

Ledford Cuts County Business Ties

By ROBERT KOENIG
Third in a series

Madison County commissioner James T. Ledford's Exxon service stations have stopped furnishing gas and repairs to county agencies.

Emergency Medical Service director Mildred West told The News Record that the EMS ambulance assigned to Mars Hill is now being serviced by Brown's Service Station on Hwy. 213.

Until recently, repairs to Madison County Transportation Authority vans were being

made by the stations operated by Ledford Enterprises in the Mars Hill area. Transportation Authority director Delba Jean Roberts said Monday that small repairs were now being made by mechanics at the county landfill.

The commissioner has also begun to comply, to some extent, with state law that requires the amount of business he conducts with county agencies be publicly posted in a conspicuous manner. A listing of the total monthly business conducted with county agencies has been posted on the wall in the county commissioner's office in the county

court house.

According to the figures on that list, Ledford has again surpassed the legal limit of business he is allowed to conduct with county agencies. The list indicates that Ledford Enterprises stations did \$6,016.82 in business with the Madison County Emergency Medical Service and Transportation Authority in the current fiscal year.

State law limits the amount of business elected officials may do with government agencies to \$5,000 in any 12-month period.

The list appearing on the county commis-

sioner's wall includes payments made directly to Ledford Enterprises and those made to Exxon, USA. Many purchases at the Ledford-owned stations were made by using an Exxon credit card.

If the \$6,016.82 is correct, it would mark the second year in a row that Ledford has exceeded the legal limitation on business with county government. The annual audit of county finances for the 1983-84 fiscal year revealed that Ledford did some \$5,241 in business with county agencies during the fiscal year which ended on June 30, 1984.

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Proposed Condos Spark Concerns

—Story On Page 5

Community Calendar

May Day Festival Set For May 3

The fifth annual May Day Festival will be held at Madison H.S. on May 4 from 10 a.m. until 11 p.m. Games, pony rides, crafts fair and dance are part of the festivities. -More information on the fair appears on Page 2.

Laurel VFD Pig Roast Planned

The Laurel VFD will sponsor a pig roast on May 5 from noon until 2 p.m. Charges are \$3.50 for adults, \$2 for children under 12. Proceeds from the roast will benefit the fire company's activities.

Ebbs Chapel VFD Supper

The Ebbs Chapel Volunteer Fire Department will hold an old-fashioned box supper and men's fashion show with a \$50.00 prize for the winner on May 4 at 6 p.m. at Upper Laurel Community Center. Cake walks and door prizes will also be awarded. Everyone is invited to attend.

American Legion To Meet

The American Legion Post 317 will hold their meeting on May 2 at 7 p.m. All members are urged to attend.

Greater Ivy May Day Festival

The Greater Ivy Community will hold an old-fashioned May Day celebration complete with May pole on May 5 at 2 p.m. Sack races, relay races, horse shoe pitching and a tug-of-war will be featured, along with a gospel singing.

On Saturday, there will be an elimination softball tournament with the winners advanced to a championship game on Sunday.

Democrat Women To Meet

The Madison County Democratic Women will meet at 6 p.m. Tuesday, May 7 at the new Western Steer in Mars Hill for a dutch dinner and a short planning meeting. All women are urged to attend.

Parenting Class Offered

Parenting classes are being held at the Senior Citizen Center on Long Branch Road at 7:30 p.m. on May 7. The discussion topic will be "the teenager." For more information call 649-2367.

THE NEWS RECORD

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WEDNESDAY, May 1, 1985

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Commissioners Approve Land Sale

By ROBERT KOENIG

The Madison County Board of Commissioners approved the sale of 3.9 acres of land in the Madison County Industrial Park last week. In a rare special called meeting, the commissioners unanimously approved a resolution for the sale of the tract to Kenpak Converters, Inc., a California-based manufacturer of medical supply packaging.

Approval of the land sale is just the first step in a process that may bring a new plant and jobs to the Marshall area. A number of conditions will have to be met before the sale is completed and construction of a plant can begin.

If approved, Kenpak Converters plans to build a facility to manufacture medical packaging that will employ 40 workers initially. Future expansion of the planned facility would eventually raise the number of jobs to more than 100.

Kenpak Converters, Inc. has presented a deposit of \$1,000 toward the purchase price of \$36,000 for the 3.9 acre site adjacent to property owned by the American Greeting Card Co.

The purchase agreement approved by the county commissioners last Wednesday calls for Kenpak Converters, Inc. to complete the purchase of the property by May 31. However, Kenpak's purchase of the site hinges upon approval of loans totalling \$598,000 for construction costs.

In order to finance the proposed plant construction, Kenpak is seeking a \$198,000 low-interest loan through the Tennessee Valley Authority's Special Opportunity Counties program and an additional \$400,000 loan at one percent above the prime lending rate.

The TVA Special Opportunity Counties program provides low-interest loans for projects to bring employment opportunities to the 50 poorest counties in the TVA service areas. Although not directly served by TVA, as a border county, Madison County qualifies under the SOC guidelines.

Kenpak's purchase agreement also calls for the installation of water and sewer services and construction of a highway to the plant site. Water and sewer lines are already in place. County attorney Larry Leake said Wednesday that he has received assurances from DOT engineer Earl McIntire that the necessary roadwork at the site would be performed.

Another term of the purchase agreement states that the county must obtain certification from a qualified engineer that the site is suitable for the proposed plant.

The discovery of methane gas beneath the former landfill site led American Greeting Card to abandon its plans for a plant at the site in 1982.

