

Viewpoints

Hoke College needs student interests

The Hoke satellite of Sandhills Community College is scheduled to begin classes September 9, and only two hurdles are left to be cleared before the bells ring and the whistles sound in celebration of one of the most positive steps this county has taken in recent memory.

For the school to become a reality, the local funds recommended in the upcoming fiscal year's budget must be approved by the county commission and courses planned for this fall must have students.

The financial needs are in the hands of the commissioners, but the success of the classes depends on enrollment by Hoke County residents.

Supporters of the college have envisioned a school which will serve Hoke County's vocational needs and will help students meet the technological changes which are taking place now in the job market.

Through the basic education program, the new satellite can also help one-third of Hoke County's adult population, who do not have a high school degree.

In addition, courses can now be offered in Hoke County to assist businesses, industries and individuals with needed job skills. Adult continuing education classes are also planned for the fall.

However, in order for the courses to be offered, the classes must have at least 15 students each.

Betty High is making an effort to line up the courses for the fall, and needs to know what classes Hoke County residents are interested in taking. A survey is being conducted.

The survey form is in this newspaper and should be filled out, signed and returned to a local bank, the Chamber of Commerce or to this office.

Fill out the survey, and enroll next fall in the new Hoke County branch of Sandhills Community College.

The school and the future of Hoke County needs the support of every resident.

Let telephone company help with county taxes

On June 26, Carolina Telephone is planning a session at the Raeford City Hall to give local residents a chance to "sound off" about their phone service.

The session will be held from noon until 6 p.m., and for those who cannot make it there will be a special number to call to "tell-a-phone company what's on your mind."

We have a few suggestions that local residents might try out on the Carolina Telephone management team who will be in Raeford:

•Hoke County needs direct telephone service to Fayetteville at a reasonable cost. Encourage Carolina Telephone to make the connection for expanded area service for those on the 875 exchange.

Isolated telephone service is acting as a roadblock to new residents who are now settling on the Hoke County borders, rather than coming across the line. Residential real estate developers are thumbing their noses at \$2,000 and \$3,000 per acre land prices in Hoke and gobbling up \$10,000 an acre Cumberland tracts.

In the first quarter of this year, over 440 housing units were sold in Cumberland County. Less than 30 were purchased in Hoke County, which is closer to Ft. Bragg and could offer a home buyer more for his money. Developers say direct telephone service is the problem.

Hoke County ad valorem taxes are increasing each year, and the burden is falling on a limited number of taxpayers. New residents would spread the load by adding to the tax base.

An expanded telephone system would not only make this county more attractive for new residents, but it would also give current customers more, like access to hospitals, medical specialists and other services not available in Hoke County.

Even the rates being proposed for Hoke County are less than local residents, living in a \$40,000 house, have paid in tax increases in the last two years.

Either we have direct telephone lines to Fayetteville and improved telephone service, or we pay higher taxes and get less for our money.

•Hoke County residents, who do not live in the 875 exchange area, should tell the Carolina representatives about the need to have direct telephone service to Raeford.

This county has eight exchanges serving residents. None of the exchanges are linked together.

For example, residents in the Ashley Heights area can call Carthage, Aberdeen, Southern Pines and Pinehurst, but they cannot call Raeford, the county seat.

South Hoke and Antioch customers can make a local call to Red Springs. Raeford, where sheriff's offices, emergency services, tax collectors and building inspectors are located, is a long distance call.

Hoke County residents need to be able to call each other and to call Fayetteville. On June 26 local customers will have an opportunity to let Carolina Telephone's representatives know about their problems.

The future of more than just telephone service could hinge on the responses the firm receives during the "Customer Information Day." Hoke County's future could also depend on the results of the day.

Show up on June 26 and let Carolina Telephone help you with your county ad valorem tax bill.

"I see here those Boy Scouts have really got the ball rolling on that Hoke Veterans Memorial... Sounds like those guys know how to get things done... you think they'd be interested in some local government jobs?"



"yep."

"yep."

"Dunno."

Bill to end property tax called financial disaster

RALEIGH -- "This bill is a disaster."

With those words, Rep. Paul Pulley, D-Durham, pretty much sums up how some legislators feel about a wide-sweeping tax reform package being proposed by Rep. Joe Mavretic, D-Edgecombe.

Mavretic wants to eliminate all property and local option sales taxes and replace the lost tax revenue with a statewide 8% sales tax. He'd then distribute 62.5% of the money back to local governments on a per capita basis -- a move that would shift \$208.2 million in tax revenue from eight generally prosperous counties to the state's 92 other counties.

Opponents of the idea criticize it on several fronts. First, they say it would pillage the treasuries of eight counties to pay the bills of the other 92. Second, they say it will, in a massive way, shift the burden of taxation to those in middle income brackets. Third, they say it will take away local accountability for the spending of tax dollars.

Rep. Ray Sparrow, D-Wake, noted that his county would lose \$32 million in revenue under the plan. Wake would either have to cut its school budget or implement a special county income tax to make up that loss. "They're trying to redistribute our money. We collect it in Wake County because we have more people living here and because we have more high income people," he said.

Rep. Jo Graham Foster, D-Mecklenburg, whose county would lose \$102 million, said the loss would make it impossible for her county to deal with the problems by growth.

As Pulley sees the plan, "it shifts the taxpaying burden from the group of people with property to those with no property." Rep. Dan Lilley, D-Lenoir, chairman of the Revenue Laws Study Committee, shares that concern. "It transfers a large percentage of the tax base to what I would call the



Watching
By Paul T.
O'Connor

middle income families," Lilley said.

