

# THE CHEROKEE SCOUT

and Clay County Progress



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## Board Imposes Sales Tax

In a special meeting last Saturday, the Cherokee County Board of Commissioners voted to levy the one percent local sales tax in this county on their own power and called off a planned referendum on the issue.

A public hearing on the local sales tax, which is prescribed by the law passed recently in the Legislature if no countywide vote is to be held, was scheduled by the commissioners for next Tuesday night at 7:30 in the main courtroom of the Cherokee Courthouse.

The special election on the sales tax, which was to be held May 22, was called off by the commissioners, who voted to rescind all their previous actions on the sales tax matter.

W.T. Moore, the senior

member of the three-man board, has made no secret of his feelings on the matter all along. He said a month ago that the board should levy the sales tax now on its own power, without a vote, adding that "commissioners are not supposed to be popular."

Jack Simonds, chairman of the commissioners, has been on the other side of the fence. Too many decisions are made without consulting the voters, he said, and people get the feeling that things are crammed down their throats. He was for a vote.

Jack Lovingood, the newest member of the board, was the key man on the decision. At the special meeting commissioners had the last of March, in which they decided to call for the vote, he went along with the

referendum but seemed to lean toward levying the tax without a vote.

The action last Saturday was completed without much discussion. Moore made the motion to levy the tax and Lovingood seconded it, then they convinced Simonds to go along with them and made it unanimous.

Their general feeling was that the sales tax might be defeated in the May voting and if it was, the commissioners would then have no choice but to raise property taxes, adding to the burden of the property owners.

Both the governing bodies of Andrews and Murphy had passed resolutions urging the commissioners to go ahead and impose the sales tax now, without a vote. Simonds ordered that records of these resolutions be placed in the

official minutes of the commissioners.

The commissioners also decided to divide the money raised through the sales tax with Andrews and Murphy on a population basis rather than the property tax formula. The choice was theirs, according to the law passed by the Legislature.

Andrews will get about \$13,000 a year from the sale;

Murphy will get \$19,000 and the county will get \$156,000 according to estimated figures.

The towns' shares, if the money was divided on the property tax formula, would have been an estimated \$15,000 for Andrews and \$28,000 for Murphy, the commissioners said.

The commissioners held a public meeting at Hiwassee Dam High School on Tuesday

night to discuss the sales tax with citizens of that area and only one man showed up. He said others had planned to come to the meeting but had either gone to the circus at Murphy or were busy gardening. He said most of the people there were not opposed to the sales tax.

Another public meeting is set for Thursday night at 7:30 at the Town Hall in Andrews.

## 500 Acres Burned

The past week has been one of the worst for forest fire conditions in recent years, with more than 500 acres in Cherokee County burned over.

The dry, windy weather kept both state and federal firefighting crews busy with a number of small woodfires and two large ones near the Tennessee line.

Cherokee County Ranger Harold Coleman said his state crews fought a fire on Pack Mountain two days last week which was started when a brush-burning operation got out of control. It burned 168 acres, he said.

Another fire in the same general vicinity, at Wolfpen Gap, started on Saturday, the ranger said and that blaze is being investigated. Mopping up operations on that fire were finished Monday afternoon, after the fire had burned about 300 acres.

Ranger Coleman said he had more than 50 men and a number of bulldozers and fireplows working on the larger fire at its peak.

Federal crews from the U.S. Forest Service assisted in the two large fires and also had a number of their own to contend with on federally-owned lands. Federal investigators were also at work in the Beavertown section late last week investigating the fires set

there by arsonists the week before which burned about 40 acres.

The smokechasers were praying for rain, which came

Wednesday morning. It has been extremely scarce since the first of April. All burning permits were canceled last week until further notice.

## Public Housing Bids Accepted

Construction is expected to begin "in the very near future" on two public housing projects in Murphy, delayed due to high construction costs.

Bids were opened at the Power Board Building last week on the two jobs, totaling \$682,600. The federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) accepted the bids and will award the contracts to the three low bidders in Atlanta on Thursday.

The HUD officials had originally planned to build the two projects for about \$600,000. Bids were opened last July and HUD would not accept them, then totaling \$699,069. A second bidding, opened in September showed a total cost of \$729,419 and the job was postponed until this Spring.

