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What Name Do You Like?

Burke County's community college is still awaiting a name.

The board of trustees hasn't come to grips with the task, although giving it consideration, short of a final decision, at meetings at which more immediate matters claimed attention.

But the time is approaching when a name must be chosen for the community college-to-be.

Trustees have considered and will continue to consider the several dozen names suggested by Burke County citizens. The number received after the board invited ideas proved surprising, indicating keen public interest.

Although there's nothing final it was apparent after a recent board meeting that the trustees were about ready to narrow the list to four or five.

Among these are Burkemont, Table Rock, Blue Ridge and Alpine. (Bear in mind that the words "community college" must be a part of whatever name is chosen, having been so prescribed by the State Board of Education).

The other new colleges being established—like Burke's, among the first five approved for North Carolina's community college system—seem to be picking names other than the name of the county in which situated. An example is Sandhills Community College in Moore County.

The reasoning is that some people in the future may think the scope of the community college is restricted if it bears the name of one county, instead of being regional in its service. None of them will be one-county institutions.

For the four most widely favored names, here are some of the reasons offered by those who suggested them:

Burkemont: This is the name of the dominant mountain in the South Mountains, easily visible from the college site at I-40 and U.S. 64. It's also the name of one of the town's oldest streets. Burkemont would bring into the title the county's name with the added "mont" to denote the area's position in relation to mountains.

Table Rock: This also stems from a geographical landmark. Table Rock is Burke County's most distinctive mountain, but it is a sentinel not limited to Burke for it can be seen from portions of several neighboring counties. The Table Rock name has been linked with education in the past. An academy once operated in the Table Rock section bore that title. It's a name which also has been given to organizations and businesses (like the former Table Rock Furniture Company).

Alpine: The word denotes mountains, although more rugged than Burke's terrain. The word is not new to the area. A former cotton mill, once a major industry, bore the name. Alpine became a part of the name of a Burke County community, Glen Alpine. There is a school named McAlpine.

Blue Ridge: Derived from the mountain chain which looms large on the landscape, Blue Ridge is a name widely used throughout Western North Carolina. It would indicate the general region in which the college is situated, in a county which proclaims itself to be "the Gateway to the Blue Ridge."

Not to be ignored is the sound which the name will produce, falling on the ears of generations to come, and the effect it will have visually as a printed title through the years.

The board concedes that a name not yet considered might be the perfect title, and for that reason continued suggestions are invited.

But it would be helpful for trustees to know which of the four names above is preferred by Burke citizens. Drop a post card to the community college board of trustees or pick up a telephone and call The News-Herald and express your preference. Add other suggestions if you like. But note which of these four you like best.

It may not mean anything because a decision was not near at the time, but at a recent meeting comments of trustees indicated that Table Rock and Burkemont might be favorites.

Now is the time to state your preference or your disagreement. But do it soon.