

# The News-Journal

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RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

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## Hoke strongly supports amendment Leach, Wright top vote-getters in commission race, 25 percent go to polls

By CATHARIN SHEPARD  
Staff writer

Hoke County voters overwhelmingly supported Amendment One, and resoundingly backed James Leach and Bobby Wright in their bids for reelection to the Hoke Board of Commissioners.

Nearly a quarter of Hoke County's regis-

tered voters turned out Tuesday to cast ballots in local, state and national primary races.

Hoke County commission incumbents James Leach and Bobby Wright received the most votes in the Democrat primary for commissioner. Leach received 2,517 votes and Wright 2,255 votes, while challengers Freddie McPhaul received 1,279 votes and Lonnie Baldwin received 1,332 votes. Leach

and Wright will go on to the fall election where they will face Republican candidates John Harry and Elda Thacker.

Leach thanked voters for supporting him in his bid for office.

"I will certainly do my best and do all I can for the citizens of Hoke County," he said.

Wright also thanked the citizens who voted for him and asked for their support in the fall.

"We're trying to do a good job, we're trying to bring jobs to Hoke County," he said.

Hoke County voters voted nearly two to one in favor of Amendment One vote that would add language to the state constitution defining marriage as between one man and one woman. The final count for Hoke was 4,366 or 65 percent in favor and 2,344 or 35 percent against.

(See ELECTION, page 10A)



A Cessna that lost power shortly after takeoff takes the less glamorous but safe route home. (Jim Hawthorn photo)

## Skydivers, pilot safe after plane loses power

By CATHARIN SHEPARD  
Staff writer

A skydiving group performing for a Harley Davidson event in Cumberland County had to leave the airplane earlier than expected Saturday when the small Cessna they were flying in suddenly lost power.

The four skydivers, all former members of the Golden Knights, and the single-engine airplane's pilot were not hurt, Raeford P.K. Airport manager Gene Thacker said. The plane had taken off moments before and was at about 1,100 or 1,200 feet when it lost power. The pilot told the four skydivers to exit the plane.

"They jumped and the pilot put it in the cotton field," Thacker said.

The pilot was able to perform a "dead stick" landing in

a field near Scull Road. The skydivers landed in another nearby field.

The pilot didn't want to try flying the plane back to the airport after the landing, so the State Highway Patrol and local firemen provided an escort to help taxi the plane to the hangar. From there, mechanics went over the plane and ultimately the pilot flew it back to Southern Pines, where the airplane is based.

This wasn't the first time in the airport's 40-year history that a plane has had a problem, Thacker said.

But speaking as a pilot himself, the pilot flying the Cessna did everything right in the emergency situation, Thacker said.

"The first thing you look for is a place to put it without killing yourself or doing damage to someone else," he said.

(See PLANE, page 7A)

## Pregnant teacher from Hoke killed

Found shot to death in Indiana town

By CATHARIN SHEPARD  
Staff writer

A pregnant schoolteacher originally from Hoke County was fatally shot last week near her Indiana home.

Tonawanda Thompson of Richmond, Indiana was two weeks from her due date and two days from her 33rd birthday when her 13-year-old daughter found her dead April 30, according to Thompson's aunt, local school board member Della



Thompson Maynor

Maynor.

"This is the most awful thing that's ever happened to my family,"

Maynor

said.

An autopsy showed Thompson, who was found in her SUV about 200 feet from her home, was shot multiple

(See MURDER, page 9A)

## Child clings to life after pool accident

18-month-old wandered from house

An 18-month-old child is in critical condition after he nearly drowned Monday morning in a backyard pool, according to the Hoke County Sheriff's Office.

The toddler was initially reported missing from a home on Plaza Drive near the Hoke/Cumberland county line about 11:30 a.m. The boy's mother Dawn Schulte discovered her son in the family's pool while she was still on the telephone with emergency services, accord-

ing to reports. Schulte dove into the pool and pulled her child out.

The toddler had no pulse and was not breathing when help arrived. Emergency responders performed CPR on the child and were able to revive him while transporting him to Cape Fear Valley Medical Center.

The Hoke County Sheriff's Office Detective Division and the Hoke County Department of Social

(See ACCIDENT, page 10A)

### This Week



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## SandHoke debaters prove small-town mettle

Going up against state's top schools, one student emerges as champ

By CATHARIN SHEPARD  
Staff writer



The debate team at its March competition—just practicing.

Seven years ago SandHoke Early College High School didn't even exist, let alone have a speech and debate team capable of taking on some of the toughest young competitors in North Carolina.

Six years ago coach Marciarose Long was just putting up flyers advertising the first meeting of the speech and debate club, even as she was still settling in to teach Shakespeare to the new school's first-generation college students.

The team was young and inexperienced those first few seasons. Many of the incoming members had never debated before. Even so, the SandHoke students started challenging debaters from high-profile schools in big counties like Wake, Orange and Mecklenburg. Then they started winning.

SandHoke won local competitions at first and then district meets. Some students even took prizes in national-level matches. In a short time, the SandHoke debate team started to carry some weight in the debate

(See DEBATERS, page 4A)

## OTHER STUFF

By KEN MACDONALD

I've been trying to figure out the ins and outs of my impending role of becoming the grandfather of a baby girl in June.

The role of the dad of a girl is simple—threaten boys, give navigational instructions and threaten boys.

Near as I can tell, all grandfathers have to do is spoil their grandchildren and send them home.

Maybe have a laugh or two at the parents' expense.

Those seem to be the roles of grandmothers too. But while

(See OTHER STUFF, page 10A)

## 28 more hospital beds in play

By CATHARIN SHEPARD  
Staff writer

Officials responsible for the State Medical Facilities Plan recently allocated 28 more hospital beds for the Cumberland/Hoke area, and Cape Fear Valley Health System and FirstHealth of the Carolinas both plan to compete for the right to use them.

A month after the two hospital systems agreed to drop their appeals so both may

build facilities in Hoke County, Cape Fear Valley and FirstHealth have both said they plan to apply to the state for the additional 28 beds. FirstHealth would put the beds in its 8-bed facility planned for Hoke County, while Cape Fear Valley would use the beds to ease congestion in its Cumberland County facility.

This is the second time in the last year that the two hospital systems have battled over additional hospital beds allocated by the

(See HOSPITALS, page 9A)

