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## Wolf Laurel Ski Area To Expand

By H.D. KOONTZ III  
The News Record Editor

A former ski instructor who came to the United States 32 years ago wants to give Madison County a taste of his native Switzerland.

Sepp Gmunder, president of the Wolf Laurel Ski Corporation, said he plans to develop 140 acres of land as skiing area at the resort in northern Madison County.

"My interest is to have a first-class ski area with a European atmosphere," Gmunder, a native of Switzerland, said the other day at his

mountaintop home.

Gmunder is in the process of purchasing the ski slope portion of Wolf Laurel Resort, which was originally developed in the mid-1970s by Bald Mountain Development.

Last year the original developers sold the golf course, restaurant, the pro shop, the inn and 1,800 acres of land suitable for development to a Florida-based partnership — the Stokes-Osteen Communities Inc. and Walter Williams Realty Co.

The ski slope was not included in that sale.

Gmunder, who said he had "an agreement" with the owners, says he plans a two-phase development which could be completed within three to four years.

The first phase will involve an investment of \$1.7 million, including purchase price, and the addition of three more ski trails.

The ski area will be doubled from about 25 to 50 acres, he said.

Eventually, 140 acres will be developed for skiing.

Now, there is one four-passenger chair lift from the existing base

facilities to the top of the mountain. Gmunder plans to install a new, Austrian-made Doppelmayr lift.

"We will concentrate during the next two years to finish the existing area to make it very useful," Gmunder said.

"This means we will change the lift and will be adding and increasing the snow-making system 200 percent."

Gmunder also plans to improve the parking facilities, the ski lodge and the rental shop at the resort.

"Phase two will mean an additional 90 acres, for a total ski area of 140

acres," he said.

There will be another four-passenger lift installed also, he added.

"If the ski use increases and we have a full house, in two years we'll go ahead and lay out the trails."

This winter Gmunder anticipates hiring 60 to 70 fulltime and parttime workers at a payroll of about \$400,000.

If all goes according to the 53-year-old developer's plans, the resort will employ up to 200 people during the season and 60 people year round at a payroll of \$800,000.

Phase two of the operation will cost about \$3 million, he said.

It won't happen overnight, he admitted.

"We expect to get about a 20 percent increase over last year," Gmunder said. Last year 60,000 skiers visited the resort, a figure Gmunder said was "really not that much."

The season begins Thanksgiving Day this year.

Gmunder also said the snow-making system will double its capacity.

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## Prosecutors May Try Case Again In Jan.

By H.D. KOONTZ III  
The News Record Editor

Superior Court Judge Robert W. Kirby declared a mistrial in the murder case against Jon C. Thorsen after the jury failed to reach a verdict Thursday, Aug. 18.

This was the second time within the past six months in which a jury failed to reach a verdict in the case against Thorsen, accused of shooting his wife, Claudia, to death in their South Bear Creek Road trailer more than a year ago.

The Madison County District Attorney's office said after Kirby declared the mistrial that it may retry the case early next year.

District Attorney James T. Rusher said he may request a change of

venue because of the publicity the trial has received in Madison County.

Rusher said this week he believed the prosecution had a good case against Thorsen and that his office would not drop the second-degree murder charges.

