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Community Calendar

Gospel Singing Planned For March 14

Ed Ball will host a gospel singing at the Tri-County Baptist Tabernacle on March 14 at 7 p.m. The Spencer Family from Ohio will be the guest singers. Everyone is invited to attend.

Retired Teachers To Meet March 12

The Madison County Retired Teachers will meet on March 12 at 11:30 a.m. at Mary's Restaurant on the Marshall Bypass. Marie Willis of Mars Hill will be the guest speaker. All retired school teachers are invited to attend.

American Legion Meets Tonight

American Legion Post No. 317 will hold their monthly meeting tonight at 6:30 p.m. at the Legion Hall in Marshall. All members are urged to attend.

School Board Meets March 12

The Madison County Board of Education will hold their monthly meeting on March 12 at 10:30 a.m. in the Madison County Court House.

GOP Lincoln Day Dinner Saturday

Madison County Republicans will hold their annual Lincoln Day dinner Saturday night at 7 p.m. in the cafeteria of Mars Hill College. Associate Supreme Court Justice Rhoda Billings will be the featured speaker.

Dems Hold Precinct Meetings Tonight

Madison County Democrats will hold precinct meetings throughout the county tonight at 8 p.m. Meetings will be held at all local polling places. Democrats will elect delegates to the county convention scheduled for April 5.

Weaverville Library Program Set

"Delving Into Your Roots" will be the subject of a program at the Weaverville Public Library on Sunday at 3 p.m. The program will explore family research, particularly in the Reems Creek area.

Guest speakers will include Doris Cline Ward of the Old Buncombe Genealogical Society, Sarah Cole and Blanche Roberts Robertson who is currently working on a history of the area.

County Jobless Rate Declines

Unemployment declined in Madison County during January, according to figures released this week by the North Carolina Employment Security Commission (ESC.)

County joblessness stood at 7.2 percent of the workforce during the first month of the year, a full percent point less than the December reading of 8.2 percent.

The ESC report estimates that 460 Madison Countians were without work during January, 80 fewer than the previous month. The ESC estimates also report that the county's force force declined during the month by 190 workers, accounting for much of the decline in the overall employment rate.

Statewide, unemployment stood at 5.9 percent in January, according to the ESC estimates.

The decline in Madison County unemployment ran counter to the trend in neighboring counties in January. Buncombe County reported an increase in joblessness to 5.6 percent, up more than two percent from December. Haywood County also saw unemployment increase by 2.6 percent to a January reading of nine percent. Yancey County joblessness also increased by more than a percentage point to 5.8 percent.

In Tennessee, Cocke County reported that state's highest unemployment rate, 24.6 percent, despite adding more than 200 jobs during the month.

April 16 Is Deadline For Nuclear Dump Comments

The Madison County Nuclear Waste Education Committee reports that residents wishing to make written comments to the U.S. Department of Energy concerning the proposed nuclear waste storage facility have until April 16 to have their comments included in the public record.

Although Department of Energy officials did not say so during last week's public briefing in Asheville, it is important that those writing to DOE have specific information included to their letters.

The Nuclear Waste Education Committee reports that all letters to DOE concerning the proposed dump must mention the words "Nuclear Waste Repository Project."

REPORT FOR THE CRYSTALLINE REPOSITORY PROJECT DOE-CH 15 (1) written at the heading.

The DOE will respond to letters which do not include this information, but only letters which fulfill this requirement will be included in the public record for this stage of the project.

Letters should be addressed to U.S. Department of Energy Crystalline Repository Project Office, Chicago Operations Office, 900 South Cass Avenue, Argonne, Ill. 60439.

For more information, contact the DOE at CHD 915-2553 or call the Nuclear Waste Education Committee at 915-2553 or 915-2555.

50 Attend Mars Hill Public Hearings

Aldermen To Study Proposed Rules

By ROBERT KOENIG

An estimated 50 Mars Hill residents and businessmen attended Monday night's public hearing on a proposed ordinance governing outdoor advertising. Many of the businessmen present voiced objections to the plan to restrict billboards and other forms of outdoor signs.

The public hearing was held prior to the start of the regular monthly meeting of the board of aldermen. A second public hearing concerning changes in the town's fire code was held following the sign ordinance hearing.

Mars Hill Mayor Owen Tilson opened the meeting by telling the audience, "I could be down in Florida living the good life. I don't have to be here, but I want to be. I can assure you we're not going to do anything to hurt Mars Hill. We're not going to have a lot of political mess. We're running this town on a non-partisan basis."

Tilson said that the hearing was called to learn the public's reaction to the proposal. The board took no final action on the proposed ordinance during Monday's meeting.

Mars Hill druggist Ed Howard worried that the proposed ordinance would lead to lawsuits. Tilson responded, saying, "We want to take care of this before they (billboards) get here."

Insurance agent Clyde English, who also operates a Big Branch Rd. restaurant, said he opposed a proposed ban on flashing electric signs. English has a flashing sign outside his restaurant. He told the meeting, "I would like my sign to stay as is."

Former hardware store owner Bob Phillips said he believed that the provisions of the proposed regulating off-premises advertising were unenforceable. Phillips also warned that a ban on off-premises advertising would hinder development by national chains such as Holiday Inn.