It won't effect the very poor, because there are provisions to refund some of their increased sales taxes offset by the removal of the annual property tax payment. Those who work, but pay no property tax now, would not get a tax cut while they would still pay the increased sales tax.

It can be argued that property tax is included in the rent. But Pulley says he's skeptical that many landlords, especially those in areas where there is a shortage of housing, will reduce rents if their taxes are cut.

Pulley also notes that business would end up getting a huge tax break under the plan. That loss of revenue is made up through taxes on individuals, he says. "When you take away the property taxes,

what happens to the big companies like IBM and Burroughs Wellcome. What kind of sales tax do they pay?"

Finally, as Rep. Ivan Motherhead, R-Mecklenburg, said, "I'm concerned about the question of local control." In 92 counties, there would be no local taxes. Some of those counties would experience a major revenue increase.

"They are going to spend that new money and they may spend it foolishly," Sparrow says. The money will have been transferred from the taxpayers of the eight counties which are losers under the plan but those taxpayers will have no voice in how it is spent.

Mavretic hopes that the plan --including its constitutional amendments -- will be approved by the House this year, the Senate in 1986 and then the voters in the 1986 election. In the interim, he says a study commission should go over the bill and improve upon it. Betting in the House is that he'll get his study commission and that this issue will be the focus of the 1986 short session.

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Letters To The Editor

One ceremony needed

To the Editor:
On Thursday, June 4, I attended one of three graduations held for kindergarten students at South Hoke School.

I don't understand why there were three separate graduations. There are only 3 kindergarten classes. I understand there are about 90 children. It seems they could've all graduated in the gym the way they did last year.

I had a niece in one class, a nephew in another and a cousin in the other. They were all held so close together I was not able to attend all three.

There were 20 or 30 parents packed in each of the three kindergarten rooms and the heat with only one fan was almost unbearable.

The principal and the teachers should've gotten together and planned the graduation so everyone could have been together. Some thought should be given to the inconvenience.

The graduation last year was comfortable and conveniently held in the gym.

They shouldn't separate the kindergarten classes if they are having a graduation.

Alice Masson

Letters Policy

Letters to the editor are encouraged and welcomed.

Writers should keep letters as short as possible. Names, addresses and telephone numbers should be included and all letters must be signed. Names will be printed, however, other information will be kept confidential. We reserve the right to edit letters for good taste and brevity. Letters should be received by *The News-Journal* by noon on the Monday of the publication week.



Sprinkler may be answer for season

It was an oven out there, all day. I watched it from inside our air conditioned office.

The temperatures hung in the mid-90's and the humidity seemed to be about 212%.

"Don't go out there. It'll cook your brain," somebody said, falling in the door to buy a newspaper.

People had been falling in the door all day and most of them stayed. We had a crowd of several hundred. Some kept saying things like: "Well, I guess I have to get going now, and let you people get back to work." But, they stayed. Nobody wanted to get back in the cooker.

At 5 p.m., we had to roll up newspapers and pop everyone on the head to get them out the door. It was not an easy job, but we had to do it. Once the office was cleared, I went home.

It was too hot to do anything. My wife wanted to ride over to the air conditioned mall for a little creative hanging out. We learned the trick during the August heat wave of 1982 when the thermometer hit 110°.

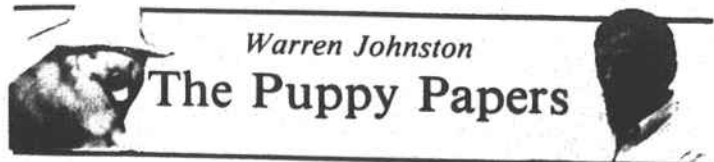
The mall was 20 miles away. Our car is air cooled, if we leave the windows down. Although we both could stand to lose weight, the idea of driving in a steam bath was not appealing.

We decided to sit in the yard and hope for a breeze.

It was too hot to sit still. I wandered over and checked my garden. The plants were suffering, and the weeds were begging to be pulled.

On a normal temperature day, mosquitoes offer free rides to victims before draining them. Once, several million almost lifted me off the ground when I was working in the garden. Fortunately I was able to escape, by diverting them with a fine hand-slapping rendition of "Hambone" I had learned at the age of eight during a cub scout minstrel show.

However, on this steaming day, the blood suckers were too hot to



bite. All they did was land and hope to be slapped. I felt a lot like the mosquitoes, except I didn't have the energy to take off and land.

I turned the sprinkler on the garden. A great cry of "hosanna" rose from the plants. I settled in next to my wife and watched the water rise and fall.

I felt a little crazy, but what-the-heck, we were paying for the water, and the sprinkler seemed to be the coolest show in town.

As we watched the wave of water go back and forth, there seemed to be a break in the heat. We remembered what it was like to be on the beach, watching the tide roll in and out.

We felt cooler; a breeze started to blow.

Before long, dozens of birds began to play in the water. A squirrel ventured down from his tree to check out the excitement.

The cat was fascinated by all the action hopping around the yard, and moved in closer "only for a better look."

Every time the cat would get near the birds, water from the sprinkler would rake across her, and she would jump like she had been hit in the face with a bucket of ice cubes.

We watched the sprinkler until it got dark and the air cooled. It was a nice way to spend the evening.

The weather today looks like it is going to be a broiler. When we get everybody cleared out of the office at 5 p.m., I plan to go home, turn on the sprinkler and wait for the cool.

