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## Community Action request granted Fiscal Court will accept the cost of sewer repair

By William Million  
The Carlisle Mercury Staff  
CARLISLE - The Nicholas County Government will accept the costs of sewage repairs near the Community Action Center.

In the Fiscal Court meeting held on February 14, the court decided to address the problems to avoid fines that state officials had said were pending if the sewer was not repaired.

Margaret Hunter, of Community Action, presented the court with an estimate of approximately \$6400 to fix the station behind the old hospital.

The county owns the building and leases it to Community Action.

McCoy and McCoy, an engineering firm contacted by Community Action to evaluate the problem, says several improvements are needed to comply with state regulations. Several well tests at the state have failed to meet state safety levels.

The engineering firm says that improvements must include two 1,000 gallon tanks, a 20 foot by 90 foot lagoon, and a chain link fence around the site.

Nicholas County Judge Executive Reese Smoot proposed that the county use its own backhoe, bulldozer, and labor

to bring the cost down.

Magistrate Daryl Stacy reminded the court that a licensed operator must oversee the operations for the improvements to be approved by state officials.

Smoot said the money will come from Bluegrass Area Development funds.

The county usually splits the money with city government. Smoot said that since Community Action benefits the city as well, the money for improvements would be taken out of the fund before the city receives half the money.

Hunter informed the court that Community Action has already paid \$1140 in soil tests and evaluation fees.

However, Community Action will not put \$1000 toward the project.

The improvements will be made as soon as possible to appease state officials.

In other business the court:

- Granted \$150 to the Community Action elderly garden seed program. City government also contributed \$150 to the program that provides garden seeds to 62 elderly and lower income households.

- Accepted the Title Three and Home-Care Program budget. No change was made in this year's budget except for an increase in the retirement benefits.

- Took \$7877 from the Area Development Fund for Parks and Recreation, as called for by the 1990-91 budget.

- Accepted the Nicholas County Sheriff's financial report.

- Paid the county bills.

- Granted the Dollar General Store and Ashland Road Martin Co. an extension on the county occupational tax.

- Granted requests from the Nicholas County Public Library and the Nicholas County Ministerial Association for \$1000 each, as was budgeted.

- Transferred \$2868.43 to the Workmen's Compensation Fund.

- Accepted \$283,288 for the county's road fund.

- Signed a covenant as defined by the \$7500 grant received by the Nicholas County / Carlisle Tourism, Inc. for the renovation of the old jail.

- Purchased a typewriter for the Nicholas County Clerk's office for \$687.25.

- Approved the settlement of the Nicholas County Fire Department and the Nicholas County Clerk.

- Agreed to look into repairing bridges on Milltown Point Road and Tom Saps Road.

The next meeting of the court will be on Tuesday, March 12, at 4:00 a.m.

## Medicaid bill passed by Senate

By William Million  
The Carlisle Mercury Staff

FRANKFORT - The Kentucky State Senate has approved a bill that would increase Kentucky's Medicaid coverage if it becomes law.

The bill calls for everyone under the federal poverty level to receive Medicaid benefits.

The current poverty level is \$13,360 in annual income for a family of four.

The federal government contributes 73 percent of the money for the state's program. State government contributes the other 27 percent.

The bill calls for the providers of services to be taxed, with revenue going into the state's fund.

Hospitals, nursing homes, and other providers would find that the new tax would bring about more revenue, because of the increased number of recipients.

The bill would provide hospitalization coverage for over 340,000 Kentuckians not covered.

The federal government would match the state's funds, increasing the total amount of revenue available for the program.

However, the Appropriations and Revenue Committee must approve the changes and present them to Governor Wallace Wilkinson for his signature after the bill passes.

## New advances in the industry means...

# Tobacco farmers faced with change

By William Million  
The Carlisle Mercury Staff

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the first in a series of articles about the changing tobacco industry.

