

THE NEWS RECORD

SERVING THE PEOPLE OF MADISON COUNTY

MADISON
COUNTY LIBRARY
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MARSHALL NC 28753

82nd Year No. 31

PUBLISHED WEEKLY IN THE COUNTY SEAT AT MARSHALL

WEDNESDAY, August 10, 1983

15¢ Per Copy

In Mars Hill

Voters Approve Sewer Bond

Construction of Mars Hill's new sewer project is due to start early next spring and be completed in the spring of 1985, according to Town Manager Darhyl Boone.

Voters last Wednesday approved, 261-56, the sale of \$1.5-million in bonds to pay for improvements in and extensions to the town's sewer system, including a new treatment plan. Out of 694 eligible voters, 317 cast votes in the referendum.

Mayor Bill Powell said officials were "tickled to death" at the outcome of the vote. "It's what people really want — they spoke," he said.

Boone said the project now goes into the engineering stage, and that this should take about six months, after which the project will be put out for bidding.

In addition to the sewer bonds, the project will be supported by a \$915,000 grant and \$1,029,000 loan from the Farmers Home Administration. Mars Hill College is donating a site for the treatment plant.



Photo by Bob Koenig

\$15,000 Grant

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE Liston Ramsey, right, presents check for \$15,000 to Vanda Cook, treasurer of the Laurel Volunteer Fire Dept. Laurel Fire Chief Lawrence Cutshall and volunteers Jimmy Joe Shelton, George Cook and Louie Zimmerman look on.

Grant Will Improve Fire Protection

By ELIZABETH SQUIRE
First of Two Parts

Madison County volunteer fire companies this week are busy making plans for improvements in coverage of fires that can be made with a \$100,000 legislative grant. Every minute that can be shaved from response times, fire chiefs told The News Record, is vital in a county where some houses are half an hour from a firehouse.

Even after the new \$100,000 is spent, the chiefs agree, problems will remain. But the situation is getting better. Marshall Chief Jackie Davis said that the Eddie Sexton home in Shelton Laurel was a total loss in a fire several years ago because the Marshall firemen had to drive 28 miles before they could start fighting the flames. Now, he said, a new firehouse in Laurel will cut the response time to three or four minutes.

Davis and other fire officials say the new Laurel department and the new West Madison department in Spring Creek are prime examples of what the county needs — more

satellite companies to respond quickly, rescue people from house fires and keep things under control until the larger companies can arrive with more equipment.

Until the Laurel and West Madison companies were started, Marshall's department was handling calls up to 55 minutes from its firehouse. Now, according to Assistant Chief Bobby Allen, response time will be down to about 20 minutes.

The Marshall fire company now covers an area from Petersburg to the top of Hot Springs Mountain and to the top of Doggett Mountain. Last year the company responded to 92 fire calls.

Mars Hill Chief Gordon Randolph said his company needs 28 minutes to get to parts of Wolf Laurel, but that a truck now on order may cut this to 20 minutes. The Mars Hill company covers Grapevine, East Fork, about halfway to Marshall (where the phone exchange ends), and U.S. 19 as far as Yancey County, plus all of Greater Ivy and south on 19-23. The company responded

to 78 calls in 1982 and has had about 48 so far this year, he said. About two-thirds of these calls are "structural," he said.

It's difficult to respond to calls effectively beyond a five-mile radius, said Marshall Chief Allen — especially in winter. So the county fire chiefs now have "wish-lists" of areas where small satellite departments could be set up. Marshall would like to see such satellites in Hopewell, Sandy Mush and the Shut-In area. Mars Hill's list includes East Fork, Grapevine, Greater Ivy and, especially, Wolf Laurel.

Tony Webb, of the U.S. Forest Service, which helps local fire companies in areas where forest fires are a factor, has his own "wish-list" — Bluff, Eb's Chapel, Spillcorn and Sodom. Chief Lawrence Cutshall of Laurel agrees with the last two and hopes his company can expand to have a truck in each location.

