

The News-Journal

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Chamber launches plan, eyeing depot as office

By Ed Miller

After six months of working behind the scenes, members of the Raeford-Hoke Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors launched active plans Tuesday morning to "start moving" Hoke County forward.

In the next few weeks, the Chamber will move toward renovating the old Aberdeen-Rockfish Railroad Depot on Main Street in Raeford to be used as an office and will hire a fulltime executive secretary.

Since the death of former Director Earl N. Fowler in May, the Chamber board has been struggling with reorganizational problems and attempting to work with city and county governments to establish an industrial development board.

In the past, about \$16,000 of the Chamber's annual budget came from Raeford and Hoke County to be used for industrial development.

With the reorganization, the Chamber will no longer be able to use that money and must now rely on fundraisers and membership drives to keep going.

In order for the Chamber to move in the depot building, the railroad must give the building to the group and renovation funds must be found.

Although the railway company still has to decide to donate the depot, plans are being made to find funds for the renovations.

State Rep. Daniel H. DeVane told the Executive Board he would do all he can to get state "pork barrel" money to fund the renovation of the building.

"I'll pull any strings I see," DeVane said.

Also during the meeting, the board voted to hire a fulltime executive secretary to man the Chamber office and to work on Chamber projects.

A special committee charged with writing a job description for and hiring the secretary was in an apparent quandary as to whether to find a fulltime person or someone part-time, according to Committeeman Tom Howell.

There may not be enough money in the chamber's budget to hire a person full-time, Howell said.

According to Howell, the chamber will be getting from

\$10,000 to \$11,000 in revenue from membership dues.

The initial idea was to hire the person to work 20 hours per week and let the hours increase as responsibilities grew, said Howell.

"The money is the only thing holding us back from hiring a 40 hour per week employee," Howell said.

"She should be doing industrial development until a developer is hired," said DeVane.

If she is working for industrial development, city and county funds can be used to pay her salary, DeVane said.

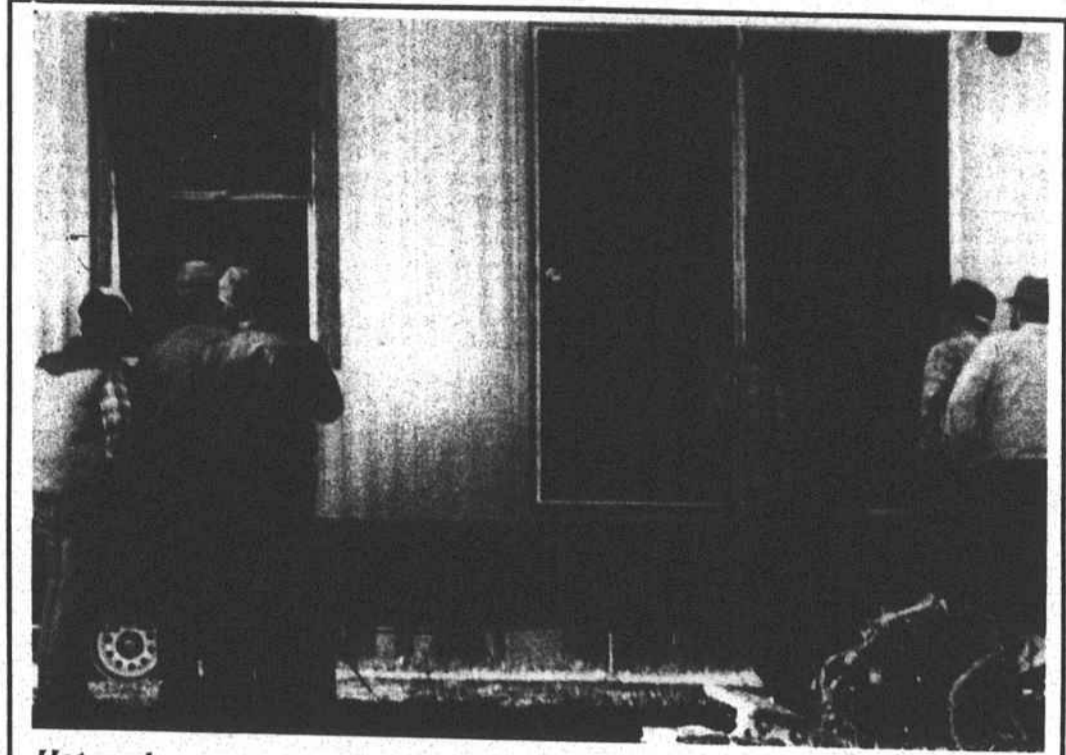
By the end of the month or the first of the year, there will be a secretary in the office, Howell said.

According to acting Chamber Manager Steve Parker, the new secretary will have to learn the job and how to work with the developer.

There is already a month's work to do just in rearranging files, said Board Member Gerald Wright.

