

Murder for hire plot nixed

Federal undercover officer posed as hit man to aid in arrest

By TIM CHANDLER
Courier-Times Editor
tchandler@roxboro-courier.com

A Person County man was arrested Thursday and charged with a felony count of solicitation of another to commit murder. Corleigh Dewitt Ragland, 52, of 322 Lawson Chapel Church

Rd. was jailed under a \$5 million secured bond following an investigation by the Person County Sheriff's Office, which was aided by federal authorities. Ragland allegedly sought to hire a "hit man" to murder his former girlfriend.

"Our investigation started from an anonymous tip," Sheriff

Dewey Jones said Friday. "We were very fortunate to be able to introduce an undercover officer off the tip we had and contact was made with [Ragland]."

Jones said his office received the tip "late Monday" and subsequently arranged assistance from the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)

Task Force.

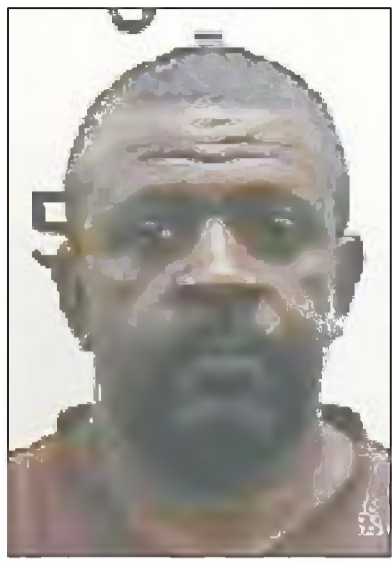
According to a sheriff's office incident report, the undercover officer posed as a "hired contract killer."

The officer made contact with Ragland on Tuesday and later set up a meeting with him on Thursday at Wal-Mart at 1049 Durham Rd.

The sheriff's incident report indicates Ragland and the undercover officer met for an hour in a vehicle. The meeting between the two was recorded on audio and video devices.

During the meeting, Ragland reportedly told the undercover

See COUNTY page A12



Corleigh D. Ragland

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS MARCH 13

Commission will receive BOE's funding request Monday night

By TIM CHANDLER
Courier-Times Editor
tchandler@roxboro-courier.com

The Person Board of County Commissioners and the Person County Board of Education are scheduled to meet in a special joint session Monday at 6 p.m.

The meeting will be held in the Person County Office Building Auditorium on Morgan Street.

"While the main issue on tap for Monday night is for the board of commissioners to receive the school board's fiscal year 2011-12 budget request, this upcoming budget year finds both of us — county government and the schools — in an uncertain and difficult fiscal situation," Person County Manager Heidi York said. "Neither of us know what the state will hand down to us in terms of funding reductions and additional funding responsibilities.

"I am hopeful that our partnership will allow us to be successful through these challenges with positive outcomes for us both," York added. "Monday night's meeting is the beginning of this important dialogue."

Person County Schools (PCS) Supt. Dr. Larry W. Cartner will share a PowerPoint presentation with commissioners Monday night.

In that presentation, Cartner notes that PCS "at the request of Person County government, [PCS has] developed a flat budget, requesting the same amount of funding as 2010-11.

"However," Cartner added, "this will mean that Person County Schools has been held to the same amount of funding for three consecutive years."

See COMMISSIONERS page A12



Phyllis Boatwright / C-T

CITY'S TOP WEIGHT LOSS LOSERS — The first place team in the City of Roxboro's Biggest Loser weight loss challenge consisted of (left to right) Kevin Dew, Tyler Solomon, Chad Lawson, Ronnie Carver, Tommy Epps and individual biggest loser Jason Beshears.

The city's biggest losers

Weight loss contest was part of wellness campaign

By PHYLLIS BOATWRIGHT
C-T Staff Writer
pboatwright@roxboro-courier.com

There has been some discord among City of Roxboro employees over the past few months, with members of different departments taunting each other and "talking smack," according to City Manager Jon Barlow.

The reason for the trash talk was a competition to see which team and individual could be the biggest losers in a weight-loss challenge.

The result was a city staff that's 697 pounds lighter than it was a couple of months ago.

Barlow said the 10 teams of six members traded barbs, but also encouraged each other to become more active and eat healthier as part of a wellness benefit the city's insurance carrier offers.

The city is insured through the N.C. League of Municipalities. The insurance offers free wellness screenings and assessments that include a detailed

synopsis of a participant's wellness and suggestions on how to improve health.

The city took the wellness suggestions a step further, Barlow said, and issued the challenge for a biggest loser weight loss contest similar to that on the TV show.

The program was voluntary, said Barlow, and was spearheaded by Planning Director Julie Maybee, Tom Alan, Chad Pergerson and Tony Kirby served as coordinators, along with Maybee.

The coordinators "came up with programs to try to get people to exercise," Barlow said, while making sure that improving fitness was also fun and interesting.

Participants were given the tools to track their daily activity and make better food choices.

"It was a bigger success than we thought it would be," Barlow said Thursday as he and Maybee were handing out certificates and checks to the biggest losers. The first, second and third place teams were awarded monetary prizes,

and the first-place team members will get an extra day off.

Barlow said the program, which cost the city about \$3,000, would result in a healthier and more productive work force due to less illness and injury. He said the city would see a reduction in medical claims, which would help to keep insurance costs lower.

He did admit that the program carried a hidden cost that he never considered. As Jason Beshears, the biggest individual loser, stepped up to receive his prizes for winning, Barlow chuckled at the loose-fitting uniform coveralls Beshears was wearing and said, "We're going to have to buy new uniforms to fit these guys."

