

# The News-Journal

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## Cost of new school pegged at \$8 million

A new middle school in Hoke County could cost over \$8 million to construct, members of the Board of Education were told Monday night.

Facility, which is being studied by local officials in an effort to meet the county's changing school needs, would accommodate about 1,200 students, Superintendent Dr. Robert Nelson said.

The construction figures were provided during recent discussions with state School Planning Director Darrell Spencer and were based on a projected cost of \$55 per square foot, Nelson said.

"I found my conversation with

Darrell very disheartening," Nelson said.

Nelson also checked with other superintendents who had recently built facilities and found that the estimates were correct.

Projections provided by County Manager William Cowan show with the current one-half cent sales tax, a bond issue of \$2 million could be supported without additional ad valorem taxes.

Even with the addition of a proposed one-half cent sales tax, the county could only retire a \$5 million bond issue without a tax increase.

"We are facing enormous facili-

ty problems and everywhere you turn you run into the dollar mark," Nelson said.

Discussions during the meeting ranged from getting around the lack of funds by renovating Upchurch School into a K-5 elementary school; building additions to existing schools; shifting students to different locations; building cinder block structures with good insulation qualities; and increasing the number of students in each classroom.

"We need to take some positive steps and what we do should do it right," Nelson said.

No action was taken on any of

the suggestions and board members agreed to wait for suggestions from various committees studying the facilities problem.

In other action, a new system-wide school health policy was unanimously approved during the meeting.

The policy is designed to define the responsibilities of school employees, set procedures for handling emergency health situations and administering medications to students and for providing health screenings and referrals.

The adoption of the policy was recommended by the superintendent.

School Nurse Kathy Ellis and Associate Superintendent Dr. Ginny Hayes developed the policy because no standardized plan existed in the county's seven schools. Over the years, each school has developed its own health care program.

"We had some gaps in practices in our schools," Nelson said.

Included in the new policy are emergency health agreements between parents and the schools.

The agreements specify what actions may be taken by school personnel in the event of emergencies. "The main problem has been what to do when you can't locate a

parent or guardian when an accident occurs," Ellis told the board.

The new agreements authorize personnel to seek emergency care elsewhere when a parent or the student's physician can not be located.

Parents are requested to fill out forms listing persons other than themselves who may be contacted in the case of emergency.

Also, the agreements authorize personnel to administer medications to students requiring them.

Although the medication forms parents are required to sign have been in use in the schools for a (See SCHOOLS, page 3A)

## Council takes oath, swaps city property

After taking the oath of office Monday night, newly elected members of the Raeford City Council gave final approval to an exchange of municipal property to allow a local church to build a manse.

A final OK was given to exchange a small tract of land owned by the city on state Highway 211 west with a similar tract owned by the Church of God of Prophecy.

The swap will allow the church to "square up" its property and to use the tract as a site for a new church manse, City Attorney Palmer Willcox said.

The properties were each valued at about \$250, and the exchange had been discussed in previous meetings.

During the first regular meeting held since the November 5 election, an oath of office was administered to each councilman by District Court Judge Warren Pate.

Newly elected Councilman Earl McDuffie took a seat on the board for the first time Monday.

McDuffie replaces Graham Clark, who was not reelected.

A resolution was passed commending Clark for his 16 years of service to the city.

Clark held the post of mayor pro tempore for 12 of his 16 years.

Councilman Bob Gentry, who lead the balloting during the November 5 election, was elected to succeed Clark as mayor pro tempore.

Mayor John K. McNeill was also named to represent the city on the Lumbie Council of Governments Board of Directors.

In further business the council approved a contract to audit the city's books during the next fiscal year.

The local firm of Pittard, Perry and Crone Inc. was given the contract for \$3,500 for the audit.

In a letter to City Manager Tom Phillips, accountant J. Frank Baker said a price increase from \$2,500 to \$3,500 was needed because the firm had been doing the work below cost.



### Looking for a spot

Raeford Mayor John K. McNeill (left) helps newly elected City Councilman Earl McDuffie find a place for his name sign during Monday's meeting. McDuffie, who was elected to a two-year term in the November 5 election, fill the seat vacated by Graham Clark.

## Courthouse bids given final OK

Finishing touches were put on contract negotiations Monday, as members of the Hoke County Commission awarded final bids for the courthouse renovation project scheduled to begin January 2.

The commissioners also agreed to drop a proposal to relocate the Register of Deeds Office in the Hoke County Library during the renovations.

DWC Contractors, Inc. of Fayetteville will be doing the general contracting for the project for \$375,315, which was the lowest of three bids.

Ellis-Walker Builders, Inc. had the high bid of \$440,873 and Cape Fear Construction Co., Inc. turned in a middle bid of \$429,000.

Gene's Electric, Inc. of Lumberton was awarded the bid to renovate the heating system and to install an air conditioning system at \$37,643.

McGrits Plumbing and Electrical Co., Inc. of Maxton will be doing the plumbing for \$20,250 and Bobby Townsend Electric Co. of Lumberton will be rewiring the building for \$81,400.

The renovations are expected to cost \$610,000.

The figure represents construction costs, contingency fees, building furnishings and the installation of a telephone system, County Manager William Cowan said.

Money to pay for the project is coming from \$528,000 budgeted for the renovations, \$62,000 in general funds, and \$20,000 appropriated from facility fees, a separate courthouse fund.

Costs for the project were brought down when the commissioners unanimously voted to delete a few of the renovations in the courthouse's basement.

