

# High Rates; Inadequate Service Cited At Hearing

## Guest Columnist

Merrill Evans, Sr., mayor of Aidskie, writes a regular column for the Parker Brothers newspapers in Northeastern North Carolina. He is no stranger along the Public Parade, being the father of a prominent local attorney who practiced out of an office on Cheapside until his death; and is a former state highway commissioner.

In mid-December, Scribe Evans had a column published with the head: "Chowan River Top Priority". It is straight from the other side of the Chowan and we find it interesting enough to pass along to our readers. Here it is:

It was good news to hear that Gov. Hunt has given the cleanup and restoration of the Chowan River top priority for his second four-year administration.

All North Carolina people are becoming water conscious. This is increasingly true here in our corner of the state because of the water problems our Tidewater Virginia neighbors are having. A fair proportion of the water being used by these over-the-state line municipalities is being pumped from the river or rivers that converge into the Chowan. That surely gives us a legitimate interest in following what is being done.

There is no doubt that Gov. Hunt spoke with complete sincerity when he announced his decision place the Chowan River at the top of the list. But what we locally must keep in mind is that the whole state is within the scope of the Hunt Administration.

There are dozens of rivers, sounds, creeks and lakes in North Carolina — every one being polluted to some degree. The Gov. must look after these also. We, then, reach the point of wondering just how much help the Chowan priority will mean to the river. How much time, money, effort, interest and concern can Gov. Hunt give our particular river when he has all the others to look after and watch over?

For years there has been all manner of help working on the Chowan River problem. These are professional efforts by dedicated, scientifically trained people. They continued to do their best. But allocating funds, making policy decisions and forcing interstate and federal coordination is not a part of their job. They are limited in their authority.

There is a saying which being paraphrased runs something like this. "Those people are looked after who look after themselves." The primary interest and responsibility for the Chowan River rests squarely upon those of us who live in Bertie, Chowan, Gates and Hertford counties. If this river is salvaged, saved and renewed - the primary effort must come from the citizenship of these four counties.

No one single county has the political strength to match Suffolk, Portsmouth, Norfolk and Virginia Beach. North Carolina's effort must be promoted, coordinated and sustained by these four Chowan River border counties. How do we harness the effort?

In unity there would be a high degree of strength. It would seem that some form of cooperative interest should be forthcoming. The only group from which this might originate would be the County Boards of Commissioners. Four counties working together would have weight and could match to a fair degree the pressure from our Virginia neighbors.

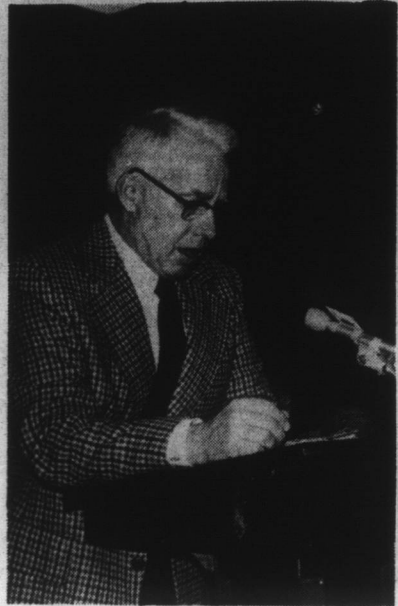
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## Boosters Slate Sports Banquet

The Edenton Aces football team, girls' tennis team and cheerleaders of John A. Holmes High School will be spotlighted at the fall Sports Awards Banquet on January 19 in the National Guard Armory. Tickets to Aces Booster Club sponsored event are \$5. A steak supper will be served.

Guest speaker will be Moyer Smith, asst. athletic director at the University of North Carolina.

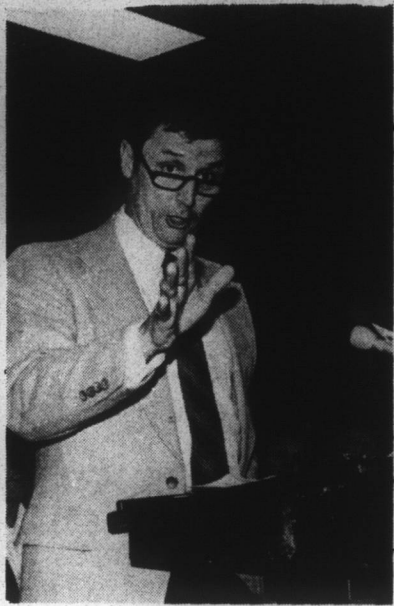
ELIZABETH CITY — Twenty-five and one-half million of anything can be expected to attract attention and it did here Tuesday night at a public hearing on an application for rate increase by Carolina Telephone Company. Witness after witness "roasted" the company, citing excessive rates in light of inadequate service.



