

# THE CHEROKEE SCOUT

and Clay County Progress

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## Clay Levy Back In Effect

# Cherokee Calls Vote On Tax

By Wally Avett  
Staff Writer

In special meetings during the past week, the Clay County commissioners put the local sales tax back into effect in their county and the Cherokee commissioners called for a vote of the people on the matter.

At Hayesville the Clay commissioners held a public hearing on the local one percent sales tax last Monday. "It took about 15 minutes," reported Chairman Howard Wimpey, with nobody at all showing up to argue for or against the tax. The three-man Clay board then voted to put the tax back into effect in that county, to become effective the first of May.

Chairman Wimpey said the commissioners agreed to divide the revenue in Clay with the Town of Hayesville, based on

the town's property tax. The new local option sales tax law passed by the General Assembly gives them the choice between dividing with the town on the basis of either its property tax levy or its population, Wimpey said, and in this case the property tax formula will "mean a little more for the town."

The Clay County voters approved the local sales tax in the original statewide vote in November of 1969 and the tax was in effect in Clay until it was knocked out in January by the North Carolina Supreme Court. During the last three months of 1970, Clay got \$12,701 from the one percent local tax, according to figures provided by the state Department of Revenue. Of that total, Hayesville received \$993.

The Cherokee County voters turned down the local sales tax in the 1969 election and that fact hung heavily over the special meeting of the commissioners Saturday morning at the courthouse. The Cherokee commissioners had several choices, none of them easy.

They hinged on the new law's provision that the commissioners of any county in the state can put the local sales tax to a vote or else can simply levy the tax themselves, after holding a public hearing.

Faced with rising costs of county services, the Cherokee board fears a raise in property taxes for next year may be necessary unless a new source of revenue is found. But since the voters of the county turned down the sales tax in 1969, there was also the fear of "being ridden out of town on a rail" if they levied the tax without consulting the people.

And if they called for an election on the sales tax and it fails, will they still face angry citizens if they have to raise property taxes? And if the commissioners are the elected leaders of the county, and the sales tax is needed, are they not supposed to have the strength to face the facts and approve it themselves?

These questions bothered the commissioners on Saturday and if they were not enough, there was also the \$300,000 school bond referendum which must be approved for construction of a school at Andrews.

Dean Pullium, chairman of the county Board of Elections, met with the commissioners and estimated the cost of a county election on the sales tax at \$5,000. There was some talk of holding a vote on both the sales tax and the school bonds at the same time, but County Attorney Lonnie Hoover informed the board there is too much red tape involved in setting up a bond referendum to hold that vote by the middle of May, the desired time for the sales tax election.

Finally, after much discussion of the issues involved, the commissioners agreed to put the sales tax to a vote of the people in mid-May and Chairman Jack Simonds shoved the legal request across the table to Pullium, instructing him to set the election machinery in motion.

The commissioners indicated that they will hold public meetings to discuss the pros and cons of the sales tax at several locations in the county before the election. They are expected to schedule these meetings at their regular April session, which will be next Monday.

If approved by the voters, the local sales tax in Cherokee County will bring in an estimated \$200,000 a year to the county, which would be shared with Andrews and Murphy.

It would become effective with the beginning of the county's fiscal year, July 1, and would certainly affect the county budget for the coming year. The commissioners said property taxes would not rise if the sales tax was approved and probably could be cut back some.



Hugh Lasseter . . . opening sports shop here

Avett Photo

## Bill Would Give More Deputies

A bill was introduced in the General Assembly last week which would give Cherokee County Sheriff Blain Stalcup the two additional deputies he wants.

Sheriff Stalcup (Democrat) has two deputies and has requested of the Cherokee County board of commissioners (2 Republicans, 1 Democrat) that he be given two additional deputies.

The commissioners have said that there is not enough money in the county budget for additional deputies at this time but last month did hire a night jailor for the county jail, former Sheriff (Republican) Claude Anderson. The GOP commissioners Jack Simonds and Jack Lovingsood voted for this: The Democrat, W.T. Moore, was against it.

Last Saturday, however, in a special meeting the

commissioners unanimously declared themselves against the bill in the Legislature and directed County Attorney Lonnie Hoover to write a letter expressing their feelings to the legislators of this area.

Sheriff Stalcup said he was tired of asking the commissioners for extra help and being denied. "The county commissioners wouldn't even give me a part-time deputy," he said this week. "There was money for that in the budget but they wouldn't give it to me."

Senator Carl D. Killian of Cullowhee introduced the bill in the State Senate on Friday, where it was referred to the Local Government committee. Dr. Killian said the Democratic executive committee of Cherokee County requested the bill.

If approved, it will empower the sheriff of Cherokee to hire four deputies, to be paid \$400 a month apiece plus their expenses, and to continue to hire a jailor at \$100 a week and assign deputies to work as jailors during hours he designates.

Cherokee County deputy sheriffs drive their own automobiles and usually receive \$200 a month in car expenses in addition to their \$400 salaries.

## Sports Shop To Open

A new business opens in Murphy on Friday, a sporting good shop in the place formerly occupied by The Shoe Box.

Hugh Lasseter, who operates the Hiawassee Sports Shop at Hiawassee, Ga., is the proprietor. He has bowed to the Cherokee County spelling of the Indian name and will drop the "a" and call his Murphy store the Hiawassee Sports Shop.

The new shop on Tennessee Street will feature a complete line of sports equipment, he says, for boating, hunting, fishing, archery, golf, camping and other sports activities.

Lasseter recently purchased the stock of a bankrupt sporting goods store in Georgia and says he will be offering, as quantities last, many goods at discount house prices.

