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Continental VP Predicts

Telephone Charges To Rise

Basic monthly telephone service in Madison County and Weaverville area could cost \$50 in the next five years if present inflation and deregulation trends continue, The News Record has learned.

Turner A. Rogers, vice president of Continental Telephone of North Carolina, said last week that such rapid rate increases might deprive low income customers of phone service entirely. Rogers said he is concerned about the trend because it will effect people in his company's services area "socially as well as economically. In other words, they won't be able to call the sheriff, the doctor, the fire department, the church."

Rogers says he is unhappy with the so-called "Pure II" deregulation plan that would require residential customers to pay flat rate to local phone companies for access to long distance lines whether or not they made any long distance

calls. In contrast, the local companies have been paid by the Bell System for their part in helping provide the long distance service. Rogers noted that 60 percent of Continental's revenues have been coming from the Bell System.

Long distance rates have been high enough in the past partially subsidize local service, bringing basic telephone service within reach of as many people as possible.

Rural customers will be hurt the most, Rogers said, because rural users already pay more for telephone service than city residents because rural homes are further apart, creating the need for longer lines and longer travel distances for servicing. While local rates would rise, long distance rates in Madison County would go down under the Pure II plan.

The proposed changes have not yet been approved by the

necessary state and regulatory agencies. Continental opposes the changes. The Bell System favors them because they will allow the long distance company to compete more effectively with other companies offering long distance service.

Rogers also had some predictions concerning changes that will be beneficial to Madison County and Weaverville customers.

Computerized digital switchboards should make new services like call forwarding and speed dialing available in the future. Even telephone-computer connections that will allow window shopping by phone could eventually become possible.

The new computerized switchboards will help keep costs down because they require less maintenance and space than those currently in use.

Some changes have already taken place. As of Jan. 1,

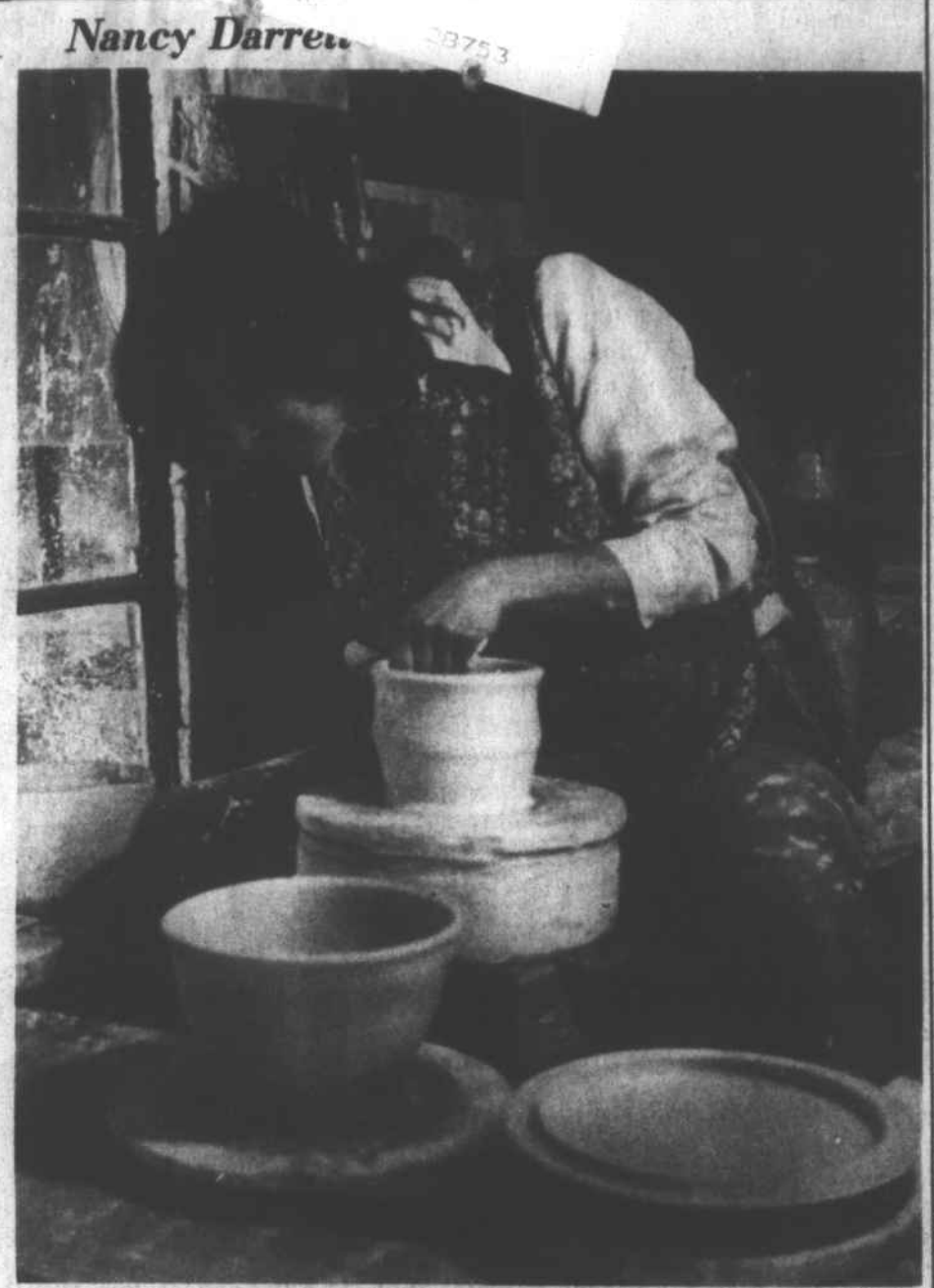
customers with party line phones become eligible, as those with single party phones, to buy their telephones and avoid a monthly leasing charge. Party line customers were unable to purchase their phones in the past because their instruments had to have the right frequency to ring on their line only. About a quarter of all telephone customers in Madison County are still on party lines.

