



THE NEWS RECORD

Serving Madison And Buncombe Counties

Vol. 88 No. 19

Thursday, May 12, 1988

25¢

WNC Leaders Intensify I-26 Efforts

Study: Interstate Would Provide Jobs

By BILL STUDENC
Editor
Upgrading U.S. 23 north of Mars Hill to interstate standards would mean up to 170 new jobs and higher wages for workers in Madison County.
That's one of the conclusions of a report on the economic and safety benefits of a new interstate highway through Madison County.
Richard Stiles, regional economist for WNC Tomorrow, presented the report recently to the I-26 Corridor Association, a group interested in seeing Interstate 26 extended from Asheville through Madison County to the Tennessee state line.
The state of Tennessee is cur-

rently at work on improvements to a 15-mile stretch of U.S. 23 from Erwin, Tenn., to the state line at Sams Gap, with work to be completed in 1992. There are no plans for immediate improvements on the North Carolina side of the line, although the N.C. Department of Transportation is planning to begin acquisition of land for right of way for a four-lane highway in 1995.
The I-26 Corridor Association is calling for DOT to move up its timetable on widening U.S. 23, and to upgrade planned improvements to interstate standards. Association members plan to flock en masse to a DOT meeting Tuesday in Asheville to make that point

(see related story). Part of their ammunition will be the economic report from Stiles.
An interstate highway through Madison County would help boost the county's economy, Stiles said in his report to the I-26 Corridor Association.
"Madison County is currently ranked as one of the 20 most economically distressed counties in North Carolina. Not only does the job market afford limited opportunities, but those employed receive only 75 percent of the average statewide wage," Stiles said.
"Upgrading U.S. 23 to interstate standards would mean more jobs
-Continued on Page 9

Group To Pack DOT Highway Meeting

From Staff Reports
A Western North Carolina organization trying to convince state officials to build an interstate highway through Madison County plans to send hundreds of supporters to Tuesday's meeting of the state Board of Transportation in Asheville.
The I-26 Corridor Association, at a recent meeting, agreed to have as many people as possible at the transportation board's meeting next week to show support for efforts to move up the timetable on the proposed interstate.
Currently, the transportation board's Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) only calls for the widening of U.S. 23 north of Mars

Hill to four lanes, with right-of-way acquisition to begin in 1995.
But members of the I-26 Corridor Association, a group of WNC government, industry and business leaders, say they want that project moved up on the TIP schedule.
The group is also hoping that the road will not be just a four-lane highway, but a continuation of Interstate 26, which currently ends in Asheville.
Because it is the Board of Transportation's responsibility to set the priority for highway projects in North Carolina, the association is hoping to convince board members to move the proposed improvements to U.S. 23

higher on the TIP schedule.
Board of transportation members will be conducting a review of the TIP plan at 2 p.m. Tuesday at Asheville-Buncombe Technical College.
The I-26 Corridor Association is also circulating petitions to collect signatures from Western North Carolina residents supporting the project.
Other strategies include the distribution of booklets, brochures and buttons prior to Tuesday's TIP meeting.
Association members have said that an interstate highway through Madison County would
-Continued on Page 9

Marshall Pool To Open

By HASSIE PONDER
Staff Writer
Children in the Marshall area can get their swimming suits out of the attic.
Contrary to rumors circulating throughout town, the Marshall swimming pool will be open for business as usual this summer.
To prove that fact, the Marshall Board of Aldermen agreed Monday night to hire Polly Caldwell to run the pool this year.
The board also agreed to patch and repaint the pool. Once the repairs are made the pool will be opening - probably around the second week in June.
Caldwell, who supervised the operation of the Marshall swimming pool last year, will be responsible for
-Continued on Page 12



BILL STUDENC PHOTO

Former Weaverville Councilwoman Kathy Young is one of five applicants seeking a vacant seat on the council. Town officials interviewed the candidates this week and may decide as early as Monday which applicant will get the job.

