

EAS Meeting
Tuesday, Oct. 29
7 p.m.

The News-Journal



The Hoke County News - Established 1928

The Hoke County Journal - Established 1905

Volume LXXVII Number 27

RAEFORD, HOKE COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

\$10 PER YEAR

25 CENTS

Thursday, October 24, 1985

Two men sought in armed holdup

Hoke County authorities are seeking two men, who apparently came back for a second try and successfully robbed a rural convenience store at gunpoint last Wednesday night.

The men entered the Short Stop in the Davis Bridge area, brandishing pistols around 8:20 p.m. for the second, according to a report filed by Hoke County Deputy Sheriff Weaver Patterson.

An earlier effort, which occurred around 2:35 p.m., was thwarted by store clerk Lee Armstrong, and the men fled without the cash.

An all-points bulletin went out for the two suspects, but they eluded arrest and apparently returned to the store for another try.

During the second robbery, Armstrong was forced at gunpoint to lie on the bathroom floor, while the men made their getaway with the contents of the cash drawer.

One suspect, who is black and about six feet tall, weighing 160 to 170 pounds, wore a Hawaiian shirt, blue jeans and had a black stocking over his face.

The man wore surgical gloves and was armed with a large caliber blue-steel revolver, according to the report.

When the first suspect entered the store, he placed his pistol to Armstrong's chest and ordered him to open the cash drawer.

"Try the stuff you did this afternoon, and I'll blow you away right now."

"I don't want you to say one thing. Open the cash drawer and give me the money," the suspect is reported to have said.

A second suspect, who is described as being black, five feet tall, weighing 120 pounds, wearing a white T-shirt and blue jeans, a black stocking over his face and having surgical gloves on, carried a (See SUSPECTS, page 2A)



Looking over remains

Hoke Rescue Squad member Lawrence Conoly and mobile home around 9 a.m. Sunday. A body was found in the mobile home. Hillcrest and Hillcrest found in the dwelling near the back door. An autopsy volunteer fire departments look over the shell of a is needed for positive identification of the remains.

Sunday blaze leaves one dead

The cause of a blaze which destroyed a Hoke County mobile home and left one person dead Sunday morning was still under investigation on Tuesday, authorities said.

The investigation of the fire, which erupted around 8 a.m. Sunday in a trailer located on Lot 9 of the Culbreth Mobile Home Park off of Highway 211 east of Raeford, is still on-going and has been turned over to the Hoke County Sheriff's Department, North Raeford Fire

Department Chief Johnny Baker said Monday.

When firemen arrived on the scene around 8:23 a.m., the dwelling was engulfed in flame, Baker said, noting that a body was found near the back door of the mobile home.

The body was beyond recognition, witnesses at the scene said.

The trailer was rented by Don Brewer, 30, but an autopsy will have to determine if he was the victim of the fire, a spokesman

for the Hoke County Sheriff's Department said.

On-duty Hoke County Medical Examiner Dr. Riley Jordan pronounced the person dead at the scene and ordered the remains sent to Chapel Hill for autopsy and identification.

Randy Blackburn, who is a neighbor, said he had assisted Brewer in returning his car from South Hoke and had been in the burned trailer around 7 a.m., sheriff's reports show.

(See FIRE, page 2A)

SBI investigates hanging death

State Bureau of Investigation (SBI) agents are in Raeford this week questioning witnesses in the death of a man found hanging in a holding cell in the Hoke County Jail.

The agents were in town at the request of Sheriff Dave Barrington, who called for the investigation on Friday, after aides to Governor James G. Martin asked for a review of the evidence in the death of Robert Lee Chappelle, 28.

Chappelle was found hanging from the bars in a holding cell by his socks on October 5.

An autopsy conducted by the North Carolina Medical Examiners office in Chapel Hill, showed that Chappelle died of "injuries consistent with hanging," Barrington said.

The autopsy showed the Raeford man had a blood alcohol content of .27 when he died, the sheriff said, noting that a .10 is considered legally intoxicated.

Although the governor's office had responded to a petition circulated by Hoke County residents and had requested SBI agents to review the local reports on the death, Barrington said Monday he called for the full investigation to "clear the matter up once and for all."

