



TARHEEL FIREFIGHTER



AND CAROLINA RURAL FIREMAN

Volume 23, Number 2

"AN INDEPENDENT PUBLICATION FOR TARHEEL FIREFIGHTERS"

FEBRUARY 1989



Fred Thomas, left, and Lee Jones inspect their "baby"—Ramseur Fire Department's first truck, a 1939 Ford . . . the two are charter members of the department which is celebrating its 50th anniversary on Sunday. (Ashboro Courier-Tribune Staff Photo by Jon C. Lakey)

Two 'Smoke Eaters' Recount Past

By Danny Mayes
Courier-Tribune
Staff Writer

RAMSEUR—As a youngster growing up in Sanford, Ramseur resident Lee Jones dreamed of being a firefighter, extinguishing blazes and helping people in their time of need.

Years later, as an adult in his adopted hometown of Ramseur, Jones' childhood dream was realized when he and 19 friends became charter members of the Ramseur Volunteer Fire Department.

Jones, 74, of Oliver Street, and Thomas, 79, who lives on Elam Avenue, are the only surviving members of the original department formed in 1939, a group of men dubbed "smoke eaters" by current department Chief Danny Shaw.

"They (the founders) laid the framework for us and hopefully, we're laying the groundwork for the future firefighters," said Shaw, who now heads a full-time, tax-supported department with 22 men and four vehicles.

Jones and Thomas, still good friends, got together at the fire station to examine some of the department's

modern equipment. In the back of the Liberty Street station, the two sat in their "baby," a 1939 model Ford truck purchased shortly after the department was formed.

The two former firemen's eyes seemed to glow as they inspected the open-cab red truck.

It was as if they were renewing an acquaintance with a long-lost friend.

"It's only got 4,424 miles on it," remarked Thomas, a former fire chief, who still looks fit enough to answer a few fire calls.

And Jones recalled the days when "we used to run from our homes to the fire department to see who would be the first to drive the truck.

"And, along the way, we were trying to put a leg into the pants while we ran."

Thomas, a former broom factory owner and fuel distributor, met Jones after Jones moved to Ramseur to manage the old Royal Theatre.

"Lee was a foreigner... We had all grown up here in Ramseur," Thomas said as the two reminisced about what Jones called "the good times."

Jones was the volunteer who got the first hands-on

experience with the fire truck, which was brought to Ramseur following its purchase from a Roanoke, Va., company.

"We could put a fire out," said Jones, who served two terms as fire chief. "For a long time we never lost a house."

In the early 1940s, and for some years during the department's development, firefighters depended on a bell at the old town hall to alert them to fire calls and summon them to the station. Later the bell was moved to the old Watkins-Leonard Hardware Store and Hodgkin Firestone Auto Supply.

"Wives of firemen who heard the fire alarm would call the others to let them know of fires," Thomas said, adding that sometimes it was difficult to hear the bell because of the direction the wind was blowing.

The wives were the department's best means of communications, he said.

"We had some fun. It wasn't all work all the time."

No, sometimes the firemen, together with other town residents, were entertained by Jones' movies which he showed at the theatre until 1953.

Fire Effort Praised

By Debra Crisp
News Herald Staff Writer

MORGANTON, NC—Area firefighters who battled the blaze which partially destroyed a Morganton lumber company handled the situation very well, according to city of Morganton officials.

About 100 Burke County firefighters responded to a fire on Christmas Day which destroyed a 12,000-square-foot warehouse, a smaller building and five delivery trucks of Wall Lumber Co. off South Sterling Street.

Public safety officials arrested a vagrant on Dec. 28 for the blaze.

Ronald Norville, 36, reportedly fell asleep inside the warehouse after setting some building supplies on fire to keep warm. He is scheduled to appear in District Court Jan. 18 for a probable cause hearing to determine whether there is enough evidence to send him to trial.

Morganton Department of Public Safety personnel held a debriefing or review of the handling of the fire on Tuesday with videotape of the fire provided by John Tudor, news director for Burke Media.

However, members of the media were not permitted to attend the session.

"We talked about how all the fire companies were managed," said Richard Lumb, director of public safety, following the session. "Everyone worked well together. There was a lot of cooperation among the different departments, and there was no fighting for turf."

In addition, Lumb said some of the other positives which emerged from the fire included the response by off-duty fire personnel.

"There was great response by our off-duty people who came in on a holiday and helped out," he said.

The public safety director said the firefighters were also impressed with the response by the community.

"We had several people and businesses who donated food and coffee to the firefighters," he said. "I think that's an excellent comment for Morganton."

However, the review also uncovered some problems that occurred when the fire was being fought.

Although Lumb said that all of the firefighters' equipment worked well, there was a problem with one fire hydrant.

The crews who fought the

blaze had to find a second hydrant when the first was found to be inoperable. Firefighters then called public utilities crews in to repair the hydrant.

The malfunctioning hydrant has also produced a testing policy question.

"The fire hydrants need to be tested at least two times a year," said Lumb. "Flow tests of those hydrants need to be done."

This would entail running water from the hydrant to make sure that there is enough pressure in the hydrant. However, Lumb said there is some confusion as to whether the public safety department or public utilities department is responsible for testing the hydrants.

In addition, the director said that while city crews are testing the hydrants, other water customers could experience some problems with muddy water and there can sometimes be damage caused to hot water heaters.

In addition, Lumb said the department's evidence van will be used as a mobile command post in future emergencies because some fire personnel were standing in the streets during the blaze.

In addition, a portable telephone will be installed in the van to make it easier to call more personnel to a scene.

The chief also said officials had problems with people who came to the fire and walked around the fire site while firefighters were attempting to extinguish the blaze.

Lumb said the department will use a portable public address system to keep people back from a fire scene.

In addition, the public safety director said there were several times that the radios were inoperable during the fire because to many people were trying to communicate with each other.

"Our radio frequencies were jammed," he said. "We're on the same frequency with the sheriff's department and all other police departments in the county. And our fire department shares its frequency with all the volunteers and EMS (Emergency Management Services)."

However, Lumb said that problem is already solved by the assignment of a new frequency for the department.

**Beat the Big One...
Heart Attack**

Firefighters Complete Remarkable Year

CHERRYVILLE—Cherryville's fire department has recently completed one of the most remarkable years in the city's history. During 1988 in Cherryville the firefighters answered 140 calls, and during the entire year there was not a fire death, a civilian injury, or a firefighter injury.

