

# The News-Journal

If it happened, it's news to us

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## This week



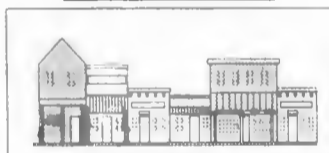
**Freedom Chapel looks back on 135 years** page 1B

**Hoke Community Foundation makes first awards** page 6A

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## Around Town



By SAM C. MORRIS  
Contributing Editor

We people in Raeford and Hoke County can be thankful that the strong winds missed us. All around us many people are without power and many have had trees blown over and damaged their homes. We did get a small amount of rain Sunday, but we could use several more inches. Our county was under a tornado watch twice on Sunday. Anyway, the storms have brought cooler weather.

The forecast for the remainder of the week, Wednesday through Saturday, calls for the high Wednesday to be in the 80s and the lows in the 60s. Thursday, Friday and Saturday the highs will be in the 90s and the lows in the high 60s or low 70s. It will be humid but there isn't any forecast of rain in the period.

\*\*\*\*\*

I would still like to have any information about the house on 205 N. Stewart St. I would like to furnish the information to the present owner, Ms. Edna Reyes. Thanks!

\*\*\*\*\*

If you know of any POWs of the Korean War, let Larry Brown Sr. know. He can be reached at telephone 875-4243. He wants the names not only in Hoke County but also in Cumberland.

\*\*\*\*\*

There was a ceremony in front of the Hoke County Courthouse Memorial Day, (See *AROUND*, page 5A)

## SBI probe of scam may net officers

By PAT ALLEN WILSON  
Editor

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

Sheriff Jim Davis publicly warned resi-

dents on May 23 against an illegal pyramid scheme sweeping across Hoke County, saying he contacted the District Attorney's Office, SBI, FBI and Alcohol Law Enforcement to conduct a criminal investigation into the "gifting program."

However, Davis did not mention his concerns over the alleged involvement of local law officers. District Attorney Jean Powell said Davis previously advised her of law officers possible participation in the scam that primarily targets African

American citizens. "Sheriff Davis made me aware of having received information of a pyramid scheme on Friday evening, May 19, and the sheriff said he was requesting an investigation from an outside agency," Powell said. "I believe it was because of some possible involvement of law enforcement personnel," she said.

"He did not indicate who they were, or what agency they were with," Powell said. "I believe it was because of some possible involvement of law enforcement personnel," she said.



District Attorney Jean Powell is concerned the scam is 'far-reaching'



A Hoke County Sheriff's Department deputy talks with members of Michael Angelo Holmes' family near the site where a body, believed to be Holmes', was found Friday evening. In the center, facing the camera, is James Holmes, Michael's father.

## Body found in pond is believed to be that of missing man

By PAT ALLEN WILSON  
Editor

The family of 33-year-old Michael Angelo Holmes is planning his funeral yet they have not been notified of his death, and identification of a body they believe was Michael is still pending.

The nightmare for Michael's closely-knit family began when his wrecked car was found on

June Johnson Road at about 7:30 Saturday night, May 20. His 1993 Mustang had run up an embankment into trees and bushes on a secluded section of the road.

The keys were left in the ignition but no one was around. A state trooper told the family he stayed at the collision site about an hour and half and no one showed. He did not see any suspicious activity, the family said he told them.

The following afternoon Michael's family filed a missing person's report with the Hoke County Sheriff's Department, according to Capt. Thomas Carlton.

Family members begged the sheriff to conduct a search for Michael but he refused, they said.

The family looked for Michael. "Every day from sunup to sundown," said his sister, (See *HOLMES*, page 8A)

## Citizens' petition seeks to keep offices downtown

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

A petition is being circulated in downtown Raeford by a group dubbed "Concerned Residents of Raeford and Hoke County," encouraging county leaders to re-think options available before erecting the proposed Hoke County Administrative Facility on West Palmer Street. The group has requested permission to discuss the issue at the upcoming county commissioners' meeting on Monday evening, asking the county to stay put and keep down taxes.

A signature drive started on May 22, when some citizens placed copies of the petition in downtown businesses for patrons

and taxpayers to sign. This protest reportedly culminated after commissioners voted on May 15 to seek a \$2.5 million loan and to consider raising taxes to construct the new county complex. Plans call for moving out of the Pratt Building on Main Street onto a 20-acre campus on Palmer, which was annexed into Raeford's city limits in March 2000.

In the petition, it specifies: "We the undersigned hereby petition the Hoke County Manager and the Hoke County Board of Commissioners to re-consider building a new county complex on West Palmer."

"First of all, we do not feel this new building is warranted and (See *OFFICES*, page 6A)

## Paper seeks court date in suit against county

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

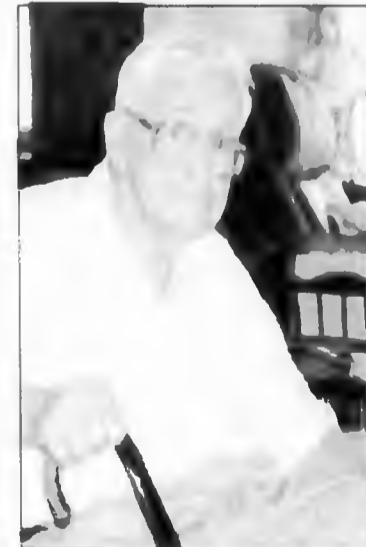
As a lawsuit filed by *The News-Journal* remains pending against Hoke County, the newspaper's legal counsel is requesting a hearing be set on the court calendar in the June 26 session. Amanda Martin has requested

the hearing in Scotland County.

*The News-Journal* filed a complaint in Hoke County Superior Court on May 9, alleging information on salaries of County Manager Bernice McPhatter and Personnel Director Shirley Rush was repeatedly denied. When the newspaper sued for public information (See *SUIT*, page 8A)

## Local WWII vet waits for justice from government

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer



Brown Hendrix Sr.

Samuel Brown Hendrix Sr., former World War II veteran and decorated hero, is searching for someone to help him move a mountain of paperwork in order to receive service disability he has been denied by the U.S. government for over a half century.

"It would take a miracle," said Hendrix, who was injured while in the U.S. Army. "I won't give up my fight until justice is served," he said. (See *VET*, page 9A)

## Taxpayers may reap from Raeford's safety award

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

Raeford City Manager Mike McNeill received a "pleasant surprise" when the North Carolina League of Municipalities ranked Raeford as having "the most well managed safety and health ef-

fort." The League compared Raeford to more than 116 cities and towns that are served by the organization in the eastern Piedmont region.

Ron Tilton, a risk management field consultant for NCLM, said the city of Mount Airy is (See *AWARD*, page 10)



At Memorial Day services, Melissa Maxwell reads her winning essay on how to honor service men and women while her parents, Will and Lise Maxwell, watch (top); above, Capt. Thomas Simons places a wreath at the war monument; at right, the Hoke High JROTC Color Guard posts the colors.

## More than 200 remember war dead

By PAT ALLEN WILSON  
Editor

George "Raz" Autry, speaker at Memorial Day services, said the gathering was to honor those who paid the supreme price for a society that has become complacent.

"Part of us died with them," said Autry, a veteran of World War II, as he spoke of those who fought alongside the ones who died in battle.

Autry said service men and women were called to fight in nations they knew nothing about. "It was our duty to protect and provide honor and commitment to our country," he said. "We bled with them but charged on. Their fight was our fight."

"Those who fought did so with a determination that this freedom would be like no other," said Autry. "As despicable as it is, even the right (See *REMEMBER*, page 8A)