Bill Zink Jr., operator of Zink's Small Engine Repair, also argued against the proposal. Zink said a provision calling for removal of political signs within ten days of an election was too short a time period. Zink also questioned a provision of the proposal that would ban signs obstructing passageways and defended flashing neon signs, saying, "I can't see a thing wrong with flashing signs. I don't think they're a bit distracting."

Hot Springs Aldermen Meet

The Hot Springs Board of Aldermen learned how to apply for state grants during their monthly meeting held Monday night.

The board listened to the steps involved in grant application as presented by Myra Grant, a representative for the Land of Sky Regional Council. Grant explained that up to \$750,000 is available to the town for economic development and other community revitalization projects.

Randall Lanier, water supervisor for the town, told the board that he had purchased the flow meter and compositor for the sewer system. The board had ordered the purchase at the Feb. meeting.

Lanier said that due to stricter state rules on sewer systems now in effect, extra maintenance would be required. The water supervisor asked the board for extra compensation for the additional work he would be required to perform. The aldermen

agreed to table the issue of Lanier's salary.

The aldermen also learned that a 60-year franchise granted to Carolina Power & Light by the town for electric service will soon expire. Chip Hutchins, a representative of CP&L, presented the board with a host of reasons for renewing his company's franchise.

A second reading of the franchise document will be held at the April board meeting. All residents are urged to attend the reading.

The board also heard complaints from residents about foul-smelling dog pens and old cars being left on the roads. The board agreed to send notices to offenders. Further action was promised if the notices are ignored.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the board will be held on April 7 at 7:30 p.m.

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Dump Opponents Ask Martin To Take Tough Stance

By BILL STUDENC
Staff Reporter

Gov. Jim Martin's "town meeting" in Asheville Thursday developed into an anti-nuclear dump session.

Martin scheduled the session to hear what's on the minds of Western North Carolinians.

Martin got an earful, as organizations from Haywood, Buncombe and Madison counties used the meeting to present a united front against the location of a proposed nuclear waste repository in Western North Carolina.

Representatives of anti-repository groups from each of the three affected counties presented petitions bearing thousands of signatures to Martin during the meeting in the Asheville City Council chambers.

"We gave to the governor tens of thousands of signatures that were the result of our preliminary petition drive," Robert Earnest of the Haywood Anti-Dump Leadership Team, said this morning. "And we anticipate having many more than that before this is all over with."

Earnest, James Laird of Save Our Mountains in Buncombe County, Bobbi Toney of the Madison County Nuclear Waste Education Committee and other speakers tried to convince Martin of the need to remove WNC from DOE's list immediately.

DOE last month announced a list of 18 "potentially acceptable" sites for the deep geologic storage of high-level radioactive wastes. A 100-square mile area of Haywood,

Buncombe and Madison counties was on that list, along with a second North Carolina site, near Raleigh.

DOE set up a 90-day period to receive public input on its selections, and a final recommendation on the 12 sites is scheduled for July.

Opponents of the repository told Martin that DOE will not consider the factors most relevant to the WNC region until after that recommendation. And that means that WNC will probably remain on the list until 1992.

The major reasons that WNC should be removed from DOE's list as soon as possible are economic, Earnest said.

Western North Carolina depends heavily on tourism, and many believe that tourists will not want to come to an area that is home to a nuclear waste dump.

"The issues that pertain to this area will not be considered until the 1990s. If we are still being considered by 1992, I have no doubt we'll be disqualified then. But I don't want us to have to wait that long," Earnest said.

Laird told Martin that WNC cannot afford to have the threat of a nuclear waste repository hanging over the region for five years.

If WNC remains on that list until 1992, the government may be liable for economic damages, Earnest said.

Earnest was referring to a phrase in the Nuclear Waste Policy Act stating that DOE would reimburse private parties in the site area damaged by the agency's activities.

"That's a vague phrase, and I think the law actually was intended to imply that if damage was done to somebody's property, that they would be reimbursed," Earnest said. "But a broader interpretation would imply that the government would be responsible for any economic hardship within the broad-based area."

Martin told the overflow crowd during Thursday's meeting that the state was attacking the issue from three sides.

The metamorphic composition of the rock bodies in WNC and central North Carolina makes the rock too fractured to allow construction of the underground storage vaults.

• The location of underground water tables above the rock formations.

• Proximity of both North Carolina sites to growing population centers.

Earnest and other repository opponents say DOE needs to consider three other factors, and needs to consider them now:

• Population variables. The population figures used by DOE did not take into consideration summer residents, tourists, nearby college populations and a large number of people living on the outskirts of cities and towns, but not counted as being within the city.

• Tourism. The site's location

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FBEMC Names Committee

The board of directors of the Frong Broad Electric Membership Corp. named a nominating committee at their meeting in Marshall on Tuesday. The nominating committee will meet on March 11 at 1 p.m. at the cooperative's headquarters on U.S. 213.

The committee will recommend candidates for four seats on the board of directors. The directors will be elected during the annual business meeting to be held this year on April 16 in Mars Hill.

Madison County: Rex Kuykendall of Buncombe County; Ronce McIntosh, Eddie Paw and H.G. Bailey of Yancey County; M.A. Anderson Jr. and Allen Baker of Mitchell County and Uraie Shadon of Union County, Tenn.

The committee will consider candidates to replace the four outgoing members of the board of directors. Those directors whose terms expire this year are John Conner of Marshall, W.G. Phares of Buncombe County and James Hays and Fred Shadon of Union County.