

Viewpoints

Recruiter should attend to county improvements

Hoke County officials are getting close to implementing a plan to hire an industry recruiter who will scour the countryside for new firms to locate here.

However, the present scheme may require the new county salesman to hit the streets with an almost empty display case and little to show his prospective customers.

Under the plan, resources of the Chamber of Commerce, the City of Raeford and Hoke County would be combined to hire the industry hunter and provide him with a budget to bring back what this community needs: more jobs, more residents and more tax dollars.

With a new industry or two, we could have better schools and continue to keep up with the spiraling cost of providing services, county officials reason.

Even a trained professional, no matter how good he is at his job, would have a difficult time selling the "promise" of this county to national firms, considering the competition we have from other North Carolina counties and from other states.

Here is the scenario:

- The Hoke County recruiter sits in the waiting room of a Fortune 500 company, when, in walk salesmen from:
 - *Scotland County offering an airport large enough to land commercial jets surrounded by an industrial park with sewer and water, a college in Laurinburg, good highway access, rail service, motels, good schools, adequate restaurants and friendly residents.
 - *Cumberland County touting countywide telephone service, a top technical school, easy access to I-95, good shopping, restaurants, hotels, a new industrial park with sewer and water, a commercial airport, a revitalized downtown and two colleges.
 - *Moore County showing off numerous golf courses, hotels and restaurants, a commercial airport, good highway and rail access, good schools, a community college, abundant shopping and plush residential areas.
 - *The Triangle area, Lee County, the Greenville-Spartanburg area of South Carolina, the Dekalb-Peachtree Industrial area near Atlanta, Dallas and Houston, all with slick presentation and bags bulging with amenities.

-The Hoke County representative opens his display case, and inside he finds inexpensive land prices, high unemployment, a sewer system which is under the suspicious eye of the state, and friendly residents. He also sees an eroding downtown, a spotty school system on the way up, no college, no four lane highway, an airport beset by problems, no countywide telephone system, no accommodations for visitors, limited places to eat, no theatres, no bowling alleys, limited shopping, no countywide zoning and no industrial park with full utilities.

-The Fortune 500 company peeks in the Hoke County bag, laughs and goes off for lunch in the Triangle area, for cocktails in Atlanta and dinner in Dallas.

We are not suggesting that Hoke County could one day compete with the Triangle, Greenville-Spartanburg or Atlanta for industry, nor are we suggesting that this county should not make an effort to obtain new businesses.

Our league of competition is with the surrounding counties and with comparable rural areas in other states. If we are prepared, we will be able to land a few new firms.

We must first give our salesman reasonably obtained amenities to sell, like a good school system, a community college, four lane highway access, zoning, sewer, water and a higher standard of living.

In the past few years, Hoke County has suffered from a lack of leadership.

Currently, elected officials seem to barely have enough time to conduct the duties of office and to still maintain personal livelihoods. What this county now needs is an aggressive leader with time.

Although citizen groups are beginning to emerge and to take positive steps to improve this county's bag of lures, their efforts are not unified.

Before we send a recruiter on the road to sell Hoke County, we should make it that person's responsibility to spearhead the home improvement effort.

It should be the industrial recruiter's job to motivate and coordinate citizen groups to work on revitalizing downtown, obtaining a college, four-laning US Highway 401 and establishing countywide telephone service.

At the same time, a recruiter should also be working to obtain a site for an industrial park and to find funds to provide adequate sewage and water service to the location.

The recruiter's office could also keep tabs on a county planner and could campaign for countywide zoning.

In addition, the industry hunter could motivate the Board of Education to implement school improvements and to see that our schools compare favorably with those in surrounding counties.

Industry hunting is a difficult business, but once we begin showing signs of meeting the needs of this community, Hoke County's positive assets, like having pleasant surroundings, low crime, inexpensive real estate prices and friendly neighbors, will put us ahead of our competition.

In the business of industry hunting, Hoke County has got the steak; we just need to add the sizzle and a rich aroma.