Other discussion in the meeting centered around a scheduled

(See CHAMBER, page 2A)



Hot week

There were five grass fires and at least five structure fires last week in Hoke County. Some of the fires are attributed to the extremely dry conditions and others to carelessness with heating fixtures. This trailer fire happened Monday at Harmony Heights Mobile Home Park and was fought by Puppy Creek Fire Department. The trailer was the home of Ricky

Johnson, said a fireman on the scene. Johnson was away from the dwelling when the fire struck. According to firemen investigating the blaze, a curtain on one side of the mobile home caught fire and flames rolled across the ceiling catching curtains on the other side of the home on fire. Much of the dwelling was lost as were many of the family's possessions.

DSS facing penalties for burdensome AFDC load

By Ed Miller

Case workers in the Department of Social Services' (DSS) Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program are being overworked and as a result the local agency may be facing fines, the Hoke County DSS Board members were told Monday.

Because of the overload, the local DSS office may have to pay penalty fees to applicants, AFDC Supervisor Mary Barefoot said.

About 48 cases must be finished in November, or DSS would have to pay the fees, Barefoot said.

According to DSS Director Ken Witherspoon, the \$50 penalties would have to come out of county funds if needed.

Witherspoon added that his department has had to pay no penalties because of the dedication of his staff, but "we flirt with it everyday."

He is not sure how long he can

keep pushing his staff, Witherspoon said.

"One of my workers took some cases home over Thanksgiving. She said that was the only way to keep up," said Barefoot.

"Workers are routinely taking work home," Witherspoon said.

Barefoot said the department has 20 days to complete an application for families who need aid.

In many cases, an application will be made, and the correct or

sufficient information will not be given by the applicant.

Depending on circumstances, DSS could be held responsible for not having the application completed, Barefoot said.

Not only are the number of families needing aid increasing, but the applications that must be filed are becoming more complex.

With some new changes that are coming up with the first of the

year, the work load will be heavier, she said.

There were some changes made in the last legislative session that were not in the hands of DSS directors and case workers until the end of October.

These changes were supposed to be implemented on October 1 and had to be made retroactive, Witherspoon said.

Just catching up on those regulations has put a great strain on case

workers, said Barefoot.

According to the supervisor, every piece of personal information presented to a case worker must be verified and in many cases, verification is not easy to come by.

Home visits must be performed and insurance policies, alleged fathers, doctors and lawyers must be checked with, said Barefoot.

Sometimes the verification process is a great strain on case workers, said Barefoot. (See DSS, page 2A)

Around Town

By Sam Morris

The weather has been cold for the past week and for the folks who get up early in the morning, they have been seeing a heavy frost.

According to the forecast, it will warm up and we will get some much needed rain during the week.

Don't forget the Junior Woman's Club Christmas Home Tour and Craft Show Sunday, Dec. 2 from 2-6 p.m. The ladies have selected five area homes to tour and will have plenty of craftsmen exhibiting their crafts at the Civic Center.

I received the following letter last week and it is self-explanatory.

Dear Sam,

It's been really exciting to learn that readers of *The News-Journal* do care about the Hoke Historical Association. Checks have come in from Iris Davis of Fayetteville, Rebecca B. Tolar of Kinston and Thomas N. McLaughlin of Charlotte, in addition to our fine Hoke County folks - you, Caroline Parker, Eleanor Gentry and Warren Johnston. The U.D.C. has gone on record as a supporting organization.

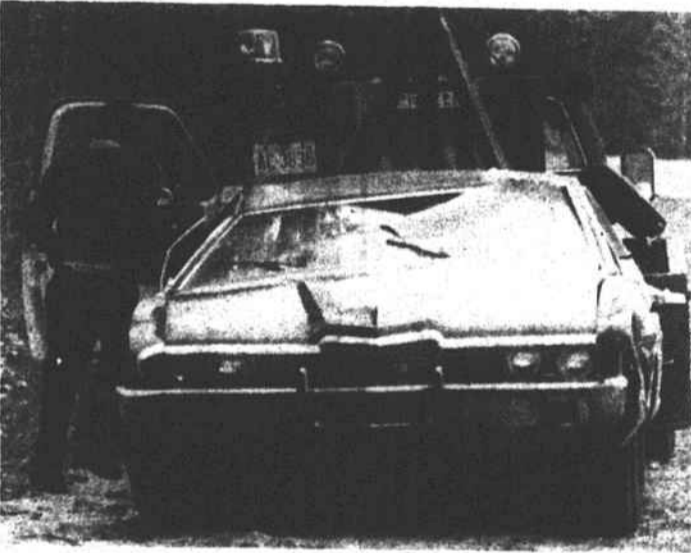
I am encouraged and excited. Thanks for spreading the word.

Sincerely,
Kay

The letter was from Kay Thomas. If you haven't made a contribution to the association, do so today. Send your check for \$10 to Kay Thomas, P.O. Box 426, Raeford, N.C. 28376.

Funds may be needed at any time now to start a worthwhile project.