Hot Springs Assistant Chief Wesley Staude, who says his company has been round

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Commissioners Approve Sales Tax Increase

A new half-cent sales tax was approved, effective Oct. 1, by the Board of County Commissioners on Friday. The local-option tax was approved by the state legislature in its waning days two weeks ago, largely at the behest of Speaker Liston B. Ramsey (D-Madison).

The new sales and use tax will be returned to the county on a population basis out of the total tax collected by all counties that adopt it. Thus, officials explained, Madison stands to gain more from the extra half-cent tax than it gets from the current one cent county sales tax, returned on the basis of total sales in the county.

Some 40% of the revenues received by the county from the new tax must be spent on school construction or on retiring debt due to school construction.

Sewer Work Begins Monday

Work is scheduled to begin next Monday on the first stage of the project to renovate the Marshall sewer system. The first portion of the project will be along Walnut Creek Road in Marshall.

The construction on Walnut Creek will necessitate closing the road to all but local traffic. According to Ron Brazil of the state Department of Transportation, both Walnut Creek Road and U.S. 25-70 (Business) will be closed off beginning Monday morning. Traffic coming into the downtown Marshall area will be detoured to N.C. 213. Brazil said the roads are expected to be closed for the next four months while crews install the new sewer lines.

The board also approved hiring of two new county employees — Sonia Cody as an aide in the Upper Laurel day-care center, and Evelyn Price as a meal-site manager for a new feeding center planned for Spring Creek.

The Board of County Commissioners on Friday authorized publication of a Legal Notice warning that a new state law "may drastically effect any oil, gas or mineral interest which you might have in land located in

the County of Madison." The notice, which appears as a legal notice in this issue of The News Record, provides that mineral rights owned separately from land may be extinguished if the holder has not listed the rights for ad valorem tax purposes for the last five years.

An unbroken surface-land claim dating back 30 or more years, the notice says, may now be sold without separating the mineral rights from it.

Road Projects Are Approved

Blacktopping for three sections of roads in the county, including one of only three unpaved primary roads in the state, was approved Friday by the Board of County Commissioners.

Zeno Ponder, of the State Transportation Board, explained to the board that the blacktop jobs are part of what he considers an essential program of getting all committed roads paved in the county.

The three projects are:

1. A 1.3-mile stretch up to the Tennessee line of former State Road 212 (now County Road 1344) at the head of Shelton Laurel Creek, to a paved road on the Tennessee side that joins U.S. Route 23 at Rocky Fork on the way to Erwin.
2. A 1.4-mile stretch of County Road 1114 from the river to a paved section in the Sandy Mush area — in effect creating a new paved road from Marshall to the Asheville area.
3. A short stretch of County Road 1551 in the vicinity of Madison Manor.

A special hearing was required by the

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Local Election Officials Named

The Madison County Board of Elections has announced the appointment of local precinct election officials.

In the North Marshall precinct, Marvin Ball has been named to serve as the registrar. Conley Goforth will serve as the Democratic judge and Michael Jenkins will serve as the Republican judge. In South Marshall, Don West will serve as registrar while Jackie Ball will be the Democratic judge and Jean Flowers will serve as Republican judge. In Beech Glen (Township 4), Jack Radford will serve as registrar while Jackie Ball will be the Democratic judge and Irene

Clark will be the Republican judge.

In Laurel (Township 2), Francis Gunter has been appointed as registrar. Mary Tweed will serve as the Democratic judge and Otis Chandler has been named as the Republican judge.

In Mars Hill (Township 3), Woody Ammons has been appointed to serve as registrar. Dick Anderson will be the Democratic judge and Jean Flowers will serve as Republican judge.

In Beech Glen (Township 4), Jack Radford will serve as registrar. J.D. Thomas will serve as the Democratic judge and Irene

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From Madison County To Music City, U.S.A.

By Robert Koenig

It takes Mike Cody six hours to make the drive from Madison County to Nashville these days. His first trip to the country music capital took him many years of practice.

A Walnut native, Cody makes his home in Nashville now and visits his family and friends to get away from the hustle of Music City. He's finding it harder to get home to Walnut lately because he's kept busy touring the country promoting his first recording, "Fiesta", on radio and television stations across the East Coast.

