

Jobless Rate Rises

Despite positive signs, unemployment rates in Hoke County during August continued to seew and increased one full percentage point over the July figures.

Hoke was among 42 counties in the state that increased during the month, as the jobless rate reached 11.4%, putting an end to a two month decline.

Although 90 more persons were out of work in the county, there were some encouraging signs for future employment here.

Candidates for jobs at the new Raeford-Hoke Village Shopping Center lined up this week at the Employment Security Commission on Elwood Street in hopes gaining an available slot.

About 120 positions will be filled at Sky City, Revco and Food Town stores, Hoke-Scotland Commission Manager Al McKenzie said.

Applications are also being taken at the J.P. Stevens Plant in Wagram for about 100 positions, McKenzie said.

"We're hoping that the figures will drop in September," he said, adding that preliminary figures are showing that there could be a decrease.

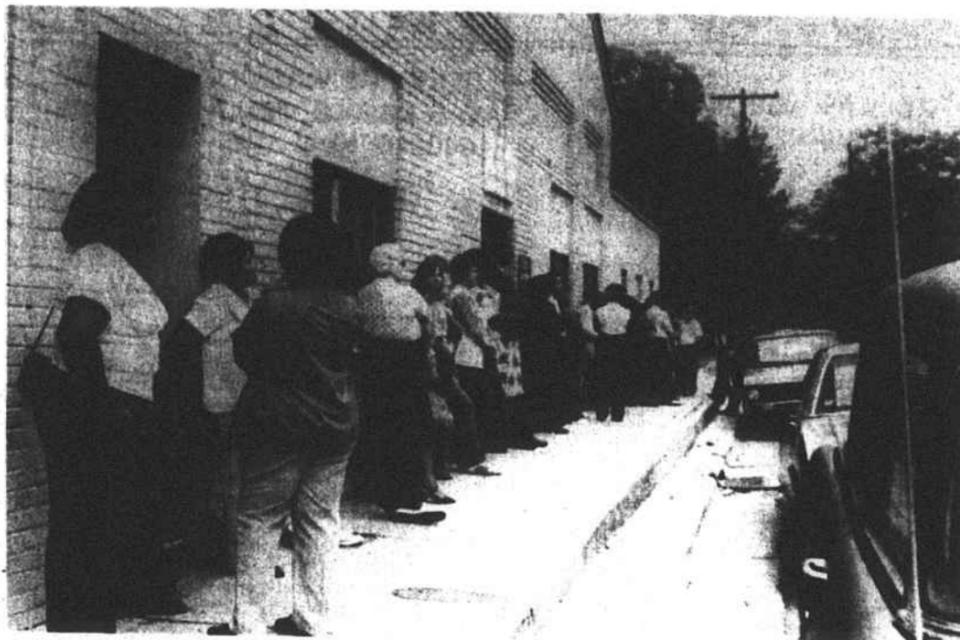
Several local plants have had temporary layoffs, which have resulted in hikes in unemployment, McKenzie said.

McKenzie said also he was unsure how the Burlington shut down planned for one week in October would affect the jobless figures during that month.

More than 1,600 workers will be off during that week.

Employment commission officials are anticipating a steady recovery and a gradual improvement in the unemployment figures, McKenzie said.

"It should be gradual, but we (See UNEMPLOYMENT, page 12)



QUEUING UP -- Job applicants lined up this week along Elwood Avenue in hopes of landing one of the 120 jobs being offered at the new Raeford-Hoke Village Shopping Center.

Search Continues For Mrs. McCray

The last time anyone saw Mrs. Florence Ree McCray, 38, of 509 E. Prospect Ave., Raeford was 11 p.m. August 1.

This was by a woman friend who walked home with her.

The last time anyone heard of her was 11:30 p.m. the same day. This was by her mother, Mrs. Annie Butler of Rt. 1, Raeford. They had a talk on the telephone. Her mother said Mrs. McCray sounded normal, that she didn't seem upset about anything.

Since then, Raeford Police Chief Leonard Wiggins said Monday, many leads, including rumors, have been investigated by the Raeford police, assisted by the State Bureau of Investigation.

"At present," he continued, "I have reason to believe foul play is involved."

He said Mrs. McCray had no car, that no evidence has been found that she left home voluntarily. He said she has not picked up her most recent pay check from the House of Raeford and she hasn't reported for work there since before she was reported missing, and she never missed a day's work.

Wiggins said also, "I've been thinking seriously of contacting the governor's office about having a reward offered." This would be for information leading to the finding of Mrs. McCray or for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person or persons who committed foul play, in her disappearance, if foul play has been committed.

