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A special railway excursion will roll through WNC next month.

See Page 5

THE NEWS RECORD

Serving Madison And Northern Buncombe Counties

Vol. 88 No. 16

Thursday, April 21, 1988

25¢

Weaverville May Lift Water Tap Moratorium

By BILL STUDENC
Editor

Weaverville officials will conduct a study to determine if they should lift a 14-year ban on providing municipal water service outside the town limits. Mayor Reese Lasher, in calling for the study at Monday night's meeting of the Weaverville Town Council, said that a moratorium on new water taps outside the corporate limits has hampered the town's economic development efforts. Lasher also said that the recently approved agreement with the Asheville-Buncombe Water Authority

should provide Weaverville with all the water it needs for customers inside and outside town limits. Lifting the moratorium and extending water service to customers outside the town could also provide funds for an independent water system for Weaverville, he said. "In Weaverville, we have had a moratorium in place on the use of water since 1974. That moratorium has prohibited the growth of this community," Lasher said. "Weaverville, being a major part of the North Buncombe community, needs to continue that type of leader-

ship role. The only way we can do that is through water and sewer facilities that we have," he said. Weaverville could actually profit from providing water to customers outside the town limits, he said. Town officials could decide to charge non-municipal customers a water rate that would cover the cost of providing the water, plus give the town money to set aside for future improvements to the water system. "I believe the study will show that we're able to do this and it won't cost the town any money," Lasher said. "I believe we will be able to make

money from the sale of water and I believe we will be able to make money from tap fees." Town officials have been studying several options to improve the supply of water in the Weaverville area. Among those options are tapping the French Broad or the Ivy rivers. Most Weaverville officials seem to favor utilizing the Ivy River as a water source, but cost estimates on a water system based on the river have been as high as \$10.5 million. "I believe this (lifting the water moratorium) will be a better way to raise money for the Ivy River project

without raising water rates and without raising taxes," Lasher said. "If we can raise money to defer the cost of building a plant this way rather than by raising water rates or property tax rates, I think all of our people would support that approach," he said. Town officials increased water rates by 27 percent last year to help provide money for the new water system. Depending upon what the study reveals, Weaverville officials may lift the water tap moratorium as early as this fall.

Councilman Harold Payne asked that study also include a look at the town's water lines. "We need to know if our pipes are suitable to get water here," Payne said. "Our problem is not availability. I think it is distribution. Will our pipes handle it?" Weaverville officials last year ironed out an agreement with the Asheville-Buncombe Water Authority through which the town will purchase water. That agreement is designed only as an interim solution until the town can

Continued on back page

Madison Jail Reopens

By BILL STUDENC
Editor

Three of the four Madison County Sheriff's Department dispatchers laid off last month are back on the job -- but they're not getting paid for it. The former dispatchers are part of a volunteer force being used by Sheriff Dedrick Brown to answer emergency calls and provide full-time supervision of Madison County Jail. By using the volunteers -- including the laid off dispatchers, auxiliary deputies and others -- Brown has reopened the jail and will keep the jail open until July 1, when the Madison County Board of Commissioners approves a new budget. Brown is hoping that his slice of the budget will include funding for four full-time dispatchers, who also serve as jailers. If the county does not provide funding for the jail, Brown has

Continued on Page 10



BILL STUDENC PHOTO

Reems Creek Golf Club, scheduled for annexation July 1, may not become part of Weaverville. A group of residents has filed a

Lawsuit Could Halt Annexation Of Golf Course

By BILL STUDENC
Editor

A group of Weaverville residents has followed through on threats to file a lawsuit against the town of Weaverville to prevent the satellite annexation of Reems Creek Golf Club. The residents, represented by attorney Harold K. Bennett, have also asked a Superior Court judge for a temporary injunction halting the satellite annexation of the golf club until their lawsuit comes to trial. Judge Claude S. Sitton will conduct a hearing next Thursday in Buncombe County Superior Court to determine whether he will issue a restraining order halting annexation proceedings. The annexation of 89 acres and 189 homesites of the development is scheduled to take effect July 1. The lawsuit, filed last Thursday by Bennett, alleges that the annexation

violates state law governing the annexation of property that is not adjacent to current town limits. Kenmore Associates of Hendersonville, developers of Reems Creek Golf Club, requested annexation of 89 acres to be developed for single-family homes. But developers did not request annexation of 161 other acres owned by Kenmore Associates -- land that includes an 18-hole golf course plus other property designated as "future development." Under state law, all of a subdivision must be included in a request for satellite annexation, according to Bennett. The plaintiffs in the lawsuit -- Joseph Joyner and his wife, Ann; Juanita Proffitt, Mary Traxler, Lawrence Sprinkle and David Bell -- contend that the golf course and "for future development" property is part

Continued on back page



House Speaker Liston B. Ramsey, left, introduces Sen. Harold Hardison, a Democratic candidate for lieutenant governor, at a gathering in Marshall.