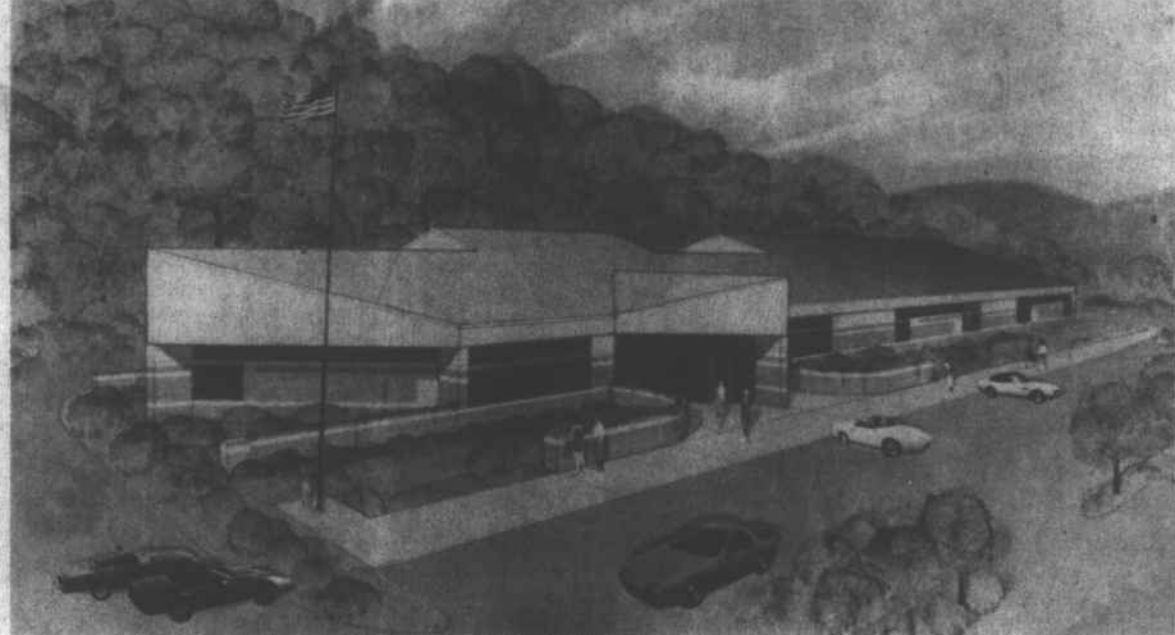
The jury of nine men and three women deadlocked at 7 to 5 after deliberating about two hours.

Seven of the jurors favored conviction.

Assistant District Attorney James L. Baker said there was no deadline for deciding whether or not to re-try the case.

Baker said a hearing would automatically be scheduled for the October session, but the prosecution

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Architect's sketch shows proposed tech center in Madison County.

## Satellite A-B Tech Center Construction Begins

By H.D. KOONTZ III  
The News Record Editor

Construction on a \$1.2 million Madison County Center of Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College is in full swing despite the searing August heat.

The proposed center, which is scheduled to be completed by June of next year, is located on the Marshall Bypass at the intersection with N.C. 213 and U.S. 25-70.

The A-B Tech satellite center will take up about 19,000 square feet on a 4.5 acre site.

One of its unique design features is the ability to expand the shop areas and classrooms to meet the needs of new industries locating in the area.

The center will initially have two shop areas and four classrooms for new industry training labs. Also, there will be a student lounge and a 100-seat auditorium.

There also will be a heliport for Memorial Mission Hospital's emergency helicopter adjacent to the center's 110-space parking area.

The 1986 and 1987 sessions of the

North Carolina General Assembly provided the funding for the project.

Madison County will own the land and building and lease the facility to the A-B Tech Board of Trustees for its outreach program.

Harvey L. Haynes, president of A-B Tech, said that originally the center will schedule continuing education and adult basic education classes.

"Eventually, we plan to offer credit courses in general education," Haynes said.

Also, Haynes said he hoped the new industry area will be fully utilized in the years ahead.

The Madison Center was established in 1984 with classes being held at various locations around the county.

"We are appreciative of the welcome Madison County folks have given us," said Ray Sawyer, center director.

"We especially appreciate the assistance given by school officials, such as (Supt.) Bob Edwards, David Wyatt, and Fred Haynie," he said.

"They gave us rooms in the schools

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Ray Sawyer

## Truck Hits Horse Tues. On N.C. 213

A Marshall man struck a horse while driving along N.C. 213 early Tuesday morning when five of the animals broke out of a pasture into the path of his 1986 pickup truck, the Highway Patrol reported.

Barnett Payne was driving west on the highway between Marshall and Mars Hill about 4:45 a.m. when the horses raced into his truck's path, Highway Patrolman Phil Kitchen said.

Barnett swerved to avoid hitting the animals but struck one, Kitchen said.

The horse, owned by Harvey Ponder of Madison County, had to be destroyed by a Madison County Deputy Dana Fox before Kitchen arrived at the scene, he said.

Kitchen said he did not know what the horse's value was. Damage to Barnett's truck was estimated at \$1,900, Kitchen said.

Barnett was not injured.

## Marshall To Extend Water, Sewer Lines

By H.D. KOONTZ III  
The News Record Editor

The Marshall Board of Aldermen approved a budget amendment Wednesday, Aug. 17, to enable the town to extend water and sewer lines to about 22 town residents on Rector Corner Road.