Jerry Hendee

The N. C. Utilities Commission, represented by Dr. Leigh H. Hammond and Douglas P. Leary, is holding a series of public hearings in the CTC service area on the August, 1980, rate application. The company now contends a \$36-million boost is justified in view of recent increases in costs.

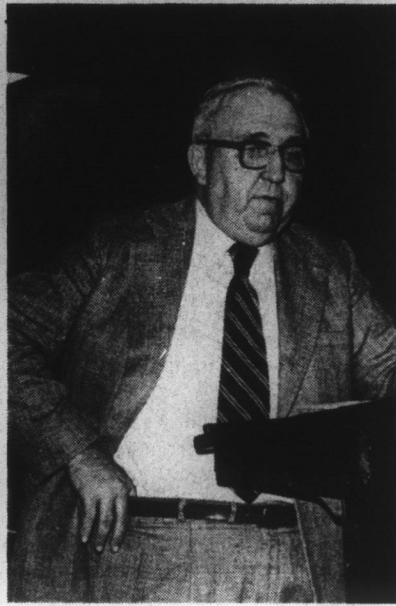
W. Raleigh Carver, chairman of Pasquotank County Board of



T. Erie Haste, Jr.

Commissioners as well as the 10-county Albemarle Regional Planning & Development Commission, was the lead witness produced by the Public Staff of the state commission.

The witness cited comparisons which tend to show that the Albemarle Area of Northeastern North Carolina has been targeted for greater percentages of in-



Raleigh Carver

crease than other areas served by CTC. When he was questioned about the Albemarle Metro — or extended area toll free service — Carver said he is not interested in seeing it done away with.

Carver asked for two things:

First, set rates for this area in proper relationship to rates in other parts of Carolina Telephone territory. There is no reason to penalize the people of the Albemarle Area with higher telephone rates since we are already having to pay higher electrical rates than other parts of the state.

Second, he asked for drastic reduction in the requested increase for two and four party lines. Two and four party lines are now serving many elderly people, our senior citizens, who are barely existing on Social Security. The telephone is their only link with the outside world. They depend on the telephone in case of sickness or when they need help. They cannot afford a 62 per cent increase in telephone company so they can pay large dividends to investors.

Jerry Hendee, executive vice president of Edenton-Chowan

Chamber of Commerce, echoed Carver's remarks about the Albemarle Area being targeted for higher rates than those requested in other CTC service areas. He also said Mayor Roy L. Harrell of Edenton had said on behalf of himself and the Town Council they are dissatisfied with the rates now proposed and will continue to be so until they are brought in line with those in other areas.

T. Erie Haste of Hertford, presented a resolution from the Town of Hertford, where he is a commissioner. As a businessman, Haste was critical of direct dial service. He said in the past two months he has logged 25 problem incidents.

In opening remarks, Dwight Allen, a CTC attorney, noted that the company serves 550,000 customers in 50 counties with a total of nearly 1-million telephones. The company's investment is near \$1-billion. He said a \$25-million increase in rates on which a big investment is not excessive.