The Building and Grounds Committee had asked the architectural firm of Dodge and Associates to make deductions to the basement renovations.

The commissioners voted on Monday to keep some of the basement renovations intact.

Although original plans to renovate the building called for work to be done only on the first (See LIBRARY, page 2A)

## Decision on EAS expected after Dec. 11 'brief' deadline

The North Carolina Utilities Commission is expected to make a decision early next year on the fate of extended area telephone service (EAS) between the Raeford and Fayetteville exchanges, a spokesman for the North Carolina Utilities Commission said last week.

Attorneys for both Carolina Telephone Company and the Public Staff of the Utilities Commission were ordered last week to file legal briefs by a December 11 deadline, Utilities Commission counselor Bob Bennink said last Tuesday.

"I would anticipate the commission will rule 30 to 60 days after December 11," Bennink said.

Bennink deferred further comment on the case, but did say: "The matter is under advisement by the commission and the commission will have to review the briefs before making a decision."

If the Utilities Commission rules in favor of EAS, 4,700 customers on the Raeford exchange would be able to call over 90,000 telephones for local rates.

EAS has been endorsed by the Hoke County Commission, the Raeford-Hoke Chamber of Com-

merce, the Economic Development Board and the Raeford City Council.

It also drew the support of nearly 300 residents who turned out for a community meeting on October 10 and the more than 800 residents who attended a public hearing on the matter before the entire North Carolina Utilities Commission on October 29.

Commission members said the Raeford crowd was the largest the commission had ever seen at a public hearing.

Transcripts from the public hearing held in Raeford and an ad-

ditional hearing held in Raleigh the following day were completed before the attorneys were ordered to prepare their briefs.

No evidence was presented during the Raleigh hearing which would detract from the testimony given to the commissioners during the Raeford hearing, according to public staff attorney Jimmy Little.

Little, along with other members of the public staff's Communication's Division, is representing supporters of extending the local service between the two exchanges.

Carolina Telephone attorney Dwight W. Allen, said the

telephone company is in favor of EAS in Raeford as long as matrix charges of \$1.22 in Fayetteville and \$4.25 in Hoke County are levied.

It is estimated that the charge on the Fayetteville phones would generate an additional \$1.2 million for the company.

Allen said those funds would be averaged out to make up for less profitable EAS situations.

During the hearing held in Raleigh, public staff witnesses testified that all costs for providing EAS are more than covered by the \$4.25 charge for residential customers on the Raeford exchange.

Charges to the Fayetteville customers are opposed by Hoke County supporters of EAS.

Local supporters say EAS is essential to expanding the local community.

The service would open Hoke County to military personnel who do not want to live outside of Cumberland County because of the cost of long distance dialing, according to local supporters.

EAS is seen as the most expedient way of increasing the tax base of Hoke County and stimulating economic growth, supporters have said.

## Fayetteville man jailed on drug selling charges

A Fayetteville man was arrested and charged with drug possession last Monday after a Hoke County Sheriff's Department detective received a search warrant from a local magistrate.

According to a Sheriff's Department report, Det. C.E. Harris received information from a confidential informant that led him to seek the warrant.

At 6:30 p.m. on Monday, officers from the Hoke County Sheriff's Department, the Fayetteville City-County Bureau of Narcotics and SBI agents, searched the residence of John William Everette, Rt. 4, Fayetteville.

The officers allegedly found marijuana, qualudes and a .22 caliber rifle thought to have been stolen from Cumberland County.

Everette, 33, was arrested and charged with possession of marijuana with the intent to sell; felonious possession of methamphetamine; and possession of a stolen firearm.

In an unrelated incident, a bat-

tery was reported stolen from a van belonging to North West Water Supply on Vass Road.

Records say the battery, valued at \$38 was taken from the van sometime last Tuesday.

Vernie Mae Locklear, Rt. 1, Red Springs reported that a license tag was missing from her 1963 Ford Falcon on Sunday, records indicate.

Locklear said she noticed the tag was missing at approximately 4 p.m.

Also Douglas Whitbeck, Rt. 1, Lumber Bridge reported that someone had broken into his home between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m. last Wednesday, records say.

According to the report, several windows had been broken in Whitbeck's house and glass was broken out of a window located in the back of the house.

Nothing was missing from the house, reports say.

Records also indicate that a Chevrolet belonging to Ella Ram-

(See BREAK-INS, page 3A)



### Caroling

Music Director of the Raeford Presbyterian Church Ray Harris (with accordian) leads a community choir and close to 150 other singers in carolling Sunday evening. The singing preceded the lighting of a

Christmas tree between the Methodist Church and courthouse, as well as other decorations throughout downtown Raeford.

## Around Town

By Sam Morris

The weather for Thanksgiving was hot. I don't believe it has ever been that hot in Hoke County at this time of year. Then Friday night we received 3 1/2 inches of rain. It didn't stop until late Saturday and some people reported 5 inches or more for the 48 hour period.

The forecast is for the bottom to drop out of the thermometer and the lows to be in the 20's by Tuesday night. Also it was predicted maybe snow by Thursday. So maybe winter has arrived.

According to farmers in the county the soybean crop is in serious trouble. The rain and warm weather has caused them to start sprouting again. Also the heavy rain over the weekend makes it impossible to get into the fields. One farmer said some fields wouldn't be in condition for a tractor until next spring.

Maybe the printing business doesn't have all the troubles.

(See AROUND, page 10A)