

## Assign-A-Highway

Buchanan County's litter problem may soon be a thing of the past due to action this week in Buchanan Circuit Court to assign 33 probationers to community service picking up litter through the new Assign-A-Highway program. Probationers appearing for the opening day of the January term of court Monday were assigned specific sections of primary roads in Buchanan County in three to five mile increments. They were provided with safety vests and orange trash bags, as well as briefed on the program and made aware of the consequences if they choose not to pick up the litter along their sections of the road.

### Their instructions?

To keep the roadside to which they are assigned clean and litter-free.

### Penalties for not doing so?

Revocation of their probation.

According to Assistant Buchanan County Attorney Frank Kilgore, who worked on the county's behalf to see the program established, the probationers assigned Monday will be keeping litter under control on Routes 460, 80, 83 and Rt. 609.



On hand to facilitate the first assignments were, from left, Assistant County Attorney Frank Kilgore; District 16 Senior Probation Officer Chris Shortt; and Buchanan County Litter Control Officers Danny Lowe and Pat Boardwine. Behind them is the probationer assignment map. (Staff photo/Cathy St. Clair)

609. **"This is the first comprehensive application of the program in the state of Virginia,"** Kilgore said.

Buchanan Circuit Judge Bob Williams, who agreed to implement the program in Buchanan County, said he has a two-fold object in the program. "I hope to beautify the county and build character at the same time," Williams said. "Both the county and probationers will benefit." **One of the side benefits to the program, Williams said, is that those made responsible for keeping a section of the roadway clean will become advocates in their own right against litter, encouraging their families and friends not to litter.** "If this works like I hope it will, we'll see a difference," Williams added.

Buchanan County Litter Control Officers Danny Lowe and Pat Boardwine will monitor the program success, keeping track of roadside pick-up progress as they travel through the county through the course of their normal daily activities. With more probationers waiting to be assigned, Kilgore noted it is possible that not only will county roadsides be addressed, but creek and riverbanks as well.

The way the program will work, a probationer's area will be checked at least twice monthly and in the event one is not cleaned the probationer will be notified the first time and told when a new inspection will occur. If it is not cleaned at that time, the violation will be reported to the probation office and that will set into motion action to revoke the probation of a specific probationer not keeping his or her assigned roadway cleaned.

Kilgore noted that the Buchanan County Probation Office has been the most enthusiastic of any about the program and he added that **while Buchanan County is the first county to implement the project, he hopes to see it take hold in other coalfield counties in the not too distant future.** "The program has a dual effect," Kilgore said. "It helps get the word out about not littering and it cleans up the area at the same time."

By: Cathy St. Clair, News Editor, The Virginia Mountaineer  
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