In addition to presenting information about physical activity and nutrition, Maybee said she and her fellow coordinators held lunch and learn sessions for employees that covered topics such as cholesterol reduction, reading food

See WEIGHT page A12

School board to receive report on NCVPS

By GREY PENTECOST
C-T Staff Writer
greypentecost@roxboro-courier.com

The Person County Board of Education will hold its regular monthly meeting on Monday, March 14 at 9 a.m. in the boardroom on the ground floor of the Person County Office Building, located at 304 S. Morgan St.

In observance of Local Government Day, Person High School students enrolled in civics and economics will attend the meeting.

A couple of presentations on the North Carolina Virtual Public School will be given, the first by NCVPS representatives Dr. Bryan Setser and Don

See SENATE back page

The Courier-Times "Weekly Poll"
This Week's Question:
Which area ACC team do you think has a better chance of winning the NCAA national championship?
 Duke
 North Carolina
Cast Your Vote On-Line At
www.roxboro-courier.com

Results of our latest poll:
Are you in favor of Senate Bill 8, which would eliminate the current cap on the number of charter schools in the state?
Yes, I favor Senate Bill 8 - 42%
I am in favor of lifting the current cap, but I am not in favor of Senate Bill 8 - 35%
I am not in favor of lifting the current cap - 19%
It doesn't matter to me - 2%

John Hill named director of PCRAPD

By GREY PENTECOST
C-T Staff Writer
greypentecost@roxboro-courier.com

After serving as supervisor of Mayo Park for the past 10 years, John Hill became the new director of the Person County Recreation Arts and Parks Department (PCRAPD) on March 1.

INSIDE Saturday

Agenda.....	A2	Boatwright.....	A2
Churches/Religion.....	B2-3	Classified.....	B6-7
Commentary.....	A5	Court.....	B5
Do You Know.....	A3	Editorial.....	A4
Education.....	A10	Inside NASCAR.....	A9
Legal Notices.....	B7	Lifestyle.....	A11
Looking Back.....	A3	Obituaries.....	A13
Person County Reads.....	B1	Realty Transfers.....	B5
Sports.....	A6-8	TV Listings.....	B4

Hill is looking forward to continuing to build community relationships and improve the opportunities offered through the department. He has worked for PCRAPD since 2000, when he became a park ranger at Mayo Park. In about a year he was promoted to park supervisor. While serving in that position, Hill wrote and received grants for the construction of an environmental education and community center and amphitheatre at the park.

Having built his career at Mayo Park, Hill said he wanted to take the same concept of teamwork that he fostered between the park and community, and apply it to his work with the entire department. He also looks forward to putting to use his education and expertise in the broader field of recreation, arts and parks.

County Manager Heidi York said of Hill, who has been serving as interim director of the PCRAPD since Mitch Pergerson retired from the position last fall, "He has brought a new level of enthusiasm and improved efficiencies for the department."

Hill is a native of Rutherford County, but has come to consider himself a Personian.

"I feel like I've been embraced by Person County citizens and I want to do right by them," commented Hill. "They made me feel like family and now I consider them family."

Hill earned a bachelor's degree in recreation and parks management from Appalachian State University, and got a minor in physical education from Gardner-Webb University. Last year he received his Master's of Public Administration from North Carolina Central University.

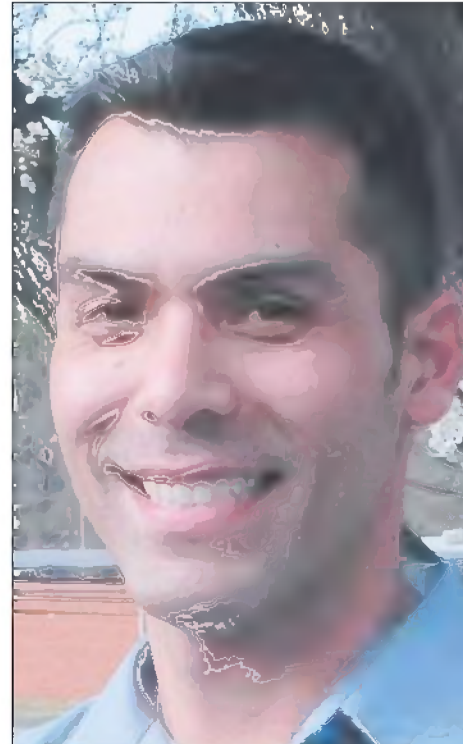
Hill's career path was influenced by his father, who worked for city and county parks and recreation departments. He grew up participating in parks and recreation programs, and said he enjoys and relates to every aspect of leisure studies, which ranges from athletics to performing arts to tourism.

Hill praised the "very capable staff" of the PCRAPD and the county's park system in general. He noted that Person County had one of the first recreation departments in the state. Hill stressed the importance of recreation, arts and parks programs for a county, saying that they have a "huge impact" on the livability of a place and the wellness of the population, and are also a big factor in county economics. He said that people want to move to and stay in places that offer opportunities for recreation. His job, he added, is to increase those

Hill praised the "very capable staff" of the PCRAPD and the county's park system in general. He noted that Person County had one of the first recreation departments in the state. Hill stressed the importance of recreation, arts and parks programs for a county, saying that they have a "huge impact" on the livability of a place and the wellness of the population, and are also a big factor in county economics. He said that people want to move to and stay in places that offer opportunities for recreation. His job, he added, is to increase those

Hill praised the "very capable staff" of the PCRAPD and the county's park system in general. He noted that Person County had one of the first recreation departments in the state. Hill stressed the importance of recreation, arts and parks programs for a county, saying that they have a "huge impact" on the livability of a place and the wellness of the population, and are also a big factor in county economics. He said that people want to move to and stay in places that offer opportunities for recreation. His job, he added, is to increase those

See JOHN page A12



John Hill