He said, "I'd rather not go into details" but that portions of Ft. Bragg have been searched by the

Army's Criminal Investigation Division and parts of Hoke County have been searched with the help of tracking dogs by other officers. Mrs. McCray's disappearance also has been entered in the National Crime Information Center, he added.

Wiggins said he called the SBI in to help a couple of days after Mrs. McCray was reported missing.

Detective James Murdock has been and is continuing to investigate the case nearly full time, Wiggins said, and the investigation will continue till either Mrs. McCray is found or whoever is responsible of foul play in her disappearance is found guilty.

Wiggins said "bits and pieces" have been investigated and will continue to be.

He said as soon as a report concerning Mrs. McCray is received by the police department it is investigated immediately. In the course of the investigation, he said reports from several states, as far away as New Jersey, and from several North Carolina counties outside Hoke have been investigated. One source reported a body found in another county, and this was investigated, but it was found that the body was not Mrs. McCray's.

Her description with her picture has been circulated by television stations WECT (Channel 6) of Wilmington and WKFT (Channel 40) in Fayetteville, and by *The News-Journal*; and her description has been broadcast by the local radio station in efforts to attract the

attention of anyone who knows of her whereabouts.

Mrs. McCray lived alone with her children, who are 18, 16, and 6 years old. She and her husband Grady, had been separated for some time, Wiggins said, and her husband is living in Hoke County outside Raeford.

Mrs. McCray has a medium brown complexion and a dark spot on the right side of her forehead near her temple. She is about 5 feet 2 inches and weighs about 135 pounds. She has brown hair and brown eyes.

When she was last seen, she was in good mental and physical health.

"Everything humanly possible is being done and has been done," Wiggins said.

He asked anyone who has any information about Mrs. McCray and has not been contacted by the police to get in touch with the police.

Va. Man Killed

A Richmond, Virginia man was killed Tuesday around 2:30 p.m. while working with an electrical hand tool at the Burlington Industries, Raeford Police Chief Leonard Wiggins said.

He was not an employe of the plant and worked for the Virginia contracting firm McGraw - Morgan. The man's name was withheld pending notification of his next of kin.

An autopsy will be performed, Wiggins said.

Ruling Sparks Public Outcry

by Warren Johnston

Public sentiment has been high since last week's nonsuit of a Hoke County man charged with raping his six-year-old daughter and local citizens are being encouraged to seek changes in state laws.

Public officials and administrators said following the verdict in Superior Court, that they received numerous calls from concerned residents about the case.

"All I can tell them to do is to call their legislator and try to get the laws changed," Hoke County Sheriff David Barrington said.

Democratic Party state House of Representatives nominee Danny DeVane, who is unopposed in the November general election, said last week that he had received more than 30 calls about the case, and that he intended to look into the law.

Another resident reportedly called Governor James B. Hunt Jr. asking about changing the law.

Under the present North Carolina law, a prosecuting witness in a rape case must testify that there has been penetration, a spokesman for the state Attorney General's office said.

"She has to say that he put his part in me," the spokesman said.

During the trial last week the young daughter of accused rapist Bobby Louis Green of Rt. 2, Raeford was unable to reply to repeated questions from Assistant District Attorney Jean Powell about the alleged attack.

Although the six-year-old had given previous statements to law enforcement officers, doctors, nurses and Miss Powell detailing the incident, all she was able to say in court was that the defendant took her clothes off, got on top of her and "hurt" her.

According to the present law, statements about the incident given to responsible persons are not admissible to prove rape.

Testimony from doctors that the girl had been injured and required stitching to stop heavy bleeding was also not permissible and would not have proved rape without the girl collaborating there had been penetration, Miss Powell said.

Miss Powell, Barrington and Hoke County Department of Social Services (DSS) Director Ken Witherspoon all said they would like to see the law changed to:

• Permit testimony from other reliable witnesses about statements

given by a rape victim of tender age.

• Allow the court room to be closed to the public while a minor witness is testifying in a rape case.

A motion was made by Miss Powell to exclude the public during the testimony of the six-year-old, however, after an objection from defense attorneys Paul Herzog and Orlando Hudson, 16th Judicial Circuit Judge Samuel E. Britt of Lumberton rejected the move.

Closing the court room may have violated the defendant's rights to a public trial granted under the construction of the United States, Britt ruled.

"The little girl was capable of only so much pressure," Miss Powell said, noting that the witness was faced with pressure applied by family members present in the court room and by the difficulty of testifying against her father.

