

Viewpoints

Hoke sales dollars slipping over line

Recently released sales tax figures from the North Carolina Department of Revenue were good news for Hoke County and the City of Raeford, but the numbers should alert local merchants to the plaguing problem of dollars being spent outside the county.

Although county merchants increased sales during the last fiscal year by more than \$2.9 million, probably half of this county's potential spending dollars are still drifting to competitors in surrounding counties.

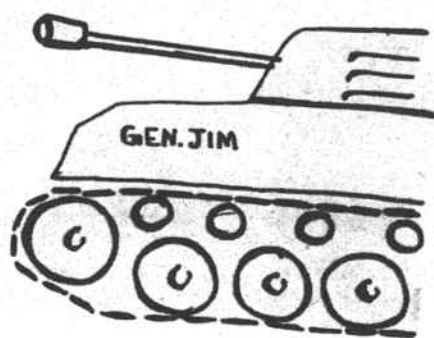
Retail sales in Hoke County during the year were \$50.35 million, and each resident spent about \$2,281 with local merchants.

Moore, Robeson and Cumberland counties have per capita sales twice that of Hoke County. Scotland County's per resident sales are over one and a half times higher than Hoke's.

A comparison with other counties with similar populations to Hoke's also show much higher per capita and gross retail sales.

For example, Montgomery County, which has 700 more residents than Hoke County, retail sales and per capita sales are almost twice as much.

Oh, let's just say it belongs to a friend. Now let's get back to our discussion on widening US 401...



Past customs worth considering for future holiday celebrations

Somewhere I read about an interesting custom practiced by our Pilgrim ancestors. They would put five grains of corn on each empty plate before the Thanksgiving dinner was served.

When the children asked about this, their parents explained that their forefathers had at one time found themselves in such dire circumstances that each person was limited to just five grains of corn to eat each day.

No wonder there was such a note of thankful joy in Governor William Bradford's first Thanksgiving Proclamation:

"Inasmuch as the great Father has given us this year an abundant harvest of Indian corn, wheat, peas, beans, squashes, and garden vegetables, and has made the forests to abound with game and the sea with fish and clams, and inasmuch as he has protected us from the ravages of the savages, has spared us from the ravages of the savages, has spared us from

Lucien Coleman

Things That Matter

pestilence and disease, has granted us freedom to worship God according to the dictates of our own conscience; now I, your magistrate, do proclaim that...

That was quite a contrast to a ration of five grains of corn per day. But that is precisely why the spirit of thanksgiving was so genuine among those first Americans. Their blessings stood out in sharp relief against the destitution of the previous three years.

No one relishes a dipper of cool water quite so much as a field hand who has worked under a hot sun all day.

No one is more thankful for dry

clothing and a crackling fire than the person who was caught outside in a cold, winter rain.

It's difficult for modern Americans to recapture the spirit of that first Thanksgiving, living, as we do, in an environment which holds the solution to every problem and the answer to every need.

Hunger? In a land where supermarkets abound and short order food can be had in every neighborhood?

Savages? If the local police can't take care of the problem, we can always turn to our multi-billion dollar defense establishment for protection.

Diseases? Just name your specialist. We've got it.

Thanksgiving comes hard to those who are surfeited with plenty. Maybe that's why, in the absence of an authentic festival of thanks, we've had to invent substitutes--parades, paper turkeys, athletic contests, TV specials and the like.

nothing to do while I was waiting for my order to arrive by special courier, so I called the company. They gave me another number. I ended up talking to the souse meat chef of the Lewis Sausage Factory in Burgaw.

"We used to use the heads and feet, but now we just put in the pork lips and tongues, a little salt, pepper and vinegar. Pour it up and refrigerate it," the chef said, noting that most people eat souse meat with hot sauce on it.

"It's good. The hot sauce makes it better," he said. Although the chef was very affable, my taste buds were still not chanting "souse, souse" like I imagined the crazed associates of the representative had been doing at the political rally.

I needed a local source, but when I asked, most everyone turned a strange shade of green.

"Souse Meat! Do you know what they put in that stuff?" one person shouted, grabbing his mouth and running for the door.

I consulted a facsimile of the 1847 edition of *Carolina Housewife* by Sarah Rutledge.

Under Hogs Head Cheese, which is what they call souse meat in South Carolina, she had this recipe:

"Take the faces of the hog and boil them until the bone be quite



Warren Johnston

The Puppy Papers



income, residents spend 77% of their personal income with local merchants.

The figures indicate a trend of local shoppers being lured away from Hoke County merchants. They also show something needs to be done to make the hometown store more attractive.

Greater retail sales should be the concern of, not only the merchants who will benefit directly, but also the city and county governments, which are losing tax dollars.

Hoke County is a poor county, but it could be richer by millions if local merchants re-double their efforts to meet the competition from across the line. We also suggest that the Chamber of Commerce, Hoke County and Raeford officials join in the effort.

