

The News - Journal

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Around Town

BY SAM C. MORRIS

The only thing you can write about the weather this week is that it has been cold. The temperature has been from 50 degrees down for the past week. We didn't have a White Christmas, but there was plenty of ice around. The ground was frozen early in the morning and the wind has made the chill factor almost unbelievable.

The oil companies should have plenty of customers these days. It seems that the heaters are running all the time. Even if you leave it on 68 it is almost impossible to catch the furnace not running.

We only hope that we didn't get any freezing rains that will cause the power lines to break. It is too cold to be without heat for any length of time.

With Christmas falling on Saturday this year it has brought forth different times for the businesses of the community to close.

Some started closing Thursday and others were closed Monday, so it was almost impossible to know exactly who was open and when. Most of the closings were for the businesses' conveniences with Christmas Day either at beginning or end.

Now we have another weekend the same, with New Year's as the holiday. So if you find a place closed Friday, Saturday or Monday of the coming weekend, you will know what it is for.

While on the subject of the holidays; from all reports in the city it was quiet over the holidays. Our local police report that it was about as usual. Just the same minor incidents.

The New Year, 1977, will start Saturday and if you haven't thought about your resolutions, now is a good time to start. Of course if you don't plan to keep them, forget about making any.

This will begin the 300th year of our nation and what we do will have a bearing on the celebration in 2076. Think about this as you move forward into the new year and for many years to come.

We received the following letter Monday and will pass it along to you.

Mr. Morris:
Reading your column of 12-16-76 concerning Murray O'Hair, subject, Religion From the Air Waves.

The way I feel, that was a waste of time and paper, because it was stated by the Lord as he was leaving this world saying to his disciples, go into all the world and preach my gospel, says the Lord, to Every nation.

I enjoy reading the Journal.
Yours truly,
Archie C. Davis, Jr.

I would like to say Congratulations to Billy Colston for being named "Coach of the Year" in North Carolina High Schools. It is very seldom this honor goes to anyone outside of baseball, basketball or football. He has done a tremendous job here in Hoke County and his teams speak for this. They would have to, because Billy never toots his horn.
Congratulations, Coach!

The United Fund Drive is still going on and from some reports, it is not doing too well. This is a pity because when the time comes to meet the requirements, the agencies will come up short.

We don't know what the cause for the slow response is, but we do know that the people of Hoke County will come through when needed, and now you are needed.

So if you have been holding back, write your check today and mail to Danny DeVane, Campaign Chairman, Raeford, N.C.
Thank you.

To all the readers of this column, a Happy and Safe New Year.

Four Projects Eyed

County Seeking HUD Funds

Killers Sought

Sheriff's deputies and the State Bureau of Investigation are seeking three black males who robbed a Rockfish grocery and killed the proprietor Thursday night.

The victim was identified by Hoke Sheriff D.M. Barrington as Robert Leslie Brooks, 58, operator of the Rockfish Store, and a retired serviceman.

Brooks sustained a gunshot wound in the left chest and was pronounced dead at the scene, according to Barrington. Two women in the store at the time of the holdup were unharmed.

The sheriff said three black males in their early to mid-20's entered the store between 7:30 and 7:45 p.m. One wore a white handkerchief or cloth over his face and the other two wore toboggans. Wanda Sue Stevens, a teenaged employee, was ordered to lie on the floor while one of the men pushed Brooks' wife to the cash register and said, "Give me the money". Mrs. Brooks opened the register and the man reached in and took an undetermined amount of cash.

Brooks, who apparently was unseen by the trio while sitting on a chair near the counter, advanced on one of the men when he picked up a broom and began threatening

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UPCHURCH MILL -- Feed manufacturing, the last active operation at the Upchurch Milling and Storage Co. plant downtown, will be moved out of the city. The process of dismantling the mill buildings has already begun.

County commissioners met in special session Monday night at the close of the planning board's meeting and agreed to apply for \$500,000 in federal community development funds for fiscal year 1977 from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for four separate projects.

T.B. Lester, county manager, said four of the five commissioners present unanimously accepted the recommendations of the seven-member planning board, which were culled from the list of suggestions made by citizens at public hearings Dec. 16 and Dec. 21. Commissioner Ralph Barnhart was absent.

Turkey House Burns

Approximately 350 breeder Tom turkeys were caught in an early morning fire Dec. 22 that swept through a steel truss turkey house belonging to Tarheel Turkey Hatchery of Raeford.

