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Commissioners Raise Property Tax

By BOB KOENIG

The Madison County Board of Commissioners voted to increase the county property tax rate by 20 cents at a monthly meeting Friday night. The increase raises the Madison County property tax rate to 95 cents on each \$100 of assessed valuation, highest in Western North Carolina.

The tax increase comes at a time when the commissioners are attempting to prepare the operating budget for the upcoming fiscal year and collect taxes owed from previous years. The shortfall leaves the county almost \$20,000 below projected revenues for the current fiscal year.

A report in the Monday edition of The Asheville-Citizen stated that the county may not be able to meet the employee payroll this week because of the shortfall. There was no discussion of payless paydays for county workers at the Friday night meeting. Neither

Caldwell or commission chairman James Ledford was available for comment on Monday concerning the report.

Caldwell told the commissioners that he has received budget requests totaling \$2.6 million from county agencies for the upcoming fiscal year. He said that the county would have to impose a tax rate of \$1.09 in order to meet all the request. The finance officer asked the commissioners to hold a session to work on the county operating budget for next year.

The board members rejected increasing the tax rate to \$1.09. Ledford asked if delinquent taxes could be included in next year's budget. Caldwell said the delinquent tax payments could not be anticipated and, therefore, could not be included in the county's budget.

County attorney Larry Leake reported that efforts to collect delinquent taxes have thus far been unsuccessful. He said that his office had thus far sent out written notices to some 40

delinquent taxpayers owing in excess of \$27,000 in back taxes. To date, the letters have received only one response with a payment of \$266.

Ledford asked Caldwell if the county could operate with a tax rate of 90 cents. The finance officer said he didn't think so, adding that the devaluation of property owned by Norfolk Southern Corp. would cost the county at least \$172,000, or ten cents per \$100 of the county's assessed property evaluation.

Caldwell reported that he has trimmed the county Board of Education's request for \$951,000 to \$600,000. Commissioner Ervin Adams moved to increase the property tax rate to 95 cents. The motion was seconded by Virginia Anderson and was passed without opposition.

Even with the cut in the Board of Education's request, the commissioners must still trim \$164,000 from requests of other county

WNC COUNTY PROPERTY TAX RATES ON \$100 VALUATION

AVERY	52c
ASHE	58c
BUNCOMBE	59.5c
BURKE	62c
CHEROKEE	42c
CLAY	54c
CLEVELAND	68c
HAYWOOD	69c
HENDERSON	39.5c
MACON	35c
MITCHELL	65c
MCDOWELL	57c
TRANSYLVANIA	69c
RUTHERFORD	85c
YANCEY	50c

*Several counties impose additional surcharges for communities within fire districts

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Marshall Project Delayed

By BOB KOENIG

Work on the \$1.2 million Marshall sewer project was postponed for at least two weeks when town officials discovered that the project had failed to attract a sufficient number of bidders. The discovery was made at a bid

opening Thursday afternoon at which town officials had hoped to award two contracts in connection with the project. The bid opening was held in conjunction with the monthly meeting of the Board of Aldermen. Bids on two separate contracts were read

by Bill Lapsley, an engineer with Butler-McGill Associates, the town's consultant on the project. One contract called for the construction of a waste treatment plant and pumping stations. A second contract was to be awarded for the installation of

interceptors and water mains. Although five contractors submitted bids on the waste treatment portion of the project, only two bids were submitted for the larger contract to install the water mains. State law requires the town to receive at least three qualified

bids before awarding the construction contract.

The bid opening was further complicated when Lapsley read a bid submitted by CFW Construction Co. of Fayetteville, Tenn., but declined to announce the other bid on the

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Mars Hill Man Drowns After Rescue Of Seven

A Mars Hill man drowned in the French Broad River near Hot Springs Sunday afternoon after helping rescue seven friends when their craft overturned under the Deep Water Bridge.

George Frank Wilson, 39, of Route 2 Mars Hill was pronounced dead at the scene when discovered by rescue workers, according to Madison County Sheriff E.Y. Ponder.

Ponder said, Wilson disap-

peared after rescuing seven members of the group. After assisting the seven back to shore, Wilson returned to the water to help the other two rafters when he went under. The accident occurred about 2 p.m.

Rafters at the scene of the accident immediately began a search for Wilson. The Madison County EMS and a rescue squad from Newport, Tenn. joined in the search. Wilson's body was recovered

about 5:15 p.m. by members of the county rescue squad in a boat. He was found in water 20 feet deep some 170 yards from where he first disappeared.

The tragedy ended a two-day river trip for the Mars Hill group. Ponder said the rafters set out from Asheville Saturday morning and camped near Marshall Saturday night. They were near the end of their planned trip when the raft overturned.

Mars Hill Project Explained

More than 35 Mars Hill residents attended a public hearing on the town's proposed \$2.4 million sewer project Monday night at Mars Hill Town Hall. The public hearing was held to inform residents of plans for the proposed sewer system and to hear their views on the project.

