

Harrelson Is Appointed To Transportation Panel

State Transportation Secretary Thomas J. Harrelson of Southport has been appointed to a key nationwide panel that is expected to play an important role in creating a new U.S. policy on highway funding.



HARRELSON

Harrelson was chosen to the 12-member executive committee of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials at the organization's annual meeting earlier this month.

The nationwide organization is expected to have a strong say in a new federal funding formula affecting highways and public transportation programs, according to an N.C. Department of Transportation news release.

"I plan to use my position on the executive committee to help North Carolina get its rightful share of federal funding," Harrelson said. "We obviously believe the current funding formula has been unfair to our residents. I intend to correct that."

North Carolina has fared poorly in getting its share of federal funding since the interstate highway sys-

tem was started in 1956, the news release states. The state has received over the past 34 years the smallest proportion of federal highway funds of any state, receiving 83 cents for every dollar it contributes to the Federal Highway Trust Fund.

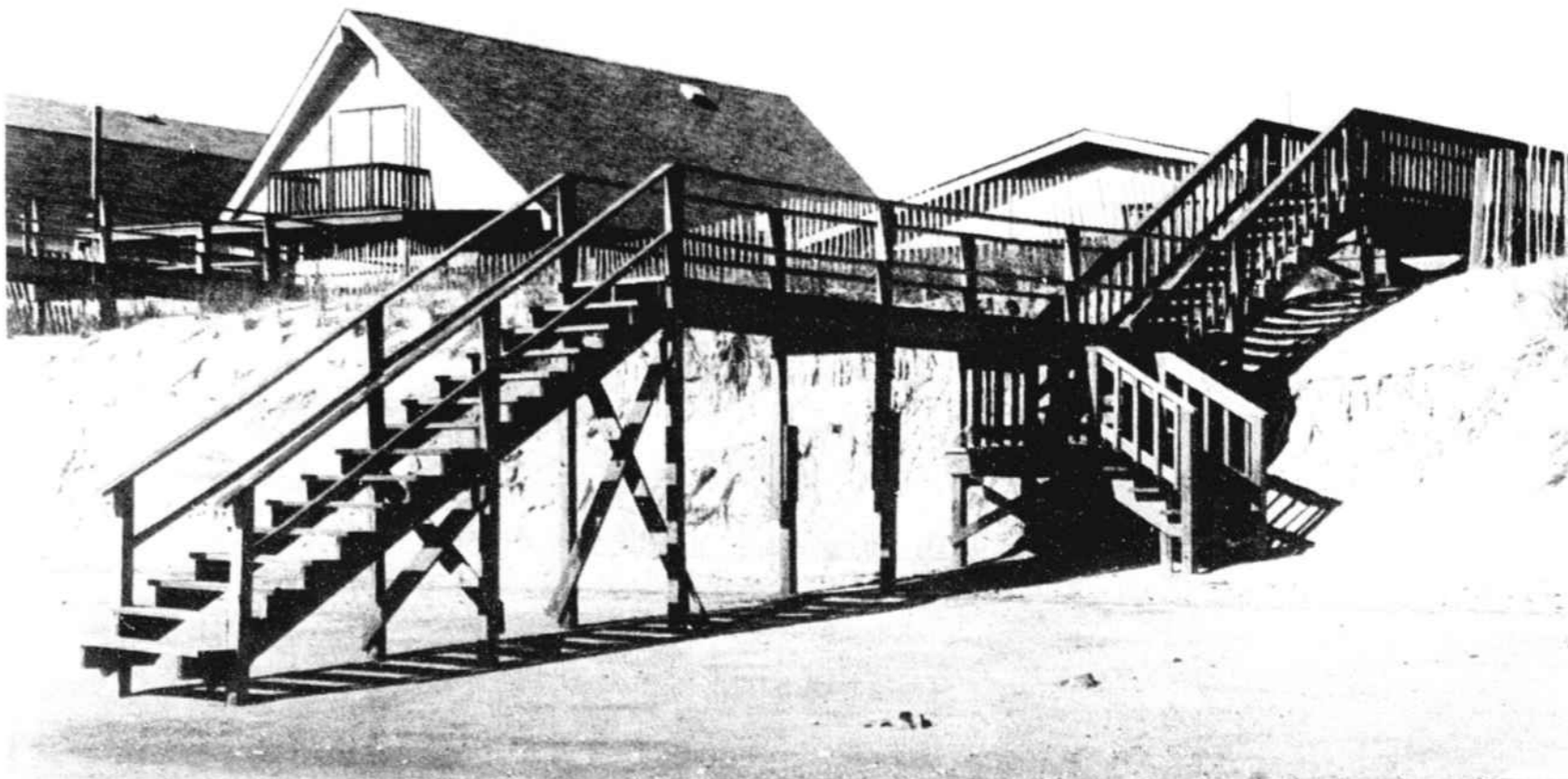
State transportation officials estimate North Carolina has fallen \$1.9 billion short of its share since 1956, according to the news release.

As an executive committee member, Harrelson will be part of an influential panel that will be instrumental in developing plans for the country's transportation system. Federal programs for highways and public transportation expire next year and must be reauthorized by Congress.

Besides selection to the executive committee, Harrelson became a co-chairman of the Southeastern Association of Highway and Transportation Officials, a subgroup of the nationwide organization. The regional association represents 12 southeastern states.

Harrelson also was selected to the executive committee of the Transportation Research Board, which is part of the National Academy of Sciences/National Research Council.

The council is the focal point for federal, state, university and private-sector transportation research in the country, the release indicated.



