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# THE NEWS RECORD

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BILL STUDENC PHOTO

Crumbling Craggy Prison in Woodfin won't be moving to Madison County. An emergency prison package approved by the General As-

sembly last week ensures that Craggy's replacement will remain in the North Buncombe County area.

## Craggy Prison To Remain In North Buncombe Area

By BILL STUDENC  
Editor

The General Assembly took action last week guaranteeing that a replacement for aging Craggy Prison will be built in Buncombe County, probably north of the current Woodfin facility.

Legislators approved a \$15.1 million emergency prison package that includes \$5.6 million to construct a new 300-man prison in Buncombe County.

The fact that the legislation

specifically calls for Craggy's replacement to be built in Buncombe County effectively removes Madison County from further consideration for the new prison and brings to a close one of the fiercest public debates in recent years.

Some Madison County residents had asked N.C. Department of Corrections officials to consider locating the new prison in Madison. Those residents said the prison could pump up to \$35 million a year into the local economy and create up to 100 new

jobs.

Sherill Allen, superintendent of Craggy Prison, visited two sites in Madison County before the General Assembly's action last Thursday. One of those sites was land owned by Madison Democratic Party leader Zeno Ponder, a fact that prompted an outcry from Ponder's opponents.

Public sentiment against the proposed prison grew, as opponents contended that the prison would result in lower property values and argued

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## Repair Pricetag For County Schools Tops \$36 Million

By ANNE KITCHELL  
Staff Writer

The Madison County Board of Education has submitted a proposal to state education officials indicating a need for \$36 million in school renovation and construction.

The proposal is the result of a request made by the state superintendent of schools, who asked each local school board to make a study of school facility needs.

The objective of the statewide study was to identify the cost of providing a safe, attractive, functional learning environment for every student.

And that cost in Madison County is \$36 million.

During the regular school board meeting March 4 Madison County School Board Superintendent Bobby Edwards presented the findings of a Dec. 5 statewide survey of educational needs. Madison County ranks among the top 20 in the dollars needed to replace obsolete facilities, Edwards said.

A. Craig Phillips, state superintendent of public instruction, said in a letter to local school officials that a 1978 study indicated statewide educational needs in excess of \$1.8 billion.

The results of the study were presented to the General Assembly with a request for a statewide bond referendum for school construction.

A study in 1984 indicated statewide educational needs in excess of \$2.2 billion.

While the statewide bond referendum was not put to a vote, legislators and school boards agreed that the en-

tire state is in need of a uniform and equal policy which would give smaller and poorer counties a means of obtaining necessary revenue to upgrade their schools in compliance with the basic education guidelines.

Edwards said the cost of the entire project to the Madison school system would be a whopping \$36,890,460.

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## Students Should Circle Aug. 17 On Calendars

By ANNE KITCHELL  
Staff Writer

Although summer vacation is three months away, Madison County students can already mark their calendars for the beginning of the 1987-88 school year.

Students can put a big red circle around Aug. 17 -- that will be their first day back to school, according to a school calendar adopted last Wednesday by the Madison County Board of Education.

For teachers, the first optional

teacher workday or annual leave day will be Aug. 11.

Next year's calendar calls for nine holidays, 10 countywide annual leave days, 16 optional annual leave or work days and four mandatory work days.

School boards in North Carolina are required by law to give students 180 days of instruction yearly.

The board also heard a letter from Senior Associate State

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## Sheriff's Department \$30,000 Over Budget, County Says

By BILL STUDENC  
Editor

Madison County Sheriff Dedrick Brown will exceed the amount of money budgeted to his department by at least \$30,000, if he continues spending county funds at his current rate.

That's the word from Robert Capps, chairman of the Madison County Board of Commissioners, who made the statement at last week's meeting of the commissioners.

"Right now, if he continues at his present rate, he will have overspent his budget by \$30,000 just on salaries," Capps said.

"If that is not helping the sheriff's department, I don't know what we can do," he said. "We have not turned him down once. It is time we let the people know we are helping the sheriff."

Capps' comment came in response to recent criticism of the county commissioners for failing to provide sufficient funds for the sheriff's department.

An advertisement purchased in The News Record by the Bipartisan Citizens' Committee For Better Government last month criticized county government for paying county

attorney Larry Leake \$53,000 in 1986, while paying Brown a salary of \$17,000 a year.

Leake and Capps later said that the payments were for services rendered by Leake over a seven-year period, for an average annual payment of about \$7,500 from the county.

Figures provided by Jan Franklin, Madison County finance officer, corroborated Capps' statement about overspending in the sheriff's department.

The former Madison County Board of Commissioners approved a \$139,680 annual budget for the

sheriff's department for 1986-87, Franklin said.

Of that amount, inherited by the current commissioners, \$94,594.02 had been spent as of Jan. 31, Franklin said.

Franklin has estimated that Brown will spend \$63,038.64 on salaries alone from February through June.

He had already spent \$11,602.43 on salaries for February as of Feb. 20. Those figures indicate the sheriff's department should spend \$189,236.09 by the end of the fiscal year, Franklin said.

And that is \$29,556.09 more than

allocated to the department by county officials.

The actual amount of money overspent by the sheriff's department may actually be higher than \$30,000, Franklin said. Her figures do not include utility charges and other unknown expenses.