The project, which will connect 12 houses to the town system, will be paid for with \$64,256.80 in leftover Natural Resources and Community Development grant funds and \$19,613 in local option money, Sam Parker, director of the Madison County Housing Development Authority.

The aldermen approved the amendment following a public hearing. No opposition to the proposed project was voiced at the hearing.

Parker said the required environmental impact statement, a state and federal requirement, has been completed.

He said 82 percent of the residents fall into the low- to moderate-income household category, which qualifies the area for state grant aid.

The money is actually federal tax dollars being administered through the state agency, he said.

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## Weaverville Man Beaten In Asheville

By H.D. KOONTZ III  
The News Record Editor

A Weaverville man was beaten and robbed Thursday, Aug. 18, outside an Asheville food store, and four Asheville residents have been charged in connection with the incident.

Leroy Morris, 57, of Weaverville, was listed in "good" condition Tuesday at St. Joseph's Hospital, a hospital spokesman said.

Detective Dale Jenkins of the Asheville Police Department handled the investigation, assisted by Deputy Sgt. Ted Lambert.

Lambert said the incident occurred

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Main Library for Madison County in Marshall

## State Grants Library Funds

By H.D. KOONTZ III  
The News Record Editor

The Madison County library system has been allocated \$70,070 in state aid by the North Carolina General Assembly for the 1988-89 year.

The figure represents an increase of about \$2,000 more than the previous year.

"The legislature has always been

good to us," said Madison County Library Director Lucille Roberts.

The initial operating budget for the county system is \$182,254.

Madison's library system is a little different, Roberts explained, from those in more heavily populated areas.

In this regard, the state aid is actually a little more than the county is able to have a comparable financing

through the twisting mountain roads, but the county library still manages to reach the remote areas.

"We place some books in country stores throughout the county... paperbacks which are popular, and such," she explained.

There is also a branch library at Mars Hill that periodically receives some of the most-read volumes of the county.

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## Schools Get More Money From Board Of Education

By H.D. KOONTZ III  
The News Record Editor

An additional \$72,000 in local school money was approved Tuesday night by the Madison County Board of Education to meet anticipated demands in vocational education and other areas.

The board unanimously increased the local current expense fund for vocational-disadvantaged school programs from \$10,512 to \$27,732.

Also, the board approved \$20,000 for the high school athletic fund, which was \$15,000 last year. That fund pays for security fees at ball games, supplements coaches' salaries for all but the head football coach and covers the \$6,000 officials' fees for the year.

The board also approved \$10,000 for band programs, the same amount as the previous year and agreed to provide about \$20,000 to pay its electrician, an item left out by oversight.

Another \$7,000 was added by the board to its \$13,000 contracted services fund, which goes to pay lawyers and auditors.

Action on a request for an additional \$10,000 for new computer hardware was delayed until a report could be presented to the board at its September meeting.

The school system's current bond revenue fund is \$1,200,000, which goes

with the state board's allotment of \$8,224,944.

The board also learned from finance officer Terry L. Price that it

has \$454,884.64 in local cash balance; \$285,504.97 in checking; minus \$4,493.52 for payroll; and \$173,673.19.

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## Coon Hound Trials To Be Held Sept. 10

By H.D. KOONTZ III  
The News Record Editor

The second Annual Coon Hound Field Trials Shriners' Hospital Benefit Hunt will be held Sept. 10 at Mars Hill Recreation Park.

All proceeds from the event will go towards the Shriners' Hospital for Crippled Children.

A parade will kick off the day's activities at 9 a.m. with an auction to follow.

A U.K.C. bench show will begin at 2 p.m., with an entry fee of \$7.

A trapping contest and dash contest will follow.

A U.K.C. two-hour night hunt begins at 7 p.m., with an entry fee of \$12.

Trophies will be presented to the winners.

"Bring the entire family," the sponsors say. "The children will be

open until midnight. Help us help the children at the Shriners' Hospital for Crippled Children."

Donations may be mailed to John L. Chandler, North Main Street, Mars Hill, 28754.

All events are being sponsored by the Tri-County Coon and Bear Hunters Association and the Shriners Ocala Mountain Buggies and assisted by the Yancey County Coon Hunters Association, the WNC Coon Hunters Association and the Mars Hill Shrine Club.

U.K.C. and sponsors are not responsible for loss, theft, accidents or damage to property. No alcoholic beverages are permitted. Dogs will be allowed.

For more information, call Jerry Chandler at 287-5444.