Not only was the year highly successful in terms of the absence of injuries and deaths, it was also a remarkable year in terms of reduction of fire damages.

In 1987 the fire department reported a total estimated property damage of \$420,850; in 1988, even

though the department responded to more calls, the damage was almost half that of the previous year, with an estimated property damage of \$213,425.

Jeffery Cash, chief of the local fire department, reported that in 1987 the total time required for all calls was 175 hours, while in 1988 the time was 129 hours. The average call time dropped from one hour and twenty minutes in 1987 to one hour in 1988.

Like the city police, who reported one of the most crime-free years in history, the firefighters completed a remarkable year.

Fire Probe Continues; Town Requests Tape

By Teri Crook
The Mountaineer
Staff Reporter

Waynesville town officials requested a copy of a tape which recorded conversations between two fire chiefs while the house burned on Plott Creek Road.

The request was made by Town Manager Bill Sutton as part of an "in-house critique" launched after a Feb. 4 blaze at the home of 30th Judicial District Judge Danny Davis.

Fire damage of more than \$100,000 occurred at the two-story house after a iron was left on, sitting on a bed.

The Davis home is in the Saunook fire district, and just outside the Waynesville district.

When Ann Davis, attorney and wife of the judge, called the 911 emergency number to report the blaze, the 911 dispatcher alerted Waynesville firefighters rather than Saunook firefighters.

Waynesville firefighters drove near the scene and shortly after passing their jurisdiction, turned their fire truck around and left, according to witnesses. Their tanker truck drove to the scene.

Saunook firefighters were notified of the fire. They asked for assistance from the Hazelwood fire district and arrived about 10 minutes later, according to witnesses.

The second story of the house was gutted and the kitchen was burned, Davis said. The remainder of the house received smoke and water damage.

Since the fire, controversy over the chain of events has arisen.

Waynesville officials are angered that the 911 system contained an incorrect fire district listing for the Davis home and Plott Creek Road residents say they are unhappy that Waynesville Fire Chief Leonard Messer reportedly ordered his firetruck to turn around because it was in the Saunook district.

Joe Leatherwood, director of the emergency dispatch system, has possession of the Feb. 4 tape.

"I have it so nobody would say it was altered and so it couldn't get accidentally erased," he said.

Leatherwood was not sure he could turn the tape over without a subpoena.

"The tapes are for us. They are protection for us. He (Sutton) may have to subpoena it, but it depends on what (Haywood County Sheriff Tom) Alexander says," Leatherwood said.

Attorney Frank Queen drafted a letter and was asked to deliver it to county officials.

Queen said he was going to deliver it to county attorney Chip Killian.

So far, Sutton said, his in-house critique of the Feb. 4 fire response has been valuable.

"I believe some lessons have been learned," he said.

Sutton said much of the blame pointed to dispatchers.

He said three areas need correcting.

First, the 911 dispatcher called the Waynesville Fire Department to report the fire rather than transferring Mrs. Davis' call, Sutton said.

Secondly, the Waynesville fire dispatcher did not recognize that the address given by the 911 dispatcher was not in the Waynesville district.

"Our dispatchers should know immediately if a house is in our district," he said. "That's a big lesson learned."

Thirdly, more communication problems occurred when the jurisdiction confusions arose, he said.

Messer and Saunook Fire Chief Benny Arrington could not talk to each other over the radio bands, he said, and had to talk between the 911 dispatcher.

Sutton said he wants the tape to learn if the 911 dispatcher told Arrington that Waynesville firefighters were on the scene and would render mutual aid. Instead, Arrington asked for mutual aid from Hazelwood firefighters.

"She's not a telephone operator," Sutton said. "She should put two and two together and get four. The lesson for us all is that we should have trained dispatchers."

Sutton said the Waynesville Fire Department has never refused a request for mutual aid, "but we can't run helter-skelter all over the county."

Turning the fire truck around after learning the house was not in the district, but less than half of a mile away, was a "judgement call" on Messer's part, Sutton said.

"He did it because he had a responsibility to have fire protection for the people of Waynesville," Sutton said.

Three years ago, Messer was also embroiled in a jurisdictional debate.

Messer's department responded to a house fire call in Mauney Cove, but was reportedly ordered to leave the scene by the Lake Junaluska district fire chief. The house, outside both districts at the time, was a total loss.

"We could have saved some of it," Messer told *The Mountaineer* at the time of the June 14, 1985, house fire. "As it was, it went to the ground. I don't believe in that. If you can save one stick you're better off. That's your job. Maybe he (the Lake Junaluska chief) thinks dif-

ferent. My job is to put out fires and that's what I'm going to do. I figure if it's a pig pen and it belongs to a man, he's entitled to have it put out."

Plott Creek Road residents say Messer's inaction at the Davis fire is "a moral disgrace."

"They did not do what is right," said Johnny Plott.

The Waynesville fire limit ends at Plott's driveway.

He saw the Waynesville fire truck drive past his house and shortly afterward turn back down the road.

Plott's house is the first house on the road that is in the Saunook district.

"I've been told by several Saunook firemen that if my house caught fire, it would burn down before they could get here," he said.

The Hazelwood Fire Department is one mile away., Waynesville's is three miles away and Saunook's is seven miles away, Plott said.

Kemper Insurance Group of Charlotte is investigating the chain of events surrounding the blaze.

Neighbor Saves House With Fire Extinguisher

By Rhonda Lewis
Wallace Enterprise
Staff Writer

"The burner and pan were on fire and the cabinets were beginning to burn," said Frank Kennedy, who rushed over to a neighbor's house to put out a grease fire recently.

Kennedy, the owner/operator of City Dry Cleaners at 305 East Carr Street, Wallace, was at work recently when twelve-year-old Tara McCormick ran into the cleaners, told Kennedy about the kitchen blaze, and asked for help.

Kennedy grabbed his fire extinguisher, ran across the street to the William McCormick residence at 304 East Carr Street, and had the flames under control within minutes.

When the McCormick twins, Tara and Terrance, came home from school, Terrance put a pan of grease on the stove and asked Tara to cook some French fries.

Kennedy said there was some damage in the kitchen area of the house, but he was glad it was not any worse.

"I sure appreciate everything that Frank did," said the twins' mother, Gwen. "He's a good neighbor to help save our house," she added, commending Kennedy for his quick action and efficient handling of the situation.

The twins said they would also like to thank Frank for his good deed once again.

