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Madison High Receives Committee Approval

When dog bites man, it's not news. When a man bites a dog, that's news. Likewise, when a school gives a report card, it's not news. When a school receives a report card, however, that's news.

Madison High School received a report card last week and the news is all good. A visiting committee from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools visited the school recently to inspect the facility and its operations.

The committee of 13 educators inspected Madison High because the school had applied for accreditation from the association. The committee met with the school's teachers and students to determine if accreditation was warranted.

Madison High School principal David Wyatt announced the committee's findings at

last week's meeting of the Board of Education. Wyatt told the board the committee has recommended Madison High School for accreditation without conditions.

Accreditation by the Southern Association is expected to make it easier for Madison High School graduates to gain admittance to many colleges. The school has already been accredited by the state Board of Education.

Wyatt added that the committee's recommendation alone does not confer accreditation. The recommendation will now be considered by a panel on the state level. Should the panel concur with the visiting committee's findings, the action will be taken when the association meets at its annual convention in Atlanta in December.

Culver Dale, the former director of the Western Regional Education Center, chaired the 13-member visiting committee.

At Wednesday's meeting of the Board of Education, Wyatt thanked the board for their support in applying for accreditation. He also presented the board with a copy of the three-volume self-study report which the school's faculty prepared as a basis for the accreditation.

The report was the basis for the visiting committee's inspection. The committee reviewed the report prior to inspecting the school's operation. The inspection was made to give the committee a first-hand look at the school's operation. The inspectors sat in on classes and interviewed both faculty and students as part of their tour.

In other action taken at Wednesday's school board meeting, the board approved the allocation of \$25,000 for the purchase of a new activity bus for Madison High School. The funds were made available from surplus funds from last year's budget allocated by the county commissioners.

The board also heard from driver education instructor McClelland Rice regarding a proposal for the driver training program. French Broad Chevrolet of Marshall has offered to supply the driver training program with cars for student drivers. The board approved the proposal, subject to the approval of contracts by the board's attorney, Larry Leake.

The board also accepted the resignations of Barbara Ray, a former teacher and Arthur Gosnell, a school bus driver.



OLD NO. 765 PASSES through Marshall Saturday afternoon on its way back to Knoxville. The steam locomotive made a round-trip excursion from Knoxville to Asheville for railroad and nostalgia fans.

Pioneer Days Reset For Nov. 5 And 6

The Pioneer Days celebration, cancelled earlier by a strike by locomotive engineers, has been rescheduled for Nov. 5 and 6, according to Cynthia Niles, the celebration's coordinator.

The celebration, marking the 100th anniversary of the railroad's coming to Marshall, was cancelled last month when the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers struck the nation's railroads. Congressional action brought an end to the walkout, but not in

time to save the two-day celebration in Marshall.

Highlight of the weekend festivities will be "The Best Friend of Charleston", a replica of the first steam engine made in America. Accompanying the replica will be a display car belonging to the Norfolk Southern Railway. The display car will have exhibits detailing the history of railroading in America from the early days of steam engines to the computerized present.

"The Best Friend of Charleston" will be giving free rides to the public on Nov. 6. The first day of the celebration, Nov. 5, the train will be available to give rides to senior citizens and the handicapped.

Other activities are planned in conjunction with the train's visit to Marshall. For more information, contact Cynthia Niles at Roberts Pharmacy in Marshall.

Chapel With A Long History

By SELMA RAMSEY AND EVERETT BARNETT

As you leave Marshall and enter the Rollins community, you may have noticed a small chapel sitting alone beside the road. That small chapel and its congregation have a history dating back nearly a century.

Ponders Chapel Baptist Church was organized in 1885 by the Rev. Randy Ponders on Little Pine Creek. Property for the church was donated by Bud Roberts.

Rev. Ponders began his church by preaching in the homes of the congregation at first. Before long, the congregation was able to build a small plant building which also served as a school. After the building was completed, Rev. Ponders was called to serve another church.

In 1920, Rev. Ponders returned to visit the congregation. The church members gathered in the Roberts home and Rev. Ponders preached to

them once more. This was his last visit to the church. He died shortly after visiting Marshall.

Following Rev. Ponders' departure, the Rev. H.E. Gudger was chosen as the pastor of the church. Rev. Gudger was a large man, standing six and a half feet tall and weighing some 230 pounds. He preached at the little church on the first and third Sunday of each month, walking from his home in Leicester to Marshall, a distance of 14 miles. He returned home each Sunday on foot after giving his sermon.

Rev. Gudger was a very dedicated man and he preached at the little church until his death in 1930 when he was in his 80's. He told the congregation he was "not going to rust out, he was going to wear out for the Lord."

His favorite hymn was "Trust In The Lord" and he sang it at the end of every service he conducted.

