

## Around Town

By Sam C. Morris

The Christmas Season is with us once again and the big day is only one week away. This year things seem somewhat brighter than last year. Energy shortage, inflation and unemployment are still with us, but people are not as blue as this time last year. The economy seems to be getting somewhat better.

One reason the above is stated is because of two meetings I attended last week at local industrial plants. The picture officials of these plants painted was not rosy, but on the other hand they were so much brighter than what they were saying this time last year.

I will try to put across a point or two gathered at these meetings.

The first was a meeting at the Burlington Raeford and Dyeing Plants held Tuesday night, December 9. The plant managers of both plants stated that they were up to their necks in deep water the first part of the year and didn't think they would be able to swim but that things had become better as the year progressed.

At the present time over 1400 are now employed at the two plants. The market looks good and whatever changeover the plants had to make have been accomplished.

Management was of the highest praise for the employees who had fought out the fight during this recession period. Much credit was given to them in bringing the plants through.

So things are better at Burlington this year.

On Thursday of last week House of Raeford Processing plant had a meeting and explained the progress that had been made at that plant since becoming a cooperative.

Management at this plant was also looking toward a brighter side than a year ago.

The plant is now employing approximately 500 workers and the payroll is over 1 1/2 million dollars a year. As most everyone in the county knows, most of the workers are from this county.

The plant is running one shift (seven days a present) and processing more turkeys than before the installation of new machinery. I believe they are processing about 25,000 turkeys a day. They can process six million a year.

A tour of the plant was given to those present at the meeting and if you haven't ever been through a modern processing plant you should try to make plans to do so.

This is the most modern processing plant in the United States and the largest under one roof.

Earl Budd stated that the plant would welcome groups to see the new plant. So if you would contact him maybe it could be arranged for a tour.

So you can see from the above that the future for Hoke County workers looks brighter than last Christmas Season. Let's all hope for a brighter year in 1976.

## Toys, Food Needed

## Families Still Waiting To Be 'Adopted'

Response has been good to this year's appeal from the Department of Social Services for help to needy families to enjoy a real Christmas, but more families are still waiting to be "adopted".

An elderly woman living alone who has lost her eyesight and has no relatives will not be having a Christmas dinner this year. A food basket, or a cash donation sent to the Department to be used for purchasing a Christmas dinner, will help this oldster remember a happy holiday this year.

A father deserted five small children, leaving a mother who was in an accident and unable to work for the next few months, and there is no money to buy even one small toy for each child for Christmas.

Household items, cooking utensils, bedding, are especially needed by a family whose belongings were damaged in a fire. Three young children and an older teenager who has severe brain damage are cared

## No Christmas Bonuses For County Workers

Unlike city employees who will find a three per cent Christmas bonus in their paychecks this month and also take home a \$4 fruit basket, people who work for the county get nothing special to brighten the Yule, unless they chose not to participate in group insurance during the year.

County employees who do not take the group hospitalization plan offered by the county through Blue Cross-Blue Shield will get a \$40 check this month, county manager T.B. Lester said, but it is not any kind of a real Christmas bonus.

Lester said county workers have never gotten any kind of a Christmas bonus, although the idea has been brought up before.

"There's nothing set in the budget at this time. When you're going to give bonuses, you've got to have the money appropriated", he said.

Lester, also finance manager, said it would be unwise to take money not appropriated in this year's budget and use it for bonuses in the middle of the fiscal year, as he does not know how the final balance will come out until the end of the fiscal year, next June 30.

"I'll get the blame for it, if the money isn't there (at the end of year). Frankly, I can't see taking it now. If we're going to stay solvent, we've got to know that we'll have the money. You keep taking money out, and you'll end up like New York", he said.

Lester claimed the city's recent action to grant across-the-board pay increases effective Jan. 1 to workers, in addition to their regular Christmas bonuses, could not

be compared to the county's situation.

"If they've got the money, that's fine. The town has got water and sewer that we don't have, that brings in a lot of money. See, just two per cent in the tax collections could really hurt us, we're basing it on 92 per cent. And we won't know before January, as most of the taxes are paid this month, and the big ones they wait until the last day of the month.", he said.

Total number of county workers on the permanent payroll is about 65.

Giving each a \$20 Christmas bonus would come to about \$1,300 an amount which Lester said "could be managed, or even better than that", but he again emphasized it is an item that should already be appropriated in the budget, and not drawn from the contingency fund.

"You can't begin deficit spending, like New York", he said.

Besides bonuses for city employees, school teachers get an "end-of-the-year" bonus which comes in June.