The singer-songwriter found time to stop by The News Record office recently to discuss his record and his impressions of the music industry.

"Fiesta" has hit the charts and is playing all across the country. Michael Cody may not replace Michael Jackson at the top of Top-40, but Cody reports the song is going well and moving up on the popularity charts that are so important in the music industry.

Cody travels these days visiting with radio station disk jockeys to get to know the people who are so important to an unknown artist's success. "It's the same story with a new artist as with someone trying to get their first job. You can't get a job without ex-

perience, and you can't get experience without a job."

Program directors at radio stations receive dozens of new records each week.

The program directors are hesitant to play material from new singers until listeners interest picks up. Meeting with the disk jockeys and program directors is an important part of getting the initial exposure an unknown artist needs. Cody's been getting that exposure by appearing on television and giving radio interviews.

A week before his visit, Cody appeared on local television in Philadelphia. The program is carried on cable TV to more than 2 1/2 million viewers in the New York-New Jersey area. "I've spent the past month talking on the phone with disk jockeys."

Cody's recording company is supporting the record with advertising in the music industry's trade magazines, Billboard and CashBox. Reviews of the record have all been favorable.

"Fiesta" was written by Cody in October of 1981. Two weeks later, he met record producer Earl Richards in Nashville. Richards liked the song and arranged for Cody to record the song in May of 1982. It would be another year after his recording session at Nashville's Bullet Studios before the record would be

released.

After months of waiting, the release came as a surprise to Cody. He told us that news of the record's release came from his friends back home at WMMH. "I was on my way out the door one day when the phone rang. WMMH was the first station in the country to play the record and they called me to let me know the record was out."

Cody worked at the Marshall radio station while he was in high school.

It was while in high school that Cody first became interested in music. His music career began when he joined with Harlan Rice, Terry Davis, Curt McWilliams, Jim Stapleton and Joby Sprinkle to form a band called "White Water". Cody credits Stapleton and Davis with teaching him the fundamentals. "I never took lessons, I just watched Terry and Jim play and they showed me some chords. I used chords they showed me to write some really bad songs."

Cody also played in the band during his days at Madison High School. He told us, "I wanted to play the flute and the band director wanted me to become a tuba player. Luckily, the tubas were a month late arriving and I got to play the flute just to have something to do." Mike later went on to study the flute

while attending Mars Hill College.

"I learned a lot about music from playing the flute. There's something about a flute, it's the closest instrument to the human voice because of all the timbres you can get out of it."

After two years at Mars Hill, Cody went on to Belmont College in Nashville where he studied music industry business. He returned to Walnut in 1981 because, "I decided I was tired of school and wanted to devote my time to songwriting."

While writing, he supported himself by working in a sporting goods store and working in nightspots in Weaverville, Mars Hill and Asheville. When he wrote "Fiesta", he knew it was time for him to strike out for the big time in Nashville.

"Fiesta" may well become a big hit overseas. The song is set in Acapulco and tells the story of a love affair during the annual summer celebration. On the record's flip side, Cody sings the song in Spanish. He expects the bilingual treatment of the song will increase its popularity in Mexico and Europe.

Cody's first album should be released any day now. Mike wrote all the songs on the album while waiting for "Fiesta" to be released. In addition to the single the album will have several other ballads with a Spanish theme. Among

the songs on the album will be "Spanish Dreams" and "Rita's Cantina" which Cody describes as a cross between a Marty Robbins song and one by Jimmy Buffett. The album will feature other ballads and several uptempo tunes.

