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Budget Woes Force Deputy Salary Cuts

By BILL STUDENC
Editor

Madison County deputies got another shock when they learned that their salaries have been cut by as much as \$400 a month.

The salary cuts are the result of action taken last week by the Madison County Board of Commissioners.

County commissioners last week agreed to lay off three deputies because of budget problems in the sheriff's department. But Sheriff Dedrick Brown said he could not operate his department with only two deputies, and he instead laid off four dispatchers (who also serve as jailers) and closed Madison Jail.

Commissioners now say that Brown can keep the deputies, but they must be paid at the dispatcher's

salary of \$800 per month. Deputies' salary had ranged from \$1,106 to \$1,207 per month, according to county

finance officer Ralph Rice, who wrote a letter to Brown informing him of the salary change.

"After consultation with the commissioners and the county attorney, I must officially make you aware that

personnel other than Dal Peek and the drug officer will be paid at a rate of \$800 per month, effective March 22,

1988," Rice said in the letter. "Since the March checks were issued at the regular salaries, adjustments will be made in the April payroll for personnel who were overpaid."

"The county attorney says now that the commissioners did not authorize the continuation of the deputies at their regular rate," Rice said Monday. "I am simply doing what I was advised to do by the commissioners and the county attorney."

But that also means that Brown can hire one more deputy at a salary of \$800 a month, Rice said.

"He can hire another deputy, or another dispatcher if he wants, and pay him \$800 a month," Rice said.

Peek, Brown's chief deputy, said that the deputies were surprised to

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Two Dispatching Systems Now On Line

From Staff Reports

So, after all the hubbub surrounding the laying off of dispatchers and the closing of Madison County Jail, who'll be answering your emergency call?

Well, it all depends, says Madison County Chief Deputy Dal Peek.

Madison County deputies are

handling law enforcement calls, while fire and rescue calls are routed through the Madison County Emergency Management Service, Peek said.

Prior to last week's layoffs, the sheriff's department had been dispatching calls for all emergency and police agencies in Madison County.

Now, the sheriff's department is handling only police calls, Peek said.

During nighttime hours, when only one deputy is on duty, an answering machine is used when that deputy has to go out of the office to respond to an emergency call, he said.

The answering machine gives

another number to call in case of extreme emergency, Peek said. When someone calls that number, the call is routed through call-forwarding to the home of a sheriff's department employee who is "on call" for that night, he said.

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Lt. Gov. Candidates Campaign In Madison

By BILL STUDENC
Editor

Two Republican candidates for lieutenant governor and one for U.S. Congress brought their campaigns to Madison County over the weekend.

Former U.S. Rep. Jim Gardner of Rocky Mount and state Rep. Bill Boyd of Asheboro, both seeking the Republican nomination for lieutenant governor in the May primary, looked for party support at the Madison County Republic Party convention Saturday.

Brevard businessman Charles Taylor, who is looking to unseat Democratic incumbent U.S. Rep. James McClure Clarke, spoke during the party's Lincoln Day dinner, which followed the convention.

Boyd and Gardner agreed that changes are needed in the Democrat-controlled General Assembly and that North Carolina's governor should have the veto power.

Boyd, a former county commissioner in Randolph County, attacked the so-called "super sub," a subcommittee of powerful Democratic legislators accused of making many decisions behind closed doors.

Currently, the N.C. Open Meetings Law, which mandates that elected boards conduct their business in public, does not cover the General Assembly. Boyd said he would work to change that, if elected.

"We can pass a bill that will put the total legislature under the Open Meetings Law," said Boyd. "We can put the legislature under that same law and that's what I intend to do."

Gardner, an unsuccessful candidate for governor in 1972, echoed Boyd's comments when he spoke to Madison Republicans minutes later.

"We need to open up the legislature. If you have a meeting right here in your home county, you can go and sit down and hear what your elected officials are doing with your tax dollars," Gardner said.

"They (members of the 'super sub') do not let other members of the legislature in. They do not let members of the press in. They do not let anybody in. They run it exactly like they want to, and that's wrong," he said.

House Speaker Liston B. Ramsey, a Madison County native, was a specific target for barbs from both Gardner and Boyd.

"I serve with a guy named Ramsey, and we sure wish you would bring him back here to stay," Boyd told the Republicans. "Of course, you probably wish he'd go somewhere else."

"We have a legislature down there that is very hard to work with," Gardner said. "We have a man from this county named Liston Ramsey who runs that legislature exactly like he wants it."

Gardner said he would prefer that someone from Ramsey's 14th House District succeed him. "I would like to see a man from this district who would be a good representative of the people of Madison County," he said.



BILL STUDENC PHOTO

A bus loaded with Spring Creek students, parents and residents rounds a curve on a steep gravel road near Max Patch. The

Saturday trip was designed to dramatize the community's concerns about sending their children to school in Hot Springs.

Spring Creek Residents Fight Loss Of School

By BILL STUDENC
Editor

Spring Creek residents say they'd rather pull their children out of the Madison County school system and start a private school than send students over a winding mountain highway to Hot Springs.

To dramatize their point, the residents rented a bus, filled it full of children, parents, newspaper reporters and television cameras and drove it over the route a school bus would take when transporting children from Spring Creek to Hot Springs.

