



# THE NEWS RECORD

SERVING THE PEOPLE OF MADISON COUNTY SINCE 1901

Vol. 84 No. 3

PUBLISHED WEEKLY IN THE COUNTY SEAT AT MARSHALL, N.C.

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## Committee Formed To Study County Future



RON ELLER, a member of the county planning board, outlines goals for members of the citizens' planning committee during Wednesday night organizational meeting in Marshall.

day night organizational meeting in Marshall.

By ROBERT KOENIG

A new committee of county residents held an organizational meeting last Wednesday night at the county courthouse. More than 40 residents attended the opening session.

The citizens' committee was formed at the suggestion of county planning board member Don Anderson. The committee, composed of county leaders, will meet to formulate a plan for economic development within the county. When the work of the committee is completed, a written report of suggestions and recommendations will be reviewed by the planning board and presented to the Board of County Commissioners. Commission chairman Ervin Adams attended Wednesday's organizational meeting.

Planning board member Jerry Plemmons chaired Wednesday night's meeting. Plemmons introduced the members of the committee and outlined the committee's goals and timetable.

The committee is expected to meet five or six times in the coming months to discuss the course of future economic development. Committee members will be assisted by staff members from the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) and the N.C. Department of Natural Resources and Community Development (NRCD).

Plemmons introduced Mars Hill College professor Ron Eller, who outlines the history of the planning board and familiarized the committee members with a report on the future of the county prepared by the planning board last year.

Eller told the committee members, "There are limitations to our ability to attract industry. We need to look at ways we can attract certain kinds of industries, support in-county small businesses and use the resources we have in the county." Eller went on to say, "We believe we need to find ways to support and strengthen our rural and agricultural way of life."

Plemmons said that the committee would be divided into three subcommittees to study the issues of economic development. The subcommittees will study agricultural and forestry, economic development and the quality of life. The economic development subcommittee will devote attention to issues of attracting new industries, promoting tourism and retirement home construction and supporting small business.

The Quality of Life subcommittee will study the county's transportation and education systems and ways to improve services to consumers.

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## Clarke Files For Re-election

Congressman James McClure Clarke toured Madison County Monday accompanied by county commissioner Ervin Adams and county attorney Larry Leake. Clarke toured the Marshall Senior Citizens' Center, met with students at Madison H.S. and Marshall Primary School and toured both the Unaka Center and Melville Footwear facility in Hot Springs.

Clarke also met with political leaders throughout the county and stopped by The News Record office for an interview before touring Mars Hill and Yancey County.

While addressing government students at Madison High, the congressman answered questions from the students. Clarke told the students that he supported the state's capital punishment law and was opposed to gun control. The first-term congressman also said he favored a withdrawal of marine forces stationed in Beirut.

In an interview with The News Record, Clarke said that he will officially announce his candidacy at a Thursday afternoon press conference in Asheville. He has already an-



REP. JAMES McCLURE CLARKE shares a laugh with students at Madison H. S. during question and answer session Monday.

nounced that he has filed for election with the state Board of Elections in Raleigh. Clarke is expected to be challenged by former congressman Bill Hendon, whom Clarke unseated in the 1982 election.

Reflecting on his first year in Congress, Clarke said that he was surprised the Congress was able to pass as many resolutions as it did in 1983. He cited the passage of 10 appropriations bills as an example.

Clarke, a former state senator, said that the U. S. Congress operates differently from the General Assembly. "You serve on fewer committees and you tend to become specialized." The freshman congressman is a member of the House Interior committee. "You look out on the floor of the House, and sometimes there are only 20 or 30 members on the floor. Most of the other members are in committee meetings that go

on while the House is in session. When there's a rollcall vote, the committee rooms empty and everyone goes to the floor for a vote."

Clarke will return to Washington Saturday for the reopening of Congress on Monday. "The most immediate thing will be pressure to get the Marines out of Lebanon. I think we have to get them out as soon as we can." Clarke said he could support stationing the Marines on ships offshore. "Our whole involvement there is questionable and I'd like to see us get out."

Reducing the federal deficit is the top domestic priority facing Congress as it returns according to Clarke. The freshman congressman said that some projects could be cut and called for closing tax loopholes in order to reduce the budget. Clarke said he did not think Congress would pass a large tax increase during this election year.

Clarke said he meets with 30 other freshmen congressmen every week to discuss budget items.

The passage of the (Continued on Page 4)

## Judge Lacey Files For Re-Election

Chief District Court Judge Robert H. Lacey of the 24th Judicial District which includes Madison County has filed for the nomination in the May 8 Republican primary. Judge Lacey filed with the state Board of Elections in Raleigh.

Lacey has held his position on the bench since being appointed in 1975 by Gov. James Holshouser. He was appointed chief judge by Chief Justice Joseph Branch in 1980.

Judge Lacey is a lifelong resident of Newland. He graduated from Newland H.S. and attended Appalachian State University. He graduated from the Wake Forest University School of

Law in 1949 and was engaged in private practice until his appointment to the bench in 1975.

Lacey has three children: Cathie L. Smith of Charlotte, Debbie Sechrist of Winston-Salem and Robert, Jr. He is married to the former Faith Gibson of Pineola.