CARLISLE - The tobacco farmer is finding himself faced with many changes in the way he can raise his crop. New advances in crop management and labor-saving devices have burst upon the industry.

For years, tobacco farmers have relied on the traditional canvas-tobacco beds. The beds require much of preparation and maintenance, and countless hours of weeding and pulling plants for the transplant to the fields.

Hydroponics, more commonly known as "water fluctuation," may soon take the place of the canvas beds.

In hydroponics, tobacco, as well as other crops, are raised in a "floating bed" rather than in the soil. The crops float over a continuous flow of nutrient filled water, and require little maintenance.

Nicholas County Extension Agent Mike Phillips says the new process is the way of the future.

"With one of the largest problems facing Nicholas County farmers is shortage of labor, this process will really catch on. Canvas tobacco beds will soon go the way of hand-tied tobacco."

Who loose-leaf tobacco sales started to catch on, everyone was skeptical. Now, you're not seeing many hand-tied bales at all. Hydroponics will catch on.

The process of hydroponics is simple. Seeds are germinated in small trays, with each seed placed in its own compartment.

The seeds are usually placed in a thin layer of peat moss, or a similar substance. In 4-7 days, the seed will break the surface. In another week or so, the plant is ready to be transplanted to the floating system.

The seeds can be germinated by the farmer, but many farm supply and seed stores

will have the plants that are ready to be placed in the bed.

The floating bed stands approximately eight inches of the ground, and is placed outside. The frame is made of 2x4 boards with a sheet of plastic loosely tacked on top.

Phillips says the corners of the frame should be rounded to avoid any rips in the plastic.

The trays containing the plants are then set directly on the floating water. The water is laced with all the nutrients the plant needs.

The plant roots grow into the water, coming through holes in the underside of the tray.

When the plants reach the size for a transplant, they can be simply be pulled from their compartments and set as the conventionally raised plants.

Phillips says the process is not without its faults. The trays the plants come in vary in size. Some have as few as 200 individual cubicles, while some companies produce trays with as many as 300 compartments.



The Carlisle Mercury/Hank Bond Photo

A basketball smile . . .  
Joey Waggoner, 5, of Mayesville Road, Carlisle, enjoyed the Nicholas County — Jessamine County basketball game last week at Nicholas County High School. The young elementary student had a basket full of questions about the proper use of a camera . . . and now, Mr. Waggoner, you see how it works!

## Tobacco farmers faced with change

The smaller trays allow the plant to be held longer before the transplant than the larger trays.

The trays with a lot of compartments can only be held off from setting for about four days. If the weather won't cooperate, or the farmer is not ready to set his crop, that is a major problem," Phillips said.

Phillips says the plants in the smaller trays compete with each other for light, and grow too tall and thin to be held off very long.

By contrast, the 200 cubicle tray can be held off for as long as 17 days.

The smaller trays offer more room for the plants to get more light, making the stem thicker and the plant tougher.

The soil in the tray contains time-released fertilizers. When the plant yellows, the plant is ready to be set.

The new process also carries a high initial cost. Not only do you have to buy the seed, build the frame, and install the water system, the

trays themselves are a sizable investment.

Each tray costs approximately \$2.50, at current prices. For one acre of plants, given a 200 cubicle tray, the cost in trays per acre is \$102, or 40 trays.

The conventional beds currently cost around \$110 per bed.

The cost of the tray is small, Phillips says, given the life of the product.

"With proper maintenance, the trays can last up to 10 years. That is very good when you compare that with the life of a tobacco canvas."

Because the bed is covered in plastic, the sun's ultra-violet rays do not reach the organisms in the bed, and they must be killed to preserve the crop.

Phillips urges farmers to be wary of companies when they

investigate the possibilities of adapting to hydroponics.

"There are so many different products that farmers must decide which ones best suit their needs. The trays also vary in density and quality, so make sure you get your money's worth."

For more information about hydroponics, feel free to call the County Extension Office at 289-2312.

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