The Hoke County Board of Education authorizes a \$100 bonus, paid out of federal discretionary funds, superintendent G. Raz Autry confirmed.

The bonus used to be \$200, but it has been decreased in a budget cutting action, Autry said.

County employees are not out of Christmas spirit, though. An elaborately decorated tree, and other decorations have been put up in the courthouse annex office building, paid for by the employees themselves.

## Athletic Equipment \$18,600 To Replace New

\$18,600 is what it would take to buy new equipment to replace the athletic equipment destroyed in the fire Dec. 1 at the Hoke High stadium, school superintendent G. Raz Autry said Monday.

The fire, believed to be deliberately set, has been under investigation by police and State Bureau of Investigation (SBI) agents, but no arrests have been made.

"The insurance adjusters haven't finalized it yet. I've given them a list, when everything was bought. The room itself was built by the vocational classes, and \$8,000 in materials went into it. Of course, there is no labor figured in that," Autry said.

Autry declined to speculate how much of the loss will be borne by the insurance, but indicated it will not completely pay for the equipment.

"I don't have any idea what they'll give us. I'd hate to say, but they have been generous in the past," he said.

Autry said preliminary inspection indicated no structural damage to the steel beams, but is asking for structural engineers from the state to see it.

## County Board Meets Friday

The board of county commissioners will hold a special meeting Friday, Dec. 19 at 11 A.M. in the meeting room of the courthouse annex building, board clerk T.B. Lester said Monday.

Purpose of the meeting is to discuss a study of youth needs in the county and decide if participating in a state program is desirable.

## N-J Office Closes Early

The News-Journal office will be closed Dec. 25 and Dec. 26 and next week's edition will be published Tuesday morning Dec. 23.

All advertising must reach the office by noon on Monday, Dec. 22 for publication in next week's edition.

Deadline for church and community news, social items, and regular features will be noon on Friday, Dec. 19 for publication in next week's edition.

## Landfill, Trash Pickup Halts

The landfill will close from noon on Wednesday, Dec. 24 until 8 A.M. Friday, Dec. 26, acting city manager Bill Sellars announced.

Residential garbage pickups will run on regular schedule until noon on Dec. 24. Regular schedule will resume Dec. 26.

## Hospital 'Not Realistic', More Doctors Instead



HEALTH CARE - Jim Bernstein, chief of the rural health care section of the Department of Human Resources, emphasizes a point to the crowd in the courtroom who gathered to discuss the shortage of doctors.

A hospital within the county is just not economically feasible for a community this size, but a stepped-up campaign to attract more physicians and increase the community's primary health care services should be a top priority, a citizens' meeting called to discuss health services was told Sunday afternoon.

"We know it's very difficult to recruit physicians to small towns", Jim Bernstein, chief of the rural health service section of the Department of Human Resources, told the crowd of about 22 in the courtroom.

Chamber of Commerce manager J.H. Blue, Jr., who has been working jointly with the county health department on a National Health Service application, which, if approved, would assign another physician to the county, told the group the community needs to think of a plan for the next 20 years.

"Most of us here recognize that we have a health care problem, the question is, what is the solution?" Blue said.

"Two practitioners are not enough for your population size", Bernstein said. "The state became aware in '73 we had a problem in rural health care. We have four resources: the student loan program for med students to return to towns of 10,000 or less, the physician recruitment program, one of the largest in the country, and we act as liaison with the National Health Service", he said.

Bernstein added the Rural Health Care Program, also a state function, is really aimed at communities with no medical services whatsoever, and this program has been given the greatest thrust.

"We'll work with you in any way we can, but first determine what your problem is", he said.

"You have to decide realistically how Raeford and Hoke County should fit in with the larger picture. The operating costs of a hospital are phenomenal. The facts are, the future doesn't look good for the small hospitals. What I'm saying is, the small hospital is a tremendous undertaking and a great financial risk", Bernstein said.

He termed it "not a very realistic option" and added the existence of a hospital is not necessarily an aid in attracting physicians.

"It took us six months to get one for Clinton, and they have a very nice hospital", he said.

Kathy Leandro, co-owner of the Open Arms rest home, said the lack of emergency services, coupled with the city's only two doctors, is a serious concern for some people.

"What about emergencies? This concerns people, and young people who are moving here with children want to know. If Dr. Townsend and Dr. Jordan are both gone, who do I call? What if my husband has a heart attack?" she said.

"I've got 26 patients now, and I expect to have 75 soon. What am I going to do in an emergency? People have sometimes called us, because they know we are nurses, but what about getting emergencies services?" she asked.