Capps said this week that commissioners are committed to funding the sheriff's department as much as possible.

"What we told Dedrick was that we want to give him every penny we can to help him operate a good sheriff's department because that's what the

people want," Capps said.

Brown had met with commissioners shortly after taking office in December to request \$27,000 in additional funding to hire extra help for his department.

The commissioners took no action at that time, but promised to do whatever they could for the department.

But the commissioners now say it is unlikely they will be able to provide additional funds to the sheriff -- or any other county department -- until

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## Recreation Center May Get Repair Funds

By BILL STUDENC  
Editor

The Marshall Board of Aldermen agreed Monday to try to divert \$99,000 in leftover state grant money to the town's dilapidated recreation center.

The decision brought to an end four months of debate about what to do with an estimated \$99,000 that is available to the town -- \$60,000 in money remaining from a sewer line installation project on Cody Road-Chandler Drive and \$19,000 in local option money.

The board agreed to instruct Sam Parker of the Marshall Housing Authority to re-apply for the state funds so they could be used for repairs to the town's recreation center.

That decision came after a 40-minute public hearing -- and with some reluctance from Marshall officials.

Town board members had hoped to use the extra \$99,000 for housing rehabilitation work in the Cotton Mill Hill area.

But Parker told the board in November -- when he first informed it of the leftover grant money -- that \$99,000 is not enough money to fund all the work that needs to be done on Cotton Mill Hill.

It would cost at least \$130,000 to rehabilitate all the homes that need work in that area, he has said. The available \$99,000 would rehabilitate up to 10 homes; but several homes would not be repaired.

If the board chose to use the money for rehabilitation work for a portion of the homes on Cotton Mill Hill, it would be unlikely that the remaining homes would receive future grant money, Parker said.

And that fact helped the Marshall board make its decision.

"Myself, I could not go over to Cotton Mill Hill and knock on doors and say, 'We're going to do your house, but not your neighbor's,'" said Mayor Anita Ward.

"We're all willing for it to be used since the money can't be used on Cotton Mill Hill," Alderman Faye Reid said. "We just don't know if NRCD will let us do it."

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## Recent Rains Ease Drought Problems

By DAVID GERRARD  
The Mountaineer

Rain and snow in the last six months have rebuilt groundwater supplies in the state, according to well drillers and hydrologists.

After a year of record low levels, groundwater supplies returned to near normal in December, and continued rainfall is adding to the total.

Kathy Hill, a hydrologist with the U.S. Geological Survey in Raleigh, monitors groundwater levels in Transylvania County with special test wells. Water levels in the wells there "were continuing to go down until September -- it was three feet below normal at that time" she said. Much-needed rains in the fall turned the situation around.

"It's above normal now," Hill said. "December was when everything really turned around. January was above normal for water levels across the state."

The only test well maintained by the U.S. Geological Survey in Western North Carolina is in Transylvania County.

The French Broad River, which is used as a reference for surface waters in the western part of the state, was at 36 percent of normal flow in January.

Jane Williamson, who keeps track of weather statistics at the Mountain Research Station in Waynesville, said a late rally saved the rainfall for 1986. "The rain in August really saved the tobacco crop," Williamson said.

Overall, rainfall for the year was 9 inches below normal, but heavier than normal rains from August through November pulled the figure up. Precipitation in the fall was 4 inches above normal in the area, saving from a 13-inch deficit for the year.

Rainfall in WNC has been above normal for 1987, which should help pull groundwater levels up even further. Mrs. Williamson said January and February rainfall totals have been 56 inches ahead of normal so far. February rainfall totalled 5.03 inches, compared to 4.03 inches normally.

Tom Ross, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service, said, "We got a little over 50 percent of our normal rainfall in the Asheville area for 1986." Ross said with the recent rains, he did not expect a lot of carry-over effects of groundwater from last year's drought.

Joe Clark, a Blount County farmer, said he had a good dry



Anita Ward  
center to be maintained

## Home For Retarded Wins Town's Support

By ANNE KITCHELL  
Staff Writer

The Mars Hill Board of Aldermen passed a resolution Monday night to allow a private company to pursue funding for an intermediate care facility for the mentally retarded in the Mars Hill area.

It was the third time in four months that Blue Ridge Mental Health had sought assistance from a local governing body.

The Waynesville Town Council in December refused to issue a portion of land proposed for a home for the retarded after nearby residents voiced

opposition.

The Madison County Board of Commissioners refused to sponsor a bond to build a facility near Mars Hill.

Mars Hill officials have now agreed to sponsor the facility's financing.

Blue Ridge Mental Health attorney David Mahony said Mars Hill officials to agree to support the acquisition of funds to construct a 20-unit home for the retarded.

The proposed financing calls for 20-year tax free industrial revenue bonds.

Mars Hill Mayor Owen Thoms said the representatives about the ac-

tual need for a facility for the mentally retarded in the area.

Retardation specialist Joe Martin told the board that a survey conducted in 1983 showed 229 area individuals in need of an intermediate care home, which is staffed 24 hours a day.

Project developer Kenneth Gummels said 27 Madison County individuals have been cited as prospective residents of the home.

"We'll make the same commitment as with Madison Manor. Madison County residents will be considered first," said Gummels.

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