

Viewpoints

401 lobby critical

Hoke County may be on the verge of breaking into the future if the recent effort by some local leaders pays off.

Last week, a local delegation met with state highway officials to plead the county's case for the widening of U.S. Highway 401, and as a result the four-lane project has a better chance.

Although construction on the widening was promised almost 20 years ago, the Hoke County stretch of 401 has been steadily moved down the Department of Transportation (DOT) priority list and away from state funding.

Editorials

Now, federal money for the project may be available and thanks to local prodding, the DOT is beginning to take notice of the needs of Highway 401.

This county's demand for services is out distancing the taxpayers' ability to pay. A widened highway could help.

The improved highway would provide a four-lane link between Raeford and Fayetteville which is vital to this county's continued growth. County officials feel the larger road would provide easy access, not only for industries who ship by truck, but also for local residents working in Cumberland County.

This county needs to gain residents in order to reduce the ad valorem tax burden. A widened Highway 401 could open the door to many who are attracted by the higher standard of living here, but turned off by having to face a narrow, but heavily used, road for daily travel.

In order to qualify for the funds, local leaders must campaign vigorously for the help from our district highway commissioner and will have to remind Eighth District Rep. William Hefner that Hoke County needs the improved road.

Without a unified local lobbying effort, Hoke County may have to wait another 20 years to get the highway construction started.

The time is right for obtaining the funds, and the time to demand them is now.

Hats off to grads

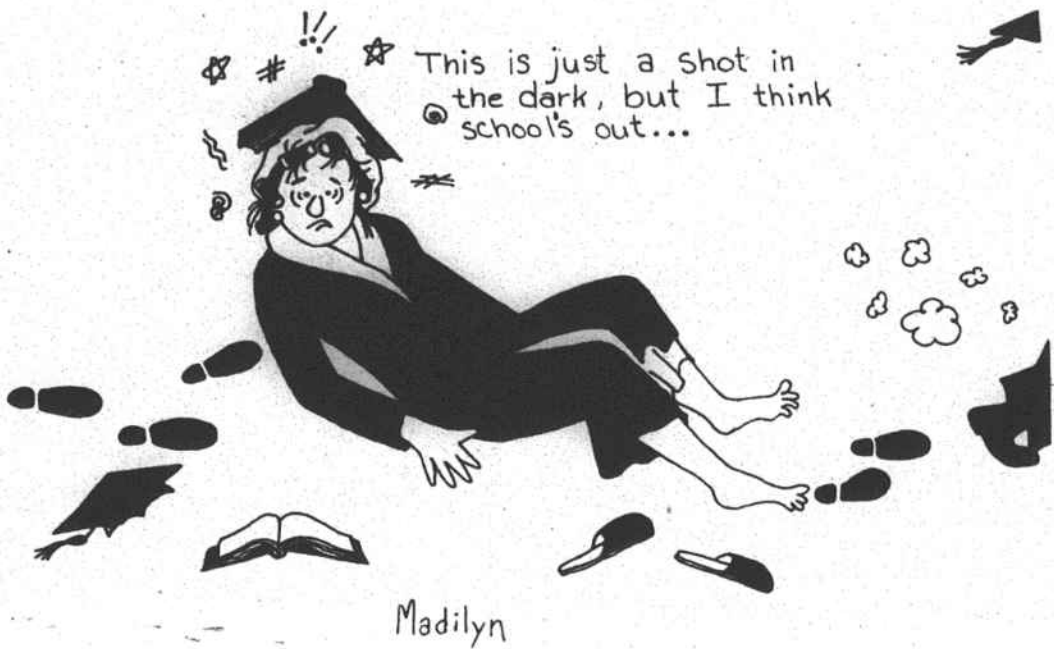
After Friday, for most Hoke High graduates there will be a sense of accomplishment and of relief.

For some the 12-year fight with school will be over. Others will continue with studies in technical schools and colleges.

Whatever the graduates plan for the future, their lives will change dramatically, and in the next few years many may look back and long for the halcyon days of Hoke High.

We wish all of the graduates well, and we hope the experience they have gained in school will prepare them to cope with the rigors of a tougher system.

Good Luck.



Letters To The Editor

School personnel not doing job

To the Editor:

Our family had a terrible experience Wednesday, May 30.

My 17-year-old daughter Donna got out of high school and went to J.W. Turlington to pick up her twin brothers, Ashley and Wesley, who are sixth graders.

Ashley met Donna at the car and told her he hadn't seen Wesley since lunch.

Donna went inside the school building and asked Ms. Smith, the school secretary, if Wesley had signed out.