Mayor Bill Powell, aldermen, and the town clerk explained details of the proposed project and answered residents' questions. Powell said the project will cost an estimated \$2.4 million. Funds will come from grants from the Farmers Home Administration, Mars Hill College, the North Carolina Clean Water Fund and from the sale of a \$1.5 million bond issue that Mars Hill voters will decide on Aug. 3. Financing for the project is similar to that obtained by Marshall last year for renovation of the town's water and sewer

system. The engineering firm of McGuire-Beebe of Spartanburg, S.C. provided cost estimates in March. Powell termed the firm's figures "bare bones estimate of the cost." The mayor told those at the meeting that construction of a waste treatment plant will cost almost \$600,000 while four pumping stations will cost \$330,000. Interceptor lines will cost another \$133,000, and collector lines will cost almost a million dollars. The project has a contingency fund of almost \$200,000.

The mayor also said that the system will have an annual operating budget of \$221,394 beginning in 1985. Estimates provided by the FmHA state that the average monthly cost for private residents should be about \$15.33. The town's debt on the bonds will be repaid over 40 years.

When completed, the

system will serve 90 percent of the town. Residents along Parkway View Rd., and in the trailer park owned by C.N. Willis will not be served by the new system. Powell said the area was excluded from the project because including the road in the plan would have cost an additional one million dollars. Aldermen Dr. W. Otis Duck told the residents that those homes not connected to the new system will not pay the additional water and sewer charges.

Powell said all homes served by the new system will be required to hook into the system. He added that the mandatory hookup is a requirement for the FmHA grant. The project will provide water and sewer lines to locations just outside the homeowner's property. The residents will have to pay the cost of connecting their homes to the system's lines.

In addition to some 400 private residents, the new system will also serve 11 businesses and the town's largest water customer, Mars Hill College. Dr. Fred Bentley attended the Monday night meeting and explained the college's position concerning the project.

"We don't have any choice in this matter," he said. "If the town were not to approve this project, we will have to proceed immediately with plans to have a secondary treatment plant operating by September of 1984. We're under a strict mandate to do something."

The school has pledged \$150,000 for the project and will also give over its present system to the town as part of the proposed project.

Mars Hill businessman Clyde English told the meeting, "This will mean a lot to bringing business to Mars

Hill, and I'm glad to see it. Mars Hill is on the move and this will keep us moving."

Powell told the meeting that a referendum on the bond issue has been scheduled for Aug. 3. Residents have until July 5 to register to vote in the referendum. Before adjourning the public meeting, the town residents took a voice vote of confidence on the plan. The vote was unanimous in favor of it.

The regular monthly meeting of the town's board of aldermen was held following the public hearing. Council member Gordon Randolph was out of town and did not attend the Monday night meeting.

The remaining town officials approved a request by chief of police R.J. Cutshall for a salary increase for Mars Hill police officer Rick Haynes. The aldermen ap-

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M.H. Police Capture 2 Escaped Convicts

Mars Hill police captured two escaped convicts from South Carolina early Friday morning in Mars Hill, according to police Chief R.J. Cutshall.

The escapees were from the Cross Anchor Institute, a corrections facility near Gaffney. The prisoners were on a work release job in a garage owned by the city of Gaffney when they made their escape in a city-owned truck Thursday. The truck apparently ran out of gas near Mars Hill.

Mars Hill police officer Rick Haynes was the only officer on

duty after midnight in Mars Hill when he spotted the two men walking near parked cars on South Main Street near the Mars Hill College campus. Haynes stopped the men and asked for identification. Neither was able to produce

any identification and one of the men gave Haynes a false name. Haynes ran a check on the two men and then took them into custody and called Chief Cutshall. After discovering the stolen truck, Cutshall called Gaffney and found the true identity of the escaped

convicts. Arrested were James Thurston, 23, serving three years for breach of trust and John Hall, 20, serving a three year sentence for car theft.

Officer Haynes and Chief Cutshall escorted the prisoners to the Madison County Jail in Marshall. The men were returned to the South Carolina prison on Friday afternoon.

Officer Haynes was commended by the Mars Hill Board of Aldermen for his arrest at the board's Monday night meeting.

The Times - And Ways Of Keeping It - Are Changing

By JOY ASCHENBACH

National Geographic News Service

WASHINGTON — Once upon a time, a glance at the sun seemed good enough. Now, man needs to know the exact time to a billionth of a second, and atomic clocks tell him.

A hundred years ago, noon was whenever the sun passed directly over your town. To signal the moment in large cities, a big "time ball" was dropped from a mast atop the highest point around.

There were at least 100 different local times in the United States, and a person traveling from coast to coast would have to reset their watch some 20 times.

Even within the East, when it was noon in the nation's capital, it was already 12:08 p.m. in Philadelphia, 12:12 in New York, and 12:24 in Boston. In Atlanta, it was still only 11:36 a.m.

