

The Carlisle Mercury

Our 111th year, No. 50

Carlisle, Kentucky, 40311, Thursday, December 14, 1978

20 Cents per copy



Winter's beauty (?)

April-like showers turned into January-like drizzle last weekend as heavy rains swept Kentucky and then turned into snow Friday night. The combination of moisture and freezing temperatures

Board hires engineer for renovation studies

At the December meeting of the Nicholas County Board of Education last Saturday night the board voted to employ an engineer to estimate the cost of renovation in certain areas at the high school.

Supt. Don Elder said the engineer will make an estimate to be submitted to the Kentucky School Building Authority, a new group created by the 1978 Kentucky General Assembly to allocate funds for secondary school construction and

renovation according to need. Elder said the engineer would check the lighting, floor, heating system and grounds among other areas in the study.

The board also adopted the close estimate budget for the 1978-79 school year. The close estimate budget is adopted around this time each year, following the adoption of the general budget in July.

Approval was also given for the board to join the Kentucky School Boards Insurance Trust Workers' Compensation Program.

This program is for coverage under workman's compensation and unemployment insurance. The school system has been under a workman's compensation program for the past three years but this is the first year for an unemployment insurance program, which was mandated by the 1978 legislature.

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A resolution was passed concerning non-incident students at Saturday's meeting. It read, in part: "Resolved, that any non-incident student at Saturday's meeting to enroll in and/or attend the Nicholas County school system must, in addition to paying the required tuition fees, show that he is eligible to attend the school system in his county of residence at the time of his request."

In other business the board: — called a board meeting for Dec. 20 at 11:30 a.m., and — advertised for bids for two used school buses owned by the system, a 1966 Chevrolet and a 1967 International.

Tax-oriented session opens in Frankfort

Delayed two days by high water in Frankfort (no doubt giving birth to many jokes about "Come hell and...") the Kentucky General Assembly met in special session yesterday (Wednesday) to consider tax-related legislation and removal of the \$15 increase in traffic fines authorized by the 1978 General Assembly.

Called by Lt. Gov. Thelma Stovall when Gov. Julian Carroll was out of the state the special session has been seen as a political move by some observers and financially-dangerous situation by others. Among the items Lt. Gov. Stovall has put under the legislature's scrutiny for

this session are: — the methods by which utility rates are structured and approved, by the Public Service Commission; — consumer protection as relating to utilities;

— legislation for preventing increases in property taxes as a result of increased property assessments; — increasing the standard deduction for income taxes and lowering the age limit for special benefits from \$6 to \$5; — removing the \$15 increase enacted by the 1978 legislature; and — legislation for removing the sales

tax from utilities. In addition, Gov. Carroll has amended the call to include consideration of both appropriations and spending in the state budget that could be affected by tax-reducing legislation, a clarification of welfare fraud legislation and a request for revenue to provide emergency medical transportation across the Ohio River for persons in the South Shore, Ky. community. They were cut off from medical assistance by the closing of the U. S. Grant bridge over the Ohio Aug. 31.

The announcement of the special session caught almost everyone in the state by surprise, including Gov. Carroll who stated (after Lt. Gov. Stovall made a request for an audit of the capital construction fund when he was out of the state again) that the lieutenant governor's actions were going to have the effect of making him a prisoner in the state.

Some have seen the call as a political ploy by Stovall, who is an announced candidate for governor in next May's primary. However, the session has political implications that range far beyond the governor's race. All 100 representatives and half of the state's 38 senators will be up for reelection in that May primary and the session is expected to affect all the incumbents with its tax-related composition.

Already submitted for the session are bills that would remove the \$15 increase in traffic fines; remove the sales tax from residential utilities; prohibit the use of the fuel adjustment clause (where increased fuel costs are passed on the consumer) from residential utility bills and change welfare fraud from a misdemeanor to a felony.

Nicholas County representatives in the General Assembly are Sen. Ed Ford, D-Cynthiana and Rep. Adrian Arnold, D-Mt. Sterling.

Want to call your legislator?

County residents wishing to contact their representatives in Frankfort during the special session may call toll-free 1-800-372-7195 and a message will be taken for delivery to the legislator's desk.

Anyone wishing to check on the status of a particular piece of legislation may call toll-free 1-800-372-7194 and receive information on the progress of any bill that has been introduced.

In addition, Rep. Adrian Arnold, D-Mt. Sterling, has released a telephone number for persons wishing to reach him outside of legislative hours at their own expense. That number is 502-564-8167.

Arnold, who has an ad in this week's Mercury asking Nicholas Countyans for their opinions on the issues before the session, said: "These telephone lines are available so our constituents can keep us informed. I welcome local opinion, and encourage all of my constituents to take advantage of these opportunities to be involved in our legislative process."

Nicholas County's other legislator, Sen. Ed Ford, D-Cynthiana, is expected to be active in the effort to remove the sales tax from utilities.