Lacey is a former chairman of the Avery County Republican executive committee, former attorney for Avery County and the towns of Elk Park and Banner Elk. He is a member of the First Baptist Church of Newland and served as a Sunday school teacher and as director in 1974 and 1975. He is presently an assistant teacher of the adult men's Sunday school class.



DISTRICT COURT JUDGE ROBERT H. LACEY

## Weaverville Awards Contracts

Contracts for water line construction were awarded by the Weaverville Town Council on Monday night. The contract were awarded to Wheeler Construction Co. of Weaverville after the results of bidding were announced by town manager Larry Sprinkle.

Wheeler Construction submitted the lowest bid for both portions of the project to install water lines on Wildwood Ave., Alexander Rd., Church St. and Highland Ave. The water line extension for Highland Ave. was let for bid as a separate project.

The council also approved replacing 300 feet of sewer line on Main Street near Lake Louise. Town manager Larry Sprinkle asked for permission to negotiate with Terry Brothers Construction Co., contractors on the sewer project, for a price on the 300-foot project. Sprinkle said the repairs were needed because the line continues to overflow during wet weather.

Council originally agreed to get an estimate from the contractor. Sprinkle then said he would need permission to make a deal before the council's next meeting. Sprinkle said a deal would have to be made before the contractor completed work on the sewer project, probably within the next few weeks. The town manager said he thought he

could get the contractor to do the job for the same rate of \$7 per foot as agreed on the sewer project. Sprinkle added that an additional manhole, at a cost of about \$1,000, would also be needed.

The town manager assured the council members that funds were available for the job. Sprinkle said, "If I get into it and the costs are outrageous, the sewer will still be overflowing next month."

The town manager also asked the council to define the town's policy on installing water service to new businesses and residences. Sprinkle said that the town currently has no such policy. The problem hasn't presented itself, he said, because most of the old lines in town run down the middle of the streets.

In newer parts of the town, however, it is sometimes necessary to obtain rights of way through property to tie in areas to the town system. The town manager asked if the town or homeowner is responsible.

Mayor Lawrence Sprinkle asked for more information before considering a policy. The town manager will consult with the Land of the Sky Regional Council to determine how other Western North Carolina towns handle the situation. The council also approved

sheltering town employee's deductions to their retirement system. The deductions from the employees' paychecks will be deducted from the gross salary, lowering the employees' tax liability. The income contributed to the fund will be taxed when the employee retires.

Council member Kathy Young addressed the session concerning water charges in the Reems Creek Volunteer Fire Department. Fire chief Zane Cole asked if the town could provide free water for the department's fire hydrant. The hydrant is used to fill the company's truck.

The question produced much debate but no action as the council elected to continue to charge the department for water. Mayor Lawrence Sprinkle defended the decision to charge all customers for water including the town's churches.

The mayor said the decision was made four years ago to reduce consumption. Since that decision, all customers have been supplied with meters. At the time the decision was reached the town was unable to account for more than 50 percent of the water used. Since the meters were installed, the town has been able to account for 80 percent of the water used.

The council also approved

## Marijuana Trial Opens

Testimony began Monday in Madison County Superior Court in the first of several drug-related cases scheduled to be heard. The week-long session opened with jury selection in the case of Reuben and Tilda Payne of Little Pine. Both are charged with manufacturing a controlled substance with intent to distribute. The charges stem from a series of raids conducted last August by agents of the State Bureau of Investigation (SBI).

A jury of six men and six

women heard opening arguments and testimony from an SBI agent during Monday's hearing. District Attorney Tom Rusher said that the Paynes were attending eight marijuana fields on Roberts Rd. Rusher said the SBI recovered 2,333 plants in the raid.

Payne's defense attorney, Robert Brown, told the jury that the Paynes were not the owners of the property, but were serving as caretakers and were unaware that the illegal crop was growing on the property.



SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE Liston Ramsey officially entered the 52nd Senate District race Monday by paying \$76 filing fee with the Madison County Board of Elections.

## Green Enters Race

## U.S. 25-70 Projects Funded

The North Carolina Department of Transportation board approved funding for three projects in Madison County at their Jan. 15 meeting in Raleigh. All three Madison County projects are on portions of U. S. 25-70. Total cost of the projects is \$1.2 million.

Announcement of the funding was made by the member of the State Transportation board.

Ponder told The News Record that the state board approved \$400,000 for engineering studies on U. S. 25-70 from N. C. 208 to Hot Springs and an additional \$400,000 for a similar study of the highway from Hot Springs to

Hot Springs. The state has the money to fund the studies.

studies are needed to determine the best means of widening both portions of the highway.

A third \$400,000 was approved to fund right-of-way acquisitions along U. S. 25-70 from N. C. 208 to Walnut.

All three projects will be funded with a \$1,200,000 state grant and an additional \$400,000 in federal highway funds.

North Carolina Lieutenant Gov. Jimmy Green officially announced his candidacy for the Democratic nomination for governor Friday on the steps of the State Capitol.

Green has served as lieutenant governor since 1979. He served seven terms in the state house, including one term as speaker of the house. He was elected to the State Senate in 1987.