STAFF PHOTO BY EDDIE SWEAT

Original Steps Uncovered

Two sets of steps on the strand at Holden Beach in the 600 block of Ocean Boulevard West measure the erosion since Hurricane Hugo. The steps nearest the dune on the right in the photo were built shortly after Hugo. They were covered when sand was pushed from the strand to form an artificial dune last year. The steps at the left of the photo were built across the artificial dune, most of which has been reclaimed by the ocean.

County Says It Legally Can't Release Cadillac

Attorneys for Brunswick County say the sheriff's department has never gotten permission to release an automobile impounded from a Seaside couple who filed suit in October.

Harry L. and Beverly Markley Heilig of Route 5, Seaside, claim a 1986 Cadillac registered to Ms. Heilig should not have been part of the property seized by the sheriff's department in a court order handed down Dec. 1, 1989, in Wake County District Court.

In Brunswick County Superior Court, Harry Heilig, a local attorney, and his wife sued the county, Sheriff John Carr Davis and Deputy Liston Hawes Oct. 29 seeking \$10,000 in damages. The car has been impounded at the government complex impound lot in Bolivia since April.

The county answered the suit on Dec. 19 through its attorneys, Thomas M. Van Camp of Winston-Salem and County Attorney David Clegg. Van Camp, of the firm of Womble, Carlyle, Sandridge and Rice of Winston-Salem, is retained by the county's liability insurers.

Their response claims the vehicle is jointly owned by both Harry and Beverly Heilig instead of registered to just Mrs. Heilig. The county has never received an official turnover order by the bankruptcy court or bankruptcy trustee ordering the return of the car, it states.

Triple J. Investments received a default judgment in Wake County against Heilig for money owed to the company. The attorney's property, including a set of law books, was ordered seized. Deputy Hawes took the books from Heilig's office on

April 25 while the couple was attending a seminar in Virginia. The following day, the sheriff's department seized the Cadillac from a residence at Oyster Bay.

Heilig filed for bankruptcy July 9. He claims the couple was not married when Triple J. received its court order and that the car was not included in a notice of sale published in *The Brunswick Beacon* May 17.

The Heiligs' lawsuit states that Triple J. received its judgment Dec. 1 while the couple was married Dec. 9. Mrs. Heilig was not a party to the litigation filed by Triple J., their suit maintains.

Heilig says he filed for relief of his debts in U.S. Bankruptcy Court on July 18 and was relieved of debts on Sept. 21.

They also claim the car was damaged when it was towed without first releasing the front-end drive mechanism and that holes were punched in the leather seats as deputies tried to bypass the electronic burglar alarm system.

County attorneys deny the damages. They also state that the county is not responsible for the actions of Sheriff Davis or Deputy Hawes, who are not agents or employees of the county.

According to the N.C. Rules of Civil Procedure, punitive damages are not recoverable against the county or Sheriff Davis and his men while they are acting in their official capacity, the response states.

In defense, the county has pled "governmental immunity" to the charges. Therefore, the attorneys ask that the Heiligs' claim for punitive damages be denied.

Offices Close For Holiday

Local government offices as well as some businesses plan to close Jan. 1 for the New Year's holiday.

The Brunswick County Government Center at Bolivia, all branches of the Brunswick County Library and the town halls at Shallotte, Sunset Beach, Calabash, Holden Beach and Ocean Isle Beach will be closed Tuesday.

Brunswick Community College closed for winter break Dec. 21, with students and staff to report back Jan. 2.

Post offices will operate on a holiday schedule Tuesday, with no counter service or rural delivery.

Local financial institutions will also be closed.

Officers Answer 1,081 Calls

Brunswick County Sheriff's officers answered 1,081 calls during November, including 102 related to domestic violence.

Officers recovered property valued at \$3,450, made 60 arrests as prosecuting witness and made 267 investigations.

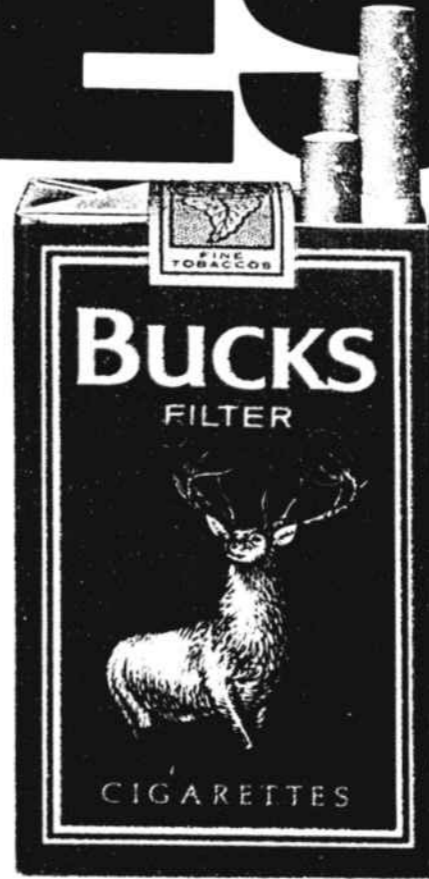
They served 425 civil papers, 280 local warrants, three foreign warrants and six mental and inebriate

papers; summoned 307 witnesses; and found three doors and windows open.

Officers also spent 745 on-duty and three off-duty hours in court and traveled 83,862 miles on 5,756 gallons of gasoline. Travel included 24 trips out of the county and 1,101 miles on the transport van.

Twenty-one crime prevention meetings were held.

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