Three SBI agents will be interviewing over 20 witnesses in the case and should conclude the investigation next week, Barrington said.

Once completed, the SBI probe will be turned over to District Attorney Ed Grannis, who will decide on its disposition.

"I hope the District Attorney will release the findings in their en-

tirety to the public and the news media," Barrington said.

The Hoke County Black Leadership Caucus has called for a "Prayer Vigil for Robert Chappelle" on Thursday in front of the Raeford City Hall.

The request for the gathering was made in the name of Alexander Edwards.

"Questions" surrounding Chappelle's death will be discussed at the meeting, a spokesman for the group said Tuesday.

Chappelle weighed only about 140 pounds and was "very" drunk at the time of his arrest.

There is the question of how he would have been able to tie his socks around the bars and hang himself, the spokesman said.

Chappelle was arrested around 4:40 p.m. on October 5 and was found dead at about 5:40 p.m.

State Medical Examiner Dr. Michael Sullivan found no bruises or cuts on the body, except those around the neck, which were consistent with hanging, Barrington said.

The prayer vigil is called for 4:45 p.m. which was about the time on October 5 that Chappelle was arrested in front of the Raeford Cleaners on Main Street for being drunk and disorderly.

Raeford Police officer Steve Coughlin and George Brown attempted to get a female companion of Chappelle's to take him home without success, Police Chief Leonard Wiggins said.

Chappelle was placed under a \$50 bond by Magistrate E.G. Inman and was given an opportunity to make telephone calls to get someone to pick him up, Barrington said.

Hoke needs to lobby Governor on 401, DOT member says

If U.S. Highway 401 is going to be widened to four lanes, Hoke County residents must keep lobbying the North Carolina Department of Transportation (DOT) and the governor, a Board of Transportation member said Friday.

Last week the transportation board voted to keep the U.S. 401 project on the DOT's 10-year highway improvement plan, but construction on the widening was delayed for two years, moving from a 1989 target date to 1991.

"We were lucky to keep it in the plan," DOT Board Member Richard K. Pugh said, adding that

some districts had projects removed from the construction priority list.

Pugh, who is the board representative for the district which includes Hoke County, said he will continue to fight for speeding up the construction schedule.

The project was expanded in this year's TIP (Transportation Improvement Plan), and will now run from the Raeford Bypass to 71st High School.

Construction costs are predicted to be \$15.5 million.

Last year, after a local delegation met with highway officials

and Gov. James B. Hunt, the 401 project was returned to the TIP after being off the list since 1981.

Under the Hunt Administration, the 401 project was about \$8 million and ran from the Raeford Bypass to the Cumberland County line.

Hoke officials have been trying to get the road widened for more than 20 years.

This year's vote by the new Board of Transportation, who were appointed by Governor James G. Martin, was the first under the new administration.

"Hoke County has got to keep

squeaking to get the grease," Pugh said.

A lobbying effort with Gov. Martin and with DOT Secretary James E. Harrington would be the most effective way for Hoke County to insure that the widening would begin on or ahead of schedule, Pugh said.

"I'm already fighting for 401," Pugh said. "To lobby me would be a waste of effort."

Board member Terry Hutchins, who represents Cumberland County, is also working to make sure the 401 widening becomes a reality, Pugh said.

"It helps when you have two board members working on your project," he added.

Although the two projects are now linked together, Pugh said he did not believe that Hoke County would be dependent on what happens in Cumberland County.

In the past, a bypass of Lake Rim has caused engineering problems for the Cumberland portion of the project, and has been used as an excuse to delay construction.

Cumberland officials have also worked to divert funds from U.S. 401 to other projects, which were considered by them to have a higher priority.

Hoke supporters of the U.S. 401 widening have said privately they are uneasy about being linked to the Cumberland portion and fear funds could be diverted once again.

Pugh said he would work to make sure the entire project would be constructed, but at least the Hoke leg would get priority treatment.

"I feel pretty good about it. Many other projects were dropped," he said.

Had 401 been taken out of the TIP, it would have been difficult for him to return to Hoke County, Pugh said.

