

Chamber Of Commerce Announces

New Industry Buys Summerfield

Around Town

BY SAM C. MORRIS

It seems as if spring has gone and summer has moved in to stay. The hot days and afternoon thunder showers are forecast for the remainder of the week and this is like July or August.

The weather or rain chart should be elsewhere in the paper, so take a look and maybe it will give you a surprise. May was a month of rain.

The turnout for the second primary was disappointing to most of the politicians in Hoke County. When elected officials look over the results and see that only 900 hundred people went to the polls, then they feel that the citizens of that county care very little about how the government is run.

Of course we can offer all kinds of excuses such as no local candidates, I didn't like the men on the ballot, etc, but it is still bad for the county as a whole.

You will have a chance to redeem yourself in the general election on Tuesday, November 7. So take time now to mark your calendar and maybe it will have time to make an impression on you by election day.

Ken McNeill, chairman of the Hoke County Democratic Executive Committee, came by and asked me about the advertisements that are now running on television saying that the folks talking on the TV were "Democrats for Jesse Helms."

Ken wanted to know, what kind of Democrats they were? All I could tell him was that I didn't know any Democrats that would vote for Jesse Helms, but maybe Buddy Blue could tell him.

As this is being written Tuesday morning, it will be election day in California in a few hours. The people of that state may be opening the door for something to spring forth in every state. The people there will vote on an amendment called "Proposition 13." If it passes, it will cut property tax assessments to 1 percent instead of the 2.5 percent average in the state at present.

In other words it is a revolt against taxes. The people are taking the tax issue into their hands, rather than letting the elected officials decide. This could really balloon into a new concept for the tax payers of this country.

It could also open the eyes of elected officials telling them that the people want a string put on the government's purse, whether local, state or federal. According to the polls this issue will pass, only time will tell.

The graduation section is in this issue of the paper and if our count is correct 72 merchants and individuals offer congratulations in advertisements. The pictures in this section were furnished by the High School and we would like to thank them for this. If a senior's picture is omitted, it will be because it was not available to the school to turn over to us.

Congratulations to all seniors and don't forget to attend the exercises on Sunday.

Forty years ago, or in the fall of 1938, a young man came to Raeford to teach science and math at Hoke County High School. I was not in school at that time, but was working at *The News-Journal* and we became associated with each other and as a brother of mine was in one of his classes we had something to talk about.

In 1940 this writer left for military service with the National Guard and the teacher was called into service a couple of year later. Even though thousands of miles (See AROUND TOWN, Page 10)

U.S. Parachute Team Trains At Raeford Municipal Airport

by Charles Blackburn
"There's plenty of room in the plane if you'd like to go up and get a few shots of the jumpers," Doug Christen told me.

"Thanks anyway," I said. "I don't have a lens long enough to get a good picture."

Had he doubted my technical difficulty story, I was fully prepared to relate the history of my inner ear trouble, a malady which has baffled specialists in three major cities on the eastern seaboard.

The truth is, besides being a card carrying member of the Man Will Never Fly Society, I'm just the plain old Holly Farms variety of chicken.

Sure, going up in a light single-engine airplane (they're nothing more than motorized kites) is safer than driving on the highway. But at least when my Pontiac conks out, I can pull off on the shoulder and raise the hood. Try doing that at 10,000 feet.

Elizabeth Geimer and photographer Dick Blount climbed aboard the small Cessna willingly. They were cheerful, almost. You'd think people who worked for the *Fayetteville Observer* would have better sense. I wished them luck and assured them that I'd notify their next of kin.

Believe me, if you want to see what the U.S. Parachute Team is all about, you have to have your feet firmly planted on the ground.

The team is training at the Raeford Municipal Airport for national and international competition this summer. Later this month, the eight men and eight women will go to Richmond, Ind. for the national meet, and from there the 10 best jumpers will go to the World Parachute Championship in Yugoslavia in August.

The takeoff was a little shaky, the wings wobbling in a brisk wind. I walked back to the target, where the jumpers would land in a few minutes, trying to get as close as they could to an 8-inch circle in the middle. Jumping from nearly 3,000 feet, you'd be surprised how many hit it dead center.

The reason they can be so accurate, as team member Doug Christen explained it, is because the jumpers actually fly their parachutes. The airplane canopy, as it's called, was developed in 1970 and has somewhat the same characteristics as a wing.

Rectangular instead of round,

the nylon chute has vents on either side which the jumper can open and close. Opening one set of vents makes one side of the chute fall faster than the other and makes the whole thing turn.

"The canopy can stall just like an airplane," Christen said. They're designed for experienced jumpers. But very few people get hurt jumping."