Collins and Minor got the

general contract at \$565,900, underbidding Smith & Jones, which had been low at the other two biddings, by \$30,000. Hughes Electric had been low on the other two biddings but lost the job to a Charlotte firm, Basic Electric Co. bid \$48,000 to Hughes' \$48,499.

Wells & West, low on the plumbing section of the contract at the other two biddings, was low this time at \$49,600.

The projects are 10 units for the elderly on Hiwassee Street and 30 units for low-income families, to be constructed on Park Avenue near the Rimco plant.

## Glenmary Council Meets

The semi-annual meeting of the advisory council for the Glenmary Home Nursing Service met at the Clay County Health Center Tuesday night.

Alvin Penland chairman presided. Other officers of the council are Dr. L.R. Staton vice chairman and Mrs. Garth Thompson secretary.

Penland led a panel discussion on problems faced by the Home Nursing Service and also how they can serve the area more effectively. The Glenmary Home Nursing Service now serves both Clay and Cherokee County.

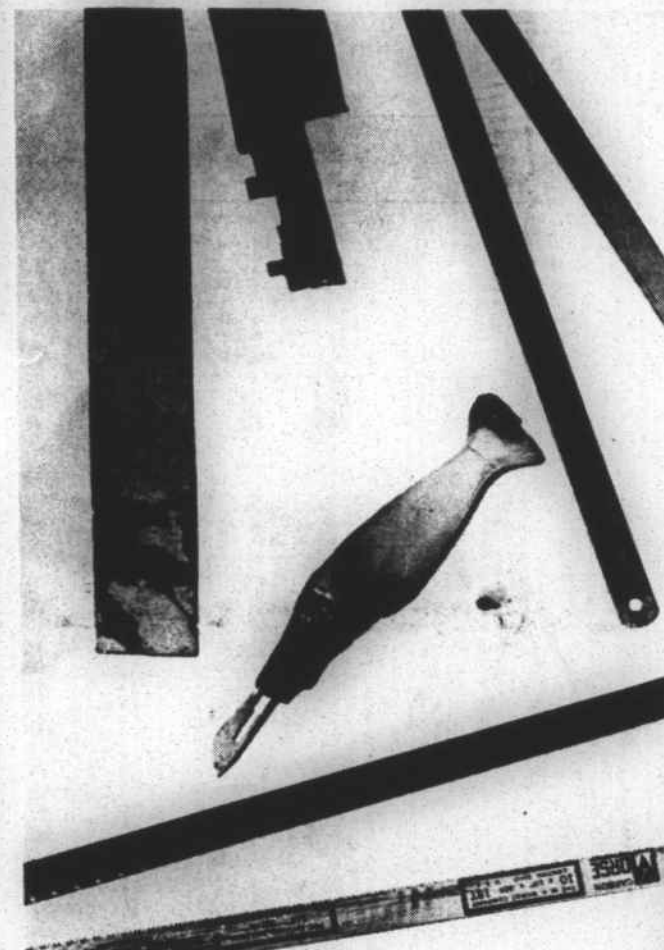
In addition to other members present for the meeting was the Glenmary staff which consists of: Sister Mary Jagues, Administrator, Miss Anita Sanford Nursing Director, Mrs. Christine Murray and Sister Loretta John - licensed practical nurses, Sister Nora, Home Health Aide and Mrs. Angella Barrett, Secretary and Bookkeeper.

## Hayesville Town Slate Unopposed

Incumbent Candler A. Carroll, mayor of Hayesville, is running unopposed in the election that will be held May 4. Town Commissioners Paul Vaught Jr., Harold Moore and Bob Cunningham are also unopposed.

M.C. Moore was elected mayor in 1967 and re-elected in 1969. After he built his new home on Lake Chatuge and moved out of Hayesville, he resigned.

Harold Moore, Vaught and Carroll were serving as commissioners at that time. Vaught and Harold Moore then appointed Carroll to fill out the unexpired term of M.C. Moore and appointed Bob Cunningham to replace Carroll as a board member.



## Nixon Commends Local Heroes

Grier Ivie and Charlie Sims, Murphy youths who saved a man trapped in a car wrecked in Nantahala River back in late January, have received official commendations from the White House.

The commendations and brief letters to each of the youths, students at Western Carolina University, were received last week, signed by President Richard Nixon.