County seeks COG help on elderly

Members of the Hoke County Commission voted Monday night to seek assistance from the Lumber River Council of Governments (COG) to establish a local Council on Aging.

The local group will be an advisory board to help meet the needs of the county's senior citizens, who are predicted to double in population during the next decade, Hoke Department of Social Services Director Ken Witherspoon said.

Because of the growing number of senior citizens statewide, North Carolina will be putting more funds into counties which have programs in place, Commissioner Wyatt Upchurch said.

"The state legislature is really pushing this thing for counties. There will be money this year and next year," Upchurch said.

A group of either nine or 11 members could represent all of the county's seven townships and would be a good working number, the DSS director said.

"I am opposed to appointing a council on aging just for the sake of appointing one," Commission Chairman John Balfour said.

In other counties, like Bladen, the council on aging is able to secure additional state funds for senior citizens' programs, Balfour said.

Over \$56,000, which was available to Hoke County for a senior citizens' center, went to Bladen County last week, Upchurch said.

The Hoke commissioners voted during the October 7 meeting not to apply for the funds because plans for the center here were not complete.

The 1980 Census of Hoke County shows about four times as many residents over 60 years old live in the Raeford Township as do in the other county townships, Witherspoon said.

In the Raeford Township, persons over 60 make up about 13%, or around 1,200, of the 9,000 population.

The second largest senior citizen population is in Quewhiffle Township, where about 300 or 11.7% of the residents are over 60.

The county currently has a growing population of residents over 80, Witherspoon said, noting the group is predicted to double in the next 10 years.

"That's going to increase the need for additional services, like long-term health care," Witherspoon said.

"Some elderly residents now do not use the senior citizen services which are available through DSS. They feel DSS is the welfare

department. They are reluctant to take advantage of what we have available," Witherspoon said.

The council on aging might work as a buffer, and be able to use more funds and services of DSS, he added.

Housing approved

In other action, the commissioners OK'd a plan to increase the number of public housing units planned for the Antioch area.

The revised plan would allow the North Carolina Indian Housing Authority to construct 53 units of low-rent housing near Antioch.

The project was originally targeted to cost \$2.25 million.

Using the original per unit cost of more than \$56,000, the revised project would top \$3 million.

Up to 10% of the rent collected on the project will be paid in lieu of county ad valorem taxes.

The project will also be managed under the auspices of the Raeford Housing Authority.

Grant approved

The commissioners received word during the meeting that a grant of federal funds had been approved by the state Department of Transportation (DOT) to study the (See EXPANDED, page 2A)



Textile week

Raeford Mayor John K. McNeill (left) and Hoke County Commission Chairman John Balfour take a break after signing a proclamation declaring this textile week in the county. We take a look at textiles in section B of today's News-Journal.

Turkey booth at NC Fair

For the first time in recent memory, Hoke County will be represented at the North Carolina State Fair in Raleigh with a booth.

The booth, which is being manned by Raeford-Hoke Chamber of Commerce Manager Beverly Pasternak, North Carolina Poultry Federation Marketing Home

Economist Emmie Whitley and several N.C. State University student volunteers, is located in the Scott Building of the fair.

Hoke County and the North Carolina Turkey Festival will be promoted at the booth, as well as the state's turkey industry.

Around Town

By Sam Morris

The rains came in Monday and the thermometer registered 58°, as this was being written Monday afternoon. So maybe fall has come and gone and the winter season will arrive ahead of time. We need the rain, but there are still some crops in the fields that need to be harvested.

The forecast is for the weather to be about the same for the remainder of the week, except the rain will cease. We could see temperatures in the 70s by Saturday. This will be fine weather for the football games.

Every once in awhile someone in the composing room can't read my writing. I can't type and so I turn in my column in long hand. In the write-up about the telephone meeting he had that the meeting next Tuesday night would be held before the "fuel" commission. Now it should have read FULL commission. Anyway, most folks interested in that item would understand.

The whole thing is to be at the meeting next Tuesday night at the J.W. Turlington School. If we can have a large crowd on hand, (See AROUND, page 10A)