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Town bids for Excellence award status

by Priscilla Hopkins

The Black Mountain-Swannanoa Chamber of Commerce was the sponsoring agency in Black Mountain's bid for a Governor's Community of Excellence award. This is an on-going program for North Carolina communities whose latest population estimate or census figures do not exceed 15,000. To meet the award winning criteria, the community must have a sponsoring agency, an economic development organization, a promotional materials committee which must provide an up-to-date brochure and a 10-15 minutes slide presentation about the features of the community, a marketing committee, a development team composed of citizens who are knowledgeable about such local topics as transportation, utilities, taxes and other livability factors of the community, an existing industrial committee, a financial organization that has the ability to finance the development of industrial properties, an accurate community profile, and at least one industrial site that will be available for a specified time.

For more than a year, many people in the community have been involved in this project which culminated with a formal presentation to the inspection team last Wednesday, Sept. 15. Bill White, Jr., President of the Chamber headed the development team who made the day long presentation. Others who were responsible for presentations in specific areas were Mayor Tom Sobol, Wendell Begley, Herb Edwards, Kathy Wacaster, George Venturella and Travis Childs. Also on the committee but unable to attend because of being out of town were Kelce Lytle and Bob Watts. Frances Berry, Community Development Director, and Tony Caudle, Regional Planner from The Land of the Sky Council were also present.

The state inspection team members were Priscilla Hartle, Ray Cantrell, Clem Wright and Hugh Stevens.

The format of the first portion of the presentation was structured so that one of the panel members portrayed the representative of a prospective industrial company—in this case an automobile head light manufacturer—who quizzed the members of the presentation team on various aspects and facilities of the community. Then each developmental team member made a more formal presentation on items in his area of expertise. The afternoon portion of the presentation was spent in an on-site tour of existing area industries. The meeting concluded with an informal critique of the developmental committee's presentation by the panel. The committee was praised as one of the best prepared groups the panel had encountered.

Informal assurances were given by the panel that Black Mountain would qualify for the award, but formal presentation will not take place until November when the mayor will go to Raleigh to accept the award.

A principle benefit to the community to be derived from the successful completion of this program will be assistance from the state department of Commerce in the economic development of the town of Black Mountain. Also, colorful signs will be erected at the entrances of the corporate limits stating that the town is a Governor's Community of Excellence.

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Billy Ed Wheeler doing what he does best.
(Priscilla Hopkins photo)

Wheeler headlines United Way Kickoff

by Priscilla Hopkins

"Asheville, Reach for the Sky" is the theme for the United Way of Asheville and Buncombe County's 1982-83 Campaign. Headlining the entertainment for the 250 community leaders who attended the campaign's opening luncheon held at the Hilton Inn on Wednesday, Sept. 8 was the Swannanoa Valley's own balladeer, Billy Ed Wheeler. He performed with Timberline, a Nashville based band. In the soft-spoken style that is his, Wheeler told of the first time he had taken part in an United Way campaign opening. It was more than a decade ago that he had come with his father-in-law, the late Arthur Bannerman, then President of Warren Wilson College. "And," he told the group, "the United Way has been a family tradition ever since." His wife and mother-in-law were in the audience as he spoke.

He entertained not only with his singing and guitar playing, but with a "down home" humorous story about how he gets the inspiration for the songs he writes. The idea for the lyrics to "Irene" came about when he was playing golf with a man who, Billy Ed

had been told, was very wealthy. During the early stages of the game, his partner remarked without preamble that perhaps Billy Edd had been told of his wealth. Yes, Billy Edd acknowledged nodding his head, he had. "Well," continued the man, "I am rich. And I've earned every penny of it, for my wife is half Indian and half bulldog and she's either on the warpath or sitting around on her tail a'growlin'!"

Wheeler also sang two other of his songs, "Coward of the County" and "Asheville—Land of the Sky". The latter is also the title of his latest album. Several of his albums are available at The Old Depot in Black Mountain.

Wheeler was warmly received and given a standing ovation at the conclusion of his performance. Timberline had played earlier in the program. The four young men who produced its toe-tapping country style music were Eric Elder, guitar; Chet Couch, drums; Chuck Fey, bass and Dave Flemming, rhythm guitar.

Campaign chairman Robert Fleming said that volunteers will be contacting individuals and businesses until the end of October. He expects good response from the community because "people

are generous once they understand the need...and in these times of great economic stress, more people have need of counseling and in meeting their bills."

Two new agencies have been added this year, Helpmate, Inc. and Hospice of N.C. bringing the total of agencies served by the United Way to 36.

A moving multi-media presentation titled "winners" was prepared by Price-McNabb, an Asheville advertising agency. The presentation stressed that the winners—the volunteers of the United Way campaign—are people who want to work and win something more out of life by helping others. As one volunteer was shown saying, "Winners are the people who get involved in forming the future, not just living." Fleming echoed this theme in his closing remarks as he challenged those who would lead this year's campaign to "reach for the sky" as they worked to meet the goal of \$1,450,000 which is up 9 percent over last year's record achievement.

Doug Stafford, a Black Mountain Alderman, is an associate of Price-McNabb and was in charge of all the arrangements for the highly successful kick-off session.

