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Cool air greets returning school children

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

Students' first day back at Sandy Grove and Rockfish Hoke elementary schools started off a lot cooler than the day in June when they said farewell to their teachers for the summer.

"Today, 600 students are in this school and it's a hot, humid day,

and it's comfortable in here," Brady Services engineering director Andy Nightengale said.

The two elementary schools, which suffered from old and failing chiller systems that left children and adults sweltering in the heat, got new chillers and a lot more this summer as part of a system-wide energy performance contracting project meant to reduce the county

schools' utility bills. Brady Services, the engineering firm the Hoke County Board of Education selected to perform the work, spent the summer months getting the biggest parts of the project out of the way first before students returned.

The idea behind energy performance contracting is to look at how a building is using energy and figure out if newer, more energy-

efficient equipment would save enough money to make it worth replacing the old systems, Brady Services president Jim Brady said.

"We go in and we take a school system, for example, and we do very deep, detailed diagnostics and energy-related inspections. We look at utility span, we look at water consumption, we look at gas or fuel (See *ENERGY*, page 10)



Facilities director Charles Tapp with a chiller.



Hawk Eye Elementary School teachers and staff donned hats and face paint Friday to celebrate their school at the annual school system convocation at Sandy Grove Middle School. (Catharin Shepard photo)

'Celebrate now, hard work begins Monday'

Convocation was Friday

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

Red-and-white mohawks, skull-and-crossbones bandanas and at least one rapping principal helped get Hoke County teachers ready to start the school year at the annual school system convocation last week.

"I'm not going to quit my day job," Don Steed Elementary Principal Kim Gray joked, before premiering her school's music video for hundreds of Hoke County teachers gathered at the event.

The convocation gave principals a chance to thank their staff members, introduce new teachers and show off what their schools are all about. Hawk Eye Elementary teachers got into the spirit with face paint and giant letters spelling out their school's name, while McLauchlin Elementary's Mustang teachers were wearing pirate gear. Grey and her staff (See *BACK TO WORK*, page 6)

This Week

Soldier charged with sex offense
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Not too late to register to vote
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Huffs receive state award
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Former commissioner Hodges dies



Jean Hodges

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

Local entrepreneur, civic leader and volunteer Jean Hodges, who was the second woman to ever serve on the Hoke County Board of Commissioners and the first to chair it, died Sunday.

Hodges, from Texas, became a fixture of the Hoke

County community after moving to Raeford in 1974 and was later elected to the county's governing board.

Tom Howell, owner of Howell Drug, served on the county commission with Hodges in the 1990s. She was "very personable" and a staunch advocate for the causes she was involved in, he (See *HODGES*, page 6)

Computer betrays alleged thief

Investigators with the Hoke County Sheriff's Office have arrested a man in connection with a home break-in last November.

Deputies arrested Ronnie Gibson, 43, of the 500 block of Prospect Avenue in Raeford on a charge of possession of stolen property. He was arrested August 22 and held under a \$25,000 unsecured bond.

Authorities called to the

home of Neisha Witherspoon on the 1000 block of Hunters Run November 13, 2014 were told that someone broke into her residence.

Witherspoon later reported that an Apple computer had been stolen from her home.

Authorities named Gibson as a suspect after he allegedly tried to access the computer and change the password.

OTHER STUFF

By KEN MACDONALD

What's way high up, and the faster it spins the more likely it is to collide with other objects? If you guessed something from Astronomy, like an asteroid, you lose; it's this guy, at a contra dance.

I'll save you the trouble of Googling that—it comes from contra—Nicaraguan counterrevolutionaries, and dance, evade issues by going around them. In essence it's a room full of sweaty people mostly spinning into each other, more or less to the beat of fiddlers (I call them a contra-band). The idea is for the I'll-charitably-call-us-dancers to follow the instructions of a caller and perform maneuvers with partners and "neighbors"—other guys' partners, who in my case, seemed to wish they hadn't drifted into my neighborhood.

The appeal for me, Saturday night, was there would be (See *OTHER STUFF*, page 6)



Oops

Michael McDonald and Tyler Kussman got tangled up during a Legends Series trace at Rockfish Speedway Saturday. Everything worked out fine and both cars were able to continue. More, page 5. (Glen Young photo)

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