

Legislature's Joint Budget Group Approves Plan

McCain To Be Cut But Will Stay Open

McCain Hospital will stay open, though smaller in operation, for at least two more years, unless the General Assembly does the unexpected this session. Thursday morning, the Legislature's Joint Base Budget Committee on Appropriations by a heavy majority voted favorably a proposal drawn up by area legis-

lators that would reduce the hospital's total number of beds to 115 from the present 150, State Sen. Sam Noble, informed *The News-Journal* by telephone from Raleigh.

The plan calls also for cutting 54 employees a year for the next two fiscal years, of the 249 currently employed. But Noble said the first

layoffs won't become effective till next October 1, instead of at the July 1 start of the 1981 - 82 fiscal year. Thus, he said, it is hoped that the reductions in the staff will come about naturally, by retirements and by resignations.

Noble said that the McCain proposal, bearing the committee's approval, was expected to be

approved by the State House and Senate floor votes. The proposal is part of a package of legislative budget proposals for 1981-83. What the Legislature will do about McCain in 1983 cannot be foretold now, he indicated.

Noble said that the proposed reductions in the number of beds and of the staff were concessions

the participating legislators had to make, in offering the alternative to the base budget subcommittee's recommendation made in March that the hospital be closed entirely within the next biennium, by phase-out.

He said the vote favoring the compromise plan was "overwhelming." Noble also said that State Sen. Robert Jordan of Mt. Gilead, the Senate's base budget committee chairman, gave "a lot of help" along with members of the delegations representing the districts which include Hoke and Cumberland counties. Noble mentioned State Rep. David Parnell and William Gay of the 21st House District, which includes Hoke. He also reported that State Sen. Russell Walker of Asheboro, who had favored closing McCain, spoke in favor of the compromise plan to keep it open. The architects of the "save McCain" plan, as it was called, were Noble, Parnell, Gay, Jordan, and Moore County State Rep. James Craven. All but Craven, a Republican, are Democrats. The McCain plan was part of a legislative budget package proposal.

Also among those favoring the plan were Cumberland legislators -- State Rep. Don Beard quoted as saying after the 100-member Base Budget Committee voted, "I don't think anyone was really against McCain. He is a member of the committee.

"No one (on the committee) wanted to close that in particular. It was just a dollar - and - cents thing," he added.

The subcommittee had reported closing McCain, the last of the three state specialty lung - disease hospitals, would save the state \$1.2 million this year and \$2.3 million in the next.

(In March, however, a number of the staff of the State Department of Human Resources, admitted at a Raleigh meeting that he found information he had given the subcommittee and on which the subcommittee had based its recommendation was erroneous.)

Beard said Thursday "it's not in the best interests of the patients to close (the hospital) right now."

Noble said the reduction in the number of beds to 115 would save the state \$392,874 this fiscal year, and \$545,716 next year.

The compromise is equal to a 12.2 per cent cut in the hospital's budget this year and 16 per cent next year. Those cuts are "more than our share," Noble said, referring to General Assembly leaders' requests of legislative committees to provide a six per cent cut from this year's budget.

Hoke County and Raeford city officials, and the Raeford - Hoke County Chamber of Commerce and other private organizations and individuals had requested state officials in the weeks before the Joint Base Budget Committee acted to make a decision on McCain only on the basis of accurate information. Earl Fowler, executive director of the chamber, attended Thursday's committee meeting. Among the requests to keep McCain open was a petition signed by more than 5,000 people throughout the state.

John Watson, administrator of McCain, said Thursday after the committee voted, "We are delighted that they have confidence in us to keep us open."

Information obtained by Fowler contradicted the erroneous information given the base budget subcommittee and the subcommittee's statement that McCain's tuberculosis and other respiratory disease patients could be treated at community hospitals.

Information obtained by Fowler was that many McCain TB patients are sent by community hospitals because the latter are unable to treat them; that many community hospitals are not equipped to provide the isolation a patient with TB, a highly contagious disease, requires and McCain now provides TB drugs to county health departments, and the hospitals budget provided \$313,039.28 in the 1979-80 fiscal year and will have paid an estimated \$380,000 the current fiscal year which ends June 30 for these drugs. Watson had said in an interview with *The News-Journal* that his cost would continue even if McCain were closed.

Around Town

BY SAM C. MORRIS

I hope that the upcoming weekend is like the one that just past. The weather would be perfect and this would bring a big turnout to the churches on Easter Sunday. The temperature reached around ninety degrees Sunday.