THE TARHEEL FIREFIGHTER and Carolina Rural Fireman

"An Independent Voice
for Tarheel Firefighters"

Published Monthly
Subscription Rates:
\$2.00 — 1 Year
\$3.00 — 2 Years

EMILY H. KING, Editor

Send All Editorial Material,
Subscription Requests and Advertising Copy to:

P.O. Box 643
New Bern, North Carolina 28560

Let Us Hear From You

Please feel free to submit any story or pictures to us for publication in this paper. We may not receive information on your department that you feel would be of interest to others, so we ask that you send items of interest to us.

We reserve the right to edit any material submitted to us. Please note that when submitting a newspaper clipping we need to know the name of the newspaper, the town it is located in and the date of the article. We also need to know who wrote it if it has a byline. If you submit original photographs, please make a note on the back of each photo if you want them returned.

Let us hear from you. We appreciate your support.

Changing Address?

PLEASE STAPLE OLD
ADDRESS LABEL HERE

New Address:

Name _____

P.O. Box or
Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Couple Killed In Fire

By Tex O'Neill
Charlotte Observer
Staff Writer

An old kerosene heater placed near combustibles is being blamed for a house fire in west Charlotte that killed an elderly couple recently.

Fire Investigator Terry Lacy said stacks of newspapers or a sofa, both about a foot from the heater, caught fire and the flames spread.

"The bottom line is this room was jammed-packed with ordinary combustible materials, thus making the clearance between them and the heater very narrow," Lacy said.

Dead at the scene were Ada Dunn Hancock, 81, and Howard Taft Hancock, 80, Rockingham natives who had married and moved to Charlotte about 1938.

The couple were found in the living room of their two-story frame home at 1319 Karendale Ave. The 10-foot by 17-foot room had been converted into sleeping quarters after Ada Hancock broke her hip and became bedridden about two years ago, said a son, William Hancock.

Ada Hancock's body was found in her hospital bed. Her husband was found on the floor near the foot of her bed, about 5 feet from the sofa where he slept.

"The Lord knew best for them both to go," William Hancock said. "They depended on each other so much." They were married for about 60 years, he said.

Autopsies are pending. Lacy said the kerosene heater that caused the fire was old and lacked safety features, and when it was moved close in to provide greater warmth, it could be dangerous.

"It's probably the world's worst invention," he said.



Firefighters set up a water holding pool during a recent training session in Atlantic Beach. (Photo by John Smith)

Firefighters Hone Skills In Exercise

By John Smith
Morehead News-Times
Contributor

MOREHEAD—A stiff, 15-knot breeze turned black for a time on a recent morning, as Atlantic Beach Fire Department members burned an abandoned structure on the beach as a training exercise.

The old cinder block cottage was ignited and extinguished several times by the Atlantic Beach firefighters, as well as by guest crews from Marshallberg, Harlowe and Morehead City.

Eddie Freeman, of the Atlantic Beach department, was instructor for the supplementary fire school, which was sponsored by Carteret Community College. Atlantic Beach Fire Chief Jimmy Leonard supervised the all-day session, with assistance from Morehead City Fire Chief Jerry Leonard.

Both chiefs are certified fire instructors.

The single-story structure

was donated by a local developer, who purchased the property with plans to demolish the cottage and build several more modern cottages. In return for the donation, the fire departments left much less debris than likely would have been left in a routine demolition.

After the controlled burning next to Triple S Pier, there were no combustibles remaining, only the supporting masonry walls of the structure.

Onlookers were surprised at first by the procession of emergency vehicles making their way down Fort Macon Road. Others soon were attracted to the scene as junk furniture inside the old cottage was ignited in a way that generated a large amount of heavy, sooty black smoke.

The object of that portion of the training was for the firefighter trainees, clad in bulky firefighting clothing and heavy airpicks, to enter the choking blackness, extin-

guish the fire and make their way safely back outside.

After lunch at Atlantic Station Shopping Center, the firefighters regrouped at the scene for the second half of the exercise. Not only did the crews have to contend with smokey blindness, but the fire gathered momentum and generated tremendous heat.

As the blaze progressed, temperatures in the rooms reached between 1,500 and

1,700 degrees, causing everything combustible to burst into flames. The firefighters learned to use their only tool, the fire hose, to its best advantage. They learned to protect themselves with a fan of coarse fog and to reach deep into the fire with a powerful stream of water.

"This is a great example of a fire-resistant structure," Chief Jerry Leonard said.

BOWERS & BURROWS INC.

North Main Street
Warrenton, North Carolina

Lee Roy's Frame Co., Inc.

Quality Frames for
Chairs, Sofas,
Sleeper Beds, Beds
Lee Roy Chandler—Owner
Call 241-2513
P.O. Box 130 in Claremont, NC
on Balls Creek Campground Rd.
in Conover, NC

RIVERWOOD CRAFT SHOP

Phone 586-2547
Dillsboro Hwy. 441 S.
Sylva, NC

Chowan Herald

P.O. Box 207
Edenton, NC 27932
Phone 919-482-4418

Arby's Roast Beef Restaurant

Dial 828-0098
3415 Hillsboro St.
Raleigh, NC 27607

Farmers Tractor & Implement Co.

(919) 534-5911
209 E. Jefferson St.
Jackson, NC 27845

Keep Carolina Green
Plant More Trees
Prevent Forest Fires

Troy Lumber Sales Corp.

652-4251
Norman, N.C. 28367

Compliments of
Guss Carpenter, Inc.

289-3021

Monroe, NC

Compliments of
Corner Barber Shop

734-9752

1001 Greenleaf St.
Goldsboro, NC

Compliments Of
Better Homes Furnishing Co.

322-8373

Hickory, NC



W. R. BONSAI COMPANY

Phone 525-1621

Charlotte, N.C.

Local Firemen Report Some Potpourri Pots Pose Safety Problems

ROCKY MOUNT—Philip Davis was playing with fire at the George Street station on Thursday.

For more than an hour, the fire prevention officer with the Rocky Mount Fire Department watched and waited for flames to burst from the potpourri pot on the table in front of him.

After area firemen received some reports of safety problems with these pots, the city fire department and city officials decided to conduct an experiment to determine

the cause of the fires. Davis tested a unit for safety recently. A blaze broke out on the test pot after it had been in use for a few hours.

The potpourri pots, fireman say, have been used frequently by many city residents in recent months. And while firemen don't seem to mind if the pots catch on, they do care if they catch on fire.

Potpourri pots are small, two-piece ceramic fixtures. A candle placed in the bottom fixture heats water and potpourri in the top fixture, sending off the potpourri's fragrance.