Ramsey Gives Nod To Hardison In Race For Lieutenant Governor

By BILL STUDENC
Editor

State Sen. Harold Hardison, one of three Democratic candidates for lieutenant governor, has been assured of at least one vote in the May 3 primary -- that of House Speaker Liston B. Ramsey. And Hardison is hoping that will translate to more votes in Ramsey's home county of Madison. Hardison, an eight-term senator from Lenior County, was in Marshall on Monday looking for support from other Madison County Democrats during a luncheon at Momma's Country Kitchen. Also seeking the nomination of the Democratic Party for the office of lieutenant governor are state Sen. Tony Rand of Fayetteville and former state Sen. Parks Helms of Charlotte.

"I intend to vote for Harold Hardison because he has been the best friend to the mountain counties."

Liston Ramsey

Ramsey, who introduced Hardison at Monday's noontime gathering, said that he knows all three Democratic candidates. "All three of them are friends of mine, but Harold Hardison has been the best friend to the mountain counties," Ramsey said. And that's the reason Hardison has won the speaker's vote, he said. "All three are capable men," Ramsey said. "I don't run around telling people how to vote, but if anybody's interested, I intend to vote for Harold Hardison because he has been the best friend to the mountain

counties." As an example, Ramsey told of how Hardison played a major role in obtaining a lithotripter -- a device which uses sonic waves to disintegrate kidney stones without surgery -- for Western North Carolina. Hardison, in brief remarks to Madison Democratic Party leaders, thanked Ramsey for his vote and said that he and the speaker agree "philosophically" on most issues. Hardison said he is not trying to sell himself as a "regional candidate," although his home county of Lenior and rural counties of WNC have much

in common. "We have to represent the whole state," he said. His campaign for lieutenant governor has taken him to all 100 counties in North Carolina. "We are doing well with our campaign. We have an organization that is working enthusiastically, and we feel real good about it," Hardison said. "I am hoping and praying that we can wrap it up in the first primary -- oh, wouldn't that be great. It would save a lot of wear and tear on me," he said. Topping Hardison's list of issues is education. "We have to educate our society. Our children are our future," he said. But almost as important as education is the development of economic opportunities, he said.

Continued on back page

Attorney Of 50 Years Honored

By HASSIE PONDER
Staff Writer

A.E. Leake, a Madison County attorney for more than half a century, must have felt like he was back home again Friday. Friends, family and officials of the Madison County court system paused that day to honor him for his 50 years of service as a lawyer. A portrait of Leake, 78, was unveiled during the special ceremony at noon in Madison County Courthouse. Leake was born in Bevers in 1911. He attended Western Carolina University, Chase Law School and Duke University Law School. He has been a teacher, a school principal, a state legislator and a member of the North Carolina House of Representatives, as well as a lawyer for the state.

Board of Education and the town of Hot Springs. Leake has also served as chairman of the Madison County Democratic Party and as a member of the North Carolina State Democratic Party's Executive Committee. During Friday's ceremony, several of Leake's long-time associates remembered the first time that they met Leake, and recalled the impression he made upon their own careers as lawyers. "I can't even remember ever hearing Mr. Leake raise his voice or get mad in a courtroom," said District Court Judge Charles Davis. "I met him when he was a young man, and he was a perfect example of a gentleman. He was the most dignified

came from District Court Judge Phillip Ginn, who said: "Like the footprints imprinted on the sand, Mr. Leake has been imprinted on many hearts, so that we will never be the same." Several other associates and friends took a walk down memory lane and recalled the many times that they had seen Leake in action. Some were humorous, some were sad, but each story told expressed the love and kindness that Leake bestowed upon those he knew. Near the end of the ceremony, his portrait was unveiled and hung up in the courtroom. Behind the portrait in the hall and a signature stand which has the names of friends, family and associates who gathered to honor



Sewer Line Project OK'd

The Marshall Board of Aldermen met Monday night for a special meeting to discuss the expenditure of leftover grant money. The town has \$94,253.55 left over from a N.C. Community Development Block Grant used for sewer line work on Cady Road and Chandler Drive. At Monday night's meeting, the board discussed how that money is to be used.

Howie Hester, town manager

Well-wishers gather around Madison County Judge Leake's portrait.

Continued on back page