Ms. Smith said, "He didn't sign out. In fact we just found out 15 minutes ago he was missing."

Donna replied "Have you called my parents?" Ms. Smith said "No not yet."

It was now something after 3 o'clock and no one at Turlington could account for Wesley.

We, the parents, weren't even called by any of the school personnel to let us know that our son was missing.

Is this the kind of school principal and teachers we need to teach our children?

A teacher failed to see where a student was located.

Teachers are asking for a raise and this has shown me what kind of teachers we have teaching our children.

I don't believe they deserve a raise for doing a poor job.

We didn't know if Wesley had left on his own or if he was kidnapped.

The point of this letter is to make other parents aware of the problem that occurred.

We were not even called when they realized my child was missing.

No one from the school bothered to call during our ordeal to see if we had found or heard from him.

Someone at the school is not doing their job. No child is supposed to leave the campus unless the child's parents or guardian has come into the school building and signed them out properly.

We believe appropriate action should take place to insure occurrences such as this do not happen in the future.

Special thanks to the Raeford Police Department, Rescue Squad, and to the many volunteers for helping us look for and locate Wesley.

Thank you
The Hales Family

Volunteers essential to search efforts

To the Editor:

The assistance of members of the Hoke County Rescue Squad and other volunteers was essential to the successful end of a search last week for a 13-year-old Raeford boy who ran away from home.

The volunteers searched all night and were diligent in their efforts.

Team leader Ron Ellis and members Ralph Tindall, Gene Hasty, Linwood Huffman, Jeff Huffman, Billy Norton, Greg Beard and Mark Gentry, along with state Department of Corrections officer Brent Hardin devoted time and hard work to the cause.

The Raeford Police Department appreciates the effort of these volunteers, who are often overlooked.

Sincerely,
Leonard Wiggins
Chief of Police

Humane Society needs help from citizens

To the Editor:

On Saturday, June 2, the Hoke/Raeford Humane Society held a Bake Sale. Thanks to the generosity of some of the residents of Raeford the Bake Sale was a success.

All proceeds realized from this sale will be used to help make life a little more bearable for the dogs, cats and kittens and puppies now housed at the Pound until they are either adopted or mercifully "put to sleep."

The Pound is always full of beautiful animals looking for a good home.

For those of you who are reading this letter, have you ever thought of going to the Pound and adopting one of these poor unfortunate creatures? Do you even know where the pound is located? For your information it is

located at the landfill and can be reached by going to the end of Main St., bear to the right, then go about a quarter mile to Virgil's Store. Turn left and follow signs to landfill. Usually there will be someone there.

The Hoke/Raeford Humane Society has enlisted the aid of one of its members to be there Monday through Friday from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Adopting a pet and then having it either spayed or neutered will not only save an unfortunate animal from being exterminated, but it will definitely brighten your life.

Statistics have proven that people with pets live longer and happier lives.

Last week *The Fayetteville Observer* ran an article detailing how many of the Pounds in the various counties receive their support. It appeared from this article that many counties receive substantial community support.

The community support in Hoke County is atrocious.

Apparently most people could care less about the plight of abandoned animals. For instance, Sheryl and Jack McGinnis, co-founders of the Hoke/Raeford Humane Society and the two mainly responsible for getting the new dog pound built, placed containers in the A&P and Food Lion Stores asking for donations of animal food.

Upon checking the containers after they had been in these stores for several days, it appears that no more than two or three people have bothered to donate food.

Where is the "community support" in Raeford?

The containers in both stores are located at the exits of the stores.

What is needed, primarily, is good quality dry dog food, dog biscuits and dry cat food such as Tender Vittles and Cat Chow, and so forth.

Speaking of the lack of community support, recently the huge and successful Burlington Industries of Raeford was contacted and asked to contribute to the Hoke/Raeford Humane Society.

They politely responded that they would not make a contribution, not even \$50! A prime example of the lack of community support in Raeford!

(See LETTERS, page 3A)

Conventions are akin to national medicine shows

By Lucien Coleman

Going out to vote in the Texas primaries recently reminded me that the great American medicine show is coming to town this summer. I'm speaking of the national political conventions, of course. The greatest entertainment event of the season.

Yes, I know that's not a very respectable way to speak of such important political events. But, on the other hand, how long has it been since the national political conventions tried to be respectable?

To the casual observer, the folks at political conventions bear a striking resemblance to the crowds at professional football games. Walking around with a paper cup in one hand and a sign on a stick in the other. Yelling for the hometown team, booing the opposition, doing little victory dances when the right side scores a point.