Rocky Mount fire officials have had at least two reports of potpourri pots catching fire. No injuries or serious damage were reported.

Rocky Mount firemen are offering the following safety tips concerning potpourri pots. For more information call Davis at 972-1488.

Blaze Claims Youngster's Life

By Donna Cox
Gazette Staff Reporter

GASTONIA—A blaze at a Sixth Avenue residence claimed the life of a 2-year-old girl who had been asleep in her bedroom.

Shelly Marie Burgess, 409 E. Sixth Ave., died of smoke inhalation, said Gaston County Coroner Bill McLean.

The girl's parents, a brother and an uncle were in the house when the fire broke out at 8:35 a.m., but were able to escape unharmed.

"I heard her crying and I was trying to wake up, but smoke had me dazed," said Carolyn Melton, the girl's mother. "When I did wake up, I ran to get Shelly. I heard her last three cries and it went silent. There was no way I could get her, the room was already ablaze."

She said she ran to get everyone else up. She was able to get her husband, Ralph; son, William; and brother, who was sleeping on the couch, out of the house. Another son, Roy, was spending the night with Mrs. Melton's sister.

Blaze Damages Home; Disabled Man Needs Bed

By Leta Parks
Morganton News-Herald Staff Writer

An early morning fire left a disabled Oak Hill resident without a hospital bed and caused extensive damage to his home.

The pre-dawn fire at the home of James Padgett on Spainhour Road started from an electrical baseboard heater in his bedroom, said Burke County Red Cross officials.

No injuries were reported in the fire.

"Because Mr. Padgett's predisaster physical condition requires that his bedroom be heated warmer than would be comfortable for other members of his family sleeping elsewhere in their home, his hospital bed was totally destroyed in the bedroom," officials said.

The curtains in the bedroom caught fire from the baseboard heater causing extensive damage to the home, said Sandra Smith, a Burke County Emergency Management Services spokes-

woman.

The Oak Hill Volunteer Fire Department received the call at 3:36 a.m., with about 23 firefighters and four units remaining on the scene until 6:55 a.m., she said.

The firefighters received mutual aid from the Lake James Volunteer Fire Department with eight firefighters and one unit coming to their aid, she added.

A Red Cross team received a call at 4:40 a.m. and remained on the scene for 1 1/2 hours, interviewing the family and helping them determine their immediate and long-range needs, said Don Stevenson, disaster chairman for the Burke County Chapter of the American Red Cross.

Other family members at home during the fire were Padgett's wife, JoAnn Padgett; their son, 14-year-old Tony; their daughter, 24-year-old Angela; and their visiting granddaughter, 1-year-old Amber Britt.

Since the family had insurance, they do not need money, said Stevenson.

**Hayworth-Miller
Funeral Service**

3315 Silas Creek Parkway
Call 765-8181
Winston-Salem, NC

305 Bethania-Rural Hall Road
Call 969-5593
Rural Hall, NC

**Applied Technical
Sciences, Inc.**

(919) 489-9090

P.O. Box 2582
Chapel Hill, NC 27515

**Grier
Funeral
Service**

Phone 283-5423

704 Walkup Avenue
Monroe, NC 28110

**Canteen
THE FOOD SERVICE
PROFESSIONALS**

Providing you with...

- CORPORATE FOOD SERVICE
- VENDING
- OFFICE COFFEE
- REFRESHMENT SERVICE
- FOOD SERVICE MANAGEMENT

 Canteen Co. Plymouth, NC
(919) 793-9254

**WILLIAMSTON
GLASS**

"Any type Glass Work"

(919) 792-7303

1102 Washington Street
Williamston, NC 27892

**MILLER
TRUCK LINES**

(919) 793-1322

Route 3 Box 229
Plymouth, NC 27962

**A-1
ALTERATIONS**

Phone 919-859-1533

5563-60 Western Blvd.
Raleigh, NC 27606

**TRADE MART
NO. 12**

(919) 792-8418

305 West Boulevard
Wilmington, NC 27892

**MOBLEY
INSURANCE
AGENCY**

(919) 792-4138

118 Main Street
Williamston, NC 27892

**SIMPSON'S
BAR-B-Q**

(919) 793-2701

ROUTE 1 BOX 323
ROPER, NC 27970

**James L. Cayton
Associates**

Specializing In
Residential & Commercial
Repair Work
Septic Tank Installation
All Work Guaranteed
Dial 637-9389
New Bern, NC

**Tim's
Butcher Shop**

(919) 792-8467

415 Washington Street
Wilmington, NC 27892

STOP & GO

(919) 792-9029

1003 Washington Street
Williamston, NC 27892

**HARRIS
FARMS**

(919) 793-9907

Route 2 Box 424
Roper, NC 27970

**Tom Gurganus
Plumbing**

(919) 792-7701

Hwy. 125 Route 3 Box 65
Williamston, NC 27892

**WOODY'S
COUNTRY
CROSSROADS**

(919) 792-6224

P.O. Box A215
Jamesville, NC 27846

**William's
Red & White**

(919) 792-4687

100 S. Houghton Street
Williamston, NC 27892

**PINE FOREST
APARTMENTS**

(919) 793-9081

803 Pembroke Drive
Plymouth, NC 27962

**BENNIE A. MOORE
Septic Tank Service**

(919) 792-1074

Route 2 Box 263
Williamston, NC 27892

**Mother's Helper
Child Care
& Learning Center**

(919) 797-4009

Hwy. 64 East
Creswell, NC 27928

County Firemen Concerned About Turnover

By Bob Wachs
Chatham News

SILER CITY—Many of Chatham County's firefighters are concerned about the high turnover rate of dispatchers in the county's communications center.

That concern surfaced at a meeting of the Chatham County Firemen's Association in Silk Hope.

Firefighters have asked to be placed on the agenda of an upcoming county commissioners meeting to speak about the matter.

Firemen at the meeting last week questioned county communications director Mark Scott about the turnover, wanting to know if there might be problems causing dispatchers to seek other employment.

During the past six years—since Scott has been in that job—a total of 20 dispatchers have left their jobs. That's an average of one almost every four months.

One was terminated by the county, three transferred to the Sheriff's Department, and sixteen quit, either for stress-related causes or be-

cause of the chance to make higher salaries elsewhere.

Fourteen of those sixteen persons left for higher pay either in communications work in other counties or for jobs outside the field.

Scott told the group that he thought the biggest problem was that salaries do not realistically reflect the kind of ability and experience required of a telecommunicator working in a high stress environment.

