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THE WEST CRAVEN

# HIGHLIGHTS

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Two year report reveals

## Arrests up 828%

By Connie Bryan

Police Chief Harley Ringer in his report to the Vanceboro Board of Alderman disclosed that the total number of arrests by the Police Department rose from 99 in 1976 to 820 in 1978, representing an increase of over 800%. Ringer added that the large majority of these (735) were for violations of traffic laws. He stressed that strict enforcement of traffic laws minimizes accidents and consequently, injuries and property damage. In his traffic analysis, Ringer points to an increase in arrests from 80 in 1976 to 735 in 1978. During this same two year period, accidents declined from 21 to 7, injuries were down from 7 to 2 and property damage decreased from \$18,380 to \$3,125.

"The Police Department cannot go forward in a professional and progressive way unless the Town Board and the citizens of Vanceboro demand it and assist it," commented Chief Ringer. "Several advances have been made during the year but more improvements are needed."

During the past year, a records system has been

implemented, which enables the department to keep an accurate account of all incidents. This system uses free forms supplied by the Federal and State Bureaus of Investigation. Using these records, Chief Ringer was able to compile the annual report. The report, first ever according to Mayor Jimmie Morris, covers a two year period.

In an interview with the Highlights, Chief Ringer explained that the improvements in the Police Department, specifically the records and filing system and the new communications center were all made possible by a federal grant approved by the Neuse River Council of Governments. These grants pay 90% of the funds, while the state and town contribute 5% each.

Chief Ringer reports that he has had a problem finding a place to set up the communications center. This plan calls for installing a radio somewhere so that a person needing assistance could call that number, then the person in charge could reach Ringer by radio in his patrol car. The Rescue Squad hut was men-

tioned by Chief Ringer as a possible site.

One of Chief Ringer's projects for the coming year is acquiring new investigative equipment. He plans to request a grant for about \$7,000 with the town paying 5% or \$350. If approved, this money would be used to equip an Evidence Collection Unit designed to preserve evidence to be presented in court. Ringer plans to put this equipment in a van, which could go to the scene of the crime and collect the physical evidence needed to secure a conviction.

Another project for the future is a full time police officer to handle the investigation of crimes along with crime prevention. More street lights are also needed to help prevent breakins.

Chief Ringer urged anyone who plans to be out of town to let the Police Department know and to have a friend or neighbor check the house everyday. He also advised those leaving to have their mail and newspapers stopped.

When asked about the increase in drug violations, which are up from 6 in 1976



CHIEF HARLEY RINGER [left] receives keys to new police car from Mayor Jimmie Morris. This car is just one of the improvements in the Vanceboro Police Department during the past year. (Photo by Rick Cannon)

to 26 in 1978, Chief Ringer replied, "We have a very serious problem in this area with drugs. Marijuana is a big problem. I hope to increase drug arrests, because I will have the help of Hudgins (G. M. "Slim" Hudgins, who replaced Stanley Kite as a part time officer)...The reason we have a serious problem is lack of enforcement personnel and lack of interest of the public. People are condoning their children smoking marijuana, because if they did not, it would not exist."

Chief Ringer also discus-

sed some of the problems of the department. He explained that since there are only two officers, they are sometimes overworked. If an officer is overworked, it is often hard to stay alert. Ringer further explained that because of the lack of equipment, it is hard to do a good job, which could cause morale problems.

The Board of Alderman, according to Chief Ringer, has been very cooperative in trying to get the best equipped police force that the town can afford. The town has purchased a new patrol car, a 1978 Ply-

mouth. Ringer stated, "Vanceboro has, in my opinion, the most efficient, professional department within the county...I know we are small, but the town has bought the best equipment it could afford."

Chief Ringer also pointed out that a good police force is often drawing card for industry. He elaborated by saying that no company would settle in a town, unless it could be assured of an adequate police force.

## Basketball Contest Second Week

### Wright takes first

Earl Wright of Vanceboro won first place in the second week of the Basketball Contest being sponsored by the Highlights and area businessmen during January and February. Wright picked seven correct winners to end up all alone in first place. Four entries picked six correct, Rita Lewis edged out John Drake for second place by winning the tiebreaker by

one point. Wright was also the only entry to beat the Editor and so won the special prize of five dollars. Numerous entries picked five correct.

Basketball Contest second week winners:  
First place: Earl Wright 7-3  
Second Place: Rita Lewis 6-4  
Third Place: John Drake 6-4

Beat the Editor: Earl Wright (won Tie-Breaker)

Last Week's winners are UCLA, UNC, Virginia, Richmond, Alabama, Va. Commonwealth, Louisville, Clemson, Notre Dame, LSU, (Tie-breaker - UNC, 63 points.)



THE CRAVEN COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION presented its proposal for a 12-member board to the commissioners & the New Bern City School Board. Hiram J. Mayo, Superintendent of the Craven County Schools, encouraged those present to let the people know the facts concerning the merger. He indicated that he had no desire to be superintendent of the merged system. The Craven County Board of Education proposal allows for both superintendents to serve four year terms as interim superintendents.