These events are encumbered with time-honored (also, time-wasting) traditions that don't do a

Things That Matter

lot for their creditability as serious enterprises. Like those long-winded chamber-of-commerce advertisements we have to listen to when delegates cast their votes.

You know what I mean: "Mr. Chairman, the great state of so-and-so, that tourist's paradise with its majestic mountain ranges and verdant woodlands, the industrialist's mecca with its abundance of natural resources and eager pools of willing labor, the home of great patriots past and present (not to speak of our superstar athletes), the land of the free and the home of the brave, casts its votes for the next president of the United States of America..."

The oratorical sky-rocketry at national conventions is the best part of the show. Inspired by the sound of their own voices, the speakers sometime scale new pinnacles of rhetorical overstatement.

Even after these many years, I

remember the stirring words with which Governor Frank Clements concluded a keynote address at the Democratic convention: "Precious Lord, take our hand, and lead us on!"

So be it, Lord. So be it.

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Blackout draws long lines of powerless customers

By Warren Johnston

The other morning the lights went out in Raeford, and the whole place fell apart.

Air conditioners screeched to a halt. Refrigerators stopped purring, and for a brief moment the city was silent.

Those who had never experienced a financial power outage quickly grabbed their check books and ran out the door, swearing that they were sure the latest bill had been paid. "How dare they turn off my power. I've never been late with a bill before," they said, pointing their Mercedes toward the nearby utility office.

Others who were no strangers to economic adversity, struggled with the bent door on the '65 Chevrolet, sheepishly admitting that it was only a matter of time. "Gee, they always gave me 60 days before," they said.

Long lines formed at the electric company office, and those without power waited for the doors to open. Many had not seen each other since 1974. They found it easy to renew acquaintances, and chatted amiably about the Administration's latest economic speech.

Bur ar alarms, set off by the power cut, wailed throughout the area. Well-shocked winos, hearing the sirens, scurried from their clubhouse in the alleyways and scanned the horizon for enemy bombers. "This is it, boys. We're back in the Big One," a wino said.

"Yeah, nothing like a good war to get things moving again," another added.

The line at the utility office had grown to more than a mile long, and seeing this Red Cross workers began to gather. They dispensed

The Puppy Papers

coffee and cigarettes. The diligent workers noted as they passed among the powerless that if it wasn't for the United Way, there would be no coffee or cigarettes to pass out.

It began to rain, but no one minded because they all had gardens and rain had been scarce this year.

Many did not have umbrellas. However, a nearby funeral parlor came to the rescue by erecting tents bearing the slogan, "When you've got to rest, we're the best," and the crowd was able to get out of the rain.

A group of passing musicians set up their instruments under one tent and began to entertain the masses as they waited patiently for the utility officials to arrive and open the office.

Several glad-handing politicians, who were themselves without power, passed among the waiting bill payers handing out rusted WIN buttons and suggesting that perhaps a compromise could be reached with the utility company. "Maybe we could pay a little now, and the rest later," they said.

Before long, tourists who had not had their power interrupted, and were looking for action because the rain had driven them off of the golf course, saw the carnival atmosphere and joined the gathering. They eagerly paid for their coffee and cigarettes, remarking how lucky the year-round residents were to be able to get theirs free.

"You people who live here sure have it made," the tourists said, shaking their fingers in the face of the waiting residents. "You don't know how tough it is out there in the real world. You're insulated from all the bad economic news."

The Red Cross workers saw that the tourists had joined the waiting residents and decided to raise the price of coffee but just while it was raining. The higher price would cover expenses and the increase would be a good source of revenue for United Way, they reasoned.

The band, also noting the mingling tourists, immediately set out tip cups and refused to play unless the coffers jingled. After all, they needed the money to get their power restored. "If it wasn't for the tourists, we couldn't live in the style to which we have grown accustomed," the musicians said.

The utility officials arrived soon to open the office. They were running a little behind schedule because of a lengthy business breakfast. The meeting had been delayed by a rousing discussion on the effects of the company's latest rate hike.

"The increase will be absorbed by the consumer," one official had said. "After all, everybody knows that the cost of power is going up."

Soon the crowd learned that the utility company had not pulled the plug for non-payment of bills. There had been a foul up in communication, and the power had been only temporarily diverted away from the town.

The rain soon stopped, and the tourists returned to the golf course.

And with power restored, everyone else went home, relieved that it had all been a mistake, and glad that things were back to normal.

The utility officials were so pleased with the turnout of powerless bill payers and the profits from the morning's affairs, they had vowed to hold a similar black out the following month.