With higher retail sales in Hoke County, the quality of life here would be improved, because there are enough dollars slipping away to put a big dent in the standard of living.

In fact, there is enough Hoke County money going elsewhere to cover the cost of a major public and private campaign to bring dollars back.

After all, \$30 million in retail sales could mean more employment, more tax dollars and more money in the local economy than several new industries.

If this county is going to prosper, the return of the sales dollars have to be added to the list of priorities.

Democratic Party needs new, young leadership



Looking On

Raz Autry

Representatives.

Ted Kennedy wants all Democrats to get his blessings before they run for office. Most of those seeking office flock to him like flies to a cow. They don't have enough sense to know Kennedy couldn't win in the south if he was the only one on the ballot. No Democrat has occupied the White House in more years than most of them can remember without carrying the south.

The present leadership in the Democratic party on the national level has squashed all attempts of young, eager men and women to assume leadership rolls. Anyone doubting the above statement didn't read the account in the newspapers of Dec. 1 of Tip O'Neal asking those who wanted to challenge him for the speakership post to step aside. Like whipped animals, they did so.

On the state level, in North Carolina, the same is true of our party. Those in control have been there too long.

Ramsey, Royal and Hardison act as if they own the place. They have a solution for all problems for the state. The very problem that exists which they could remedy they never see. To step down from their power post is asking too much.

The solution for all of our elected officials might be one six-year term. If this came into being, most of them wouldn't have time to get caught up in their own self importance. Perhaps they would work for the good of the nation and North Carolina.

How is the party to move back to center? I don't know. The

answer would have to come from collective heads. I would suggest they be fresh heads. The old ones have molded. There are some things I do know. A personal experience will say it all.

I was particularly fond of the school board which hired me as the principal of Hoke County High School and later as the superintendent. When I got on a tangent which was contrary to their thinking, they always said:

"Raz you aren't listening. The only voice you hear is your own."

The same analogy could be applied to our party. The leadership isn't listening, the only voice they hear is their own.

Being guilty of repeating myself, I say once again it will take new leadership to get the party back to center.

Different voices will have to speak and listen to the still voice of those who pay the bills when they say we have had enough.

It was evident. No one listened in the party when they whispered before the last election. Instead of letting their fingers do the talking, their pencil did the talking, and it was loud and clear.

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Souse meat sets them running for door

A local state representative recently gave a "friend" a slab of souse meat.

"Makes my mouth water to think about it. It's a real culinary delicacy. You put a little hot sauce on it and pour vinegar over it to kill the taste. There is nothing like it. Um, um, um," the representative said to the "friend."

The friend, who was quite sure the gift would kill him, gave the souse meat to "his" cat. The cat promptly packed a small suitcase and was last seen on US 401 flagging down a diesel for a ride.

"Ever try any souse meat?" the representative asked me later.

"It's really good, but it is like the law. You don't want to see it made."

I grew up in Atlanta. My mother could cook a fine tuna casserole, and she knew how to stretch a can of Spam six ways for three meals a week, but souse meat was not on the menu at our house.

"People eat it like an appetizer," the representative said.

I decided that before I added it to my list of "really great" things to eat, that I would investigate the making of souse meat.

The representative had eaten souse meat at a political rally in a nearby county. He liked it, and decided to peddle some he found for sale at a local grocery to his friends back home.

"I don't understand it. Everybody at the rally liked it," the representative said.

I did not want to be like the representative's other friends. "What the heck. You only go around once. I'll try it," I said.

I called the grocer, ordered a slab and inquired about its origin.

The grocer did not know about making it, but he did give me the name of an out-of-town firm where he got the souse meat. I had

loose, and can be taken out without trouble; pick them all well out; take the skin and lay them on a coarse cloth in a deep dish, the outside of the skin next to the cloth, in the same manner as you would put paste to make an apple dumpling. This done, season the faces well, as you would do sausage; put it (the meat) upon the skin, of which you must have some to lay over the top; then tie it up as for a dumpling, not too tight; put it into a press or under a heavy weight for two days, when it will be fit for use."

In the North Carolina Pork Producers Association's *Wonderful World of Pork Cookery*, the recipe was a little more graphic:

"Souse--Reserve the head, feet and ears of one hog; remove eyes and brain; split the head in half; wash and scrape...."

I was interrupted by the arrival of my order of souse meat from the local grocery. I noticed my skin had a rather strange green tint. I had a strong urge to run for the door.

"Here's your souse meat," the courier said, dropping a package on my desk as he exited the room.

I did not open the package. It remained on my desk. That day, as people dropped by, I offered them a taste of my souse meat.

"Souse Meat! Oh, no, no thank you. But I love it," they said, backing out of my office.

That night, after considerable liquid consolation, I tried the souse meat.

It was pretty good, especially with hot sauce on it. I offered some to my wife.

"Souse Meat! Are you crazy? Do you know what they make that stuff out of?" she said, turning slightly green.

I wanted to give the leftovers to the dog, but I was afraid he might pack a small suitcase and join the cat on the highway.