As of the first of the year, customers acquiring new services or adding additional services are required to purchase their own phone. The new regulations also allow first-time customers to save money doing their own in-house wiring. The telephone company offers a booklet providing instructions for the wiring.

There are now approximately 5,240 telephone customers in Madison County and 5,027 in the Weaverville exchange.

The price of telephone service is based on the number of phones that can be reached in an exchange. All phones in Madison County are in Group I, phones that can reach fewer than 4,000 other phones locally. Weaverville customers, who can telephone Asheville numbers toll-free, are in Group 5 and pay a higher basic charge each month.

All toll calls made in Madison County must first pass through Asheville. If someone in Marshall wants to call someone in Hot Springs, the call goes into Asheville and back out again. Because of this, it is not likely that the changes in telephone service charges will include the reduction in the present toll call system among the towns, Rogers says that the cost of rewiring to make such changes possible would be prohibitive.



(Photo by Bob Koenig)

Shelton Laurel's Crafty Potter

By ROBERT KOENIG

In the peaceful quiet of her Shelton Laurel home, Nancy Darrell works at an age-old craft. With only thousands of her farm animals to disturb the silence, Nancy sits at a kick wheel crafting fine porcelain wares that are both functional and beautiful. Nancy operates a cottage industry with many centuries of history from her farmhouse near the Tennessee border. She and her husband, Don, operate a small farm on 50 acres in the Shelton Laurel section on Mill Creek.

surrounded by sacks of clay that she uses to create her pottery, Nancy sits at her wheel and "throws" pottery. When potters "throw" pottery, they create the forms that will be solidified on shelves called boards. A board might contain several dozen pieces of work, depending on the size of the individual pieces. The first step in creating a work of pottery begins weeks before Nancy sits down at her wheel. The clay used to create porcelain is a mixture of kaolin, silica and feldspar. The mixture must be allowed to age to allow for the breakdown of bacteria. Nancy ages her clay from two to six months. Some potters will age their clay for as long as a year.

trained eye watches as a bowl takes shape at the potter's fingertips. Nancy uses few tools in her craft. When the piece on the wheel begins to take shape, Nancy will use a small piece of plastic called a rib to help shape the piece. Later, she will use another small tool to trim away any rough edges. After the thrown piece of clay has been coaxed into shape, it goes on a shelf to dry. The piece must dry to a stage where it is what Nancy describes as "leather hard" before handles or knobs can be added. Once the handles are added, the piece then must continue drying until it reaches the bone hard stage. The chalk white pieces of pottery are then ready for their first firing in the kiln. Exposure to the high temperatures of the kiln creates porcelain from the clay by a chemical reaction. Nancy's kiln is a gas heated creation behind the workshop. She and Don built it when they moved to the Shelton Laurel farm. The pieces to be fired must be carefully stacked inside the kiln so that no piece touches

Once the clay is ready to be thrown, Nancy takes special care to center the clay on the wheel. This centering is important for creating a piece that is evenly shaped. When the clay is centered on the wheel, the potter's magic begins. As the wheel turns the clay, skilled hands make the lump of clay take shape as a vase, bowl, cup or plate. To the casual observer, the workings of the potter's hands is barely detectable. The un-

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Clean Water Committee Sets Recommendations

By ROBERT KOENIG

The Citizens' Advisory Committee for the Madison County Clean Waters Project met recently to finalize a draft summary of their recommendations for installing septic systems in county homes. The committee's work, to be presented to the Madison County Board of Commissioners, is the first step in a project to upgrade sewage facilities in six target areas in the county.

The committee will report to the county commissioners at their regular monthly meeting, scheduled for Friday in the county courthouse at 7:30 p.m. The county commissioners are not obligated to accept the committee's recommendations.

The planning phase of the Clean Waters Project is just

the first step in the process to provide the septic systems. Funding for the project is not expected before the 1985 fiscal year. The planning phase is a necessary first step toward obtaining the necessary funding from Environmental Protection Agency. The Madison County Housing Authority currently has funds from the block grant program to install septic systems in 35 homes. When the necessary funding is provided, the advisory committee hopes to install septic systems in some 240 homes in the county.

