

# The News-Journal

If it happened, it's news to us

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RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

Wednesday, April 4, 2012

## \$14 million wastewater plant clears hurdle

By CATHARIN SHEPARD  
Staff writer

After years of development, Hoke County's wastewater treatment plant cleared a hurdle this week as a United States Department of Agriculture official announced available funding for the \$14 million facility.

Steve Smith with the USDA Rural Development Center's regional office presented commissioners with an overview of the proposed terms and conditions for the funding during the board meeting Monday. A \$10.7 million loan and \$2 million grant from the USDA would join a zero-percent interest \$1.6 million loan from Lumbee River EMC to back the

project. The larger loan will have at maximum a 2.75 percent interest rate, down from the 3.25 percent interest rate officials expected just a month ago. If the rate drops even lower between now and when the paperwork is signed, the county will get the benefit of the lower rate, officials said.

Officials aren't sure yet how much the county will have to pay each year for the debt service on the loans, but the lower interest rate on the largest loan will save the county taxpayers a lot of money over the repayment period, County Manager Tim Johnson said. Additionally, the \$2 million grant is more than twice the amount the county originally (See WASTEWATER, page 8A)

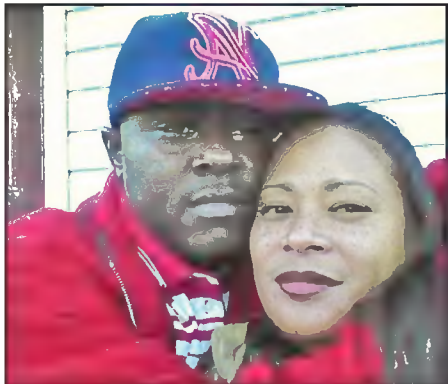
## 911 recording shows horror of murder

Child: 'Are you going to die?'  
Mom: 'I am.'

By CATHARIN SHEPARD  
Staff writer

The man accused of fatally shooting a couple in front of children last month will face additional charges, law enforcement officials said.

John Oliver Hill Jr., 48, was charged with two counts of first-degree murder in the shooting deaths of Tommy Charles Brown and Thalia Mook of 110 TC Jones Road. Witnesses told investigators that Hill walked across the street from his home on Philippi Church Road onto the family's property and shot Brown from behind and then shot Mook when she came out of the house onto the front porch, according to an affidavit filed



Brown and Mook

in court.

Brown was pronounced dead on arriving at Cape Fear Valley Medical Center and Mook died the next day after undergoing emergency

surgery. Officials said more charges are pending in the case against Hill.

Hill is set to appear in court April 11, according to a courthouse schedule.

The Hoke County Emergency Communications Center last week released a recording of a 911 call. In part of the recording, a child screams repeatedly for his mother. At one point the child asked his mother if she was going to die, and she replied, "I am."

Documents filed at the Hoke County Courthouse (See MURDER, page 6A)



Thousands braved the carnival rides at the first ever Hokee Pokee barbecue contest. Left, Morris Locklear tries to win his daughter a stuffed toy.

## Carnival well-received by thousands

By CATHARIN SHEPARD  
Staff writer

The first annual Hokee Pokee Barbecue Festival and Carnival faced a spring downpour Saturday but crowds turned out in full force for the weekend after the skies cleared.

Organizers estimated between 15,000 and 17,000 people stopped by to try the barbecue, hop on a ride or carry a tune on the karaoke stage during the event that ran from

Wednesday through Sunday.

"It was very successful, we had big crowds of people that enjoyed particularly the barbecue cook-off competition," festival director Hubert Bullard said. "It was dampened a little bit by weather Saturday morning but we sold a lot of barbecue to a lot of hungry people, and they said it was some of the best barbecue they've ever eaten."

The competition judges also praised the event for being (See CARNIVAL, page 6A)

## Hoke's homeless efforts may get \$52,000

Hoke County's homeless efforts may have attracted more than \$50,000 in aid. After participating for the first time in North Carolina's Point-in-Time count of the homeless, Hoke County Coalition Against Homelessness

joined four other counties in a program called Balance of State, thus qualifying HCCAH for state funding. This year Hoke County helping groups may receive more than \$52,000.

Hoke is now under the

same umbrella as Anson, Richmond, Moore and Montgomery counties. AHRMM, as the five-county group is called, met recently at the Hoke County Public Library. Emila Sutton, head of the Balance of State Continuum

of Care, outlined three "A's," keys to ending homelessness, as affordable housing, appropriate services and adequate income. The ultimate goal is to go from managing homelessness to ending homelessness.

HCCAH's immediate goal is a transition home for women and children. The state stipulates that the state money cannot be spent to build a dwelling for housing the homeless. (See HOMELESS, page 8A)

## New banquet will honor Hoke sheriff's deputies

By CATHARIN SHEPARD  
Staff writer

Hoke County law enforcement officers, detention officers and some civilians

will receive awards for their service to the community this month at the county's inaugural law enforcement awards banquet, presented by the Hoke County Sheriff's

Office.

The event, set for April 20 and hosted by Gilbert Baez, will present awards for meritorious conduct, longevity, lifesaving actions

and others, including an Officer of the Year award. The banquet is open to the public and tickets are available for \$25 per person by contacting the Sheriff's Office. The

awards presentation will take place at 6:30 p.m. at the Matthew Rouse Jr. Community Resource Center on Pittman Grove Church Road.

(See BANQUET, page 8A)

## OTHER STUFF

By KEN MACDONALD

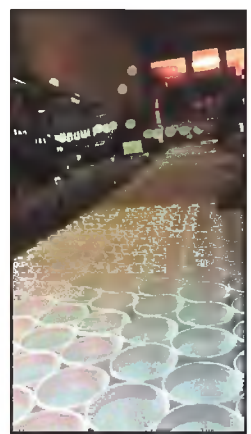
You're a high school administrator, and you arrive to work Monday morning at 0-dark-30, and there before you are thousands of foam cups and plates arranged neatly on the grounds and steps and walls of your school. Then you remember—yesterday was April Fool's Day.

Vandalism or harmless prank?

It's a debate that surfaces from time to time, like (See OTHER STUFF, page 5A)



Maybe the best April Fool's joke to plague a Hoke school ever. The senior miscreants are "doing the time" now for it, having been "sentenced" to chores and in-school suspension.



### This Week



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