

The News-Journal

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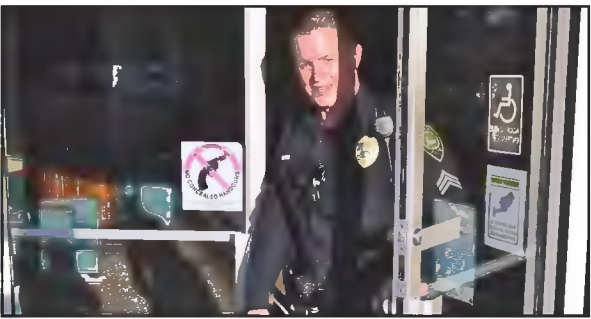
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RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

Wednesday, April 11, 2018

Investigation coming to a close?

SBI spokesperson says year-old-plus case involving county nears end



A police officer keeps people out during an S.B.I. raid of county offices. (File photo)

BY CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

While the State Bureau of Investigation probe of county departments into alleged time card fraud is still ongoing, it could be coming to a close sooner rather than later, according to an SBI spokesperson.

"The investigation is still ongoing, but getting close to the end," Patty McQuillan of the North Carolina Department of Public Safety said in an email last week.

The investigation has been underway for more than a year. However, no charges have been filed. McQuillan reported earlier this year that agents

continue actively investigating. "The agents are doing interviews and they're keeping the district attorney updated on their progress, so nothing really to report at this time," she said in February.

The SBI typically does not release information about ongoing investigations, but should any charges be filed, that infor-

mation would be public. The search warrants in the case remain sealed by a judge.

The investigation became public knowledge February 20, 2017 when SBI agents executed search warrants at the Hoke County government offices in the Pratt Building in connection with alleged time card (See SBI, page 4)

Sheriff's office seizes 240 computers in raids

BY CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer



Deputies cart out computers allegedly used in illegal gambling at Club Pond Skill Internet Café Monday. (Catharin Shepard photo)

The Hoke County Sheriff's Office seized more than 240 computers allegedly used for illegal electronic gambling Monday afternoon in a simultaneous raid that shut down three alleged gambling parlors.

Investigators removed 175 of the computers from Club Pond Skill Internet Café operated at the shopping center near Walmart at the intersection of U.S. 401 and Club Pond Road, according to authorities. Officers also took 66 of the machines from Triple S Bingo and EZ, located in Hillcrest Plaza shopping center located near the intersection of U.S. 401 Business and Rockfish Road.

Electronic gambling has been the subject of legal battles for years in North Carolina. At the moment most setups are considered illegal, Peterkin said.

"Right now until somebody tells us different, we're going to enforce the law," he said.

The Hoke Sheriff's Office received a high volume of complaints from the community about the gambling parlors, with people citing issues such as an increase in crime and concerns about safety.

"They're near schools, churches...this has been a nuisance to the community," Peterkin said. Deputies have also responded to a number of recent armed robberies at some of the parlors.

(See VIDEO GAMBLING, page 4)

All 9 candidates for Hoke Commission share views

We put 10 questions to those running for commissioner, here are their responses in their own words



Jones

Frump

Hunt

Little

McMillan

Overby

Poole

Southerland

Thomas

Nine people are vying for three seats up for election this year on the Hoke County Board of Commissioners, marking one of the larger fields of candidates Hoke voters have had to choose from in recent years.

Among those nine are incumbent Commissioners Tony Hunt and Allen Thomas and Vice Chairman Harry Southerland, all Democrats;

Democrat candidates Angela Carter Jones, Therman Little, Terrell McMillan and Graham Poole; and Republican candidates David Frump and Clifford Overby.

In just a few weeks, voters will go to the polls for the primary election to narrow the field of Democrat candidates for commissioner from seven to three. The three Democrat candi-

dates chosen during the primary will go on to face Frump and Overby in the General Election in November. Frump and Overby will not be on the May primary ballot because not enough candidates filed to run as Republicans to require a Republican primary election this year.

To help voters learn more about the candidates' views on topics of

local interest, *The News-Journal* sent out questionnaires to each of the nine candidates, with some of the questions drawn from suggestions provided from readers on Facebook.

The commission candidates' answers appear here, and will also be made available online at thenews-journal.com.

Early voting for the May primary election begins April 19 and runs through May 5.

Early voting locations include the Board of Elections at 227 North Main Street in Raeford and the Rockfish Community Center at 2749 Lindsay Road. The primary election will be held Tuesday, May 8.

(See CANDIDATES, page 3)

18-year-old murdered in Fayetteville

A young man from Raeford died Sunday after being shot inside his car in Fayetteville, and authorities are seeking the public's help in finding a person of interest in the case.

Officers responding to reports of a shooting near the intersection of Cliffdale Road and South Reilly Road in Fayetteville found Karon Howard, 18, of Raeford inside his car suffering from a gunshot wound, according to a police report from Officer J.K. Breach of the Fayetteville Police Department. First responders took Howard to Cape Fear Val-

ley Medical Center, where he was admitted in critical condition and later died of his injuries.

The case is being handled as a murder investigation, according to Fayetteville police. Authorities have put out a call to the public seeking any information about the fatal shooting, and Crimestoppers is offering a cash reward of up to \$1,000 for information that leads to an arrest in the case.

The Fayetteville Police Department is looking a person of interest in the homicide (See MURDER, page 4)

OTHER STUFF

BY KEN MACDONALD

Seriously, people. Who keeps church bulletins from 1970?

I received a copy of one in the mail, apparently to refute my assertion in a previous column that organist Josef Privette refused to play Amazing Grace on Raeford Presbyterian Church's pipe organ, saying the tune wasn't befitting of such a magnificent instrument.

The bulletin was from Sunday, March 8, 1970, during Mr. Privette's tenure. I know what you're thinking. Why (See OTHER STUFF, page 16)

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