

THE NEWS RECORD

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On the Inside . . .

Lady Bicyclist Visits

Marshall On Way To

Florida - See Page 3A

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Ford Endorses Hendon, Gudger Stumps Counties

Campaigns In High Gear For Election Day

By NICHOLAS HANCOCK

In the last week before the polls open on election day, candidates from both Republican and Democratic parties have gone all out to woo voters to their side on Nov. 4. Candidates on the state and federal level have worn the campaign trails nearly into ruts in Western North Carolina, particularly in the 11th Congressional District.

The contest for the 11th District congressional seat between Democrat Lamar Gudger and Republican William (Bill) Hendon will probably be the most closely watched race in the state, and some political sages are saying the race will be the closest one in recent memory for the district.

Gudger, 61, is seeking his third term as congressional representative for the 11th District, and touts having "brought representative government back to Western North Carolina" in his campaign speeches. Hendon, a 35 year old Asheville businessman, has never held elective office and states "it's time for a change" regarding spiraling inflation and other ills he says are brought on by the Democratic party.

Rep. Gudger hit the campaign trail heavily last week

by boarding a chartered bus to visit the county seats in all 17 counties comprising the 11th District. He stopped in Marshall Friday morning during the seventh day of his tour to meet with local Democratic candidates and supporters on the steps of the courthouse.

Introduced to the audience by Zeno Ponder as "one of the best congressmen in Congress," Gudger responded by saying, "I feel as close to the people of Madison County as to any people on Earth."

Gudger lauded the Democratic ticket, and urged voters to support the best slate of Democratic candidates "we've had in a long time." He told supporters he has been doing his job in Congress by "voting for the things that you thought important... for agriculture support, for a strong national defense and for issues concerning the aging."

Gudger ended the 30 minute campaign address saying, "I belong to you, and these Democratic candidates belong to you. Let's get to work on building a better tomorrow for Madison County."

On the Republican campaign trail, former president Gerald R. Ford flew into Asheville Sunday to attend a rally at the Western North Carolina Farmers Market



REP. LAMAR GUDGER addresses voters and Democratic election hopefuls from the steps of the Madison County Courthouse Friday.

where an estimated crowd of more than 1,000 turned out for what was billed as "Bill Hendon Day In Western North

Carolina." Ford readily endorsed Hendon as the Republican congressional candidate, and

echoed Hendon's call to stop inflation and create a change in government by supporting and electing the Republicans on Nov. 4. The former president blamed the Democratically controlled Congress and President Carter for the nations economic woes stating the rate of inflation on the day of Carter's inauguration was 4.8 percent, and "under Jimmy Carter today it's 13 percent," he said.

Sharing the stage with Ford and Hendon at the rally were former Gov. Jim Holshouser, Chairman R. Curtis Ratcliff of the Buncombe County Commissioners and Mars Hill attorney Bruce Briggs.

Briggs, a former Superior Court judge and state legislator, is serving as Hendon's campaign manager, and has himself opposed Gudger for the congressional seat in the past.

Ford attacked Carter on his economic and foreign policies and defense records while he used Hendon's rally to promote Ronald Reagan for the presidency. He said Carter's foreign policy has been "a total failure," that inflation under Carter "is a rampage," and "this country is in peril" because of military expenditure cutbacks initiated by Carter.



FORMER PRESIDENT Gerald R. Ford campaigned for Bill Hendon in Asheville Sunday night at a Republican rally.

Ford said Reagan "will make a very good president," and he reminded the audience that a Republican president would be much more effective with a Republican Congress to support him.

The former president said that during the 20 years he had

served in the U.S. House of Representatives he had seen many congressmen and that Hendon would rank among the best. He said he had been traveling extensively this fall campaigning for 29 congressional candidates, and he would rate Hendon as a "man of quality who should serve in

Congress.

After the rally and a brief press conference at the Farmers Market, Ford joined Hendon and other Republican candidates and party leaders at a \$250-per-person fund raising dinner at the Biltmore Forest Country Club.



CROWD of voters, candidates, officials and the curious gathered at the Madison County courthouse to listen to Rep. Lamar Gudger praise Democratic candidates and officials before Tuesday's election.

'Most Gruesome Crime In Recent History'

Graverobbery Suspects Indicted, Await Trial

By KEVIN MORLEY

On October 20, 1980, the Grand Jury for Madison County returned True Bills of Indictment against three persons charging each of them with six counts of "grave-robbing", which is a violation of General Statute 14-150, and is a felony charge.

These indictments arose out of the investigation of the June entry into a private mausoleum in Hot Springs, and the theft of valuables and remains from the graves of Bessie May Safford, the daughter-in-law of President Andrew Johnson, Bernard Rumbough Baker, James Rumbough Safford, Mary Lee Hill, Daniel Bigelow Safford, and Ann Dandridge Baker.

Removal from the graves of skulls, teeth, rings and other items valued at

\$30,000 prompted some observers to call it the most gruesome crime in Madison County in recent history.

Indicted were McKinley Luther Aikens, 20, and Stanley Lewis, 49, both of Hot Springs, and Louis Bollo, whose current address is not known but who was residing in Hot Springs at the time of the crime.