"She just froze up," Miss Powell said. "She wouldn't say anything or even indicate what had been done."

In some rape cases, medical testimony can prove rape if semen is found in a post-incident examination.

However, in this case, the little girl was bleeding so much that evidence of sperm would have been "washed away," Miss Powell said.

At the time she was admitted to the hospital, doctors said that the girl's hemoglobin count was about half that of a normal child her age because of the loss of blood, Miss Powell said.

"I was upset after it was over. I got personally involved," she added.

"Jean Powell is one of the best assistant DA's in this state," the spokesman for the Attorney General's office said.

"I'm sure that if she couldn't get the girl to testify, it couldn't be done," the spokesman said.

During his 26 years of law enforcement work, Sheriff Barrington said he has seen 20 to 30 cases like the one in court last week.

"It was obvious there was sexual assault, but the witnesses couldn't or wouldn't testify," Barrington said.

In seven or eight cases, mothers have come to the sheriff's office with the victims, but when they found that child would have to testify, the women refused to press charges.

"We had medical examinations (See RAPE, page 12)

Around Town

BY SAM C. MORRIS

The weather over the weekend was wet, but it did hold off enough for the football games. It was also really cool on Sunday and maybe some of the local folks turned on their heaters. As this is being written Monday afternoon, the sun is shining and the forecast is for warmer weather the remainder of this week.

We think that the rain was too late to help the soybeans and it also caught farmers with cotton open in the fields. Most farmers now try to wait until all the cotton is open before they send the cotton picker into the field. So it is very likely that cotton will get wet.

As you ride north on Main Street you will notice that the new building of the First Baptist Church is near completion. I was told last week that they should be putting the carpet down next week, so it shouldn't be long before they will be holding service in their new building.

Every new building on Main Street helps the looks of the city.

Someone told me Monday that one of the stores at the new shopping center was taking applications that morning and that people started lining up early in the morning for jobs. Maybe when all the stores open in the center it will cut the unemployment rate for the county. We certainly hope it does.

Last Saturday I went again to Chapel Hill to see the Carolina football team play. It was cloudy when we left, but the sun came out and it turned out to be a nice day. At the game Saturday before (See AROUND TOWN, page 7)

Zoning Could Take Months

Although members of the Hoke County Commission vowed last week to assist residents of a county subdivision stop objectionable development pending in their neighborhood, it could be months before regulations can be implemented.

In response to a request for help from residents of the Chance Subdivision, commission members instructed County Manager James Martin to begin working with the Lumber River Council of Governments (COG) on developing a countywide zoning plan.

However, both Martin and COG Planning Director James Perry believe that implementing the plan could take months and the road to adopting a comprehensive zoning ordinance could be politically arduous.

Perry has collected ordinances from surrounding counties for the commission to study, and will also resurrect a zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations and mobile home restrictions, which were partially drawn for Hoke County three years ago but abandoned when the issues became "too hot politically."

Commissioners will probably have to call a special work session to go through the material and

decide in which direction to go, Martin said.

Countywide zoning, along with the other planning ordinances, were worked on by the commission in 1977, but the matter was dropped after a December public hearing.

In 1979, the commissioners again considered developing a zoning plan for the county.

Funds were earmarked in the budget to share the expense of a staff planner with the City of Raeford.

Many property owners will strongly oppose passage of a zoning ordinance, until someone attempts to move a pig parlor or a slaughter house next door to them.

--COG Planner Jim Perry

Each governmental body would have split the salary expense. Martin and City Manager Ronald Matthews had interviewed and selected a candidate for the boards approval, when the commissioners changed their minds and decided

not to fund the project.

Political pressure from some property owners apparently took its toll again on the project.

"Zoning is designed to protect the property owners, but until it is explained to them that way, most people are against it," Perry said.

Many property owners will strongly oppose passage of a zoning ordinance, until someone attempts to move a pig parlor or a slaughter house next door to them, Perry said.

Proper zoning can eliminate a mixing of uses which can have an undesirable effect and cause a loss of value, Perry said.

Once county commissioners decide how they want to use zoning, then the county land use map must be updated to determine present uses.

Zoning would be centered around the present uses, Perry said.

For example, the new countywide water system could be tied into the zoning ordinance.

If engineers plan to put in heavier lines for future industries, then those areas should be zoned for industry, Perry said.



FALL COMES TO FARM -- The first day of fall came last week to this old barn and its fields in Hoke County. The large, fleecy clouds covering part of the blue sky reminded the admirers of the beauty of the day of the summer that had just left till next June.