Confused? So were travelers on the then fastest means of transportation, the railroad. In Pittsburgh alone, six different railroad times governed train departures. Passengers easily missed connections.

That's the way it was until 100 years ago. At noon on Nov. 18, 1883, time changed for good. The railroads standardized it into the four now familiar zones: Eastern, Central, Mountain, and Pacific.

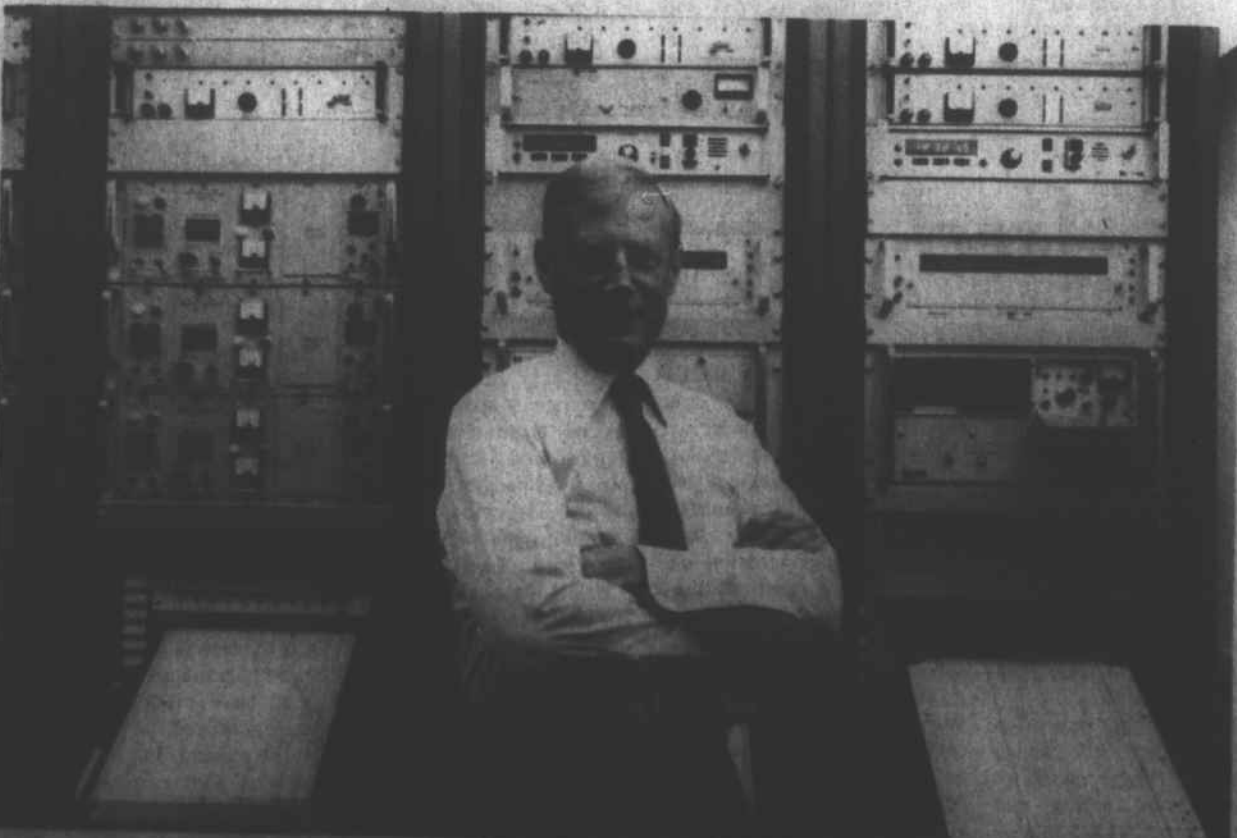
It was known as the "Day of Two Noons" because in the eastern part of each zone there was a noon by the sun, and another by standard time. Telegraph lines transmitted the new noon time from the master clock at the U.S. Naval Observatory in Washington, D.C., to major cities.

Some people grumbled. "The sun is no longer to boss the job," complained an Indiana newspaper. "People must...eat, sleep, work, marry, and die by railroad time. The planets must, in the future, make their circuits by such timetables as railroad magnates arrange."

Despite the initial resistance, the rest of the world followed. Within a few years the entire globe was divided into 24 uniform time zones, each an hour apart. Every 15 degrees of longitude east or west of the prime meridian at Greenwich, England, is equal to one hour in mean solar time. The United States ran on railroad time for 35 years before Congress formally adopted that standardized system in 1918.

Every since the beginning of standard time, scientists have spent time trying to make the nation and the world even more "on time." They have succeeded in within a billionth of a second.

What time is it - really? The answer



By Steven Lipton
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They may not have that familiar round face, but these are clocks—the atomic type that is the most reliable in the world. Using the atomic clock, time is kept to a billionth of a second. Master of the atomic clock at the U.S. Naval Observatory, Dr. Ernest R. Westbrook presides over the system that sets the nation's timekeeper.