

## No Violations Seen

# Health Officials Monitoring PCB Operation Here

by Warren Johnston

State and local health officials are cautiously monitoring a county business which is handling "low level toxic PCB's" *The News-Journal* learned this week.

The monitoring, however, is done sporadically and depends largely on the business operator not to handle the hazardous material and to report any spills that might occur, state Natural Resources and Community Development (NRCD) Regional Supervisor Dennis Ramsey said.

Although the electrical transformer salvage operation's

owner Woody Wilson says efforts are being made to avoid handling PCB laced oil, low levels of the substance have been found by health officials at the business's North Carolina Highway 211 location.

State officials checked the Ashmont Community business recently and discovered PCB's in concentrations of 22 parts 1,000, a November 2 letter from Ramsey to Wilson says.

Federal Environment Protection Agency (EPA) does not consider that level of PCB's to be hazardous, Ramsey said Monday.

If concentrations are below 50 parts per 1,000, the material handling is not overseen by the EPA and state health authorities have no jurisdiction unless a spill occurs, Ramsey said.

"We have to depend on the operator to report any spills," Ramsey said.

State officials make periodic checks and have found that Wilson "is doing a good job," Ramsey said.

The business's grounds are clean, and there is no evidence of spills.

Used transformers are received

by the local business from Carolina Power and Light (CP&L) and dismantled, Wilson said, noting that the cores and casings are salvaged.

The oil from the transformers is pumped out, taken across Highway 211 to be abandoned service station site and pumped into an underground storage tank, Wilson said Tuesday.

"The tank is checked daily," to insure that no oil is leaking, he said.

Efforts to pressure check the tank have proved impractical, and a "dip stick" method is used daily,

Wilson added.

Once the 6,000 gallon tank is full, it will be transferred to tanker truck and taken, probably, to Arkansas for recycling, Wilson said.

Although Wilson lives in Goldsboro, he said he chose the Hoke County site for his business because he owns the land here.

"I'm originally from Hoke County and went to high school there," he said.

PCB's have come under fire recently as being a cancer-causing material.

Mass arrests were made recently

in Warren County, after residents protested the state's efforts to place PCB's in a recently constructed landfill there.

The material being disposed of was dumped along roads by a firm that was reconditioning electrical transformers. That operation has no connection with the Hoke County firm.

Before being discontinued, PCB's were widely used in the transformer oil.

Utility firms found, however, that the toxic material leaked from the units and was posing a health hazard.

## Store Robbed At Gunpoint On Monday

Crossroads Grocery on U.S. 401 north of Raeford near Tanglewood Motel was robbed about 5:30 p.m. Monday of about \$350 in cash and about \$100 worth of jewelry by an armed man, Sheriff Dave Barrington said.

It was the first armed robbery in the county in two years.

He said he and some of his officers got to the scene within minutes after the robbery was committed, radioed to officers in adjoining counties, and searched areas of Hoke, Robeson and Cumberland but without success.

He said two men and possibly a third person were involved. The two known to be involved were described as Indian males about 18 to 20 years old, he added.

The sheriff said Jimmy McQuague, owner of the store, reported these details.

One of the men came into the store, bought a soft drink and left. Then, when McQuague was the only person in the store, the second man, showing a .38 caliber pistol entered, forced McQuague to lie on the floor behind a shelf of food, took the money from the cash register and the rings -- men's and women's -- from a sales case, and left, and both, with possibly another person.

McQuague got a look at the car the armed men got into before it left and described it to the investigating officers as an iron-gray or silver Pontiac Firebird, model 1978 to 1980.

The sheriff said this was the first armed robbery that had been committed in the county in two years. He said also that, usually, several days before Christmas, he splits his patrols and has the officers checking rural stores especially from late afternoon until closing to prevent robbery attempts.

This year, he said, "they started early."