The little plant church was moved several times during its years of service. After it was built on Little Creek around 1885, it was first moved across the river to Redmon Rd., about a half mile below Marshall. The church was moved by a team of mules and ferried across the French Broad.

Later, the church was moved to what is now the corner of Walnut Creek Rd. and Skyway Dr. Another move saw the church transported to a site on Hayes Run and Smith Creek.

On Dec. 1, 1903, a lot was purchased from W.B. Ramsey, Minnie Ramsey, A.J. Ramsey and Clara Ramsey by Joe Hall and Fate Jackson, trustees of the church. The lot was purchased for \$20. The plank church then made its last move, to the lot at the mouth of Hayes Run, its present location.

In 1952, the old plant church was replaced by the one that stands on the lot today. The

new church was built by the Payne brothers, Clay, Garrison and Wayne.

When he died in 1930, Rev. Gudger had served as pastor for 43 years. He was succeeded by the Rev. Homer Ferguson, who served the congregation for two years. Following his departure, The Rev. J.H. Pettaway served as pastor for 10 years. He was succeeded by Rev. Charlie Thomason who served for two years. Rev. Thomason was succeeded by the Rev. J.E. Pedew, who served as the pastor from 1952 until his death in Nov. 1981. Following the death of Rev. Pedew, the Rev. D.E. Lytle was named interim pastor, a position he still holds.

Everett Barnett has served the church for the past 46 years as treasurer. Mrs. Edith Hampton has served as the church secretary for the past 27 years.

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ARC Cuts Will Hurt County

Many good things have occurred in Madison County in recent years because local officials have applied for, and received, funds from the Appalachian Regional Commission. The 17-year-old agency is now facing drastic funding cuts from the federal government.

ARC funding has been responsible for many improvements made over the past 17 years. These improvements include renovating elderly people's homes in the Bee Tree section, creating day care centers for working mothers, improvements in the county health program and attracting new industry to Madison County.

ARC funding for such projects could be affected by current efforts to work out a solution to different bills passed by the House and Senate in Congress.

The house version of the bill calls for a five year "Finish Up" program, starting with \$298 million in next year's fiscal budget. The Senate version calls for a three-year extension of the commission and provides for a \$150 million block grant, with only \$50 million earmarked for non-highway projects.

What will cuts in the ARC funding mean to Madison County? Sam Parker, director of the Madison County Housing Authority, and Becky Williams, a consultant to the authority, said older people would be especially hard hit by such a move.

ARC funds, they explained, have helped finance renovations to some 183 houses in Madison County regarded as substandard. About half of such homes belong to older people.

Some three or four decades ago, Parker said, a man would call his neighbors and say "Hey, I have to build me a house. Will you help me?" Such a house would be built as well as the man and his neighbors knew how, but often it

would be built without indoor plumbing, or insulation, or a modern septic system, so that often effluent ran into a nearby creek.

If such a house were wired for electricity at all, Parker said, chances are the wiring was never inspected for safety. Now, most of these houses belong to older people, said Parker — so that it is typical that half the 22 houses in the Bee Tree area being brought up to standards by this year's ARC grant belong to older citizens.

There's still plenty to do," said Parker. Madison County is the only western county in the 1980 census, with more than 20% substandard housing. He said the authority has applied for and received ARC grants three years in a row to renovate 105 houses; the Town of Marshall has received funds to take care of 38 additional houses and Hot Springs has received funds for 40 houses. Housing Authority grants were actually for 18 months, but each time the work was finished within a year, to clear the way for another grant application.

ARC funds are available only for septic systems, water supplies and other site work, but these funds enable the Housing Authority to stretch other funds it gets from the U.S. Housing & Urban Development Department (HUD) and other sources, to the point where the housing authority can renovate 25% more houses each year.

HUD funds also go to projects where other sources of funding are available, said Parker — so that, if ARC is ended, the county will find it more difficult to get funds from HUD. Combination of the two sources, HUD and ARC, Becky Williams said, has brought about \$3.5-million into Madison County over the last three or four years.

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YOUNG MEMBERS OF PONDEERS CHAPEL CHURCH stand outside the building in this 1919 photo. In front from the left are, Obeatrice McLain, Robert Gorman, Charles Jones, Hugh and Brownlow Barnett, Walter Henry and Everett Barnett. In the second row are Eugene Jones, Earl Barnett, Howard Feimster, Guy Barnett, Hattie and Sue Henry, Bertie McLain, Kathleen

Feimster, Lena May Weston and Mable McLain. Behind them stand Ray Henry, Buster Jones, William and Dorsey Barnett, Lodusky Jones, Norman Feimster, Mable Davenport, Rose McLain, Margaret Davenport, Virginia and Lodie Jones and Dora Gorman. In the rear are Elizabeth Henry, Carrie Baker, Rev. J.C. Clark and Bob Sams.