

Camden worker is paid twice for same hours

By WILLIAM P. BARRETT
Of The Bulletin Staff

When it snows in Camden County, Harold S. (Poppy) Jones of Camden becomes a man of action.

As a \$12,392-a-year truck driver for the county government, Jones is part of the crew called in to help clear 400 miles of county roads. In a heavy storm it is not unusual for snow workers to log 16 or more consecutive hours on the job salting, sanding and plowing.

While it is arduous, hazardous work, it is also lucrative, since all snow removal outside of normal working hours means overtime pay.

For Jones, a Democratic ward leader who is also on the Camden City payroll as a \$9,844-a-year night security guard, county snow removal work is particularly rewarding. That's because he often is being paid twice for the same hours, once in overtime by the county and again by the city.

Last Sunday, The Bulletin reported that Jones is one of five city workers linked to the Democratic political machine of Mayor Angelo J. Errichetti, who allegedly are "no-shows" or "part-shows" on their city jobs. All five have a second job, four of them on another public payroll, at which they appear to put in their full hours.

However, Jones is different from the other four in one important respect. The others apparently arranged the working hours of their two jobs to avoid a conflict on the time cards and time sheets they submit. Jones did not.

Several days ago, The Bulletin obtained copies of most of Jones's 1979 time records for his daytime county job driving a truck for the highway department in Lindenwold and his nighttime city job guarding the pub-

lic works garage at 11th st. and Wright ave. The county records are for the full year, but city records for November could not be obtained immediately.

Jones's county job normally runs from 8 A.M. to 4.30 P.M., and his city shift from 6 P.M. to 2 A.M. The county time cards are closely scrutinized by supervisors; the city time sheets bear only what purports to be Jones's signature and are not signed by any supervisors.

A comparison of the records shows that the snowy months of January and February 1979 proved especially rewarding to Jones:

Jan. 2-3 — According to his county time card, Jones punched in at 11.59 P.M. Jan. 2 and worked straight through on snow removal to 4.18 P.M. on Jan. 3. He was paid for eight hours of overtime — two of them falling during the 6 P.M.-2 A.M. shift he was paid for in the city.

Jan. 8-9 — Jones again reported for county snow duty at 11.47 P.M. on Jan. 8 — in the middle of the 6 P.M. to 2 A.M. shift he was supposedly working for the city. His county time card says he didn't leave until 4.18 P.M. on Jan. 9, a conflict of two hours.

Jan. 12 — Jones reported in sick to his city job, but according to county time records he was healthy enough to keep working at his county job past the normal 4.30 P.M. quitting time until midnight. He racked up 7½ hours of overtime, six of them during his "illness."

Jan. 17 — He worked a regular shift at the county, then called in sick to his city job. Yet, according to county time records, he reported back to work at 11.57 P.M., working through the night to 4.17 P.M. the next day. Thus, for two hours he was paid once for working and again for being sick.

Feb. 7 — Amid a heavy snowfall, Jones punched into his county job at 4.27 A.M. and was paid for more than 35 straight hours to 4.17 P.M. the next day. He also reported in sick to his city job on Feb. 7 and received a full days' pay there.

Feb. 13 — Called in on snow duty the night before, which was a city and county holiday, Jones was paid for working straight through to midnight — overlapping six hours with his city job, for which he was fully paid that night.

Additionally, on Dec. 19 he worked overtime at his county job until 9.14 P.M., three hours after he reported in sick to the city job.

And although it wasn't a snow situation, on July 12 Jones remained on his county job until 7 P.M. — while drawing full pay for a city shift that began at 6 P.M.

There is a gap of only 1½ hours between the end of Jones's county job and the start of his city shift. Yet, according to the time records, on at least 24 days during 1979 he reported in sick to one job — usually the city job — while recording himself as present at the other. Ten of those 24 days came in five sets of back-to-back days; Jones worked one day, reported in sick that night, worked the next day, and reported in sick that night.

Only once during the 11 months examined — May 29, 1979 — did he report in sick to both jobs on the same day.

According to city and county officials, work rules state it is improper for an employe to report in sick when in fact that employe is not sick. They stress that sick days are not interchangeable with vacation days.

It is difficult to calculate precisely how much money Jones improperly collected during 1979, but it seems likely it is in the hundreds of dollars.

The Camden Police Department is investigating the allegations raised in last Sunday's Bulletin story, including those regarding Jones. Detective Wayne Clark has asked county and city officials to supply Jones' pay records back to 1975.

Sources say that since The Bulletin's story appeared last Sunday, Jones has been putting in regular hours at the public works garage, located just off Admiral Wilson blvd.

On Thursday night about 8.30, a Bulletin reporter seeking comment from Jones about his 1979 time records found him in the guard office at the garage — asleep. A fellow guard had to call his name three times before he woke up.

The reporter identified himself and the purpose of his visit. Using a string of obscenities, a highly agitated Jones ordered the reporter to leave, told him never to return to the garage, and threatened violence against him and another Bulletin reporter who wrote last Sunday's story.

Jones, a city employe for seven years, also declined to talk about his time records.

In addition to the two jobs, Jones, who lives on Spruce st. in Camden, also has a part-ownership of Just Pals, a tavern at 8th and Chestnut sts., South Camden. According to city liquor license records, a co-owner is Novella Hinson, the wife of Jones's boss, Theodore Hinson, the director of public works.

Hinson, who lives in Jones's ward, has said he is unaware of any shortcomings in Jones's city performance.

Jones, long active in local Democratic politics, also has another governmental jobholder in the family. His wife, Virginia, has an \$8,647-a-year position with the county as a building service worker in the courthouse.