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Telephone service battle taking shape

Commission sees rough fight ahead, high rates

By Ed Miller

A move by local officials to get the Fayetteville telephone exchange extended to include Hoke County may meet with opposition from the North Carolina Utilities Commission, a spokesman said Tuesday.

According to Hugh Gerringer, Public Staff Communications Engineer for the Utilities Commission, it is unlikely that the extension of service can be made unless there is some extensive polling among telephone subscribers in Fayetteville and Raeford areas.

Gerringer also noted that telephone rates would suffer large increases in the coverage area if the extension is granted.

"Based on Carolina Telephone's matrix," Raeford phone subscriber's bills may increase by \$4.52 per month for residential service and \$10.78 for businesses, said Gerringer.

Also, according to Gerringer, Fayetteville rates could increase as much as \$1.52 for private phones and \$3.64 for business phones.

Gerringer added, however, that it was possible the extra costs of the service could be incorporated into the system with little increases in either city.

The Utilities Commission may be reluctant to do that, he said.

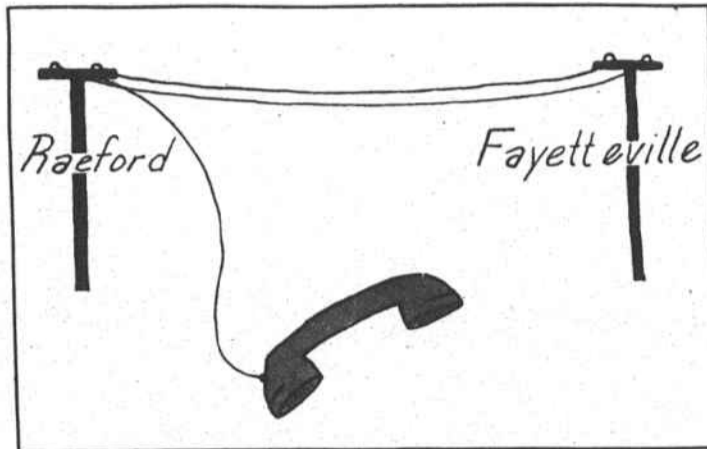
When such service extensions are requested, the larger city is usually polled.

According to Gerringer, few of the people polled ever respond, and those few usually react negatively.

Gerringer gave Winston-Salem as a recent example.

The increase was between only \$1.15 and \$2.20 and the response was negative, he said.

A similar move was tried in Raeford in 1976, with similar increases quoted and it was defeated



by Raeford telephone subscribers, said Gerringer.

Conceivably, the Utilities Commission could extend the service without any polling, Gerringer said, but "even in those cases, the commission would probably affect the increases."

"The minimum you can expect is a poll in Raeford," said Gerringer.

"Without some sort of unusual arrangement, it is going to be difficult to get the service," said Gerringer.

Generally, petitions from subscribers in all affected areas are asked for by the Utilities Commission, he said.

If the poll is positive in Raeford, it will also have to be passed by Fayetteville subscribers, the spokesman said.

Parkton suffered only slight rate increases

By Ed Miller

Hoke County could take a lesson from neighboring Parkton which was recently incorporated into the Fayetteville area telephone exchange with only slight increases in rates, State Senator David Parnell said Tuesday.

Many barriers were placed in Parkton's way by Carolina Telephone and Telegraph to stop the extension of service, but the North Carolina Utilities Commission granted the service with only a slight increase in service rates, Parnell said.

"What we contended was that we should not have to pay any more than Fayetteville," said Parnell.