It seems that most folks these days have some fault to find with the postal system or the way that the mail is being handled. Of (See AROUND, page 3A)



The removal

An area towing company takes away the car driven by James Tart. Tart, the fourth person to lose his life on Hoke County highways this year, was apparently travelling at a high rate of speed on State Highway 1104 when his car left the road and overturned. The crash happened at 11:25 a.m., Tuesday. State Troopers J.W. Weston and R.D. Jacobs investigated the wreck.

Crash kills Scotland man

By Ed Miller

A Laurinburg man became the fourth traffic victim to die on Hoke County roads in 1984 after the car he was driving overturned Tuesday morning.

James Belton Tart, 55, was travelling at "an excessive rate of speed" when his car, a 1972 Ford, ran off the right side of the road and overturned, according to investigating State Trooper J.W. Weston.

The crash happened at 11:25 a.m.

Tart was travelling southwest on State Road 1104 near the Scotland County line when the incident occurred.

Dr. Riley M. Jordan pronounced Tart dead on the scene, Weston said.

Tart lived at 1004 Park Street in Laurinburg.

According to Weston, the car he was driving belonged to his wife.

There were 181-foot skid marks at the scene and another mark along the dirt shoulder of the road that measured 140 feet, Weston said.

State Trooper Ronnie Jacobs, from Scotland County, assisted Weston in investigating the accident.

Hoke and Scotland County Rescue Squads and ambulance services responded to the emergency, Weston said.

Tart was the third person to be killed on a road out in the county this year, according to Weston who added that there has been one fatality within the Raeford city limits.

The last Hoke County fatality occurred on U.S Highway 401 in September.

EAP program working for schools

By Ed Miller

After a year of practice, Hoke County school officials say the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is doing its job.

Through EAP, teachers and employees of the Hoke County School system can get private help for many emotional and mental problems free of charge.

The program will be beginning its second year about December 1 and is doing well at helping some school employees conquer their problems, according to Hoke County Schools Personnel Director Gloria Williams.

The program, administered by Sandhills Mental Health, is available for the asking to any employee of the school system and the initial consultation is free, Williams said.

An employee is entitled to one free consultation per immediate family member, she said.

If an employee has a problem, all they must do is go to the mental health clinic in Raeford or where ever they choose.

There, they will receive guidance as to where to proceed.

Not all problems are handled by

mental health. Many are referred to other, better equipped agencies, said Williams.

"Job security and promotional opportunities will not be jeopardized by seeking assistance through the program," according to the original policy passed by the Hoke County Board of Education.

That pledge was emphatically endorsed by Williams.

"The EAP is not used to get rid of teachers," she said.

Williams explained that when the Board of Education offices receive bills charged by EAP services, they only receive a number.

There are no names associated with the numbers, and the program is totally anonymous.

Once the initial consultation is over and a recommendation is made, there are "no obligations for employees," said Williams.

It is up to the employee as to whether they follow the advice or recommendations given them, she said.

According to Williams, on rare occasion, a supervisor can recommend that an employee go in for a consultation.

However, she stressed, a super-

visor will only make a recommendation. They will not insist on an employee seeking the assistance.

There have been many teachers and other school employees that have already used the service, Williams said.

She added that there have only been two supervisor recommended cases in the first year of the program.

There have been teachers who used the program in finding assistance to stop smoking.

Another teacher, one from Hoke High, told Williams that people did not know how much help a program such as the one here could be until thousands of personal dollars had to be spent for counseling.

The EAP is not recommended for use unless needed, said Williams.

"It is there as a service."

"If you want to use it, it's there. If you don't want it, leave it," she said.

"It's like going to the grocery store. You don't buy everything on the shelf," Williams said.

Cameron Heights Center visitor dines on chicken, spends night

When Nina Morrissey opened the Cameron Heights Center last Monday, she did not expect to find someone asleep on the couch.

As she entered, the man awoke and was questioned as to what he was doing there, according to Hoke County Sheriff's reports.

The man, who said another man let him into the building to sleep, wrote his name down as Albert Davis Chavis. He left the building before Morrissey called the Sheriff's Department, according to Chief Deputy Alex Norton. Morrissey opened the building at

about 8:30 a.m. and found Chavis, but did not call Norton until about 9 a.m. because the telephone was locked in a cabinet, reports say.

A check run on the name given Morrissey revealed that there is no such person as Albert Davis Chavis, Norton said.

Whoever the man was who slept in the center, or whoever it was that let him in, if anyone, removed a chicken from the refrigerator, cooked and ate it, reports say.

In an unrelated incident, two 10-year-old boys are suspected of

vandalizing a house near the home of one of the boys.

Patricia Beavers reported the incident on November 18.

Upon investigation, deputies found rocks and bottles inside the house which had apparently been thrown through the windows, reports say.

Further investigation revealed tennis shoe tracks leading to the home of one of the suspects, according to reports.

Beavers is asking the children to make restitution for damages and (See VISITOR, page 2A)