In addition to individual sports equipment, Lasseter will be selling team equipment for baseball, softball and basketball plus a line of trophies. He also offers a line of hobby wood-working equipment.

...The winners of the Collins-Crain coloring contest, left off the ad on page 4-B by mistake this week, are Debbie Kay Maxey, 6, of Bryson City and Lisa Johnson, 7, of Route 1, Murphy.

APRIL 1971						
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LEFT TO RIGHT:  
KAREN RUTH MOORE  
—Mr. & Mrs. Ferd Moore  
ANGELA LEIGH HENDRIX  
—Mr. & Mrs. Jim Hendrix  
TAMARA LYNN BARTON  
—Mrs. Mary Frances Hughes  
MARGARET LYNN HALL  
—Mr. & Mrs. John Burton Hall



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## Spring Snowstorm

Spring came in last week with a surprise storm on Thursday which left six to eight inches of mushy, soggy snow on the area. The heavy wet covering collapsed several chickenhouses, a barn at the Cherokee County Golf Course (top) and a boathouse at Hiwassee Dam (bottom). It also hit store awnings hard and accounted for dozens of

wrecker calls as vehicles skidded and slid into ditches. More appropriate Spring weather on Friday and Saturday did away with the snow. Ordinarily we don't print weather predictions, or other forms of guessing, but some of the oldtime weather prophets are calling for one more snow before Spring sets in for good. (Carringer Photos)

## Court Ends Quickly

Jurors who had been called for Superior Court duty next week won't have to serve.

In fact, the jurors called for duty this week didn't have to serve either.

A scheduled two-week session of Cherokee Superior Court, with Judge Thad Bryson of Bryson City presiding, lasted one day and only guilty pleas were heard on Monday, no jurors being seated.

Court officials said the reason the court term was short was that a key lawyer was absent and so were several officers, out of the county attending a special school.

In action Monday, Judge Bryson set bonds at \$2,500 each for three youths charged in a rape-robbery case in Murphy—Steve Thrasher, Barry Dockery and Steve Lance. By Tuesday all three had made bond and left the county jail.

A psychiatric examination was ordered in the case of Howard Radford, 45, charged with the shooting deaths on New Year's Day of his father and sister at Unaka.

## Trout Season Opens Saturday

The trout fishing season begins Saturday morning a half-hour before sunrise with designated trout streams in Cherokee and Clay counties stocked in preparation for opening day.

Traditionally one of the days (along with the opening of deer season) when the largest numbers of sportsmen will turn out, game wardens expect crowded creeks on Saturday, if the weatherman cooperates.

## Softball Meeting Set

The Murphy Softball Association will hold its organization meeting for the coming season on Wednesday night of next week at the Power Board Building.

All team representatives for men or women's squads and potential sponsors are invited to attend the meeting, which begins at 7:30.

## Grand Jury Finds Jail

## 'Improved' Rescue Squad To Train

The Cherokee County Grand Jury Monday reported the county jail to be "much improved" and in a "satisfactory" condition.

This was a far cry from the Grand Jury report of last July, which blasted the jail at that time as "too filthy and smelly for human-occupation."

Sheriff Blain Stalcup said he was pleased with the Grand Jury's findings, noting that a lot of work, painting and fixing up, has been done at the jail in the past few months.

The jail was closed by order of a Superior Court judge late last year and cells were to be used to hold prisoners for no longer than six hours. Sheriff Stalcup reported this week, however, that the state jail inspectors have approved four of the renovated cells for regular use and added that approval of the rest of the jail is expected soon.

The Grand Jury report was signed by Ruth Forsyth, who was named foreman on Monday, and presented to Judge Thad Bryson, who presided over the short session of Superior Court here.

It found the county tax office, Clerk of Court and Register of Deeds offices all in satisfactory condition.

Members of the Grand Jury also looked at the county schools, reporting that "road conditions for buses are poor."

They talked with representatives of the State Highway Commission about improving some of the roads the buses travel.

## Hayesville Senior Play Scheduled

The Senior Class of Hayesville High School will present the Senior Play next Tuesday night at the school, beginning at 7:30.

A three-act comedy, it is titled "Do You Trust Your Boyfriend?"

The players include Vivian Mart, Linda Martin, Connie Murray, Mike Mauney, Bobby Hollifield, Linda Bell, Rondall Brown, Melba Moore Russell, Danny Hollifield and Eleanor MacCorle.

## Youth Finds \$6,000; Returns It To Owner

Barry Lunsford, a schoolbus driver at Hayesville High School, sat in his bus early Thursday morning of last week, warming up the motor.

A car stopped for a stop-sign near the Hayesville Library where Lunsford parks his bus and then drove away; the 17-year-old Junior, a star athlete at Hayesville High, saw something fall from the car's roof.

He ran to investigate and found three money bags lying in the street. He opened the first one and found a quantity of \$10 bills and checks, the second one contained more money and more checks. Then he saw "B&T Supermarket" printed on the third bag and didn't open it.

Lunsford quickly circled the Courthouse square and recognized the car involved, parked in front of Tiger's Clothing Store.

He got out of the bus and headed for the store, money-bags in hand, where he was met by an anxious Bobby Tiger. Tiger, a prominent Hayesville merchant, had placed the bags on top of his car as he prepared to get into the vehicle that morning and then forgot about them, driving away with them still on the roof.

Tiger reported that there was more than \$6,000 in cash and checks in the three bags, all returned safe and sound. He commended young Lunsford for his honesty in returning the money and gave him a suitable reward.



## Building Saved

Quick action by the Murphy volunteer firemen on Monday night saved the Sims Radiator Shop building from destruction by fire. The

building is vacant but firemen said someone apparently has been staying in it; they said a burning mattress started the fire. (Avett Photo)