"In a city, they have a true emergency room. I don't think a rural community can support such an emergency facility 24 hours a day, seven days a week, just for emergencies, it would be very expensive. Ideally, it would be good to have a group practice here, say four physicians, your ambulances,

See HOSPITAL, page 13

## Suspect Wounded

No charges have been placed against a Rt. 1 man who apparently shot and wounded a would-be burglar about 2:30 A.M. Tuesday morning.

Sheriff's deputies received a call from Fred Dudley, of Rt. 1, Box 829, Raeford, who said he had shot someone trying to break into his house and the man fell out of the window and ran, according to Sheriff D.M. Barrington.

Commie Wall, Raeford, was charged with first degree burglary and is being held without bond pending preliminary hearing.

Deputies J.K. Riley and George McGuire searched near Airport Road which is near the Dudley residence and found Wall in a field and he had been shot one time in the right arm, Barrington said.

There was no address listed for Wall.

## Area Incidents

### Police Arrest Pair

A sixteen year-old Raeford man and a juvenile were arrested last Thursday following a chase and charged in connection with the reported shoplifting of \$77.90 in goods from Auto Parts and Equipment, Inc., on E. Elwood Ave.

John E. Alford, 16, Rt. 3, Box 343, Raeford, was charged with larceny and released on his own recognizance and a juvenile petition has been drawn on a 15 year-old allegedly involved, police chief Leonard Wiggins said.

Wiggins gave this account of the incident:

Alford and the juvenile were allegedly seen stealing one 12-piece socket set worth \$27.95 and one 16-piece socket set worth \$49.95 by store employee Buddy Willis. Willis chased the suspects, who fled on foot, and several police officers apprehended the pair in the vicinity of E. Donaldson Ave. and Crawford St. The suspects offered no resistance, Wiggins said.

In other incidents, two Raeford youths were arrested by Maj. J.C. Barrington last Wednesday night and charged with larceny.

Nigel Baldwin, 17, 514 E. Sixth Ave., and Laverne Freeman, 18, 804 Saunders St., were arrested about 11:50 P.M. while driving near the vicinity of the Tex - Elastic plant, Wiggins said.

The two were charged with larceny in connection with the theft

of a tape player, speaker, and battery from the car of Roy Lee Murchison, Rt. 3, Box 293, Raeford, a Tex - Elastic employee. Value of the stolen items is \$40, Wiggins said.

Off. J.J. McNeill reported his home at 518 E. Fifth Ave. which had been vacated was found stripped when he checked it Dec. 12. Penelung, closet doors, windows, frames, and other items estimated in total worth at \$633 were taken. The house had been unoccupied for about two weeks since the family moved, according to McNeill.

Douglas R. Huggins, 209 Patterson St., complained to police his clothes were stolen from Blanton's Laundromat on Harris Ave. Monday. Huggins told police he put the clothes in a dryer and when he returned, they were gone. The loss is listed at \$84, police said.

Steve Thomas, 111 Patterson St., reported to police a Remington .12 gauge shotgun worth \$229 was stolen out of a jeep parked in his driveway sometime Sunday night. Nothing else was apparently taken, police said.

Mrs. Shirley Wrenth, 503 Forrest St., notified police about 10:30 P.M. Monday night upon returning home and discovering a break-in. One black and white 12 inch portable television and one 19 inch color set with a total value of \$423.75 were taken. Entry was apparently made by breaking a window, police said.

Home Food Market on Main St. See AREA INCIDENTS, page 13

## Merchants Say Sales Booming, Predict Record Christmas

Local merchants indicated last week that business was booming this year in comparison to last year's Christmas sales.

Most merchants said the increase was due to an earlier start in the Christmas promotion this year and the fact that people started buying earlier this year for the holidays.

"It's going great. We're having one of the best Christmases in the history of the company," said Dan Powers, manager of B.C. Moore and Sons.

Powers said Moore's started their Christmas promotion directly after Thanksgiving and sales had been going strong since that time.

"I'm really happy to see it going this well," he added.

"It's a whole lot better than it was last year. Christmas started for us a few weeks ago. We actually started right after Halloween," said John Blanchard, manager of the Family Dollar Store here.

"I've been out of Christmas trees for over a week," he said.

"I think the shoppers are making up for the slow shopping last year," he concluded.

"Last week was the best week we've had since I've been here," said

Ed Hasty of DeVane's.

"Things are really looking up," he added.

"I'm tickled to death myself," said proprietor, Danny DeVane.

"Sales and layaways are up. We've had a big increase over last year," said James Wood, operator of Western Auto.

"It's much heavier than last year and we're really pleased with it," he added.

"Our Christmas promotion started right after Thanksgiving and things are going well," he concluded.