Scott also said the starting salary for dispatchers in Chatham County was well below that of surrounding counties and most dispatchers in those counties are not burdened with heavy work load dispatchers in Chatham carry.

"It takes about six months to properly train a dispatcher," Scott says. "With a turnover of one every four months, the dispatchers are constantly playing catch-up in providing the services required by the county and expected by the taxpayer."

"Our dispatchers are as good as anyones," he said, "but the combination of low salary and constantly work-

ing under the most trying conditions provide the incentive to seek other employment."

Scott went on to say he has repeatedly asked the salaries by significantly increased, with only small percentages resulting. "After taxes and other deductions, those increase amounted to small tokens," he said.

Chatham County's starting salary is \$13,000.

The only nearby county that comes close to that figure is Randolph County. There a dispatcher starts at a salary of \$13,644. The next step in salary increase is \$14,280. Dispatchers there dispatch only for the Sheriff's Department.

Sanford dispatchers, who start at over \$16,000, dispatch for the Sanford police department, fire department, and rescue services.

Alamance County dispatchers, with the same basic responsibilities as those in Chatham, start at an annual salary of \$15,792.

Chatham dispatchers, on the other hand, answer phone calls for more than 15 different county agencies,

some for 24 hours a day. "At least five of those have to be considered true emergency organizations," Scott says. "They include the 13 fire departments, rescue squads, Pittsboro police, sheriff's department, and Shearon Harris. All the phone lines for those organizations may involve life or death situations."

In addition, after 5 p.m. local dispatchers answer calls for social services, home health nurse, water department, hospice, alarms for county banks, magistrates, N.C. Department of Transportation, the rape crisis center, and 911 calls for the Siler City police and fire departments.

When an emergency call comes in, the dispatcher has to log the call on a daily log and make a dispatch card with the time a unit responds, arrives on the scene, and leaves. That information is then entered into a computer.

For the non-emergency calls, the dispatchers must notify the appropriate agency or department, give the nature of the problem, tell who made the call, and give

the location.

Another problem surfaces with the requirement that dispatchers be Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT).

"With the current high turnover, EMT certification is almost impossible," Scott says. "Plus, telecommunicators must also be certified by the State Bureau of Investigation to operate the DCI terminals."

Firemen's Association members at the meeting said Chatham's dispatchers deserved a pat on the back for handling emergency situations in tight quarters that sometimes become busy, even chaotic.

INTERNATIONAL DIET SYSTEM
(919) 792-3431
703 East Boulevard Ste. B
Williamston, NC 27892

A R CHESSON CONSTRUCTION COMPANY
(919) 792-4486
803 Washington St.
Williamston, NC 27892

ETNA SERVICE STATION
(919) 792-5344
331 Washington Street
Williamston, NC 27892

WILLIAMSTON HEARING AID SERVICE
(919) 792-6305
508 Warren Street
Williamston, NC 27892

THE COUNTRY SQUIRE
296-1727
—Also—
Squire's Vintage Inn
296-1831
Between Warsaw & Kenansville

WALKER'S HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING
(919) 793-4216
Loblolly Drive
P.O. Box 943
Plymouth, NC 27962

H.T. Andrews Grocer
(919) 795-3400
Hwy. 64 West
Robersonville, NC 27891

Tarkenton Brothers, Inc. Logging
(919) 793-4908
Hwy. 64 E
Plymouth, NC 27962

Country 24 Hrs. A Day
Am 1470 5KW
FM 95.09 3KW
WPNC Radio
(919) 793-4104
Hwy. 64 W
Plymouth, NC

Russell's Septic Tank Installation
Installation • Repairs
Septic Tank Cleaning
Drain Lines • Grease Traps
Driveways • Fill Dirt • Asphalt Paving
Top Soil • V Ditching
Dozer & Piling Work
Industrial—Residential—Commercial
M. M. Russell 393-8638
Glenn Russell 393-2257
Rt. 5, Box 723
Newport, North Carolina

THE VIDEO
Video Tapes & Discs
Renting & Leasing
(919) 792-4699
609 East Boulevard
Williamston, NC 27892

Williamston Fire Extinguisher Service
(919) 792-1560
321 Washington Street
Williamston, NC 27892

United Pentecostal Church
Johnny Godair, Pastor
Call 477-6555/2008 Carver
Durham, NC

Pam's Soda Shop Restaurant
919-946-0087
607 John Small Ave.
Washington, NC

Jarrett Honda
Wide Selection
Top Quality
Let Us Impress You
Call 437-3181
Hwy. 64—¾ Mile
South of I-40
1600 Burkemont Ave.
Morganton, NC

Grier Funeral Service
283-5423
704 Walkup Ave.
Monroe, NC 28110
Also:
2310 Statesville Ave.
Charlotte, NC

MARIE'S MINI MART
1 (919) 793-5809
Hwy 64
Poper, NC 27970
#2 (919) 793-5002
Hwy 64
Plymouth, NC 27962

MATTIE'S MAGIC TOUCH
(919) 798-1671
Pugh Street
Hamilton, NC 27840

OAK CITY PARTS & REPAIR
(919) 798-6881
Route 1 Box 63
Oak City, NC 27857

Chief, Peers Give 2 Firefighters '88 Awards

By Doris Burrell
The Mountaineer
Staff Reporter

WAYNESVILLE—The Canton Fire Department has named this year's two outstanding firefighters.

Derek Littlejohn was named Firefighter of the Year by his peers, and Ronnie Pace was named Officer of the year by Canton Fire Chief Phil Smathers. Both received plaques at a banquet to honor firefighters.

Littlejohn, 27, is single and lives alone. He has been a paid firefighter two years and before that a volunteer firefighter with the North Canton Fire Department. He is son of David and Jean Littlejohn of Canton.

"Littlejohn," said Captain Russell Teague, "was chosen by his fellow firefighters, both paid and volunteer, for his outstanding performance, attending fire training

courses, returning to work on his days off when there is a fire and dedication to his work."

Why did Littlejohn choose to be a firefighter? He's always wanted to help people, and fighting fires is one way to do it.

"I started out as a volunteer when I was about 18 years of age," he said. "And then when a full-time job opened here at the Canton Fire Department I decided it was what I wanted to do."

Firefighters work 24 hours and are off 48 hours. On his days off Littlejohn helps Kenny Brookshire in his plumbing business. He likes the variety of work and learning a new skill.