Allen said the company has an enviable record of keeping rates

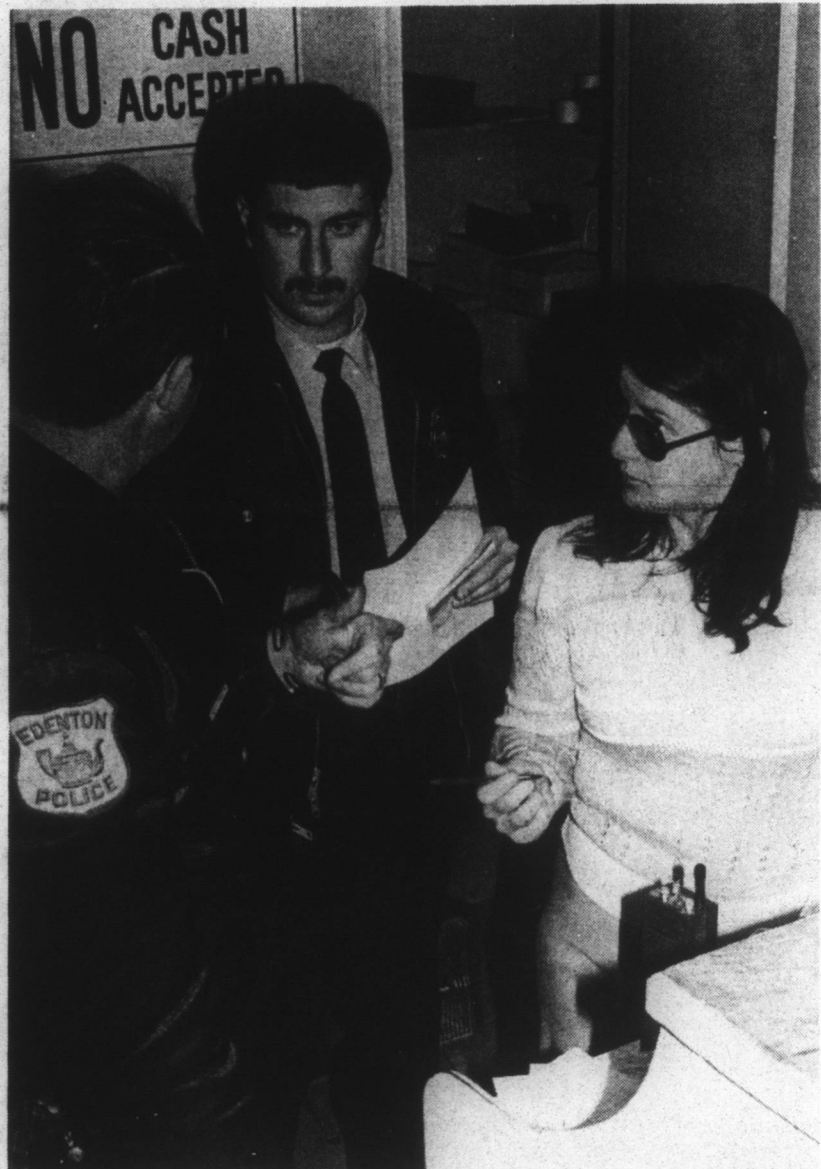
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SCENE OF ROBBERY—Police Chief J. D. Parrish, Patrolman Andy Maglione and Barbara Everette, manager of Edenton Manor Apartments, are shown at the office where Mrs. Everette was robbed at knife-point Tuesday afternoon by a masked bandit. About \$200 in cash was stolen and a telephone wire was pulled from the wall to prevent her from calling the police. No arrests have been made. (Staff photo by Luke Amburn.)

## Armed Robbery Investigated

A knife-wielding, masked bandit robbed the office of Edenton Manor Apartments of about \$200, Tuesday afternoon. Officers of Edenton Police Department responded at 1:43 P.M. to a call from Barbara Everette, manager, who said a black male wearing a ski mask had demanded the cash box after asking for change for a \$5 bill.

According to the police report, Mrs. Everette had gone to the cash box for change when confronted at knife point by the assailant. Before leaving, the suspect ripped the telephone cord from the wall.

Chief J. D. Parrish, Captain C. H. Williams and patrolmen Bland Terry, Andy Maglione and Bill Phillips handled the investigation.

Chief Parrish reported that as of Wednesday morning no arrests had been made.

The suspect was described as being about six feet tall and of medium build.

He said that besides the charge of armed robbery, the suspect faces an additional charge of using a mask to conceal his identity.

According to North Carolina statute 14-12.7, it is unlawful for a person over 16 years old to wear any kind of mask or hood on public property that conceals one's identity or disguises the voice. There are five different statutes dealing with concealment.

## CPR Training

Do you know the symptoms of a heart attack? Could you start a heart to beat or lungs to breathe? Do you know how long a person can live when he stops breathing? How long would it take you to get help to a breathless person?

North Carolina along with many states have come to realize the vital importance of fast effective care in case of heart arrest. Arrest (stopping of heart and-or breathing) can be caused by many things such as drowning, electric shock, heart attack, and choking.

ARPCD through the Emergency Medical Services Council has

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## Revenue Needs Cited By Company

TARBORO — Carolina Telephone and Telegraph Company has filed with the Utilities Commission updated testimony and supporting exhibits showing that its need for additional revenue has increased to \$36,260,000 annually, about an 18 per cent increase over existing levels. Such updates are necessary to show current operations preceding the rate case hearings.

Carolina Telephone applied to the Commission on August 28, 1980, for authority to increase its annual revenues by \$25,523,726, or about 13 per cent, based on data through March 31, 1980.

## Work On Cable TV System Begins First Of February

Television viewers whose desire for entertainment has long been hampered by erratic reception and limited selection will be happy to know that cable TV is on the way and will be in service in about eight months.

Don Vicini of Compass, an Erie, PA cable television development firm, reported Tuesday that construction will begin at the first of February on an earth station and receiving tower for Albemarle Cable TV Company's system in Edenton. Service is expected to begin six to seven months after start up of construction.