As this is being written Monday morning, the sky is overcast and it would be a relief to all of us if the rain would come. It is about as dry as I ever remember for this time of year. Usually you hear people say, "that it is too wet to plow!" This is not the case this year, and it would take a lot of rain to keep the tractors out of the fields.

Caroline Parker was by the office last week and brought me an article about the North Carolina Symphony Chamber Orchestra. She was wanting to help promote the ticket sale for their scheduled appearance on May 14th. Monday morning she called and said not to run the article because the Symphony would not appear in Raeford this season.

The news out of Raleigh was that the funds for this year were \$500,000 below the anticipated revenue and that they had cancelled further engagements for the season.

Miss Parker did say that the orchestra would be here next year or next season.

I don't think that coffee will be served, but if you are an early riser, you can attend the Easter Sunrise Service at the Hoke High Stadium on Easter Sunday, April 19 at 5:40 a.m. The service is sponsored by the Hoke County Ministerial Association and the message this year will be delivered by Dr. John Ropp, pastor of the Raeford Presbyterian Church.

Now for you people that will attend and are not early risers, be sure to take a coat or a blanket, because it is cold about the time the sun comes up.

If you have never attended a sunrise service, it will be an experience well worth your time in more ways than one.

I like to play golf, but to see the pros putting at the Master's tournament in Augusta, Ga. and some rolling from one side of the green to the other made me say, "I wouldn't want to play there."

I noticed in a daily paper Monday that the census for Hoke County gave the population as 20,383. In 1970 the report showed that the figure was 16,436. This is a gain of 24%.

The final figures for the City of Raeford should be made available before too long.

An editorial running in this week's paper was written because of a comment made to me by a parent of this community that has a child in the school system. The parent called to say she was glad the paper would stand up and say what they did in the editorial that started on page one of last week's paper. She stated that she would like to say the same thing, but was fearful of what would happen to her child in school.

I told her she didn't have anything to be afraid of and doubted her thoughts, but it was horrifying to me that she would even think anything like that. She said she was not the only parent in the county that felt that way.

This is a sad state for the parents to be in and they should know that they can say what they want about the schools without fear.

A call from Mrs. Rena Smith Monday morning from a Nursing Home in Moore County was good to receive. She had something good to say about the paper last week and we have always valued her opinion.

Of Proposed 401 Four-laning

Cumberland Board Hits Cost, Priority

The Cumberland County Joint Planning Board last week criticized the high priority State Department of Transportation officials have given the proposed four-laning of the U.S. 401-bypass between Raeford and 71st High School in the southern edge of Cumberland County.

The planning board questioned these points about the projects.

The project would cost \$14.5 million, it has been estimated. It runs 11 miles from the junction of U.S. 401 bypass and 401 business

west of Raeford to the present end of the four lane 401 east of 71st High.

It has been given a high priority by the state highway officials. The priority level has been criticized also by Cumberland County officials, including commissioners.

The cost of the project the planning board expressed concern about because state highway funding's end has appeared. Two members of the planning board also said they consider the

posed median's 46 feet as too wide and, consequently, too costly, for the road.

Board members agreed in general with the contents of the letter sent by Cumberland Planning Department Director Cliff Strassenburg to state officials. The letter recommends the officials look at the project again, including route changes near Lake Rim which would have the road bypass the lake to the south.

It also points out that the state is

using a design intended for vehicle speeds of up to 70 miles per hour, though today's top limit is 55.

The planning board is scheduled to adopt at its April 21 meeting a resolution containing the criticism.

The 401 project is included in the DOT's Transportation Improvement Program for 1980-86. Acquisition of rights of way is scheduled for the fiscal year 1983, and if funds are available, construction is scheduled to start in fiscal 1984.

Grand Jury Indicts 3 On Drug Charges

The following true bills of indictment were returned last week by the Hoke County Grand Jury.

Mike Melton, Rt. 3, Raeford, drug trafficking by conspiracy to manufacture 2,000 pounds or more but less than 10,000 pounds of marijuana with William C. Durham, Donnie Ray Anderson, Randell S. Smoot.

Daniel Eric Jones, 18, Rt. 1, Raeford, possession of more than one ounce of marijuana.

John Bradley Gordon, 19, Rt. 3, Raeford, possession of marijuana with intent to sell and possession of Methaqualone with intent to sell.