Council Seat Up For Grabs In Weaverville

By BILL STUDENC
Editor
The Weaverville Town Council interviewed five applicants Monday night to fill a vacancy created by the March resignation of Councilwoman Ann Williams.
Williams resigned after serving on the council for only three months, citing "personal reasons." Her resignation came during the height of controversy surrounding the satellite annexation of Reems Creek Golf Club.
Remaining council members agreed to allow any interested Weaverville resident to apply for the position on the town council. During that sign-up period, which ended April 18, five residents applied for the seat on the council.
Candidates vying for the vacant position are former Councilwoman Kathleen Young, who lost in her bid for re-election in November; Robert Dreibelbeis, chairman of the Weaverville Board of Adjustments; John Dodd, a salesman living in Weaverville; Robert Neiger, retired from the U.S. Air Force and now employed at the VA Hospital in Oteen; and, Colin L. Hudson, a former employee of the Buncombe County Tax Office and current employee at RCV Turf and Tractor.
Those applicants were put on the "hot seat" Monday night, as the
-Continued on Page 12

Hot Springs Delays Promotional Plans

From Staff Reports
The Hot Springs Board of Aldermen postponed a decision Monday on a proposed contract with a retired marketing expert who has offered to help promote the town for the sum of \$1 a year.
The board wants town attorney Larry Leake to look over the proposed contract with Jim Oliver, a retired promotions and marketing expert from Hendersonville, before it is approved.
"They decided they wanted Larry Leake to look at it before they make any decision," said Hot Springs Mayor Kenny Ramsey.
The board's main concern with the contract is expense, Ramsey said. Although the contract with Oliver would only cost the town \$1 a year, aldermen are concerned that promotional efforts could result in other expenses, he said.
Ramsey said he is disappointed that the board did not approve the contract, and is hoping that Leake will give the contract his stamp of approval.

"To me, this is one of those things that you might get offered every 50 years. I wish they would have gone ahead and passed on it without dragging it out, but the new board members want to make sure that everything is up to par," Ramsey said.
"They are afraid there will be a lot of expenses, but the contract plainly says that everything would have to be approved by the town board, even the purchase of a pencil," he said. "He's not authorized to make any purchases unless it's approved by the town board."
Oliver learned of the town of Hot Springs and its efforts to attract industry and tourism after meeting at the Asheville Mall a former resident of the town.
He then offered his services to Hot Springs for \$1 a year.
Ramsey said he hopes to call a special meeting or poll the town board members by telephone on the proposed contract after Leake has an opportunity to review it.

Ramsey, 285 Graduates Receive Degrees At MHC

Special to The News Record
Degrees were awarded to 285 students Sunday afternoon - and an honorary degree presented to N.C. House Speaker Liston B. Ramsey - at Mars Hill College's commencement services.
Mars Hill College President Dr. Fred B. Bentley presented the degrees as the Baptist school brought its 132nd academic year to a close.
A colorful part of the ceremonies was the presentation of an honorary degree to Ramsey.
"No one has done more for the people of Western North Carolina than Liston Ramsey," Bentley said.
A Mars Hill College alumnus, Ramsey, D-Madison, is currently serving an unprecedented fourth term as speaker of the N.C. House of Representatives.
In a short address at the graduation ceremony, Bentley told the graduates he hopes they will not only establish themselves as leaders in their communities, but also strive to reach the Christian ideal of servant leaders.
Bentley urged the graduates to set aside a few moments during the rest of the day to "dedicate yourself to God's calling to utilize your talents, knowledge and skills to serve others, making this a better world for all of us."
Dr. J. Wesley Grayson of Laguna Hills, Calif., was recognized during the ceremonies. He is Mars Hill College's most generous benefactor, funding scholarships that currently assist more than 100 students each year.
Earlier in the day, Dr. Leon Smith, president of the N.C. Baptist State Convention and pastor of the First Baptist Church of Goldsboro, brought the message during the traditional baccalaureate service.
Smith, a moderate who was elected to the convention post by a surprising 10-3 margin last November, entitled his address "The Challenge of Character Development."
Reading his message on the Biblical mandate of Moses, Smith quoted passages from Isaiah and Hebrews.
-Continued on Page 8



Mars Hill College President Fred Bentley, left, presents an honorary degree to N.C. House Speaker Liston B. Ramsey, right, during commencement services Sunday afternoon.



BILL STUDENC PHOTO

Photographer Marty Harris pauses on a bridge over the French Broad River during a recent visit.

Picture This... Photographer Searches NC For Modern-Day Mayberry

By HASSIE PONDER
Staff Writer
Does Mayberry really exist? To Marty Harris, 36, from Statesville, it does. And he's spending the next year looking for real-life versions of the fictional TV town.
Harris is walking across North Carolina in search of small quaint towns and picturesque scenes to photograph for a book that will be centered around mostly pictures of one of the many places in North Carolina.
Harris worked for five years for the Statesville Journal. Ever since he was a teenager, he wanted to write a book.
"I actually started out driving across the state, but I found that it wasn't turning out the way I planned. I then decided that walking would be better," he said.
Harris started his walking tour in October and made it as far as
-Continued on Page 8