At their last meeting, the citizens' advisory board, composed of residents of the six target areas, decided on a number of recommendations.

Although the committee did not decide on a particular area in which to begin the project,

they were in agreement with the proposal that work be begun in a single area before going on to another of the targeted areas. The committee also agreed that participation in the project would be on a voluntary basis.

The committee also agreed that the Madison County Health Department should be charged with the responsibility of informing residents in the target areas of the costs, benefits and responsibilities of accepting the new septic systems.

Those homeowners agreeing to having the systems installed will be charged a portion of the system's cost. It is estimated that the cost of a conventional system will be somewhere around \$120 while more expensive systems could cost \$240. The committee

agreed that those residents accepting septic systems will pay according to the kind of system needed.

Committee member Dr. Don Anderson suggested that some provision be made for low income and elderly residents receiving improvements. Becky Williams suggested that looking into Farmers Home Administration funding for those unable to afford the improvements.

The committee also agreed that those receiving the system be required to grant an easement so that inspections and maintenance on the systems can be performed.

Regarding the costs of homeowners, the committee recommended that each homeowner be required to pay a \$25 refundable deposit prior to having the site evaluated

for a recommended septic system. Those receiving the improvements would also be required to sign a binding contract for the construction and easement and would be required to pay the balance due at the completion of the construction.

One of the major questions the committee was unable to resolve at their last meeting regarding which county agency should be appointed to operate the project. The committee recommended that the county commissioners make the decision.

A detailed 21-page draft summary of the committee's findings has been prepared by Frank R. Shutz Consulting Engineers of Asheville. The report will be presented to the board of commissioners at the Friday night meeting.

Mountain Park Hotel

A Legend's Lure Remains

By ELIZABETH D. SQUIRE

Travelers still come to Hot Springs lured by the legend of healing springs.

Sheila Price, waitress at the Trail Restaurant, says that even in winter about two people a week come in and ask "Where is the hot spring?" and "Does it really cure diseases?" More come in summer.

On a recent cold day, a young couple and a young man who hopes to buy land in Hot Springs had ignored the "no trespassing" signs to go look at the boarded-up bathhouse. Said the young man: "What catches the imagination is that there's something of natural origin here that goes way back to the earliest part of our history, was once built

up into something remarkable and then just faded back into nature... except it didn't. Now it's walled away."

Even back in the 1920's as the widely famous resort began to die, the citizens could not believe it.

Peggy Dotterer did not know her twelfth birthday party with a cake decorated by the chef at the Mountain Park Hotel would be her last at the hotel. Shortly after that birthday party, her grandfather, Col. James Henry Rumbough, then in his 60's, gave up running the hotel. That was on the eve of World War I.

Then during the war the hotel became an internment camp for men seized from German ships. Even that was a glamorous time in the hotel's history, Mrs. Dotterer remembers. "A German band came out on the lawn every afternoon and played that gorgeous music" (behind the fence, of course). "All the German wives came out and sat on our wall and listened and waved at their husbands." Even a ship from which Ger-

man men were seized brings back legendary memories. The husband to be of Carolyn Parker of Weaverville, Arthur Robinson, served as an army guard at the internment camp, then sailed to France on the captured German ship. There was a cabin for the Kaiser inlaid with gold on that ship, young Robinson told her.

After the war, the Mountain Park Hotel burned down, probably because a repair worker dropped a cigarette. This was the third hotel near the springs to burn: the first Warm Springs Hotel in 1838, the next hotel in 1884, the Mountain Park in 1920.

Bessie R. Sanford, one of Col. Rumbough's daughters, built the next building by the springs, a sanatorium.

Mrs. Sanford was a fit subject for a legend herself. She was Andrew Johnson's son's widow, then had married a rich banker and lived in Paris. But back in Hot Springs again, she was unable to get doctors, nurses, or Catholic sisters to come run her sanatorium. Father Andrew

Graves says. Jesuits of the New Orleans province bought the building and the springs property around it, intending to start a college. But Hot Springs never became a college town because the Jesuits unable to get a tax deduction and finally

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BATH HOUSE of the Mountain Park Hotel as it appears today.

Mineral Bath \$1.50
Hours 8 A.M. - 6 P.M.
WATER 50¢
SAB 50

PEGGY DOTTERER stands next to the sign on the boarded-up bath house, showing prices at the time it closed.

W'ville Office To Close

Officials of the Continental Telephone Company of North Carolina have announced plans to close their service office in Weaverville effective March 11. The office closing is part of the company's efforts to centralize service to customers. Services handled in the Weaverville office will be transferred to the company's offices in Sylva. Continental Telephone operates telephone service to customers in Madison, Yancey, Mitchell, McDowell

and North Buncombe counties, as well as much of Western North Carolina. The Weaverville office will remain open for customers wishing to pay their bills in person. The Weaverville office currently employs 12 people. A worker in the Weaverville office said Monday that only one employee has accepted a transfer to the Sylva office. The Weaverville office will retain two employees for bill collection. One employee of the office is retiring and the remainder will lose their jobs.