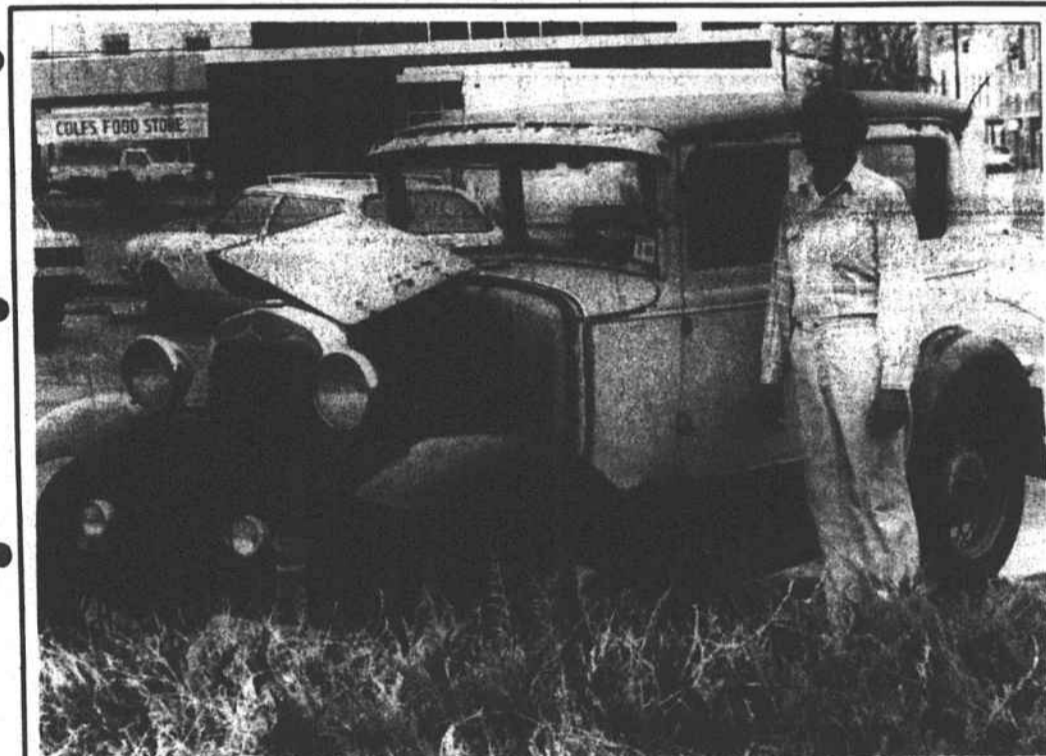
Hoke County officials and members of the Raeford-Hoke Chamber of Commerce feel direct service would stimulate growth in the county and would aid economic development.

Local officials have reasoned that 92,000 acres of Hoke County are in Ft. Bragg, which is on the Fayetteville exchange.

However, Ft. Bragg personnel, living in Hoke County cannot reach the base except by calling long distance.

Parkton officials were told that rates would increase drastically and that polls would have to be conducted in both areas to see if subscribers really wanted the phone service, Parnell said.

Since the service was granted to Parkton, Carolina Telephone has tried to get rate increases several times, but they were denied by the (See PARKTON, page 13)



They don't make 'em...

Preston Moore stands proudly beside his 1931 Model A Ford. Moore is in the process of restoring the vehicle. Although he does not know if his odometer has turned over or not, the car has only

45,000 miles registered on it. According to Moore, the car has been sitting in his yard since 1969, when he drove it last. He has just had the engine reworked and plans to begin work on the body soon.

Teal tapped for tax post

By Ed Miller

A local man has been chosen by the members of the Hoke County Commission as acting tax supervisor.

Dale Teal, a lifetime Hoke County resident, will serve in the Tax Supervisor's position in an acting capacity until July 1 when he will be appointed for a two or four year term, according to County Manager William Cowan.

Teal will begin work on March 4.

"The commissioners made an excellent choice in him," Cowan said.

According to the manager, Teal is very experienced in accounting and administrative management but is not certified as a tax supervisor.

The County Commission could have chosen a candidate who was certified, but there would have been some disadvantages, said Cowan.

The county would have had to spend more money in salary for a previously certified person, and there could have been residency requirement problems, said the manager.

Former Tax Supervisor Larry

Holt resigned the position last fall after he failed to move his residence to Hoke County.

Although Teal has been the accountant at Hoke Auto for 12 years, the position of Tax Supervisor will require new skills and experience he has not had, he said last week.

"I'm going to be depending on people that know the system already to teach me," Teal said.

Teal will have to work in an acting position until the term of Holt expires June 31, he said.

According to Cowan, Teal will have to take 160 hours of course work at the Institute of Government in Chapel Hill before he can be certified as Tax Supervisor.

Teal will begin taking his first course about a month after he assumes the new position, said the manager.

A course called "Fundamentals of Real Property Appraisal" will begin April 1.

In June and July, Teal will take courses dealing in assessment administration and property value appraisal, said Cowan.

During the second week in October, Teal will be in school for actual position training.



Dale Teal

Upon completion of all four courses, he will have to pass a comprehensive test before becoming certified, said Cowan.