Willie Ray Huggins, Rt. 1, Shannon, second degree burglary, at the mobile home of Margaret Small early July 12, 1980.

Robert Wayne Damewood, 31, Raeford, lewd and lascivious act with a child.

Jasper Chavis, 21, Rt. 1, Shannon, assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill inflicting serious injury by stabbing Junior Lee Jones.

Henry James Morrison, 26, Fayetteville, breaking and entering and larceny.

Anson Avery Maynard, 38, Rt. 2, Raeford, possession of stolen goods (six counts), larceny, and accessory before the fact of felonious larceny.

Stephen Patrick Ross, 18, Raeford, felonious larceny.

The jury returned no true bills of indictment on charges of armed robbery against Robert and Mavis Sturdivant of Rt. 1, Raeford.

Check Charge Against Rep. Locklear Dropped

Worthless-check charges against State Rep. Horace Locklear of Pembroke were dropped April 3 after Locklear made the \$2,000 check good the previous day.

Locklear was charged with writing the check to Lacy Collins, operator of Collins and Son Milling Co. of Maxton. Collins had taken out the warrant in November.

The case was scheduled for trial in Scotland County District Court March 27 but was continued to April 3 to give Locklear time to raise the money to make the check good. Locklear said March 27 the charge resulted from his having written a personal check last fall in connection with his part ownership of First American tobacco warehouse. He said he wrote the check because a \$40,000 mortgage on the warehouse was due early this year

and the warehouse's money was wanted to meet the mortgage payment. Locklear is one of the

three members of the State House of Representatives who represent the 21st District, which consists of

Hoke, Scotland, and Robeson counties. He is serving his third two-year term.

City, Hoke, State Offices Closed Mon

Except for federal employees, including those on the Raeford Post Office staff, Easter Monday will be a holiday for all Hoke County and Raeford city government workers, including state employees.

The Courthouse and other county government offices and City Hall will be closed for the annual holiday.

The schools will be closed from the regular end of classes Friday till the regular time of starting classes the morning of April 27, though the "official" Easter vacation will run from Monday through April 24.

Mail services will be offered as usual, including window service, by the post office on Easter Monday.

Easter Service At 5:40 A.M.

The Easter Sunrise Service sponsored by the Raeford Ministers Association will be held in Hoke County High School Stadium starting at 5:40 a.m.

The Rev. Dr. John Ropp, pastor of Raeford Presbyterian Church of Raeford, will bring the Easter Message.

The congregation will be welcomed by the Rev. George McKeithan, pastor of Hillcrest Baptist

STORES AHEAD -- This sign on the northwest side of the U.S. 401 south bypass at Cole Avenue Extension tells of two major stores coming to the planned new Raeford-Hoke Village shopping center. Food Town announced its plans last year to have a store built at the center. Eckerd's planned store was learned recently. Up to six locally owned stores are also planned for the center, which will be built by Edens & McTeer, Inc., of Columbia, S.C., after financing arrangements are completed. The site covers 7.9 acres, and the cost of construction has been estimated at \$1.4 million. [Staff photo by Pam Frederick].

Easter Basket Drawings Saturday

The drawings of prizes in this week's Easter Promotion of the Raeford Merchant's Association

will be held at 2 p.m. Saturday at Michael's, 109 S. Main St.

This will be the four Easter Basket drawings. The winner of each drawing will receive five prizes valued at a total of \$25 and \$30.

People may register for the drawings in advance at any one of the businesses which has contributed prizes, and these are listed below with the prizes being offered.

The Easter Basket showing the prizes is on display in Michael's show window.

The four groups of prizes and their donors are:

First winner -- a pair of jeans, R&R Outfitters; a sport shirt, Michael's; a wheelbarrow Easter

basket, Pope's; a pair of roller skates, Jane's Variety.

Second winner -- dress shirt, Howard Clothing; sun dress, Raeford Outlet; baby basket, Medicine Shoppe; hand bag, Shoe Chest; and sewing chest, Howell Drug.

Third winner -- Polaroid camera, Hoke Drug; blouse, Cato's; free roach extermination, Enviro - Chem Exterminating Co.; a gift certificate for spark plugs, Auto Parts; and a serving tray, Kinlaw's.

Fourth winner -- dressing gown, Theresa's; calculator, Western Auto; pocketbook set, Pauline's Fashion; Western shirt, Raeford Outlet; and spoon - and - fork wall hangers, Gifts from Holland.