Sen. Ford introduced unsuccessful legislation to that effect in the 1978 regular session of the General Assembly. He has already pre-filed a bill to that effect for the special session.

Municipal gas rates up 10-cents across the board

The Carlisle City Council approved a 10-cent across-the-board raise in gas rates at Monday's meeting.

The 10-cent figure was derived after conference with Columbia Gas officials about Columbia's recent rate hike. The city buys its gas from Columbia.

The rate puts the city's minimum bill at \$2.56 — almost \$1.50 lower than the average for cities served by Columbia Gas franchises, city officials say.

The rates down the scale are \$3.30 minimum, \$2.47 for the first 1,000 cubic feet, \$2.47 per 1,000 for 2,000 cubic feet; \$2.37 per 1,000 for 10,000 cubic feet and 11,000 cubic feet or more will be billed at \$2.36 per 1,000.

Although the Columbia hike has fluctuated in the past, city officials estimated that it would average seven cents per 1,000 cubic feet over the previous rate. The three cents per 1,000 difference will be used by the city for maintenance on and improvements to the city gas system.

In tax-related matters the city received a letter from Father Herman Kamlage, pastor of the Shrine of Our Lady of Gladness concerning the assessment of the building adjacent to the church property in Carlisle housing busloads.

The property, owned by the church, was valued at \$25,000 for tax purposes. The church appealed that assessment and received a reduction to \$22,000 which Father Kamlage indicated was acceptable to the parish board.

Postoffice open Saturday

The Carlisle Post Office window will be open this Saturday, Dec. 16, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. as convenience to the mailing public.

company would receive a plaque at the city's annual Christmas party Dec. 19.

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Some tax bill questions answered

(Editor's note: Because of the many questions surrounding the 1977 tax assessment sent by the Nicholas County Fair Tax Committee and the mailing of the 1978 tax bills the Mercury interviewed Nicholas County Property Valuation Administrator Tom Brady on the status of the tax bills for the two years. The questions in the interview are in bold type and Mrs. Brady's answers follow.)

Many people who have appeals still pending on their 1977 assessments have asked if payment of their 1978 taxes will affect their appeals.

Payment of the 1978 taxes will not affect any appeals on the 1977 assessments. The 1977 assessments have not been certified and won't be until the court case is over but the 1978 assessments have been certified by the Department of Revenue.

It has been stated that persons may pay their taxes on what they consider their assessment is and if it differs from the tax bill they received they will be billed for the difference after the court case is resolved.

This applies only to those people who have an appeal before the Kentucky Board of Tax Appeals. Those persons may pay their taxes on what they consider their assessment is and if there is any difference after the state board hears their appeals they will be billed for that difference plus six per cent interest.

This is for the 1978 assessments only. The 1977 assessments, as stated before, have not been certified and those taxes can't be paid until the Department of Revenue certifies the assessments, which again won't be until the court case is over.

Some people have raised the question as to what the 1975 assessments are based on. They contend they are based on the 1977 assessments which were set aside by the Circuit Court's decision. Is this correct?

The 1978 assessments were based on the emergency reassessment ordered by the Circuit Court. But before this assessment was certified the Fair Tax Committee appealed the court's decision and the Department of Revenue court-appealed.

Will there be any raise in assessments for the 1979 taxes? At this time I don't think so. I believe that the figures will be accepted by the

Department of Revenue when they are sent in for certification in May.

Some people who have built on their homes may have their assessment changed but this will be due to

improvements made to their property and not to any raise. Also, new homes will have to be added to the tax rolls, but again this is not a raise.

City collecting '77 tax payments

Despite the lawsuit by the Nicholas County Fair Tax Committee that the 1977 county tax assessments in limbo some 1977 taxes are being collected.

Carlisle Mayor Bill Power said at Monday's city council meeting that the city has been collecting 1977 taxes for the past few weeks, based on the 1978 assessments.

"People have been paying their 1977 city taxes on the 1978 assessment,"

Power said, "and then the city will bill them if there is any difference once the case is settled."

The procedure described by Mayor Power is the same that Frankfort attorney Joseph Leary, counsel for the Fair Tax Committee, contends can be certified and that won't happen until all the appeals have been made on the court case. There is no way that a person who would pay their 1977 taxes until the assessment is certified.

What is the procedure for listing

improvements made to their property and not to any raise. Also, new homes will have to be added to the tax rolls, but again this is not a raise.

I think we will be able to get through this coming year without a raise, and I hope we won't have to raise any assessments for at least a couple more years.

To recap, payment of 1978 taxes won't affect any appeals made on 1977 assessments. What about those people who did not appeal their 1977 assessments and/or who are not involved in the Fair Tax Committee action?

Again, because of the court case, no 1977 taxes have been certified. Even those people who were satisfied with their 1977 assessments cannot pay their taxes until the court case is over.

None of these taxes can be paid because the assessments haven't been certified and that won't happen until all the appeals have been made on the court case. There is no way that a person who would pay their 1977 taxes until the assessment is certified.

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