According to Wyatt Upchurch, hatchery owner, the short-lived fire ran through the shavings used for turkey bedding so rapidly that workers were able to save only one pen of turkeys (about 46 turkeys per pen).

Damage to the 4,000 sq. ft. turkey house was estimated at \$8,800. The turkeys, valued at \$22 each, added up to a \$5,487 loss.

Upchurch said, "This doesn't really put the hatchery in a bind since it was breeder stock. We artificially inseminate, so we'll just haul semen in from another farm until we get this flock built back up."

The cause of the fire, which started on the north side of the house, was not determined. Hillcrest Fire Department answered the call.

The projects to be applied for, and the amount needed for each, are: construction of a multi-purpose neighborhood center for the Rockfish area, \$100,000; extension of city sewer lines to Shawtown, a predominately black neighborhood east of the city limits, \$50,000; rehabilitation of sub-standard homes in Tylertown and the North Raeford area, \$250,000; and repair of the county-owned community house located in seven townships, \$70,000.

The last project was not named during the two public hearings. The idea originated with the planning board, Lester said.

The \$500,000 requested also includes a \$30,000 contingency fund.

Planners with the N.C. Department of Natural and Economic Resources, the state agency preparing the county's application, told officials here that housing rehabilitation carries the highest number of "points" with HUD when applications are reviewed and stands a good chance of approval.

Hoke County is now in the process of implementing a \$90,000 grant awarded this year from HUD for repair of low-income homes in North Raeford.

Funds were also approved in the same grant for sewer extension work in the North Raeford neighborhoods.

The Rockfish center project was included in the package at the urging of groups in the community who turned out for both public meetings to express a need for a neighborhood meeting place. The county-owned community house was sold last year to a textile manufacturer.

"They felt that since Rockfish doesn't have a center at all HUD would recognize the need out there," Lester said. He added that it was a rapidly growing area, with a high concentration of mobile home parks and a subdivision of nearly 100 homes nearby.

"As far as the rest of the community houses, we haven't really done anything in the last 20 years. They all are in need of some renovation," he said.

Purpose of the community development funds, also called dis-

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1977 License Renewal Begins Jan. 3

The 1977 red and white North Carolina vehicle plates and validation stickers will go on sale Jan. 3 at the Raeford Division of Motor Vehicles Office on W. Edinborough Ave.

Office hours will be 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The Raeford office will be closed Saturdays. Nearby offices which are scheduled to remain open on Saturdays are in Rockingham and Elizabethtown.

1976 plates expire Dec. 31 and their use beyond that date is permissible only if they are duly registered by the Division to the vehicles on which display is made. Owners who have their vehicles properly registered have through Feb. 15 to obtain new plates or validation stickers.

Again next year the renewal of private passenger license will be by the sticker, with the exception of special classifications. The renewal of all other classifications, including trucks, will continue to be by an annual license plate.

The validation sticker is to be affixed to the upper right hand corner of your current license plate in the designated indenture over the 1976 sticker.

For newly acquired private passenger vehicles, a license plate as well as a validation sticker will be issued unless a plate is to be transferred.

Care should be taken to place the sticker in the correct position as once it is affixed it cannot be removed.

The Raeford license agent, Frances W. Greene, points out that "to renew a plate you must have a renewal card" and cautions against losing it when it is received. She asks that you complete the application according to the instructions on it before presenting it for a new plate or sticker. This will expedite the procedure and keep lines from forming.

The application cards necessary for obtaining plates or stickers were placed in the mail on Dec. 10 and Dec. 20. The Division of Motor

Vehicles expect this huge mailing, estimated at more than four million cards, to be delivered by Jan. 1.

City, County Denied Public Works Grant

Both the city of Raeford and the county government lost out in last week's allocation of federal public works funds, dooming the proposed annexation of College Drive and the planned expansion of the public health center.

Cumberland, Bladen, Robeson and Columbus Counties were among the state's counties which shared in more than \$28 million in grants, but both the city and the county's applications seeking a total of \$889,000 were denied.

The city had sought \$469,000 for sewer construction work west of the city limits which would lead to the annexation of some 100 homes along College Drive, and later, the Thomasfield subdivision.

