

# The News-Journal

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50¢

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RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

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## Judge orders state to send Hoke money Ruling brings hope of supreme court victory in educational suit

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

The Hoke Board of Education is "hopefully optimistic" a ruling Monday by Wake Superior Court Judge Howard Manning could be the prelude for the

state losing its appeal to the N.C. Supreme Court in a lawsuit filed by Hoke.

In the nearly 10-year legal battle fought by Hoke for at-risk children's education, the county achieved a victory two years ago. The state immediately appealed the verdict. Manning has finally told the state

it has to actually provide more money for Hoke, according to George McFarley, Hoke assistant school superintendent.

Prior to this recent ruling, mandates for improvements were ordered by Manning, yet he remained unconvinced funding played a primary role in the educational

inadequacies.

Monday, Manning sent a "bottom-line" letter directing State School Superintendent Mike Ward at the Department of Public Instruction to comply with his request. This, after the judge received a progress report from the Local Educa-

tion Agency Assistance Program about Hoke.

Manning did not place a particular dollar amount on the aid requested for Hoke.

Copies of the decree were also sent to (See MANNING, page 5A)

## SBI probes Tylertown Fire Dept.

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

A criminal investigation into allegations of misappropriation of funds at the Tylertown Volunteer Fire Department has been ordered by the Hoke District Attorney, according to Jerry Weaver, supervisor and agent-in-charge at the State Bureau of Investigation in Fayetteville.

According to county public record information, Tylertown has not submitted an annual audit to the county since 2000. The yearly audit is required because the volunteer fire department receives a fire district tax collected from citizens to operate each year. As the smallest fire unit in the county, Tylertown only covers portions of Doc Brown and June Johnson roads where the Raeford airport is located. It receives approximately \$29,000 per year from the county tax revenue to service its territory.

(See TYLERTOWN, page 7A)



Serving up green eggs 'n ham: Ann Shannon's McLaughlin School class celebrates Dr. Seuss with appropriate hats and books.

### This Week



Animal shelter has glut of unwanted pets page 1B

Hoke drug kingpin convicted page 7A

Commissioners make pact on prayer page 7A

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Hoke's top stories are on the web; send us stories, subscribe

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## Rezoning bid adjacent to Camp Rockfish seen as threat

By Victoriana Summers  
Staff writer

Some Hoke and Cumberland land preservationists are taking a stand against a Rockfish property owner who wants to bring commercial progress to the Rockfish-Davis Bridge communities.

Hector Davis wants his land rezoned highway commercial next to Camp Rockfish, which was founded by the United Methodist Church more than 30 years ago. A non-profit retreat nestled on 450 acres

of wilderness in Hoke and Cumberland counties, the Rockfish Outdoor Center is known as a natural "treasure" in North Carolina. It attracts thousands of visitors

to Hoke County each year, and some are worried commercial encroachment may threaten the outdoor sanctuary.

A Dollar General Store, the first outside

of Raeford's city limit, is currently under construction on Davis Bridge Road in that northeast quadrant of the county. It is being built next to the unpaved Camp Rockfish Road. Rockfish Creek, home to rare plant species not found anywhere else in the world, flows through Camp Rockfish. Upchurch's Pond, a scenic lake is wedged near the middle of the camp's conference center and dining hall.

Located directly behind the Dollar General's site are five more lots owned by (See CAMP ROCKFISH, page 4A)

"I am concerned that you might be willing to sacrifice the long-term viability of this treasure of Hoke County for a few, short-lived commercial tax dollars."

The Rev. Marty J. Cauley

## Twenty story artistic tower to compliment city streetscape



The tower's top.

By ANDY ZOFFAGIN  
Staff intern

The same guy who sold a \$1 million, 400-foot tower to Fayetteville has convinced Raeford to replace the old Raeford Hotel with a slightly smaller and less expensive version.

"The tower will compliment our new streetscape wonderfully," said Knott A. Klew, a member of the Downtown Revitalization Committee. "It will be even brighter than Fayetteville's and we think it will attract tourists like moths."

He said a representative of TRU, known in the industry as "Towers-R Us", designed the Raeford project to soar to a height of 220 feet and cost only \$900,000.

To offset the cost of the project, an artist designed the tower to incorporate a popular Raeford figure to tower above the town. Some funding was then obtained from the N.C. Turkey Festival. Most of

the rest of the cost will come from Critical Needs education funding, said Klew. He said weather instruments will be located in the top of the tower and it will therefore be educational.

The cost of the tower does not include demolition of the hotel.

Demolition should begin in a few weeks. Historic preservationists have delayed the project as they attempt to preserve the artwork located along the building's

front wall.

The tower will be constructed mostly of aluminum and will be illuminated by lights that will be visible in space, said Klew.

It will also house communications equipment for the new SBI branch office which will locate here sometime next year.

The bureau is planning the office to facilitate the frequent investigations in Hoke County.



By KEN MACDONALD  
General Manager

Some helpful advice for the weekend. Don't forget to turn your clock ahead an hour before you go to bed Saturday night. If you've been getting up around 6 each morning, then try this. Turn your clock upside down before bed; in the morning, you'll think managed to sleep until 12:30 p.m. (That doesn't work with digital clocks.)[]

Al, "your maintenance supply guy," called again this week with a new twist on trying to sell toner cartridges and toilet paper by phone.

"Hey, Keeeee, this is Al, your maintenance supply guy."

"Uh huh."

"Look, I've got great news!"

(So far, nothing new here.)

I didn't really have time to talk to Al, and I knew the one toner cartridge we buy every six months wasn't worth the (See OTHER STUFF, page 3A)



A "beacon in the night," a huge tower downtown will call to tourists.