The county attorney also recommended that the commissioners have the site surveyed before completing the sale.



MEMBERS OF THE HAYES' RUN 4-H CLUB took part in the Clean Streams Day effort last Saturday. Hundreds of volunteers throughout Madison County joined together to remove trash from local creeks, rivers and streams. -More pictures and raffle winners appear on Pages 6 and 7.

Marshall's Money ...

Political Dinners, Police Uniforms

And Out Of Town Trips Add To Budget Crunch

By ROBERT KOENIG

The financial pinch Marshall has been feeling for the past several months appears to be becoming worse as the 1984-85 fiscal year winds down.

Between today and the first of June, the town will have \$30,251.25 in bond payments due. The town's general fund showed a balance of \$34,723.78 on March 31. A report of the town's expenses in April is expected to be delivered when the Board of Aldermen meet on May 13.

The town still has some \$70,000 in savings in certificates of deposit, but it is apparent that those remaining bonds will have to be redeemed if the town is to meet its obligations for the remainder of the fiscal year which ends on June 30.

In order to get some idea of where Marshall's money has gone in the past 10 months, The News Record reviewed the town's general fund checking account ledgers last week. The investigation uncovered a number of curious expenses.

Outfitting the town's police department has proven to be an expensive proposition. Through last Friday, Marshall had spent more than \$2,500 for uniforms and police equipment purchased from Stilette Uniform Sales in Asheville.

The town has hired six officers during the current fiscal year. Ed McLean and Bill Linscomb, the town's current officers, and Joe Grifley, Herschel Cox, Craig Edwards and Larry Davis. Among the expenses for uniforms was \$300.35 for equipment for Herschel Cox, hired by the aldermen to serve as police chief. Cox was first sworn in

was sworn in when it was learned that he faced felony larceny charges in Buncombe County.

Since June, 1984, Marshall has purchased 24 shirts and 16 pairs of pants for the town's policemen.

Another large expenditure for police equipment was the purchase of two bulletproof vests for \$460.

The town also purchased baseboard heaters at a cost of \$436.28 for a proposed police department office on the upper floor of Town Hall. The move was never made and Linda Dodson, the town's secretary reports that several of the heaters were later stolen.

Advertising has accounted for some \$297.60 in the current fiscal year. Records indicate the town spent \$267 for advertisements in programs offered by the American Legion, Madison Central Optimists Club and the North Carolina National Guard Association. The remaining \$30.60 was spent with The News Record for legal advertisements.

The town also spent \$6.80 for a one-year subscription to The News Record.

Attorney fees have accounted for \$4,030.17 in the first ten months of the current fiscal year. The town paid the Mars Hill law firm of Briggs and Hall \$380 to defend the mayor and aldermen in a suit brought by The News Record stemming from violations of the Open Meetings Law.

Marshall also paid the Asheville law firm of Palla, Strain, Robinson and Moore \$1,150.62 to defend the town in a lawsuit brought by former Marshall police officer Curtis Smith.

Marshall town attorney Charles E. Mashburn has received payments totalling \$2,573.55 for legal services. Mashburn has also received \$300 for rent on the former police shack on Main Street which was placed on his property. The town has sold the shack to the Madison County Animal Shelter and currently rents a garage from Pioneer Ford at a cost of \$125 per month.

Out-of-town trips meetings and seminars have accounted for \$1,222.24 in the current fiscal year. The town sent Linda Dodson and Peggy Loomis to attend a one-day tax collection workshop in Chapel Hill in August of last year. At Mayor Wild's direction, they stayed overnight at the Hotel Europa, the most expensive hotel in Chapel Hill, at a cost of \$70.50.

In September, Mayor Wild attended a meeting in Raleigh and stayed at the Radisson Plaza Hotel at a cost of \$47.53. In October, Peggy Loomis was sent to Raleigh to attend a workshop and stayed at the Raleigh Inn. Costs for the trip were \$141.85.

Also in October, town officials attended the convention of the League of Municipalities in Winston-Salem at a total cost of \$603.97. A meeting of the N.C. Downtown Development Association to which the town sent Richard Kingston cost \$229.85.

Marshall taxpayers have also footed the bill for several dinners attended by Marshall officials. Records indicate the town paid the Madison County Young Democrats \$120 for six tickets to a dinner at Madison H.S. honoring Speaker of the House Liston B. Hanney. The town also purchased six tickets at a cost of \$8 for a dinner in

Hendersonville held by the Land of the Sky Regional Council in January.

Alderman Ed Niles did not attend the Ramsey dinner. On Monday, alderman John Dodson told The News Record that he purchased a ticket to the dinner with his own funds.

The long-standing practise of purchasing flowers for funerals of former town officials has also accounted for some \$97.42.

Other expenses shown in the current fiscal year include:

\$2,500 to Herbert Hyde and Carlie Gunter for the out-of-court settlement of their lawsuit charging the town officials with wrongful dismissal and libel.

\$147 to Ron McBride for rewiring the upper floor of Town Hall.

\$68.20 to the Blue Ridge Court Reporting service for work on the Carlie Gunter lawsuit.

\$750 donation to the Marshall Christmas Pageant.

\$30.85 to the Share Corp. for mice for the town police.

\$5,000 to Nationwide Insurance for insurance on town property.

\$23.13 to Roberts Pharmacy for unclassified supplies.

\$461 to the Marshall Insurance Co. for flood insurance.

\$4.15 per month to the Rental Uniform Service for a journal in Town Hall.

\$336 for paper for the copier at Town Hall.

\$3,871.78 to Edna Cross-Blue Shield for health insurance for town employees.