

Budget requests presented

News Herald September 19, 1980

Calling Western Piedmont Community College an "incomplete campus," WPCC President Dr. Wilmon Droze Thursday asked the state Advisory Budget Commission to fund four building projects over the next three years at a cost of at least \$3.4 million.

The commission, chaired by Charlotte Mayor Eddie Knox, visited WPCC, Western Carolina Center and Broughton Hospital Thursday for tours and outlines of each's state budget needs for 1981-1983.

At WPCC, Droze cited the college's needs for a skills training center, a physical education center and auditorium, a continuing education center and renovation of the second floor of the Moore Administration Building to serve as an expanded Learning Resources Center.

Based on an estimate of \$50 per square foot, which WPCC Vice President for Fiscal Affairs

Kenneth Clark said was "a little low," the new projects would total \$3.4 million, with no estimate given for the renovations.

The skills training center, which would meet the needs of new industry, would be 15,000 square feet, the physical education center and combination auditorium would be 41,000 square feet and the continuing education center, 12,000 square feet.

"Since Western Piedmont was founded in 1964, we have been struggling to meet the needs of the citizens and the mandate of the legislature by offering complete programs. We have done so with an incomplete campus," Droze said.

"New industrial development, expanding business operations and increasing levels of service by public institutions have greatly increased the need for instructional space," Droze said. "I submit that if we are going to have the mandate to

train the highly skilled employees for new industries we have to have the space to train them," he added.

WPCC received a \$100,000 capital budget allocation in Burke County's 1980-81 budget. That money is to come from the county's federal revenue sharing funds and would be set aside for use in future building projects at the college.

The request to the county drew some criticism at the county's budget hearings in June, with some opponents suggesting the \$100,000 could better be spent on public school needs. Droze did not specify that the \$100,000 would be applied to a gymnasium facility, though he did acknowledge that a gym is definitely needed at the college.

In addressing the commission Thursday, Droze also outlined WPCC's priorities, according to the operational budget, which included re-

★ Please turn to page 5A

College seeks new buildings

★ From page one

quests for decreased instructor-student ratios, increased allotments for instructional support positions and increased equipment allotments.

"While I'm speaking especially for Western Piedmont, in a way I'm taking the opportunity for speaking for all of the community colleges," Droze said.

Droze also asked for "compliance expenses" resulting from lawsuits to be considered. He said, "It is financially burdensome to comply with federal requirements... Additional funds should be made available to handle legal expenses growing out of litigation..."

Broughton requests
The commission also heard building pleas — in renovation form — from Broughton Hospital director W.W. Lowrance.

The renovation requests, totalling \$5,176,246, were prioritized by Lowrance after several senators on the commission said they had heard the request to air condition before.

A representative from the Division of Mental Health of the Department of Human Resources was asked what priority air-conditioning of Broughton's central building had on a 75-point plan. It was 51.

"That just won't get it," said Knox and other members. Although Lowrance had declined to put priorities on requests, he placed life-safety systems, or a complete alarm from each of the hospital's buildings to the Morganton Fire Department, as number one. The cost would be \$226,044.

Second on the list is renovation of Wards R and S, at a total price of \$679,921.

"This building was built in 1925. It is three stories high, has no elevators and the stairways are so narrow they are almost inaccessible for stretchers," said Assistant Director Bill Gamble.

The residents' rooms, required by law to be partitioned, still remain open in the R and S wards.

"In 1972, a request was made to renovate this and two other buildings. The go-ahead was given for the other two, which were air-conditioned at

that time," said Gamble.

An air-conditioning compressor was purchased to be large enough to cool all three buildings, and since has required repair because the motor is functioning improperly, while cooling only two.

Other projects on the Broughton capital improvements list are insulation of the steam lines, at an estimated cost of \$44,506; water valve regulators (away from patients' bathrooms, where they are presently located), at a cost of \$121,275; replacement of two 25,000-pound 1939 boilers with a single, 80,000-pound boiler; re-roofing of buildings at \$454,575; new laundry equipment at \$109,250 and heatin and air-conditioning of the center building at \$2,710,246.

Western Carolina
For Western Carolina Center, Dr. Iverson Riddle presented a plan that would total approximately \$450,000, to renovate Mulberry Cottage and to buy facilities in Sylva to house residents in the western part of the state.

Mulberry Cottage is the only one of the center's facilities that is not approved for Medicaid funding, the commission was told.

"If we can get more beds certified (for Medicaid) we can get more money right away," Riddle said. If \$150,000 were available for the center's own staff to do renovations, Riddle said, they could bring in about \$1 million in federal funds.

The remaining \$300,000 would be used to purchase facilities to serve 40 mentally retarded persons in Sylva. One of the center's goals is to served the handicapped in or near their own community.

Different methods of doing paperwork were also discussed by Riddle, who summed up: "We need a computer."

He brought a stack of notebooks to the commission's hearing table, saying, "This is one patient's record."

"Our staff spends approximately 30 percent of their time funneling through this stuff," he said. When the center went on Medicaid support in 1973 — 10 years after opening — \$17 million per year in federal funds became available. The center's total budget is \$25 million.

Riddle was careful to note to the budgetary commission that since 1973, \$12 million has been reverted to the state's general fund.

He also touched on another proposal:

"We spend \$40,000 per yer per resident on patient care," he said. "I am as certain as I am standing here that we can find a more cost-effective way of doing this."

"There ae at least 83 residents at WCC... with severe congenital defects, which can be seen by looking at their chromosomes under a microscope."

"If we continue at today's cost, care and treatment of these people for the next 10 years will closely approximate \$33,200,000. If the average life span of these people is 40 additional years, we are talking about an outlay of \$132,800,000."

Riddle then estimated the cost to the state and the government of treating residents at other centers, especially O'Berry, and other institutions, bringing the 40-year total to \$825,000,000.

"I'll probably live to regret saying this, but what we ought to do is take an inventory of the birth defects, and pick the people out where they are likely to re-occur."

"For a fraction of that cost (\$825,000,000) we could employ a couple of people, and put them on the road seeing families. Although we tell them when a congenital disease is likely to re-occur, we ought to follow it up at home, and be sure they really understand it," Riddle said.

"If we can save 25 percent of these defects from occurring, we stand to save approximately \$206,250,000," he said.

The commission recommends appropriations to the governor and to the legislature at budget time.

Other members of the Advisory Budget Commission are Assistant Chairman Sen. Kenneth Royall Jr. of Durham; his fellow senators, Joe H. Palmer of Clyde, James A. Garrison of Albemarle, Harold W. Hardison of Deep Run, Marshall A. Rauch of Gastonia and Ralph Scott of Haw River; and Reps. Liston B. Ramsey of Marshall, John R. Gamble Jr. of Lincolnton, Edward S. Holmes of Pittsboro, H. Horton Roundtree of Greenville and Ben Tison of Charlotte.