

The News-Journal



The Hoke County News - Established 1928

The Hoke County Journal - Established 1905

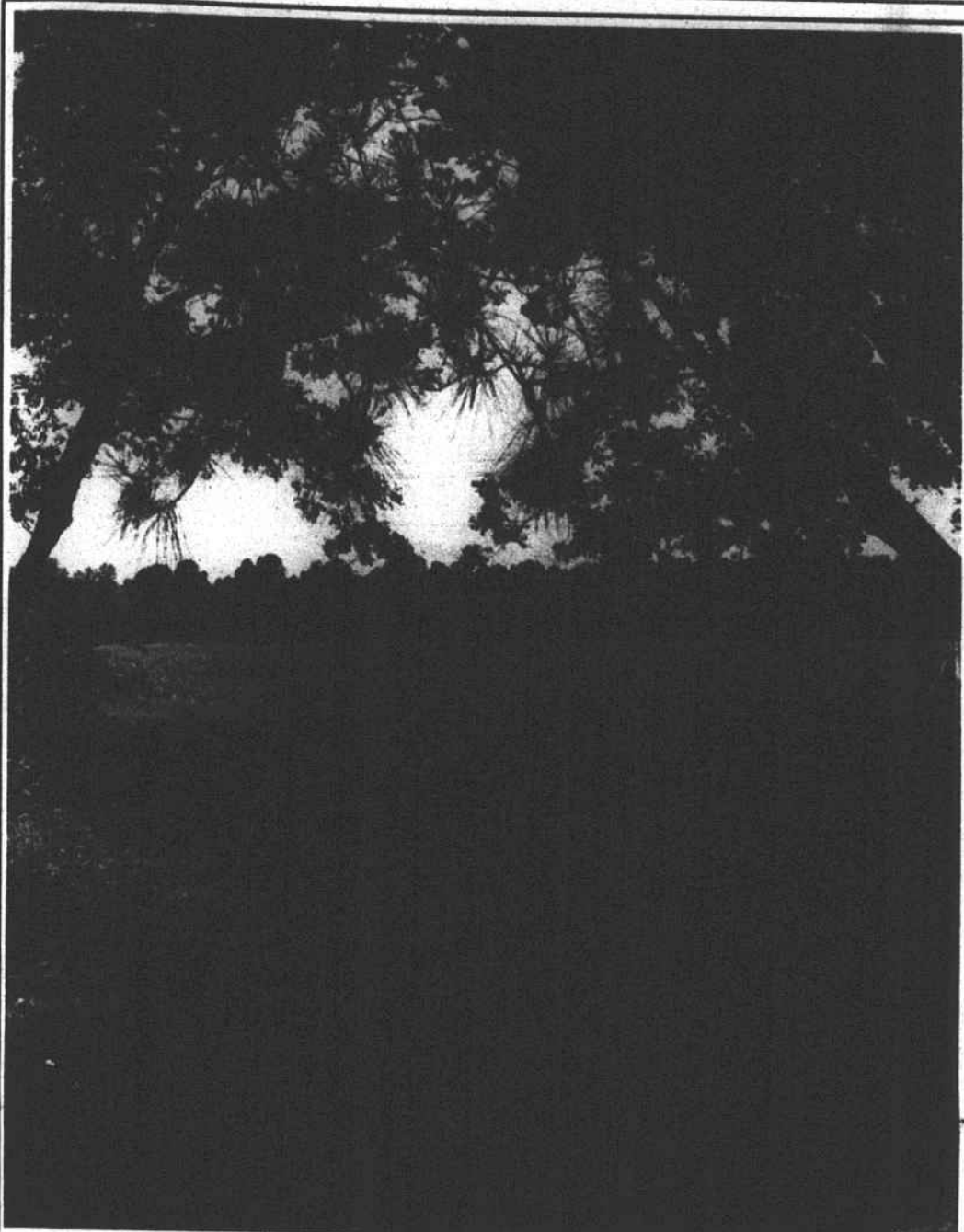
Volume LXXVII Number 11

RAEFORD, HOKE COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

\$10 PER YEAR

25 CENTS

Thursday, July 4, 1985



Cool spot
A Hoke County farmer might choose the shade of these trees to rest while working in the nearby fields on a hot July day. Recent rains and mild

temperatures have been a boost to local crops and may help them survive the long hot days that are bound to be ahead.

Photo by E.W. Miller, III

County OK's final budget, college, deputies approved

By Ed Miller

Members of the Hoke County Commission approved a six-cents tax rate hike Thursday night which included funding for a community college satellite, more deputy sheriffs and a slight increase for Hoke County schools.

The hike is one cent less than was requested by Hoke County Manager William Cowan.

In an effort to get the recommended budget passed, Commissioner Cleo Bratcher took a stand against his fellow commissioners.

"I know Mr. Cowan worked real hard with this (budget) to get it (a tax rate increase) down to three or four cents, but I think we ought to listen to what we heard at the public hearing. I would hate to sit on this board and see the county go back," said Bratcher.

"I feel like Raeford can grow, especially if people can bite the bullet and accept an increase," he said.

