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Ethanol plant sale possible by March

Owners say \$100 million plant may go for less than \$15 million, seek tax break



The plant, under construction in 2010.

BY CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

A potential buyer could purchase the former Clean Burn Fuels ethanol plant next year for a fraction of the cost it took to build it.

A buyer might close on the ethanol plant by March 2014, likely at a price of \$15 million or less, according to representatives with plant owner CBF Holdings LLC. Attorney Sandy Sands and holding company general manager Joel Britt revealed the news of

the potential sale Monday night while speaking with the Hoke County Board of Commissioners about the ethanol plant's assessed tax value.

"We are working with a buyer, and we feel like it's a very good group. They're going to be a great neighbor for Hoke County. That purchase price is somewhere south of \$15 million," Britt said.

Sands also commented on the possibility of selling the plant.

"We hope and (are) keeping our fingers crossed that there may be the

possibility to have somebody else relocated in that facility and I am at liberty to say that the sale price on that would be somewhere south of \$15 million," he said.

The ethanol plant cost over \$100 million to build and operated for just a few months before it shut down in March 2011. Clean Burn Fuels declared bankruptcy in April 2011.

The plant went into foreclosure and in August 2011 sold at auction to the major lien holder for \$34.5 million.

(See ETHANOL, page 6A)



Rockin' Runners

Runners dashed down Magnolia Street Saturday morning for the Rockfish Hoke Elementary 5K "Rockin' Raven Run" race. Hundreds of students, their family members, teachers and other participants turned out to race through downtown Raeford, many pushing strollers or jogging along with their dogs. The event was sponsored by the Ravens on the Run running club at the elementary school. (Catharin Shepard photo)

2 found hiding in yard, arrested



McLean Parker

Deputies with the Hoke County Sheriff's Office arrested two men last week on burglary charges.

Investigators were called to a breaking and entering in progress on the 100 block of Seagull Drive.

A caller told a 911 dispatcher that she could see two men breaking into the house of her neighbor, Gwendolyn Jones. Deputies were able to speak with the caller, who reported that the two suspects were hiding in her backyard and also gave a physical description of the suspects.

Officers arrested Trevonte Parker, 17, and Keshandre M. McLean, 19, no addresses provided, on charges of second-degree burglary, according to a press release from the Sheriff's Office.

Both suspects were held in the Hoke County Detention Center under \$5,000 secured bonds.

School board elects officers

BY CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

The Hoke County Board of Education named its new officers for 2014 and recognized local students and a coach for their achievements.

The board members unanimously elected Irish Pickett to serve another one-year term as the chairwoman of the board. The board also selected member Barbara Buie to serve a one-year term as the vice chairwoman. The board select their new officers every year in December.

The school board recognized eight children in Hoke schools who participated and won awards in the Farm (See SCHOOL BOARD, page 4A)

This Week



Trekkers reach South Pole
Page 1B

East sewer system gets needed grant infusion

BY CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

Hoke County will receive even more grant money than anticipated to pay for the long-planned wastewater treatment plant, the

United States Department of Agriculture announced last week.

With the addition of a \$2.5 million grant from the USDA's Water and Waste Disposal Loan and Grant Program, the county will

now receive a total of \$4.5 million in grant funding to help pay for the \$18 million treatment plant system.

"The good news is we got \$4.5 million in grants," County Manager Tim Johnson said.

The additional funding is a good thing for the county because the bids came in higher than expected and left officials looking for more money to cover the cost, he said.

"Originally it looked like

we were going to get \$2 million in grants on that, so when the bids came in higher than what we were given to believe they were going to be from the engineer groups, we had to (See GRANTS, page 4A)

OTHER STUFF

BY KEN MACDONALD

On this Christmas trip to Mexico, I was in the Dallas airport trying to unfold these long legs from the seemingly permanent sitting position they were in. Curious by nature, I followed a corridor from the terminal and walked, expecting I'd soon hit a dead end. But no, it snaked this way and that, stretching at least a mile until it deposited me into C terminal. But what's this? A Christmas fantasy land had been constructed, like a scene from the Wizard of Oz, but at Christmas. And there were dozens of people dressed as elves lined up at the gate, forming two parallel lines like a big welcome party. Then they began hooping and hollering and ringing gongs and blowing whistles, and children emerged from the gate, a little timid, but all smiles. I sat down to watch the spectacle and used my phone to look up "Snowball Express," the name emblazoned on the elves' t-shirts.

(See OTHER STUFF, page 6A)



Veteran of the Year

George Balch (with plaque) was awarded the first annual Veteran of the Year by Hoke County Commissioners at night's meeting. With him (left to right) are Willie McCaskill, VFW Post 10, and commissioners Bobby Wright, Ellen McNeill, Jean Powell, Tony Hunt and James Leach. (Photo by Hal Nunn)

- Calendar 2B
- Classifieds 5B
- Deaths 3A
- Editorials 2A
- Legals 4B
- Sports 5A
- Worship 2B



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