Vicini said the local system will be the third to be designed, engineered and constructed by Compass, parent company of Albemarle Cable TV Co.

Viewers within the Edenton city limits will be able to choose from three levels of service beginning with a mini-service consisting of 12 channels at \$6.95 per month. Next will be the Super Service with 19 channels at \$9.85 per month. Premium Service will consist of 19 channels plus Home Box Office and Cinemax at \$15 per month additional cost for the movie channels. About 25 channels will be available initially, and Vicini stated the system will be designed to handle up to 60 for future cable television expansion.

Another benefit will be the availability of cable FM reception carrying some 20 stations to home stereo systems.

Looking to the years ahead, cable TV could become a watchdog for the home through a two way system that links a home terminal with a computer at the other end. Among the many uses would be that of a security system for alerting police and fire departments when there is trouble, a means of responding to

Supplemental information filed shows that the company's costs have increased since March, 1980, due to a large construction program, climbing interest rates, wages, taxes and depreciation expenses. Decreasing long distance revenues were also cited as causing a need for increases in local service rates. The updated cost information will not affect the level of rates requested by the company on August 28.

Carolina Telephone's present rates became effective on June, 1979, as part of a Commission-ordered local rate reduction totaling \$6,723,000 due to the high levels of long distance revenues

televised polls and access to additional pay channels.

"This service is not presently available because of technology and price structures," Vicini commented. "But as technology changes, this service could become feasible."

He explained that the service will eliminate duplication.

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## Miss Keeter On Concert Tour

Miss Susan Carla Keeter, 205 South Granville Street, has been accepted for membership in the U.S. Collegiate Wind Band. The highly selective musical organization will make a concert tour of England and seven European countries in July and August.

The John A. Holmes High School senior is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Fred E. Keeter. She plays oboe in the Marching Aces Band, directed by Otis Strother.

The invitation to tour with the U.S. Collegiate Wind Band was received from Prof. Al G. Wright, director of bands at Purdue University in Lafayette, Ind., and conductor of nine previous band tours since they were started in 1971. Gladys Stone Wright is the associate conductor and is the founding president of the Women Band Directors National Association.

Local sponsors are being sought to defray some \$2,000 in expenses for the student's participation. Dr. Allen Hornthal is coordinating the sponsor list and can be reached at 482-2171.

The U. S. Collegiate Wind Band will travel for three weeks (July 13 - August 5) in England, France, Germany, Austria, Italy, Holland and Switzerland. Concerts will be

then being received.

Last month, in response to Carolina Telephone's August rate filing, the Public Staff of the Commission recommended a \$4.7-million increase for the company rather than the \$25.5 million applied for.

According to Carolina Telephone's President Wayne Peterson, the Public Staff's recommendation would disallow portions of Carolina Telephone's actual expenses and investments for rate purposes, calculate its taxes differently would use a theoretical capital structure rather than Carolina Telephone's own, and would allow a lower investor return on the company's operations than the company requested. Peterson characterized the Public Staff's recommendations as "totally unrealistic."

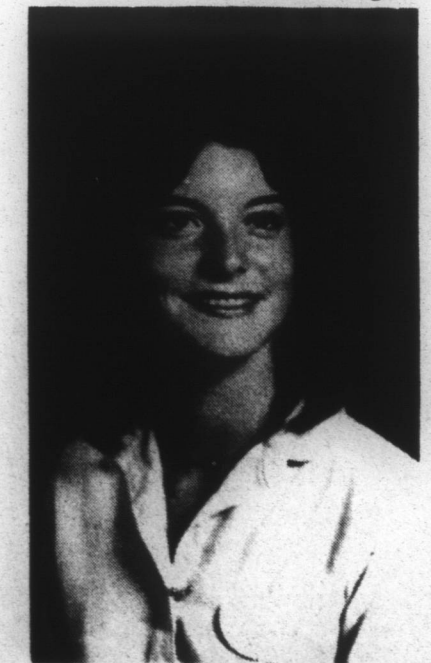
He said, "The Public Staff for some reason, appears to be willing to use every device it can come up with to hold our rates artificially low. We don't believe that it is in anyone's best interest, particularly that of our customers, to limit our ability to invest in cost effective facilities required for ongoing modern communications

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performed in the cities of London, Paris, Lucerne, Innsbruck, Lugano, La Chaux-de-Fonds, Munich, Amsterdam, Montreaux, Cologne and Heidelberg.

The group will assemble in New York City for rehearsals prior to their departure from Kennedy Airport on July 13. While in New York City the USCWB will play invitational concerts at the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts and in the Plaza of the

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Susan Carla Keeter