The county had applied for \$420,000 to be used to build additional space and relieve overcrowding at the health center on Central Ave. and also for enlarging the Hoke County Rescue Squad building on

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Overruled By Chairman

DSS Director Under Fire On Needy Handouts

Department of Social Services Director Benjamin O. Niblock clashed with an ex-caseworker over the Department's halt to the clothing handouts to needy families and also the refusal of Christmas goods collected by Ft. Bragg in a verbal volley during the Board of Social Services' regular monthly meeting Monday.

Dayna Pate, who resigned her caseworker job earlier this year, appeared at the meeting at the request of Chairman J.H. Blythe to discuss the two decisions. Last week Niblock announced the DSS would not accept the articles collected by the Main Post N.C.O. Wives Club and the 35th Signal Group for Christmas distribution because 28 out of 30 remaining families on the DSS needy list had already been taken care of by local contributions.

Blythe said that he realized that the lack of space for storage of clothing and other items made it necessary to discontinue the service, but that he had changed his mind talking to "numerous" people.

"I'm afraid that we're getting a lot of flak from many people. One thing that disturbs me is people don't have a place to leave some

nice things that other people could make use of. It is our duty - that is the work of this organization to be a central distribution point for needy families," Blythe said.

Mrs. Pate said she had become concerned about the problem in September when she began receiving phone calls from people seeking assistance and told the board that she didn't discuss the matter with Niblock because she "knew how he felt about it."

"A lot of families depended on that clothes closet, particularly at the beginning of the school year," Mrs. Pate said, but Niblock disagreed.

"First thing, back when we operated it, we kept a daily log on everybody who asked for anything. I checked the log and we averaged only four persons a week during the winter months. In the summer only two a week," Niblock said.

"That's not true, I was there and there were more than that," Mrs. Pate interrupted.

"This is indisputable, Mrs. Pate, I have gone over the log and it is correct," Niblock said.

Niblock said there were other resources in the community and named the Attie, a second-hand clothing store operated by the

Raeford Woman's Club, as a place where clothing could be bought at thrift prices, but Mrs. Pate disagreed, claiming that many families cannot afford that option if there are many children.

"I know what's going on at the Attie, it's no use trying to hide it, Mrs. Pate. They send us all the clothes that are no good - junk - and they keep the good stuff," Niblock said.

"That's another mistake in premise, that these people don't have fifty cents or so to spend," he added.

"Are you denying that a need exists?" Mrs. Pate asked.

"I'm tired of you telling me that I'm denying a need exists," he shot back.

Blythe said that since the controversy surfaced over the Ft. Bragg articles last week, he had done some checking and learned that the North Raeford volunteer firemen kept a supply of clothing and whatever else they found space for to give to victims of fires who were in need. Blythe said he was told that firemen would help manage the DSS clothes closet if room could be found for it.

Discussing the matter of the Ft. Bragg Christmas drive, Niblock

told the board that it was correct that nearly all of the families requesting help from DSS had been provided for, and furthermore that he was notified too late to handle any Christmas deliveries, a statement hotly contested by Mrs. Pate.

"They (the military group) made a very conditional offer. I know the paper had a big headline about it, but it was a matter of only two families left. They didn't let us know until the last minute they would have anything for us," Niblock said.

"Mr. Niblock, it was in the papers weeks before. I made contacts about it," Mrs. Pate said.

"On Dec. 6 I called and they said no plans had been formulated. Ft. Bragg comes in at the last hour, on Dec. 20, as we are getting ready to close, and says they will take care of any leftovers on our list," Niblock responded.

"Well, who put it in the paper then?" Mrs. Pate said.

"I don't know. That's immaterial. Last year, for the record, if my memory serves me, that stuff was certainly not a prize package. The toys were used and most had to be put together. I don't want Ft. Bragg being pictured as the great

benefactor of Hoke County," Niblock said.

Niblock told Mrs. Pate that she acted "irresponsibly" by making contacts without checking with the DSS office first, but Blythe interrupted to halt the sparring between the two.

"You let it be known that you don't have a closet anymore, so you can expect that people will call her," Blythe interjected. "Your record is not as clean as you think. Some of your people (staff) are afraid to speak to you. Some of them are smuggling these things out to these people, and personally, I think it is commendable of them."

"To set the record straight, I know the one you're speaking of who smuggles clothes -- it's just a very few items," Niblock responded.

"It seems that you and Mr. Niblock have a little personality conflict," Blythe said, speaking to Mrs. Pate. "but anyone has a right to come in here and state their views. And I'll have to agree with Mrs. Pate on this."

Niblock said that most people in the community who had usable

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