"I guess the worst fire I've been involved in was the burning of the old Pennsylvania Avenue School," said Littlejohn. He fought fires at the school on two separate occasions, including the last one, which destroyed the building.

Pace, 42, has been a volunteer with the Canton Fire Department for seven years.

Anthony D. Keller New Fire Chief

Anthony D. (Tony) Kelly has been appointed as Kinston's new Fire Chief according to City Manager Stephen W. Raper.

Kelly, a 28 year veteran of the department, will assume his new duties immediately.

"I am obviously very pleased and excited," stated Kelly. "I am also quite eager to begin implementing some important new programs we've been working on for some time now."

"Our department has come a long, long way in recent years and I intend to keep us moving in a positive and progressive direction," continued Kelly.

Since former Chief Tedd Melvin's resignation in September 1988, Assistant Chiefs Kelly, Greg Smith, and Wayne Brower have been managing Fire Department operations. Each of the three assistants applied for and were considered for the Fire Chief position.

"Chief Kelly has demonstrated a very strong commitment to the City and to the continued professionalization and development of our Fire Department," stated

Raper. "I am convinced he can and will provide appropriate leadership and direction in the years ahead."

Kelly began his career with the City as a firefighter in 1961. He attained the rank of Lieutenant in 1969 and Captain in 1970. In October of 1971, Kelly was promoted to Assistant Chief.

He and his wife, Eva, have six children. The Kelly's live at 1011 Bell Road. Chief Kelly has been active in local historical activities and served as chairman of the Committee for the Restoration of the Caswell Fire Steam Company No. One on Queen Street.

"In selecting the new fire chief," explained City Manager Raper, "I attempted to determine the candidate who best met the needs of the department and who best exhibited the essential characteristics of the position which we established early on in the selection process. Leadership skills, integrity, community sensitivity, technical and professional knowledge, work perspective, and interpersonal sensitivity were among those

most important characteristics." Raper indicated that he encouraged input from Fire Department employees and others in establishing the desired characteristics of the new Chief.

The City Manager explained that the fire chief selection process consisted of four components: (1) a comprehensive assessment center, (2) interview, (3) a special research assignment in which each candidate prepared an "organizational analysis" of the Fire Department, and (4) an evaluation of professional qualifications, background, and experience.

"I was extremely pleased with the entire process and with the fact that we had three very competent professionals from which we could select a new Chief," said Raper. "I have a great deal of confidence in Chief Kelly and in the department as a whole. Our firefighters are dedicated, enthusiastic, and bright people."

Submitted by:
The City of Kinston, NC
Stephen W. Raper,
City Manager

Jacobs Glass Company
Call 383-1120
Or
732-8630
Highway 70 West
Durham, N.C.

Creations Unlimited
502 E. Colonial Ave.
Elizabeth City, NC 27909
(919) 335-7265

Bill's Auto Service
Phone 697-7167
871 Howard Gap Road
Hendersonville, NC 28739

United Organics Corp.
Chemicals
(919) 792-2102
1008 East Blvd.
Williamston, NC 27892

NORTH CAROLINA POWER
Williamston Dist. Off.
Hedq. Bldg. Hwy. 64
(919) 792-2113

Compliments of
TRAILER MODLIN
Williamston, NC

PLYMOUTH STORAGE
(919) 793-4518
105 East Water Street
Plymouth, NC 27962

Williams Insurance Agency
(919) 795-3558
107 West Railroad Street
Robersonville, NC 27871

MULTI-VISION CABLE TV
127 W. Main Street
(919) 792-1551
Williamston, NC 27892

WALKER FUNERAL HOME
Formerly Horner-Roanoke
Funeral Service
(919) 793-2132
216 Washington St.
Plymouth, NC 27962

PORT OF PLYMOUTH INN
(919) 793-5006
305 Highway 64 East
Plymouth, NC 27962

Williams Service Center
(919) 795-3612
Hwy 64
Robersonville, NC 27871

Compliments of
David at
Molly Maquires Irish Pub
(919) 942-4668
136 East Rosemary Ave.
Chapel Hill, NC

McDonald's of Plymouth
(919) 793-9311
Highway 64
Plymouth, NC 27962

H & R BLOCK
(919) 792-7014
Nights, Sundays, & Holidays
(919) 798-5611
115 West Main Street
Williamston, NC 27892

BERTIE CITIZENS DENTAL CLINIC
Allison F. Vincent, III DDS
Hwy 17-13 Rt. 4 Box 107
Windsor, NC 27983

Ward Fruit And Produce, Inc.
Delivery Service Available
Call 828-4161 or 828-9915
1301 Hodges Street
Raleigh, North Carolina

CAROLINA HARDWOODS, INC.
(919) 792-1116
Lumber Wholesale
P.O. Box 1004
Williamston, NC 27892

SHORT STOP
(919) 796-0937
Groceries
P.O. Box 300
Columbia, NC 27925

JUGTOWN POTTERY
Dial 464-3266
Route 2
Seagrove, NC

Hendersonville Man Charged In House Fire

Citizen-Times
Tri-County Bureau

—**HENDERSONVILLE**— Henderson County deputies have arrested a local man on charges stemming from a Jan. 10 house fire.

Michael Thomas Turner, 24, of 31 Springside Drive in Hendersonville was arrested in connection with a morning blaze that heavily damaged a house in Bat Cave. He has been charged with one count of breaking and entering and one count of second-degree arson.

The house fire started about 9 a.m., sometime after its occupant, Russell Albrecht, left for work, according to detectives. Bat Cave, Gerton and Edneyville firefighters had the blaze under control about an hour later, but smoke and fire heavily damaged the one-story ranch house.

Turner was arrested Friday, but lawmen didn't release details of his charges until Monday. He has been jailed under \$150,000 bond.

Damage High At Salisbury Marble, Granite Co.

By Tracy Presson
The Salisbury Post

A childhood memory crept into Mitchell Gaulden's mind as he watched a fire destroy his family's business.

"I remember when I was a little boy, my grandfather's shop caught on fire," said Gaulden, manager of Salisbury Marble and Granite Co. "I saw the flames shooting up. It always stuck in my mind."

"We do anything in the monument business," Mitchell said.

This morning's fire was the third time the company has been struck in its 70-year history.

In 1978, an explosion involving an air compressor caused \$30,000 damage. An overheated wood stove pipe near the ceiling caused a fire in 1981. The building suffered little damage because employees used fire extinguishers on the blaze until firefighters arrived.