Letters To The Editor

Parents would support a better school system

To the Editor:

In response to the recent article written by Ed Miller titled "PUPIL ATTENDANCE BOTHERS COUNTY SCHOOL OFFICIALS."

I find it difficult to believe our Superintendent was really surprised by the number of students who did not show up for school on Wednesday August 29. I do want my children in school for the required 180 days but with a little more thought, school could have been postponed until after Labor Day as it was in Cumberland County and St. Pauls schools. I feel sure this would have eliminated a lot of the problems this county had with children not reporting on the first day of school.

As for our students crossing county lines to attend school. Maybe most of the parents of these children saw the report on WRAL TV 5. According to this report, Hoke County spends only \$250 per student per year. This was compared to other counties that spend over \$800. Can you realistically blame parents for wanting to send their children to another county?

I am not sure what the solution to this problem is, but I would think a person who would qualify for the position of Superintendent of Hoke County Schools would be able to provide us with some answers. I feel sure the parents would stand behind any improvements that could be suggested.

Thank you,
Linda Blankenship

of some fine, black talented youth in the Hoke area.

School officials, parents or senior guardians should recognize, take notice of such good potential among today's youth, and encourage them.

Charles Andrews, an ROTC student, is a potential leader and a fine young man.

I say to the elders and to the young: when you see good talent, please encourage it.

Your young "Saturday Night Breakers" of today may very well be the nation's "Michael Jacksons" of tomorrow.

Remember: "A talent is a terrible thing to waste."

Thank you sincerely,
Daniel Edwards
Pine Ridge, Box 301
Bladenboro, N.C.

Foreign policy can be compared to throwing dice

Dear Editor:

One of the issues in the Presidential race, if there are any other than who can get televised the oftenest with the biggest crowds with the most flags, is supposed to be foreign policy — which candidate is better equipped to handle it.

I have never understood foreign policy or what it's for. For the most part it looks like trying to settle a family squabble next door, something most people had rather dodge if they know what's good for them.

Some prospective candidates, looking ahead to a race, visit a lot of foreign countries to prepare themselves to be practical to handle foreign affairs.

Also, it's hard for countries to understand each other's foreign policy when they don't understand their own. I doubt if there are 10 voters out of 75 million or 2 congressmen out of 435 who know what our foreign policy is right now, and none who know what it'll be tomorrow. Count me among those who don't know what it was yesterday.

Trying to establish a foreign policy with the squabbling shape the world's in today is like a farmer's trying to plan next year's farming operations on a normal year, when every farmer knows there never has been a normal year. The weather, like nations, operates in a very haphazard pattern. How does anybody know when the next uprising is going to break out in Central America or a hail from storm in Hoke County?

Yours faithfully,
J.A.

"Y'know every year about this time I get an uncontrollable urge to go back to Florida."

I wonder what causes that?"



Madilyn

School days evoke old time memories

The sight of children wending their way home after a hard day at the neighborhood brain factory sends me on a nostalgia trip.

My thoughts go skittering back over the years to the brick building in Lepanto, Arkansas, where I embarked on my educational pilgrimage 47 years ago.

Everybody called it "the school." Not "high school," or "middle school," or "elementary school." No need to make such fine distinctions. There was only one school. Scared first-graders and high-and-mighty seniors went through the same portals every day.

The official title for the teachers, among us young scholars, was "Old Lady." Even if Miss Smith happened to be just 27 years old, she was still "Old Lady Smith" to us. The only male teacher I can remember was the school coach, who handled basketball, track, baseball, and taught square dancing on the side.

The principal was a man, too. A pretty scary one. Being sent to see the principal was the ultimate punishment for offenders whose sinful natures couldn't be cured any other way. It was common knowledge among us grade-



Lucien Coleman

Things That Matter

schoolers that you got killed, or worse, if you ever had to go to the principal's office.

We had two recesses, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. This was the favorite time of day, for teachers and pupils. The playground surrounding the school was sort of a giant dust bowl, since no grass grew there. It was really much better that way. Much more fun.

For example, a good soaking rain would always leave a huge mudhole on the east side of the school ground; and it was great sport to see who could ride a bicycle all the way through the mud without falling over. We didn't always succeed.