"In the long run, I think everyone would benefit from it (a tax rate hike)," the commissioner said.

The Sandhills Community College satellite was left in the budget for a total of \$17,900 which includes \$15,000 for classroom use at Hoke County High School and \$2,900 for upgrading an office in the old county office building for the director of the college.

Also left in the revenue sharing part of the budget was \$9,816 for a secretary for the director.

The salary was placed in the revenue sharing budget because it is a one-time expense to be picked up by the state next year if the college is successful, according to supporters of the facility.

Commission Chairman John Balfour voted "no" in a question about the college.

"There are a few people out there who oppose it, and I feel they need representation," said Balfour.

In adopting the final budget, commissioners were required to increase several line items before cuts could be made.

A total of \$12,000 was added to the budget in items that were not anticipated when the original

budget was formulated.

For additional postage for the county tax department, \$1,200 was added, said Cowan.

Special legal council for the county to fight a law suit presently pending with two former and one current deputy sheriff will cost about \$5,000. That amount was added to the budget, said Cowan.

About \$3,000 was appropriated to the Hoke County Planning Board for the services of a professional planner for the development of a subdivision ordinance, Cowan said.

Axed from the budget to keep the tax rate hike to six cents was \$31,280 from the Hoke County Board of Education's current expense budget.

That cut was offered for consideration in last Tuesday's budget work session by Commissioner James Albert Hunt.

When asked if he still felt the same way about the cut, Hunt said: "Just as strong as I did before."

"I think they've had some state (See COUNTY, page 2A)

School board appeals funding

Members of the Hoke County Board of Education voted Monday night to appeal for additional funds to operate the county schools during the coming fiscal year.

A joint meeting will be scheduled with county commission members to discuss the budget, which was cut by over \$78,000 from what was requested.

Although school board members noted the meeting would be a "friendly confrontation" to work out differences over the funding, state law provides that the session is required if legal action is to be taken against the commission.

The vote to approve the joint session was 3-2, with members Ed-

die McNeill and Shirley Gibson casting the dissenting votes.

Only about \$38,300 of the mandated cuts can be eliminated without sacrificing personnel, Finance Director Don Steed told board members Monday during a three and a half hour session.

"All that is left is to cut local teachers," Steed said.

The remaining \$39,874 needed to be cut from the school budget would have to come from the elimination of two local teachers, Steed said.

According to the budget provided for the schools, revenues would be increased by \$23,860 over the last fiscal year.

Because of the state's mandated

9.6% pay raise for all employees, the school board's budget was increased by over \$55,000, Steed said, noting that the current budget plan calls for the schools to have about \$32,000 less than the previous year.

"I'm not going to vote to cut one more penny than we have already cut," board member Walter Coley said.

Coley called for the meeting with the commissioners to work out the \$38,000 difference.

According to state law, if the schools are going to appeal to the courts for more money, a joint meeting would have to be held within seven days from Monday's (See SCHOOL, page 2A)

Student attendance area redistricting receives green light

By Ed Miller

Elementary school students in three sections of the county will be going to different schools next fall because of a redistricting plan approved last week by members of the Hoke County Board of Education.

The plan was approved to alleviate overcrowding at Scurlock and McLauchlin schools.

About 79 students living south of Rockfish Creek will go to South Hoke School next year, according to the decision made in special ses-

sion last Tuesday night.

Also newly placed in the South Hoke district will be students who live in the newly completed Lantern Lanes apartment complex, said Hoke County School Superintendent Dr. Robert Nelson.

Students living on Covington Street, Birch Street and Oak Street will also be affected, said Nelson.

Currently, there are few students living in the area, but estimates are that between 10 and 15 students of elementary school age will live

there when the apartment complex is completed, Nelson said.

There will be an estimated total of 22 school age children living in the complex upon completion, said the superintendent.

Future problems could arise in this area also because of proposed plans to double the size of the complex, Nelson told board members.

"This will come closest to producing three classrooms at South Hoke," said Nelson.

According to the superintendent, there are four classrooms

available for use at South Hoke, but one is being occupied by the school system's dentist.

Also to be attending a different school next year will be 30 students living in a neighborhood at the intersection of the Vass Road and the U.S. Highway 401 Bypass, said Nelson.

Those students will be attending West Hoke School, he said.

"Now will this solve the problem?" Board of Education member Shirley Gibson asked.

"I think this is going to take care

of it in the short run," said Nelson.

During the last board meeting, Nelson told board members that new school facilities would have to be built before long term solutions to the crowded conditions could be examined.

Also discussed was moving some of the county's excess mobile units to Scurlock School to take in some of the students.

"We have a history of having temporary units that become permanent," said Nelson, adding that

no money has been budgeted for mobile units.

The board's decision will "disturb the least number of people to accomplish what we need to do," said board member Walter Coley.

"Unfortunately, there is never an easy or pleasant solution to zoning. Never," said Nelson.

Also discussed at the board meeting was the lack of funding given the Hoke County school system.

(See DISTRICT, page 8A)

Highway 401 apron funds cut

By Ed Miller

A resurfacing and widening project scheduled for this summer on U.S. Highway 401 between Raeford and the Cumberland County line has been cancelled because of federal rights-of-way requirements and a duplication of effort, state Department of Transportation (DOT) officials said last week.