City firefighters were called to the scene of the 70-year-old business at 1305 S. Main St. Flames already engulfed the wood-frame struc-

ture when they arrived. No one was inside.

"The whole rear of the structure and halfway through the front was heavily involved," said Rick Fesperman, assistant fire chief. "The guys en route had to slow their response down at Main and Mildred streets because the streets were filled with smoke. We were able to knock it down and contain it within an hour."

Three walls on the main structure still stand, Fesperman said. He said the roof collapsed, pulling in a fourth wall on the south side of the building. A storage building next to the main structure suffered little damage.

Also damaged was a car parked at Lee's Transmission Service next door and a warning sign at the railroad crossing on Vance Avenue.

"We were able to keep the fire from jumping to other buildings," Fesperman said. "The railroad warning suffered heat and fire damage. It will probably have to be replaced."

City police officers blocked Main Street and Vance Avenue, stopping traffic to Cone

Mill. Duke Power Co. officials cut off power to the structure. No other locations were affected.

"In the early stages, we did have some utilities actually on fire," Fesperman said. "We had some lines on the ground. Duke Power came out and cut it off so there wouldn't be anything else interfering with the firefighters."

Fesperman said fire officials won't know for a couple of days what caused the fire. Battalion chief Tim Lackey will handle the investigation. No damage estimates were available this morning.

"It may take a day or two to get started in the rubble because we had several collapses," he said. "It's going to take a lot of work. The structure was totaled."

Firemen respond

Three engines, a ladder truck and a tanker responded. A command unit was set up across the street in Chestnut Hills Cemetery and a relief unit near Paul's Barbecue.

Yellow fire hose lined South Main Street as fire-

fighters used mounted deck guns to spray water on the fire from the street.

Firefighters also had to battle temperatures in the low 20s. Streets became slick as water covered them. Icicles coated branches on a tree near the railroad tracks on Vance Avenue.

"The guys were slipping and sliding a little bit," Fesperman said. "But no one was injured."

Nearly 30 firefighters were on the scene, Fesperman said. Off-duty personnel were called in to man the three fire stations.

A crew will remain on the scene most of the day, he said.

"We were able to handle it without calling in the county," Fesperman said. "They will be there cooling hot spots. Mainly, it will be an overhaul and fire watch the rest of the day just in case it starts up again. The men will still be available for other calls."

Bonk's Cleaners, Inc.
Phone 672-0332
314 Old Liberty Rd.
Asheboro, N.C.

VICTORY TEXACO
(919) 795-3474
Main Street
Robersonville, NC 27871

ROBERSONVILLE CRAFTS
(919) 795-4670
133 South Main Street
Robersonville, NC 27871

THE NEW IMAGE BEAUTY SALON
(919) 795-4986
East Green Street
Robersonville, NC 27871

Lexington Auto Glass Company
Service for all Makes
Cars & Trucks
Telephone 249-9815
4 Raleigh Road
Lexington, NC

John's Tire Service
(919) 798-6281
Oak City, NC 27857

H & R Block Tax Returns
(919) 793-5088
804 Washington Street
Plymouth, NC 27962

BELCHER'S TAXI
(919) 793-4316
302 East 3rd Street
Plymouth, NC 27962

BELK TYLER COMPANY
(919) 793-4816
117-119 East Water Street
Plymouth, NC 27962

Compliments of
FOLTZ CONCRETE
Call 764-0341
Rt. 10, Box 234
Winston-Salem, NC

North Main Street Fashions
704-648-2771
Wolff Tanning
Beds Available
16 North Main St.
Canton, NC

Compliments Of
HARD BODIES GYM
Dial 919-449-6563
119 W. Main St.
Gibsonville, NC

Lee Motor Co. Inc.
Call 291-6000
1415 Lipscomb Rd., E.
Wilson, NC

Hugh Pfaff Poultry Co., Inc.
Call 919-983-3105
Tobacoville, NC

Compliments of
SMITH MOTORS
Telephone 245-4946
104 Martin Street
Forest City, NC

MAMA'S PIZZA
(919) 793-4773
107 E. Water Street
Plymouth, NC 27962

Dr. Jeon Myung-Kil, MD
by Appointment
(919) 793-5073
Hwy. 64 East
Plymouth, NC 27962

Hannah's Hair Shack
(919) 793-3784
Route 1 Box 685
Roper, NC 27970

GURGANUS MOBILE STATION
(919) 793-1100
Hwy. 64 West
Plymouth, NC 27962

Pro-Clean Professional Carpet & Upholstery Cleaning
Certified
All Carpet Treatments
Oriental Rug Specialists
Carpet Repairs
Deodorization Specialists
(919) 793-2418
308 Conaby Drive
Plymouth, NC 27962

Retired Fire Chief Remains 'On Call'

By Leta Parks
For The Valdese News

Although Clyde Lowman has officially retired as fire chief of Lovelady Volunteer Fire Department, he is not yet ready to hang up his hat.

"I'm not getting out," said Lowman, who still serves as advisor to the department. "Any time they need me all they have to do is call."

He has stayed active since his Oct. 31 retirement, helping the firefighters by providing food and drinks for them during busy times, he said.

The Burke County Board of Commissioners passed a resolution honoring the retired fire chief at its January meeting.

The resolution said Lowman "did unselfishly give of his personal time and time away from his family in pursuit of professional attributes as a firefighter, while serving the citizens of his community."

Lowman's fellow firefighters honored his retirement by taking him out to dinner, he

said. They also gave him a new firefighter's coat, a gold badge and a 2 1/2-inch water hose nozzle from 1932.

The former chief said he remained on duty longer than he had to in order to train his replacement, Lee Carswell.

In spite of back pain and surgery, Lowman remained on the job so Carswell could gradually learn the responsibilities of the fire chief, he said.

After his back surgery in 1987, "The doctor said I'm lucky to be walking," Lowman said.

His left leg and foot were numbed by the operation, but his leg has since recovered its feeling, he added.

Lowman remains confident the feeling will someday return to his left foot, also.

His memories of his own difficult beginning as chief prompted the retired chief to make sure Carswell was trained to handle the job, he said.

When Lowman began the job himself, he came into it suddenly after former fire chief John C. Humphries Jr. developed serious health problems.

However, Lowman finally had to retire in October because, "Age plus disability really slowed me down," he said.

With Lowman's retirement, there are no longer any charter members of the vol-

unteer department, which first began in 1958, he said.

The department serves Rutherford College, Flat Gap Mountain, Mineral Springs Mountain, Connelly Springs and the Knob-Rhodhiss Road area.