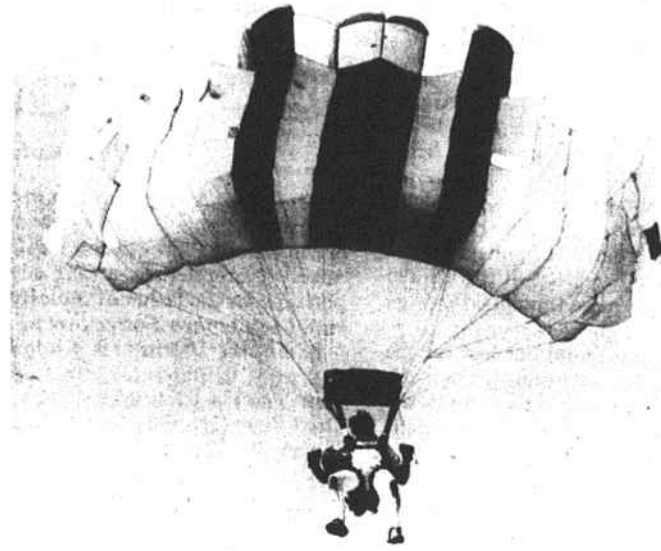
Windssocks near the target let the jumper know how to make his approach, said Cathy Collingswood. Like airplane pilots, the jumpers land into the wind.

In a field near the target, other members of the team were busy packing their chutes for the next jump. Judy Patrick, an orthopedic nurse at Womack Army Hospital, said the team trains here because this drop zone is more competitive than others in the country.

"The Golden Knights train here," she pointed out. "And the weather is a little nicer here than in other places."

All of the team members gave a lot of credit for their being here to Gene Paul Thacker, owner of Raeford Aviation Co., who operates the airport.

(See PARACHUTE, Page 10)



PARACHUTE TEAM -- Those daring young men (and women) of the U.S. Parachute Team are training at the Raeford Municipal Airport for national and international competition later this summer.

County Awards Ambulance Contract To Spring Lake

On Monday the Hoke County Board of Commissioners awarded the county ambulance contract to Spring Lake Ambulance Service, low bidder at \$45,000.

Spring Lake Ambulance Service under bid its competitors by more than half, the next lowest bidder being Daniel Morrison, at \$100,000. Tony Buie, who currently holds the contract til June 30, bid \$102,000.

"Spring Lake Ambulance has convinced me they can operate the service for \$45,000," said Commissioner Danny DeVane.

The service will have two ambulances available 24-hours a day, DeVane noted. He said the firm will set up an office here and staff it for daytime calls. At night, the ambulances will be kept by husband and wife teams of Emergency Medical Technicians at their homes. Calls will be handled by the

Sheriff's Department.

County Attorney Charles Hostetter said he was concerned that ambulance firms here might get into competition for emergency calls and race each other to the scene of an accident. To keep this from happening, the board voted to pay the Spring Lake firm a minimum trip fee of \$25 on all emergency calls, even if another ambulance service beats them to the scene.

Garbage Contract

The county garbage collection contract was awarded, after some hesitation, to the low bidder, Carolina Waste Systems, with a bid of \$53,623. Commissioner DeVane cast the one dissenting vote.

He expressed the opinion that the county should stay with the current contract holder because the company, Sanitary Container Ser-

vice, had proven that it could be the job.

The county attorney advised the board that it was legally bound to accept the low bid unless it could give a valid reason why it shouldn't. Sanitary Container Service was third lowest in the bidding at \$56,244.

Courthouse Roof

The board authorized its architects to advertise for bids on repairs to the courthouse roof. The project will cost between \$7,500 and \$9,000. About 60 squares of roofing need to be replaced, architects said. The board should be able to act on the bids by July 1.

Crop Report

Hoke Extension Chairman Wendell Young gave the commissioners a report on the crop situation in the county in the wake of an unusually wet spring. He described the condition of crops across the county as fair. Tobacco looks better than most crops, he said. Corn has suffered because nitrogen washed away with the rain.

"Farmers have had bigger problems this spring than I can remember," Young said. "Production expenses have been high because fertilizer and other chemicals have washed away."

He said they won't be much (See AMBULANCE, Page 15)

Soup Plant May Help Area Vegetable Growers

The Campbell Soup Company's new plant, scheduled to be under construction in Maxton next spring, could be a real boom to area vegetable farmers, Wendell Young, chairman of the Hoke County Agriculture Extension Agency said.

The plant could eventually employ 1,000 persons as well as providing a new market for vegetable-growers. Campbell plans to make an investment of between \$100 and \$200 million in the new facility over the next 10 years, depending upon economic trends, a spokesman said.