The North Carolina DOT found that not enough right of way was acquired to widen the road for two-foot shoulders, said DOT Division Engineer Henry Jordan.

Although some right of way had been obtained, it was not enough to meet the requirements of the Federal Highway Administration, Jordan said.

Also considered when the widening was cancelled is the proposed four-laning of the road to begin next summer, said Jordan.

"It would be kind of foolish to duplicate efforts like that," he said.

"It's just a matter of doing the same thing twice," Jordan said.

The highway department would have had to go down 401 cutting

trees in the path of the new right-of-way, and that will have to be done anyway when the four-laning starts, said Jordan.

Hoke County's Highway Commissioner Richard Pugh said: "We will keep it (401) on the burner."

According to Pugh and Jordan, support for the 401 project, which is currently on the DOT's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), is coming from the Cumberland County end of the road as well as from Hoke County. (See HIGHWAY, page 8A)

Hoke resident named to Sandhills board

After eight years of no local representation, a Hoke County resident has been appointed to serve on the Sandhills Community College Board of Trustees.

Elizabeth Barnhart was named last week by Governor James G. Martin to fill a seat on the board currently held by a Lee County man.

Mrs. Barnhart will become Hoke County's first representative on the college board since Paul Dickson was not reappointed by then Gov. James B. Hunt in 1977. Although the college serves only

Hoke and Moore counties, Hunt appointed Ralph Monger Jr. of Sanford to fill Dickson's slot on the board.

Barnhart will replace Monger, whose term is expiring. She will serve for eight years.

"In the past, members of the Sandhills Board of Trustees have come from Moore County, although the school represented both Hoke and Moore counties. Gov. Martin is delighted to be able to appoint a member from Hoke County," the Governor's Deputy Press Secretary David G. Balmer

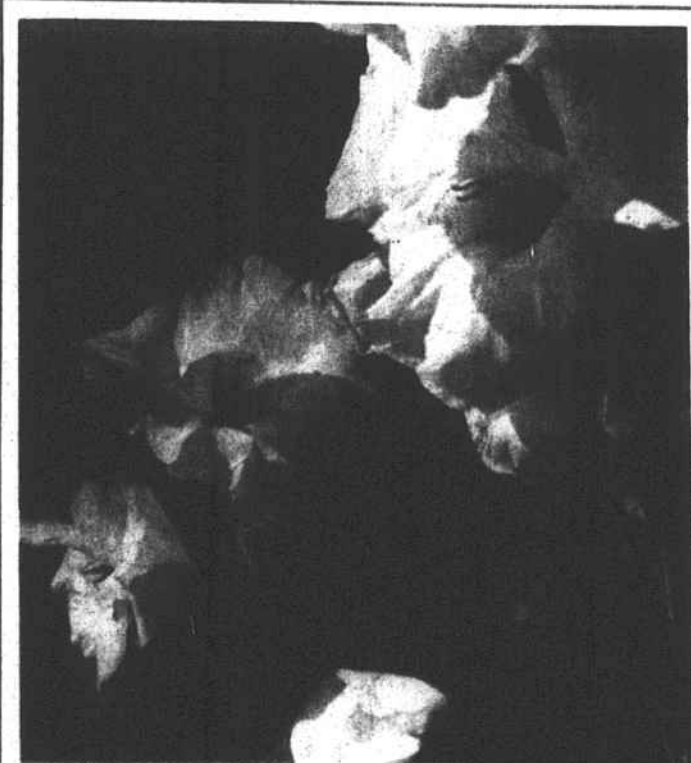
said Tuesday.

"The governor is pleased that Elizabeth Barnhart will be serving on the board," Balmer said.

Mrs. Barnhart also serves as a member on the Hoke County Sandhills College Satellite Advisory Board and the Hoke County Higher Education Foundation.

She has taught classes at Sandhills and has served on the Sandhills Citizen Advisory Board.

Mrs. Barnhart is married to former County Commissioner Ralph W. Barnhart. (See BARNHART, page 8A)



Blooming summer
Hoke County's flowers are in full bloom and buzzing with beauty. We take a look at the signs of summer on page 1 in today's B section.

Photo by E.W. Miller, III

Around Town

By Sam Morris

The weather over the weekend was what the farmers of the county have been looking for this year. It is still raining as of this writing on Monday and it has been raining since Saturday night.

I don't have any official figures on the rainfall, but it must be somewhere between three and four inches. Julian Johnson said Sunday night that he had three inches at that time. It was a slow rain, and it did soak into the soil.

The forecast is for clearing by Tuesday and the temperatures will be in the 80s.

Don't forget the American Legion Golf Tournament on the 4th of July. It will start with a breakfast at Edinborough Restaurant and then on to the Arabia Golf Course for play.

Bob Gentry, chairman, states that you can sign up for the tournament at the breakfast Thursday morning. So go out and enjoy the Fourth with golf and also help some worthy projects.

The article in last week's paper about the upcoming book written (See AROUND, page 9A)