Lowman served those communities as a firefighter for 30 years, and as a fire chief for 17 years.

"I've been in fire service a lot longer than our firefighters are old," he said, laughing.

Since he first became fire chief in 1971, "There have been a lot of improvements," he said.

An accomplishment that means a great deal to him is the additional space and facilities in the fire department building, he said.

One of the goals he wanted to accomplish before he retired was adding a bay area to the right side of the building, he said.

The area, which has drains in the floor, allows firefighters to wash the trucks and hoses inside in the winter without freezing them, he said. A dryer in the corner of the wash bay dries the hoses so they will not freeze and crack.

Since Lowman started as chief, the building has grown from 32 by 48 square feet of space upstairs to 64 by 65 feet, he said. A basement which was added downstairs makes an additional 20 by 64 square feet of space.

That space is needed because the department now

has five fire trucks as well as a van.

The amount of equipment now stands in sharp contrast with the old weapons carrier that had been converted into a fire truck. This was the only piece of equipment the charter members had to work with when they began in 1958, Lowman said.

A highlight of the fire chief's career is his visits to other U.S. cities where he attended International Fire Chief Conventions.

He proudly displayed plaques on the wall at the fire department showing his trips to various cities, including Cincinnati, Ohio; St. Louis; New Orleans and Philadelphia.

At the conventions, "You meet with fire chiefs from all over the world," he said. "You see equipment from all over the world worth millions of dollars."

He described the convention in New Orleans, where fire chiefs wandered through the city's Superdome, which was packed with firefighting equipment.

Another important part of the conventions were meeting fire chiefs from other countries such as England, Holland, Germany, Japan and Canada, he said.

Lowman developed close friendships with other N.C. fire chiefs by attending the conventions year after year, he said.

A reception was held for Lowman at Lovelady Fire Department on Feb. 5.

Fiery Drill

By Dwight Martin
The Chapel Hill Herald

CHAPEL HILL—Firefighters and rescue workers from across the state gathered at Chapel Hill High School to take a few courses, but they were not interested in traditional subjects, like English, history and algebra.

The firefighters were there to sharpen their firefighting skills and hone their ability to handle emergencies. They took courses that might one day help save lives — maybe even their own.

On Saturday and Sunday, approximately 150 volunteers and professionals attended the third annual Tar Heel Fire and Rescue College to take courses on handling liquid propane gas emergencies and emergencies involving aircraft, said Mike Tapp, a Carrboro firefighter. The firefighters and rescue workers were enrolled in classes that combined classroom and hands-on experiences, he said.

The college also offered basic courses in fighting fires.

"We've got a good many rookie firefighters here," Tapp said. "The basic courses, like self-contained breathing apparatus, will be offered for them."

The self-contained breathing apparatus course explained how to operate breathing equipment and why it is important to wear protective equipment while fighting fires. The course showed rookies the proper way to dress in protective equipment, as well as how the equipment should be cleaned, sanitized and maintained.

Rookie firefighters also wore self-contained breathing equipment to practice search-and-rescue operations in a smoke-filled environment at the Chapel Hill Fire Department's "burn house" off Airport Road.

The liquid-propane course covered how to deal with emergencies stemming from storing and transporting the gas. It also introduced firefighters to methods of coping with rail and highway accidents.

Students in the class extinguished a liquid propane fire Sunday in the Chapel Hill High School parking lot.

The college also offered students a tracking class, Tapp said.

Appalachian Outdoor Advertising Co.

—Outdoor Advertising—

(704) 728-4269

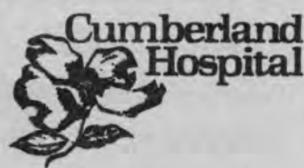
Lenoir, NC

HALL OIL CO

Batteries—Tires
Heating Oils
Wholesale Auto Parts

Dial 539-4141

RICH SQUARE, NC



(919) 485-7181

3425 Melrose Road
Fayetteville, NC 28304

Joann MacMillan, M.ED
Assistant Administrator
Market Development

Dale's Refrigeration Service

Phone 438-5526

406 Parham Rd.
Henderson, NC

Ledbetter Grocery

Call 648-1692

Lake Logan Road
Canton, NC

PINEWOOD APARTMENTS

(919) 892-1458

Ponderosa Dr.
Dunn, North Carolina

PLYMOUTH CLINIC

Dr. A. Papineau
Dr. Daniel Zinicola

Hwy 64 E
793-4155 or 793-4135
Plymouth, NC

Church Of Immaculate Conception

Father Gabriel Meehan
Pastor
245-4017

940 West Main St.
Forest City, NC

Firefighters on hazard team

DURHAM—Durham Fire Chief Nathaniel Thompson announced the promotion of 10 firefighters to the rank of hazardous-response specialist.

The new specialists are qualified by special training to handle situations involving hazardous chemicals and other materials.

They all are assigned to the department's hazardous-materials truck and Engine 30, which accompanies the "Haz Mat" truck from Station 3 in East Durham, and the rescue truck, stationed at fire headquarters downtown.

The firefighters, whose new rank was effective recently, are G. A. Barringer, D. L. Crowder, W. J. H. DeShazo, A. A. Gilliam, D. A. Griffith, J. D. Hamlett, C. D. Hawley, D. P. Reilly, W. H. Towner and H. M. Varnum.

Rutherfordton Fire Chief Bill Wells Resigns

By Scott Carpenter
Rutherfordton County
News

RUTHERFORDTON—Rutherfordton Fire Chief Bill Wells officially submitted his resignation to the Rutherfordton Town Council at the regular council meeting. Wells, who is 57 years old, said he wanted to spend more time with his recently retired wife, and to work more with his hobby—dealing in antiques, which has grown into a small business.

Wells has been with the fire department for 30 years, as a volunteer and as a paid fireman, and finally as fire chief during the past 10

years. Over the past 30 years, Wells said "I have seen changes for the better in fire service."

"Under my administration," Wells continued, "We have gone from three pieces of equipment to seven, and reduced the fire insurance rate for the town from a class seven to a class three."

"We've gone from a municipality to a fire tax district, which brings in revenue," he said. "I feel good about it."

Wells plans to retain his fire instructor's certification, and may work part-time as an instructor through the community colleges. Wells' last day was December 30.

This digital copy of The Tarheel Firefighter and Carolina Rural Fireman was created by Mike Legeros in January 2020, from copies collected by retired Fire Chief Donald E. Whitaker in Pleasant Garden, NC.