The Campbell plant would require a water system, and the Robeson County Board of Commissioners recently voted to seek a \$5-

to \$7-million bond referendum next fall for construction of a county-wide water system.

Chap Nobel, county consulting engineer, said the water system would be built in two stages. The first would be a minimum line to provide water during the early development years, and later, as the plant production increases, a larger line would be needed to provide some eight and a half million gallons of water daily.

A letter from a Campbell spokesman to the Robeson County officials said that initially, 65 persons would be employed, but over a 10-year period, the proposed 250,000 square foot distribution center would be developed into a complete production center, employing more than 1,000 persons.

It's official, Summerfield Industries, Inc., a textile manufacturing firm that closed here in February, has been bought by a company that expects to begin production by early fall, eventually hiring 300 workers.

The announcement was made Wednesday at a special meeting of the Raeford-Hoke Chamber of Commerce.

"Raeford Manufacturing Corporation has signed a purchase contract to buy the Summerfield plant from Macfield Industries," Chamber Manager Earl Fowler told the group.

Although details were necessarily sketchy to protect negotiations, Fowler said the new industry will produce "a varied line of consumer and service products." It is anticipated that manufacturing operations will begin no later than early fall, he said.

"Initial employment will be around 100," Fowler said. "Operations will expand rapidly with 300 or more expected to be fully employed within 12 months."

At the request of those involved, no further statement will be issued at this time, Fowler said.

"At the request of the principals, any official statement will be made through the Chamber office," he said. "Any other stories should be considered as rumor and/or speculation."

The chamber manager, who has been acting as spokesman for the parties involved ever since negotiations began, said that information regarding applications for employment will be released through his office and published in *The News Journal*.

"Please do not call the Chamber office," Fowler said.

"The Chamber of Commerce has considered this to be its number one priority since the closing of Summerfield in February," said Chamber President Neil McFadyen. "We are proud that your chamber has played a very important role in successful efforts to secure a new tenant for the idled Summerfield plant."

Summerfield was the second largest employer in Hoke County at the time of its closing. Six hundred workers were idled. According to a company spokesman, the market conditions for the firm's primary product, double knit fabric, got worse and worse while the cost of raw materials, yarn and other items, as well as operating expenses, increased substantially. As a result, the company found it was unable to continue in business profitably.

Company officials tried to save the plant, through merger or revamping the operation, but all efforts failed and the plant was closed.

Summerfield Industries, headquartered in Greensboro, bought the Raeford property about two years ago from financially troubled Knit Away, Inc. The Raeford plant produced knits for apparel and home furnishings markets.

Efforts through the local chamber of commerce began immediately to secure a new tenant for the plant. Meanwhile, in the absence of the industry, unemployment in the county has risen to 11.3 percent.

It was announced last month that final negotiations were underway to secure a new tenant. At that time, Fowler said the transaction would be concluded in four to six weeks.

City, County Boards Meet To Discuss Landfill Here

Members of the Hoke County Board of Commissioners appeared before the Raeford City Council Monday night to discuss problems at the county landfill.

The meeting came about because of what Commissioner Danny DeVane described as "a break down in communications" between the city and county.

Commission Chairman John Balfour told the council that a state inspector had given the county 10 days in which to construct a sedimentation basin at the landfill or face legal action.

According to the inspector, erosion at the landfill constituted a major violation of state law.

Balfour said the city had known about the problem for some time and had promised to correct it by March 1. Due to the urgency of the situation, Balfour said the county didn't have time to advertise for bids on the \$1,600 project.

"It's been done now," he said of the sedimentation basin. "But he had to threaten us to get it done."

Members of the commission said there was a lot of red tape involved in getting permission through the city for repairs at the landfill. Mayor J. K. McNeill noted that confusion was caused in one par-

ticular case because the town was without a manager; one instance cited by the commissioners had occurred just after City Manager Robert Drumwright had resigned.

Members of both boards agreed that communication between the city and county over landfill problems could stand improvement.

In other business, the council heard a report from a special committee appointed to study the feasibility of going ahead with a project to improve the local airport, acquiring additional land and paving taxiways. The board voted to have the land appraised again. The city can still get state and federal grants for the project, the committee said.

The council voiced support for the Hoke Medical Betterment Association's efforts to establish 24-hour primary health care in the county.

At a special meeting to discuss revenue sharing funds, the Hoke Rescue Squad submitted a request for \$5,000 toward the purchase of an ambulance. The squad is also asking the county for money, a spokesman said. That was the only request during the revenue sharing hearing, the first of two such meetings.