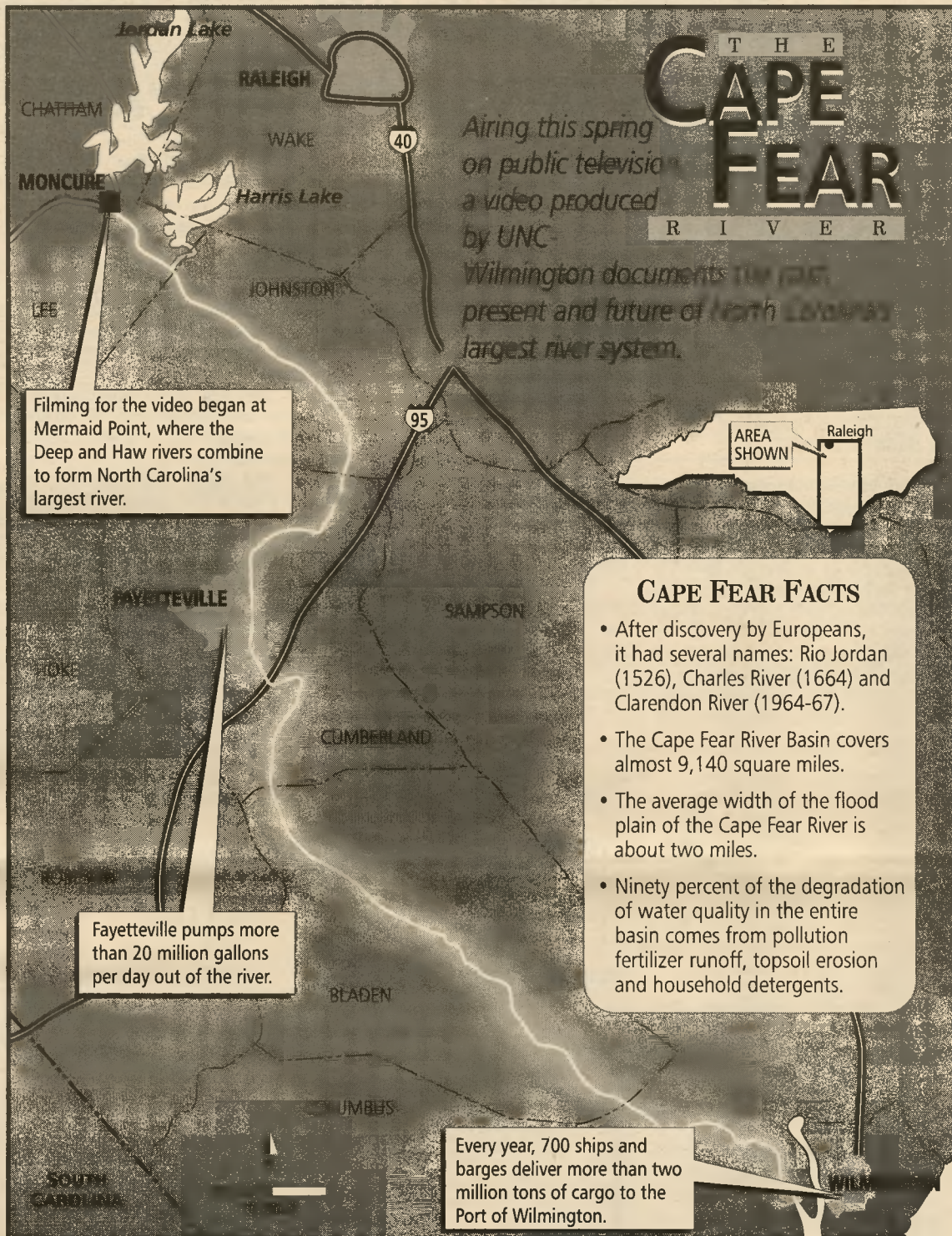
"The river isn't like some rivers," says Elaine Penn of the UNCW university advancement office. "It's relatively clean. But we know very little about it."

The Cape Fear River Documentary Project, an hour-long video to be aired on public television this spring, is the first step in establishing a statewide, river study program in the university's marine science division.

The video will be used to raise public awareness of the river, and to raise \$100,000 to \$150,000 in public and private funds to launch the new program.

The documentary will air several times on UNC-TV this spring, and may be shown nationally on PBS and The Discovery Channel. It also will be distributed free to the state's public school system and to local governments, community organizations and environmental groups.

The first order of business is finishing the fundraising to pay for the



Research by Justin Scroggs

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documentary.

"We are making an appeal for support because the river is precious to all of us in North Carolina," says Penn. "It's definitely a group problem, and it's going to take a group effort to save the river."

The video itself is a collaboration between UNCW; N.C. State

University, whose broadcast services office is putting the video together; UNC-TV, and several North Carolina foundations and corporations that are lending financial support.

The Grace Jones Richardson Trust and Florence Rogers Trust in North Carolina gave \$15,000 and \$6,000, respectively, to the docu-

mentary project, and Applied Analytical, Wilmington Du Pont and Cape Industries each gave several thousand dollars.

So far, the university has raised about half the \$150,000 needed for the video, which should be completed

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Study in inequality

N.C. Equity reports on women's health

The health of Tar Heel women is at greater risk than for women in other states, says a report by N.C. Equity, a statewide group that is an advocate for women and girls.

A new report on the health status of women in North Carolina shows the patient is ailing and the prognosis is in doubt.

While previous studies have found that the U.S. health-care system ignores the needs of women, a report released Nov. 19 by N.C. Equity shows that Tar Heel women are at even greater risk than their

counterparts throughout the U.S.

"Women in North Carolina ranked fourth-highest in the nation on deaths from strokes," N.C. Equity President Brenda Summers says in her preface to the report. "They are more likely to die from heart disease and from complications due to pregnancy and childbirth. They are more likely to contract a sexually transmitted disease and are assaulted at higher rates than women in other states."

The report, entitled "In Sickness and in Health," looked at topics ranging from heart disease to reproductive health to access to health care.

Among the other findings:

- While North Carolina women

experience more chronic diseases than do men, less research is directed toward illness that affects women or toward how disorders such as heart disease affect women.

- Nonwhite women have less access to health-care services than do white women and, when it is available, often receive care too late.

- Women have higher rates of illness, more disability days and greater use of health services than do men.

- HIV infection and AIDS are increasing faster among women than among men, especially among black women, who are 17 times more likely to be infected with the AIDS virus than are white women.

- Violence against women represents a growing public health-care problem in the state, which now has the fifth-highest rate of increase in violent crimes in the nation.

"Current efforts at health-care reform must meet women's particular needs and new health-care systems should provide universal health care for all North Carolinians," the report says. "It is critical that the state's leaders, male and female, begin a serious dialogue about the diagnoses and prescriptions made within these pages."

Copies are available from N.C. Equity, a nonprofit public policy and advocacy organization in Raleigh. Call (919) 833-4055.