Members of the Madison County Board of Education and Madison County Board of Commissioners were also invited along for the ride, but none accepted the invitation.

"How do you feel about riding the school bus to Hot Springs," Bill Barutio asked a group of about 30 children before Saturday's ride.

"Awful!" came the reply from the

children. "I don't like Hot Springs," one child said. "Yeah, it stinks," said another.

The children held signs protesting the plan to bus them to Hot Springs as they waited for Saturday's ride.

Children's voices chanted "Heck no, we won't go" as the bus pulled out of Spring Creek School. The bus traveled the Meadow Fork bus route - a rough route over gravel roads to the top of Max Patch, a majestic bald on the Madison-Haywood county line.

Several children complained of upset stomachs during the 47.6-mile trip.

"We are attempting to get the attention of the school board and just get them to listen to us," said Barutio, spokesman for the Spring Creek group. "The bottom line is they are just not going to put their kids on a bus to come up here to Hot Springs."

A long-range facilities plan approved

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Mars Hill Mayor May Be Witness To 31-Year-Old Tennessee Murder

By BILL STUDENC
Editor

Mars Hill Mayor Joseph Godwin may hold the key to a 31-year-old murder mystery in Chattanooga, Tenn.

According to a report published March 18 in The Atlanta Constitution, a star football player at Auburn University confessed the murder of a convicted moonshine runner to Godwin, a minister taking courses at Auburn in the summer of 1957.

Godwin, contacted at his Mars Hill College office this week, refused to comment on whether he is involved in the case.

"I really don't have any comment to make about that, not any comment at all," Godwin said. "I can't say a word about that case. Sometime the time may come when I can address the case, but that time is not now."

Bobby Hoppe, now 53, has been charged with the 1957 murder of Teddy Donald Hudson, killed by a shotgun blast to the head as he was driving through North Chattanooga. Newspaper reports attributed the slaying to either a disagreement over a girlfriend or moonshine.

At the time of the shooting, Hoppe was a star halfback at Auburn University and had already led his

high school team to three consecutive state championships.

Hudson's murder went unsolved until 1966, when Chattanooga police attempted to obtain an indictment against Hoppe after receiving new information from an unnamed informant. Despite the informant's statement, the grand jury did not indict Hoppe.

According to The Atlanta Constitution, that informant was Godwin.

The newspaper reported that Godwin, who was then dean of men, director of guidance and professor of psychology and Bible at Gardner-Webb College, was taking courses at

Auburn University that summer when Hoppe confessed the murder to him.

The newspaper report, written by Sam Heys, goes on to say that Godwin talked to authorities several years later, feeling guilty because he had remained silent for so long.

Godwin, contacted by The News Record, would not comment on The Atlanta Constitution report.

"I just can't say a word about it," he said.

Heys said he learned through his own investigation that Godwin provided police with new evidence.

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Joseph Godwin may be witness

Child Sex Abuse Charges Dismissed

The District Attorney's Office has dismissed six child sexual abuse charges against a 26-year-old Marshall man because taking the charges to trial would create a hardship on the alleged victims.

Ricky Chandler of Skyway Drive, Marshall, was charged in May 1987 with sexually molesting three children - aged 4, 5 and 8 - including one girl involved in another child sexual abuse case.

Chandler had been charged with three counts of first-degree sexual offense and three counts of taking indecent liberties with a minor, charges which were dismissed last week by the District Attorney's

Office with the consent of the N.C. Attorney General's Office.

"The Special Prosecutor's Office of the attorney general of North Carolina has consented to a dismissal of this case for reasons that trial of said case would result in additional trauma to the alleged victim of the crime alleged in this case," according to the dismissal order.

Authorities say they are especially concerned about the trial's potential impact on one of the alleged victims, who was also a victim in the child sexual abuse charges against Andrew "Dexter" ...

Despite Threat Of Lawsuit, Golf Course Groundbreaking Held

By BILL STUDENC
Editor

Weaverville officials and developers of Reems Creek Golf Club broke ground Friday for the 250-acre residential development and golf course.

Ground-breaking ceremonies were held despite the threat of a lawsuit to halt the satellite annexation of 189 hectares of Reems Creek Golf Club.

A group of residents - Concerned Citizens of Weaverville - has opposed the annexation of 30 acres of the development, saying the additional houses would place an undue burden on municipal services.

Joe Jigger, chairman of the group,

said Monday that Concerned Citizens of Weaverville still hopes to take legal steps to prevent the annexation on the grounds that it does not meet state requirements for the annexation of non-contiguous property.

The group has hired attorney Harold K. Bennett to look into the possibility of filing a lawsuit. Bennett is still studying the issue, Jigger said Monday.

"We are still consulting with our lawyer, but we don't have the answer yet," he said. "I talked to him this morning and gave him more information about the case and some other things. We will see if we can certainly lead the same way. We

haven't given up. That's the main thing."

Bennett warned Weaverville officials last week that annexation opponents may file a lawsuit, but that didn't stop the Weaverville Town Council from approving the annexation by a 5-1 vote.

The council's approval of the annexation has paved the way for Kenmore Associates of Henderson County, developers of the project, to begin work at the site, located 1.3 miles outside municipal limits.

Developers say they are glad that the annexation request has been approved.

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