Bollo is reportedly under arrest in Florida on unrelated charges but will be returned to Madison County to face trial with the other defendants.

Trial for the three is anticipated to begin during the December 8, Regular Criminal Session of the Madison County Superior Court in Marshall. Conviction on the charges could bring prison terms of up to ten years on each count.

Aikens was served with an order for arrest on these charges while in custody at the Madison County jail on unrelated charges. On Oct. 27, he was turned over to State Corrections officials after being sentenced by the Superior Court to two two year sentences to be served concurrently, one for assault with a deadly weapon and the other for violation of probation.

Stanley Lewis was arrested at his home in Hot Springs by Sheriff E.Y. Ponder who said the three had been suspects since the case was first investigated, and had been under surveillance for some time.

Bond for Lewis and Aikens was set in the amount of \$50,000.00 by Judge Frank W. Sneed. Lewis is being held in jail in lieu of bond.

McAlister Appointed Chairman

Maurice L. McAlister of Marshall has been appointed Madison County chairman of North Carolina State University Alumni Association's 1980-81 Loyalty Fund Campaign.

McAlister, a 1970 graduate of N.C. State's School of Education, said:

"There are 40 N.C. State alumni in Madison County, and we're counting on them to help sustain and expand our first true merit scholarship program. Volunteers will be calling the alumni in the county November 10-25 asking for their support."

Support of alumni in Madison County and the surrounding area will be a key in the association's efforts to raise more than \$400,000.

Westco Telephone Files Rate Hike Request

Western Carolina and Westco Telephone Companies Tuesday filed rate proposals which would generate \$3,560,580 in additional annual revenue for the combined companies.

Eugene Morris, president of the two companies, said that the last time they asked the North Carolina Utilities Commission for rate increases (in 1975) they were granted about 62 percent of what was requested.

It is expected that the requested Commission order will be issued in late spring 1981. The test-year end for the current filing is June 30, 1980.

"Inflation has adversely affected the companies' earnings and ability to expand and improve services," Morris said.

"Since the previous case, our operating expenses have increased dramatically. Payroll has increased 78%, maintenance costs 120%,"

taxes about 200%. There have been substantial increases in the cost of gasoline and electrical power.

"Despite very large increases in operating costs, we have been able to keep the amount of this request at a rate below the consumer price index for the same period. The requested increase is also within the President's price guideline.

"Without a rate increase, we could not continue attracting borrowed capital at a reasonable interest rate in order to meet the service improvements and needs of our customers."

Local service rates would go up by an average of about twenty-six percent if the request is granted.

The rate request has been complicated by an order from the Federal Communications Commission (Docket 20622) requiring all telephone companies to "unbundle" their rates.

Unbundling, to be phased in throughout the industry over the next year, separates costs of telephone instruments from charges related to the customer's basic access to telephone service.

This provides the private line customer with the option to own his telephones — much as he owns other appliances in his business or home: the washer, the refrigerator, the toaster.

Western Carolina and Westco are among other companies filing the unbundled rate format in compliance with the FCC order issued early this summer.

The 26 telephone exchanges of the two companies grew by 23,116 telephones, or a 35.2 percent expansion, over the five years since the last rate-case filing.

That growth required more than \$40 million of new investment for switching systems and transmission facilities.



GERALD FORD addresses crowd of 1,000 at Western North Carolina Farmers Market Sunday.

Madison Deputies Set Up Roadblock

A bank robbery in Maggie Valley sent Madison County Sheriff's deputies hurrying out Monday morning to set up road blocks on Routes 63 and 209.

The Sheriff's office was notified around 9:25 a.m. that the getaway car was headed for Soco Gap driven by a white male, around six feet tall, weighing 250 pounds.

Armed with shot guns and rifles the deputies were dispatched to cover the possible escape paths that lay in Madison County.

Late word Monday indicated that two suspects had abandoned the car and were being pursued on foot. At that point the deputies pulled off their stake-outs and returned to Marshall.

Good Turnout Seen For Election

About 65 percent of the registered voters in Madison County will probably turn out to cast their ballots on Tuesday, Nov. 4, according to Oscar McDevitt, chairman of the Madison County Board of Elections. McDevitt said the predicted turnout would be approximately 10 percent higher if a sheriff or county commissioners were up for election this year.

As of the registration deadline on Oct. 6, 10,678 persons are eligible to vote on Nov. 4 in Madison County.

That's a 626 increase in registered voters from the 1978 general election.

Broken down into party affiliation, the Board of Election records show 7,165 Democrats registered, up 534 from 1978; 3,121 Republicans, up 66; one Independent; 391 Unaffiliated, up 25. There are no Libertarians, Citizen or Socialist Worker party members registered in the county.

McDevitt said as of last Thursday, 131 civilian absentee ballots have been requested and 15 military service persons have applied for absentee ballots.

"The absentee ballot requests have been about average as compared with the past two or three elections," McDevitt said.

McDevitt spent parts of last Thursday and Friday traveling in the precinct polling places inspecting the voting machines. "They are all sealed and ready to go," he said. "The polls will open at 7:30 a.m. Tuesday and close at 7:30 p.m."