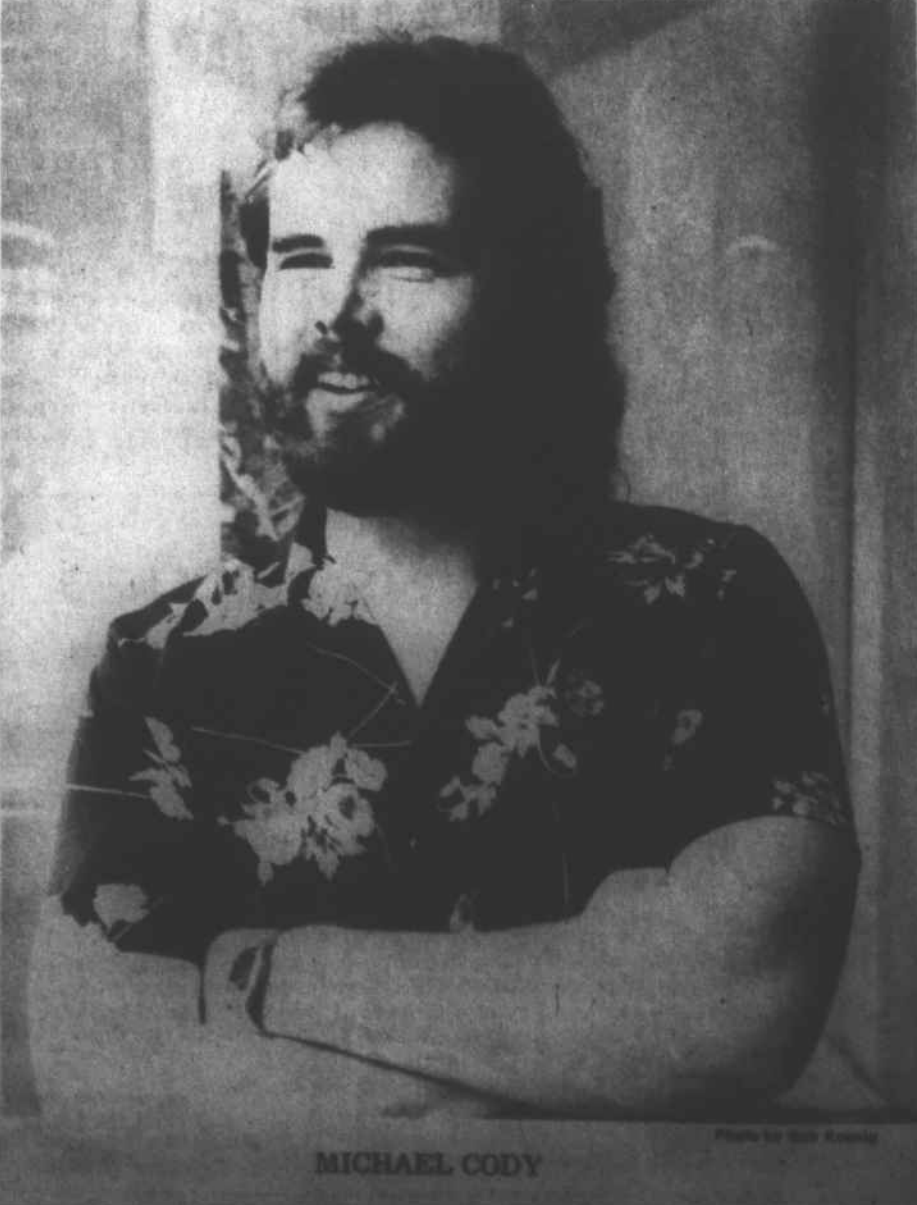
What's next for the Walnut singer and songwriter? If reaction to the new album is favorable, Cody expects to put a band together for a tour. Plans are also in the works for recording a video to promote the album.

Cody enjoys his new life in Nashville. He told us, "It's inspiring. Nashville is a songwriter's town. Being in such a creative community, it's easy to be focused on your work."

Despite his new found success, Mike hasn't forgotten the folks back home. He still tries to get back to Walnut about once a month to visit with his parents, Plumer and Dorothy Cody.

Does Madison County's most successful musician have any advice for other aspiring musicians? "The most important thing is to keep at it and be able to accept criticism. When I was criticized by publishers and my friends, I would use their suggestions. You can't be afraid to take chances."

It's a long road from Madison County to Music City, but Mike Cody is well along on his way.



MICHAEL CODY

Photo by Bob Koenig