Aldermen struggle with zoning problems

by Bill Anthony

Do you live in a residential zone of Black Mountain and would you like a mobile home park in the three acres adjacent to your house?

That is the political test question before the Board of Aldermen following a public hearing Sept. 15 intended to air the town's proposed new zoning ordinance.

While controversy has focused for 10 months on business identification signs, the aldermen instead were brought up short last week without a consensus on how to respond to those people who, usually for economic reasons, prefer to live in mobile homes, and how not to dismay those who don't want mobile

homes next door.

The aldermen and their Planning Board have recently moved in the direction of preventing new individual mobile homes, while accepting the alternative of mobile home parks. Most of the officials agree that people who want to live in mobile homes should be allowed to do so, but where? Rejecting the notion that only specific neighborhoods should be labeled acceptable for mobile home parks on the premise such communities chosen likely would be the poorer in town, and not wishing to add to their unattractiveness, the aldermen and planners were prepared broadly to allow the parks in both the higher density R-10 and lower density R-20 zones.

However, according to the drafted ordinance, such parks must have a minimum area of three acres, and no one at the Sept. 15 meeting could recall an empty area in the R-10 zone so large. That leaves R-20.

The controversy last week developed between residents of the S. Blue Ridge Rd. community (R-20) and Jack Brown. The latter was recently denied a permit by the Board of Adjustment to create a recreational vehicle park on his property in the vicinity of S. Blue Ridge Rd. and Brier Brook Road. Now Brown wishes to use the acreage for a mobile home park, and he told the aldermen, in effect, he would consider it discriminatory not to be permitted to do so.

Dr. and Mrs. Al Wagener led the neighbors opposed to Brown's proposal at the zoning ordinance public hearing. They argued that an area zoned for low density is precisely not the place designed for mobile home parks.

Unable to resolve the problem Sept. 15, the aldermen called for more research on their legal alternatives, and scheduled another public hearing for Oct. 7. That follows a previously scheduled meeting by the Planning Board Sept. 30, and is before the aldermen's regularly scheduled action meeting Oct. 11. When the zoning ordinance will come to a vote is uncertain, although some have predicted no sooner than November, 12

months from the time the McDonald's sign prompted a moratorium on the issuance of new sign permits and redrafting of the zoning ordinance.

As for the original sign controversy, the aldermen apparently have no problem with Article X of the planners' zoning ordinance draft. That would permit free standing business identification signs not more than 85 square feet on each side and up to 25 feet tall. Also permitted would be "reader boards" attached to the free standing signs up to 25 square feet per side, and various signs attached to buildings up to 50 percent of the front street wall surface. Bill boards now in place may remain, if kept in good repair.



Tell Linus that the Jones kids have found the Great Pumpkin, or so it seems anyway. This 175 lb. giant grew in the pumpkin patch of Billy Jo Jones of the Grovemont section of Swannanoa. Jones tried a new seed that had a history of producing giants as sure enough, this, and another which is still growing [and may top this one in size] were both grown in his Patton Cove garden. Pictured with the pumpkin emeritus is Bill Jones, age 8, second grader at Swannanoa Primary, and his big sister Joann, age 11, a seventh grader at Swannanoa Middle School. The planned future for the giant is to have his Halloween face painted on rather than cut, and then to be cut into wedges for the neighbors to make pumpkin pies. Care to guess how many pies can be made from 175 pounds of pumpkin? [Maggie Lauterer photo]

Buckeye Cove wins

by Priscilla Hopkins

Buck-eye Cove, which lies to the south of U.S. 70 just west of Swannanoa, has been organized as a community club since Jan. of 1975. Each year since then, the community has entered the two annual competitions of the Western North Carolina Development Association, Inc. whose parent association is the North Carolina Agricultural Extension Service. In Aug. of each year, Community Beautification competition takes place and in Oct., the Over-all Community Development is judged. The residents have not only entered all of these competitions since they organized, but have always won a first, second or third place in them. In the Keep North Carolina Beautiful competition sponsored by Quality Forward, they have won several certificates and a silver bowl. All the certificates and trophies are proudly displayed on the walls of their community center.

Annie McMahan, President of the Buck-eye Cove Community Club, spoke with justifiable pride of the accomplishments of the community as she showed off the community center that had been built on a "pay as you go" basis. The

exterior is of Wayne-edged siding, felled from pines that grew in the cove and sawed into boards at a sawmill at the upper end of the cove. The interior is paneled with rough poplar planks. A complete kitchen, bathroom and large meeting room fill the main floor and a full basement is below. People in the cove provided all the labor except for the dry-walling and plastering; these services were hired only because no one in the community knew how to do them. The community raised funds for the materials needed for the project with Poor Man Suppers, two flea markets (which netted \$800), a hamburger fry where the men-folk took a turn at cooking, and a Garden Variety supper featuring food grown in members' gardens.

The community club meets the first Thursday in the month and the meeting is always preceded by a covered dish dinner. The long range goals of the group are community beautification and development. Some of the projects that help implement these goals are an active Community Watch program a monthly award for the most attractive yard from April to October, (the winner turn to page 5