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RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

Wednesday, August 19, 2015

County hires Edens as manager No contract, no salary set, board puts off details for later

BY CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

The Hoke County Board of Commissioners voted four to one Monday night to hire Interim County Manager Letitia Edens to fill the manager's position full-time.

The county board chose not to advertise the job opening or interview other candidates, and voted to hire Edens without having a contract in place. The motion to hire her included a requirement that Edens,

Chairman James Leach and County Attorney Grady Hunt meet later to negotiate her contract, which will be brought before the board for consideration at an upcoming meeting.

Information about the new county manager's salary and other terms of employment won't be available until a contract is finalized. Leach mentioned offering \$10,000 in moving expenses for Edens to move into Hoke County, which is the same amount offered to former County Manager

Tim Johnson when he first took the job, officials said.

Commissioner Harry Southerland said he believed in Edens' competence and capabilities and felt that she would be an excellent county manager.

"I know there may be some concern about going out and possibly doing some interviewing and looking at other candidates, but she's been doing the job for the last seven months and, prior to that, she was on the job six months prior to this in the

(assistant) county manager's role, plus her years of service in county government," he said. "I don't necessarily see that there's a need to go out and maybe do some interviews when I think that we've got someone that's in-house that's doing an excellent job, and I'd like to see her be promoted to county manager, and I'm willing to put that in the form of a motion if I have to tonight."

Commissioner Bobby Wright suggested having something in writing before hiring (See *MANAGER*, page 6)



Left: Hoke sheriff's deputies attend to victims (Ken MacDonald photo). Above, a truck burns after its driver escapes. (Sherry Sanders photo)

Wreck on N.C. 211 kills 3 in Lumberton family

BY CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

A former Robeson County commissioner and his wife and son were killed Monday in a wreck with an allegedly impaired driver on N.C. 211 near Shiloh Presbyterian Church.

John "Tommy" Wellington, 84, his

wife Joyce Wellington, 69, and son James Douglas Wellington, 55, all of Lumberton, were killed in the head-on crash that happened around noon about five miles outside of Raeford, according to the North Carolina State Highway Patrol. Joyce Wellington's sister, 55-year-old Gail Prescott, survived the crash and at last report was in stable condition at FirstHealth Moore

Regional Hospital.

Authorities suspect that the driver faulted with the wreck, 31-year-old Matthew Allen English of Pinehurst, was driving under the influence. English survived the wreck and was arrested on charges of driving under the influence, careless and reckless driving and driving left of center. He will likely also face criminal charges

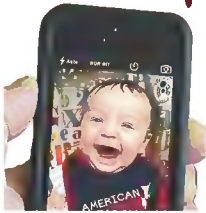
in the Wellingtons' deaths, according to officials.

"During the process of talking with the assistant (district attorney), further charges are pending," North Carolina Highway Patrol Troop H spokesperson Trooper John Burgin said.

Sherry Sanders of Raeford was driving (See *FATALITIES*, page 6)

This Week

Oh Snap!



Grand Prize Winner
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Teen court funding denied over Facebook post Commissioner says next director can request needed money again

BY CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

Funding for a local program meant to help juvenile offenders is in question after some county leaders reportedly received complaints from citizens upset over a friends-only Facebook post an organizer made after she resigned from her position for unrelated reasons.

Suzanne Maness, founder and executive director of Called Into Action, was working on securing funding that would support the Teen Court program. The nonprofit Called Into Action, which Maness started three years ago, works with at-risk youth and young people seeking volunteer opportunities. The Teen Court program

offers alternatives for young offenders who have committed a misdemeanor offense for the first time.

Maness said she resigned from Called Into Action last week because of the struggles of getting funding and due to a lack of support from volunteers and the community.

"I felt there was a lack of support from the board and the community," she said.

The organization had been promised funding from the state, but it was contingent on matching funding from a local source. Maness tried to get on the Hoke County Board of Commissioners' agenda to seek the county's help in getting the matching funding to pay for the programs, after the city of Raeford declined to provide the ap-

I am tired of black lives matter activists and the NAACP and all the other black organizations trying to take over. Why does it have to be about race ALL the time? What happen to compassion for all people and to love your neighbor? These organizations just want to cause division between the races instead of solve racial issues.

Screen shot of Facebook post that Commissioner Allen Thomas says prompted citizen complaints.

proximately \$10,000 in matching funds. However, she was taken off the first meeting in August after Commission Chairman James Leach said he wanted to get some more information, Maness said. She was on the agenda for the meeting (See *FACEBOOK POST*, page 7)

Walking track light repair due

Back by popular demand—lighting at the McLauchlin Park walking track.

The City of Raeford's Duke Energy account representative, David McNeill, told city officials that repair to the underground power lines is scheduled for Saturday, August 22.

Based on information from Public Works Director Travis Sutherland, the initial delay was caused by a discrepancy in the light pole numbering scheme.

The track is located behind McLauchlin Elementary School.

Office flood forces out Hoke Farm Services

BY CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

Concern over water damage from a plumbing problem has forced the local branch of the Farm

Services Agency to temporarily move to Cumberland County.

As of August 14, people seeking services from the FSA will have to go to the (See *FSA*, page 7)



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