We didn't have computers, videorecorders, or electronic calculators. But we also didn't have drugs, alcohol, or cigarettes on the school grounds. And we did learn to spell pretty good.

Hoke student's talent should be recognized

To the Editor:

Most all of us are familiar with the maxim: "A mind is a terrible thing to waste." That is true! Buff! What is "mind?" In short: a "mind" is that which develops into love, understanding, spiritual, and intellectual capabilities. But! Talent also develops from "mind."

So! Let us say: "A talent is a terrible thing to waste."

I do sincerely congratulate Charles Andrews, of the Hollywood-Robbin Heights area of Raeford, for his great talented ability for break-dancing, "rapping" and other intellectual-artistic abilities.

Mr. Andrews has great potential and talent.

Mr. Andrews, better known as "Cool C," a black high school student of Raeford, is a great example

Roof work brings aches, pains

As part of the overall enrichment program, members of the Hoke County Culture Club recently traveled to Holden Beach to inspect the damage from Hurricane Diana.

We had been offered a free place to stay for the weekend, and most of the members felt the two-day visit would give us ample time to get a close look at the havoc wreaked on the area by the high winds of the storm.

The ride down was pleasant. Everyone was in good voice as we rolled along in the old Bluebird. In fact we did such a good job on "Over There" that Sadie Louise, who was leading the singing, made us go through it three times.

There was quite a bit of damage to the roof of the place where we were staying, and rain was expected the next day. Our host, who is an aspiring member of the club's inner circle, informed us that if we did not make repairs, we might all be sleeping on mattresses which were reminiscent of early childhood.

Although I did not remember my own bedwetting experiences, I did recall the time Little Ralph went in his sleeping bag during a backyard campout, and I did not want any part of spending a night in the same sort of mess. I got up early, ready to patch the roof.

After several cups of coffee, a club rendition of "The Wakeup Song" and an international breakfast featuring bagels and cream cheese, we were ready to work. It was 6 a.m.

Once on the roof, Sadie Louise broke into a French verse of "Brother John" and was just getting into a good loud "dormez-vous" when the neighbors started complaining.

"Well, he just doesn't know fine music when he hears it," she said, shortly after one neighbor suggested she do her gargling somewhere else.

It wasn't long before we all realized that Sadie Louise would be more useful on the ground. We sent her off to conduct a geological survey of the storm damage on the beach.

When we got to working on the roof we found that the hurricane had not blown off many shingles, but that much of the damage had been caused by an earlier repair job done by the "Jackleg Roofers," who turned out to be a rock and roll group from Perth Amboy, New Jersey.



Warren Johnston

The Puppy Papers

Following a storm several years ago, our host had seen the name on the side of their van and had hired them to fix the roof.

The band members kept insisting that they had only come to the beach to play for a bar mitzvah and that they knew nothing about roofing, but their New Jersey accents were so thick that our host, who hails from the Sandhills, could not understand them.

"I just thought they were foreigners," he said, as we pried off the pieces of sheet music which had been tarred down for shingles during the earlier repair.

We finished the job in about six hours. Although there were only 12 shingles to replace, the work was slowed when we found the first sheet of "Rock Around the Clock" under a layer of tar. Of course, we had to sing it, which was difficult because some of the words were smeared black.

Later in the day after a number of rounds of cooling refreshments and a few comments like: "It doesn't get any better than this," we decided to go into the roofing business to raise money for future Culture Club events.

The next day, our muscles ached and our skinned hands hurt. Sadie Louise gave her report on the beach erosion. We enjoyed a piece of homemade Boston Cream Pie. A vote was taken, and we decided to charge \$1,000 a shingle. We hoped no one would hire us.

"I think I had rather sleep on a wet mattress, than have to listen to y'all complain about your aches and pains," Sadie Louise added sympathically.

We had a good time at Holden Beach, but it was nice to pile back in the old Bluebird and to head for home, even if we did have to sing "When Johnny Comes Marching Home Again" six times and the Culture Club theme song twice.

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