The 38-year-old Teal graduated from Hoke County High School in 1965.

After two years at Pembroke State University, Teal transferred to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

He attended U.N.C. on scholarship and graduated with a B.A. in Business Administration.

County DSS gains custody of three Hoke children

By Ed Miller

Protective custody of three local children was granted to the Hoke County Department of Social Services (DSS) during the February 13 session of District Court, members of the DSS Board were told Monday.

All three children are now available to be placed in foster homes, said Linda Cromartie, Director of Hoke's Foster Parents Program.

Abuse and severe neglect were some of the reasons the children were released from the custody of

their parents, she said.

The hearings were the first three in the county, Cromartie said.

According to the Foster Care Director, there are currently 39 children in the custody of the DSS.

There are 30 children in foster homes and nine in the homes of

relatives, she said.

Eight of those 39 are "long term" foster care recipients, said Cromartie.

Long term care applies to children around the age of 16, she said.

Usually these older children are

not put on permanent adoption rolls because it may take years to place them by which time they will no longer be minor children, she said.

The average age of the children on the Hoke County Foster Care roster is 8.5 years, according to

Cromartie.

Children range in age from four months to 20 years.

A person can be kept in foster homes until they reach the age of 21 as long as they are still in school, said Cromartie.

(See DSS, page 12)

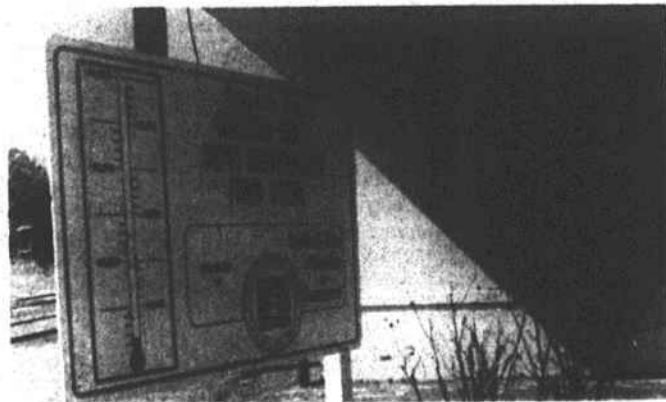
Around Town

By Sam Morris

The rain came to town Monday, but the weekend weather was perfect. It is hard to realize the temperature getting to 75° in February. It was up to about 70° on Monday until the rain came. My heat didn't come on during the night Sunday and this is the first time in about two months.

The forecast is for the weather to cool off a little after Tuesday, but not cold enough to freeze. Maybe I can get in another round of golf this week.

It seems that I didn't have all the (See AROUND, page 13)



Marking the goal

This sign was erected last week to announce the Raeford-Hoke Chamber of Commerce's project to restore the old Aberdeen-Rockfish Railroad Depot in Raeford. The building will house the offices of the Chamber and the economic developer. Over \$30,000 is needed for the project.

Depot funds mounting

Contributions for the remodeling of the old Aberdeen Rockfish Depot have climbed over the \$2,000 mark.

Backers of the restoration fund drive, which is being sponsored by the Raeford-Hoke Chamber of Commerce, have set a goal of \$30,000 to improve the circa 1900 structure.

The facility is expected to house the offices of the Chamber and the economic developer.

Members of the committee hope to arouse public spirit for volunteer labor in the restoration effort.

Thus far, \$2,005 has been raised.

Contributions have been made by Paul and Virginia Burnette, Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Leach, Mr. and Mrs. James Wood, James G. Wood Jr., Margaret Wood, Western Auto, Harold and Peggy Gillis, Marianna McLean, Josephine Hall, Talmage and Louise English, Edna McNeill, Mr. and Mrs. Ashwell Harward, Mr. and Mrs. Neill McNeill, Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Gibson, Mr. and Mrs. Bill Archer, Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Upchurch Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Robert Conoly, Mr. and Mrs. D.R. Huff Jr., Mr. and Mrs. David Howell, Mr. and Mrs. Warren Johnston, Mr. and Mrs. Steve Parker, Mr. and Mrs. Crawford L. Thomas Jr. and the Raeford-Hoke Chamber of Commerce.



Man of Year

Hoke County Commission Chairman, John G. Balfour, was named as the Raeford Kiwanis Club's Man of the Year last week at the club's annual Ladies Night dinner.