

The News-Journal

If it happened, it's news to us

50¢

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RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

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Local National Guardsmen deploy to Iraq

Family members cheer, shed tears as troops depart from Pope Air Force Base

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Family of the 105th Engineer Battalion of the U.S. National Guard in Raeford will soon be sending letters overseas to an unknown brigade headquarters.

They bid final goodbyes at Pope Air Force base last week to Companies A,

B, and C. Hailing also from Rockingham, Wadesboro, Laurinburg, Hamlet and St. Pauls, their peacekeeping mission as part of the 30th Heavy Separate Brigade is scheduled for at least one year as part of the Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Unfortunately, family may never know where their husbands, wives, fa-

thers, mothers, sons or daughters will be stationed in Iraq, according to Capt. Robert N. Carver, chief of public affairs for the N.C. National Guard.

"Families might eventually be told where they are based, but not right now," Carver said. "I was honored to see the Guard deployed last week at Pope Air Force Base.

"It is always difficult when you put friends on an airplane to a place where they will be in harm's way," he said.

"I was watching family members — some upset, some entirely stoic. It was a range of emotions."

This, as a voyage to participate in the peacekeeping assignment began for 129 local National guardsmen in one of the

largest deployments of the volunteer military force since World War II.

Fortified by family cheers and tears, National Guard troops from the 105th Engineer group in Raeford flew to Kuwait on Thursday and in the wee hours of Sunday before daybreak. Their final destination will be Iraq, joining 5,000 (See DEPLOYED, page 8A)

Below: It hurts so bad... a relative is consoled as a family member from the 105th Engineer Battalion is deployed to Iraq. Right: Boarding a transport plane for Iraq at Pope AFB last Thursday are members of the 105th Engineer Battalion headquartered in Raeford.



(Photos contributed by TSgt. Brian Christiansen of the N.C. National Guard)



This Week



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Balm in Gilead addresses AIDS with prayer
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Raeford City Council studies streetscape plan

Members hear Redevelopment Commission presentation of a future Raeford

By PAT ALLEN WILSON
Editor

Raeford councilmen kept the purse strings closed Monday night as they opted to study one proposal that would mean taking money from the coffers and rejected another.

The council tabled and is to address on March 15 a request by the Redevelopment Commission of the City of Raeford that the city demolish the vacant and

decaying former Raeford Hotel and prepare the site for sale as well as authorize a design plan and implement Phase I of a streetscape plan presented to them.

Councilmen decided against proceeding with Phase II of a water improvements project begun in 2001. Phase I, consisting of a 12-inch water line along Highway 20 to Oakdale Gin Road and to Highway 401 Business as well as a new water tank, is near completion. However, the laying of a 12-inch water line along

the Palmer Street Extension, a Phase II project, was to go on a N.C. Dept. of Transportation roadway right-of-way whose route is not yet finalized. Delaying the project may result in a loss of a Rural Center grant of approximately \$62,000, part of an approximate \$400,000 grant obtained to pay for the entire project at a cost of \$1.5 million. Approximately \$188,000 is needed to complete Phase II.

The city could recoup part of the expected grant loss by piggy backing on

DOT's right-of-way and not having to pay landowners from city funds.

Two weeks ago, engineers for the project recommended Phase II be continued, and Public Works Director Mike Lucas, when asked his opinion Monday night, told councilmen, "From my standpoint, I'd like to see it done but I can't tell you how to spend your money."

Councilman Wayne Mills suggested the city "hold to Phase I right now" and (See STREETScape, page 7A)

Attorney and school board chair Smith seeks state house seat



Smith

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Raeford attorney Russell Charles Smith, serving his second term as chairman of the Hoke Board of Education, says he is vying for the 48th District House of Representatives seat in the upcoming November election.

A former Hoke High teacher, Smith is the first candidate residing in Hoke to

announce he will run for the state office for the next term.

Outlining his future campaign, Smith supports an improved road system in the county, including the expansion of N.C. 211 and U.S. 401.

Committed to a high caliber of education for students in Hoke, Scotland and Robeson counties, Smith said he would urge the state to contribute more educational funding to these neighboring counties.

"This is something that I have always wanted to pursue," Smith, who will con-

tinue to operate his local law firm if elected, said. "I am not a professional politician. I am here to represent the people."

"I think my valuable experiences as a

Redistricting impacts Hoke House district

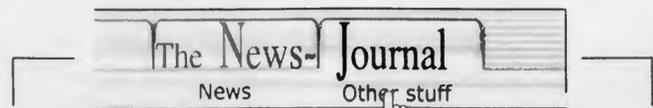
By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

With the presidential and gubernatorial races approaching November 2, Hoke's board of elections is faced mainly with local challenges because of a shifted filing period and primary date. The de-

sole practitioner of a law firm and small businessman in Raeford and serving on the school board will be taken to the state (See SMITH, page 7A)

bate centers around a redistricting feud on the state level between Republicans and the predominantly Democratic-controlled General Assembly.

The federal court has set a trial date of April 13 to consider the redistricting plans submitted by North Carolina legislators. (See REDISTRICTING, page 8A)



By KEN MACDONALD
General Manager

It's not every year we get eight inches of snow in Raeford. The storm last week was kind of like a 100-year flood. In terms of rarity, yes, but also in the sense that water was appearing in places it isn't supposed to.

The first such report here at the office was that water was pouring from the ceiling of the darkroom. That we abated by constructing a contraption with a funnel

and tubes — resembling a still — to divert the flow into a sink. Then little drips began appearing all over the building.

To the roof!
We discovered the snow was acting as a sponge, holding four inches of slush in place and the slush was looking for a way in the building.

Apparently several businesses downtown with flat roofs experienced the same indoor rainfall.

When the going gets tough, the tough (See OTHER STUFF, page 5A)



Food Lion opens

Sheriff Hubert Peterkin was among dignitaries on hand for the grand opening of the Food Lion at Hoke Landing this morning. He is shown with store manager Jackie Robinson.

Chief jailer quits after demotion

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Citing several serious incidents, Sheriff Hubert Peterkin demoted Chief Jailer Michael Sparks Friday. Sparks resigned yesterday.

Peterkin said after numerous incidents of a serious nature at the Hoke County Detention Center had gone unreported to him, there was no choice left.

Sparks subsequently resigned yesterday afternoon after a surprise visit by state inspectors from the (See JAILER, page 7A)