The letter signed by Nixon reads, in part, "Your concern for a fellow human being in danger deserves the respect of all Americans..." The commendations bear the names of the youths, awarded "in recognition of exceptional service to others, in the finest American tradition."

Ivie and Sims were returning to school at Cullowhee when they came upon a car, wrecked and overturned in the icy Nantahala River. Together with an Asheville truck-driver, who also has been commended by Nixon, they waded into the rushing stream, freed the man and brought him to safety.

## Mainstream Cleaning Up Clay And Cherokee

A Federal program to provide jobs and training for unemployed is responsible for much of the clean-up work now visible in Cherokee and Clay counties.

It's Operation Mainstream, a manpower program of the Department of Labor, sponsored by the Four Square Community Action office at Andrews.

Mainstream was put into operation for a six-month period last February, to work 100 men in the four counties of Clay, Cherokee, Graham and Swain. It was funded for \$190,000 and will be up for re-approval by federal officials at the end of July.

In Clay County, for example, the 25 men allotted to that county work under the

supervision of Clyde E. Dayton. They have cleaned up around the county jail, at the school in Hayesville and also at Ogden and Shooting Creek schools. They have also hauled away abandoned auto bodies and help demolish old unsightly buildings.

"They're exceptional, I know them all and they're excellent workers," Dayton says. One rule of the Mainstream program is that 40 percent of those hired must be 55 years old or older. Dayton

said one of the men in his crew is 73 years old.

Dayton and other supervisors have noted that the older men of the Mainstream program seem to get much more work done than the youths involved in summer programs. They add that this is probably because the mature workers need the money, are more used to work and have family responsibilities to meet.

They are paid about \$70 for a 40-hour week, which is divided into 32 hours physical work and

8 hours of classes on Fridays at Tri-County Tech. There they learn basic education and safety.

The classroom is an important part of the program, according to Mack Huffman of Robbinsville, who is the counselor for the program in Cherokee and Swain Counties. Huffman estimated that 70 percent of the men employed by the program have less than a fifth grade education.

Huffman's counterpart for Clay and Graham counties is

Paul Millsaps, also of Robbinsville. Under them are the supervisors, Dayton in Clay County and in Cherokee County, Hal Bryson and Fred Haynie. Ed Bryson in the Four Square office at Andrews is the overall director for the project.

"Our men do work that would probably not be done otherwise," Bryson said. "We certainly hope to get the project refunded when it expires at the end of July."

In Cherokee, the Mainstream crews have worked

at the airport, cleaned up around the schools and cleaned up at the Courthouse in Murphy. They have also helped haul in junked cars at Murphy and picked up litter along the streets in town.

Some of the Mainstream workers were assigned to work for the U.S. Forest Service and have built grills and picnic tables for campgrounds and picnic areas and even fought fires during the past week. "We've been very well pleased with them," a Forest Service spokesman said.

## Don't Forget, This Is Clean-up Week

...have garbage tied or bagged, ready for trucks on Thursday

## Escape Artist

Russell Lee Jones, 22, of Robbinsville, shows how he escaped from the Cherokee County Jail early Monday morning after sawing bars out of two doors on the top floor. Cherokee Sheriff Blain Stalcup, keeping a close watch on Jones, taped the hole the young prisoner went through at 7 inches wide by 12 inches high. Jones was recaptured about noon Monday in Graham County, charged with escaping, stealing a car in Murphy, possession of the stolen car in Graham County and failure to stop for a Highway Patrol siren. With

another prisoner, he escaped from the Clay County Jail last November and was recaptured several hours later in a stolen car back in his home county of Graham. He was originally jailed on charges of breaking and entering. After the escape, Sheriff Stalcup ordered a thorough search of the jail Tuesday which produced items at right - several hacksaw blades, a homemade knife (center) and two keys in the process of being made from the metal bed-slats in the cells. (Weaver Carringer Photos)



## Clean-up Projects

Paul Millsaps, left, and Hal Bryson, are shown with Mainstream workers cleaning up near the Harshaw Chapel in Murphy in the top picture. Clyde Dayton, left, supervisor

of Mainstream in Clay County, is shown in the bottom picture with two of his crew tearing down an old house in Hayesville. (Avett Photos)