## Around Town

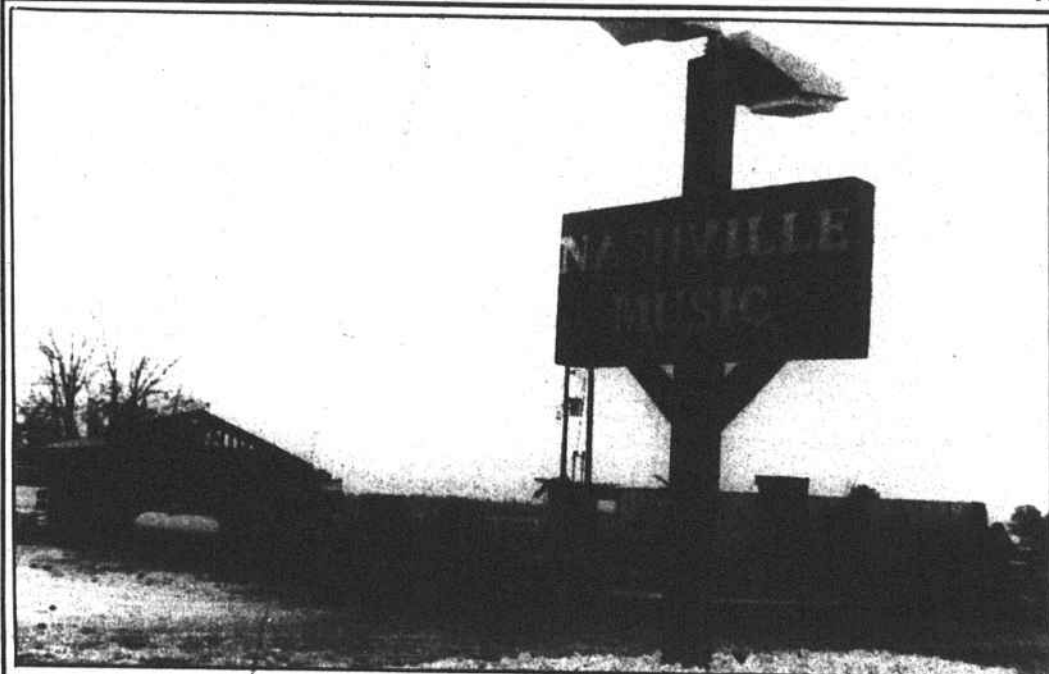
by Sam Morris

Monday for the first time in many months I had to stop a round of golf because of rain. The foursome that was playing finished 13 holes before the skies opened and caused us to call it quits. I can't complain because since retirement last December 31st the weather has been good most of the time and I have missed only a few weeks during the year from the golf course.

The forecast for the remainder of the week doesn't look too good as rain and cold weather have been predicted.

Anyway this summer weather the past few days has been good for the fuel bills, but I believe that we will really feel the cold more when it does turn colder. We do need some cold weather thought to kill the insects.

The Raeford Kiwanis Club will sponsor its annual Pancake Supper Thursday night at the Gibson Cafeteria. The feeding will start at five o'clock in the afternoon and (See AROUND TOWN, page 14)



Remains of Nashville Music building left by fire. At right are law enforcement officers and Antioch firemen.

## Arsonists Torch Night Club

Three masked men burned down one of three clubs owned by Brady Locklear on N.C. 211 east in the Antioch Community early December 1 and were frightened away after spreading gasoline in a second building but before they could ignite the fuel.

This was reported by Sheriff Dave Barrington from findings of the investigation being conducted by his department assisted by the Arson Division of the State Bureau of Investigation (SBI). He said the investigation is continuing.

The sheriff said the three men, reported wearing ski masks, first jumped the elderly night watchman, Freddy Hunt, and bound him in one building, but did not injure him.

Then they poured gasoline around Nashville Music and set it afire.

The Antioch Volunteer Fire Department answered the alarm, and the firemen prevented the blaze from spreading, though they could not save the burning building.

The sheriff said his department

received the call reporting the fire at 3:06 a.m.

The burned building was about 75 yards south of the Locklear club that was the scene of a fatal shooting May 9. Perry Wayne Locklear, 25, of Pembroke, was sentenced last month to life for the killing, which took the life of Terry Wayne Locklear, also of Pembroke.

The sheriff said that he saw no connection between the Lowery-Locklear case and the December 1 fire.



Raz Autry

## Autry To Quit Thurs. Effective In March

by Bill Lindau

Raz Autry is doing what he said four years ago he would do -- make this four-year term his last as superintendent of Hoke County schools.

He said Monday afternoon in an interview with *The News-Journal* and earlier to his central office staff and his principals in separate meetings that he was resigning effective March 17.

The agenda for Thursday night's regular December meeting of the Hoke County Board of Education lists "Resignation of Superintendent" on the meeting's agenda.

Autry said he has chosen the March date to leave office to give the new superintendent, who has not been named yet, time to establish a good relationship with the Hoke County commissioners on the eve of budget-making time.

Autry's conflicts with the commissioners are public knowledge. He said that his primary quarrel with the commissioners was "they really haven't supported education."

"No man or woman should be bigger than the institution he or she serves," Autry said.

But, he said, he has no animosity toward the commissioners and isn't leaving "mad" at anybody.

Among his accomplishments as superintendent for nearly 10 years he lists free school lunches, abolition of all school fees and pushing

of cultural arts. He said he had recommended the free lunches and abolition of fees. The school boards of the various times had acted favorably on them.

Fees were reinstated in the school system the current year to help compensate for cutbacks in federal funds.

Autry said his greatest contribution would have been to give every youngster in the county as good an opportunity for education as any in the state.

Regarding the selection of the new superintendent, Autry said he will have "absolutely nothing to do with that." His only input, he said, would be to report what other school systems do.

The new superintendent should work under his or her own budget, he or she has the right to make his or her own decisions on personnel, "not mine," he said.

He said he has been eligible for retirement since 1978 when he had 30 years' experience in education. He has 34 actual and two more technically credited years, but he said he feels that he has done all he can do for the county schools.

He added there are a "lot of physical things the county has got to face up to," meaning upgrading buildings.

As for his plans, he said he hasn't made up his mind what he will do, but "I've got enough to (See AUTRY, page 14)

## Two Local Industries Ask Sewer Fee Relief

by Warren Johnston

Members of the Raeford City Council are considering requests from two local industries to "forgive sewer fees" charged against the firms.

The requests were made Monday night by Commercial Products Inc., who has a concrete manufacturing plant under construction here, and by Hoke Concrete Works.

Both firms, although heavy water users, claim operations place no effluent into the city sewage system and are seeking relief from the sewer charge which is based on water consumption.

However, if the council approves the requests, the move is likely to open the door to other industries for similar relief, and could "severely" damage the financial stability of the municipal water and sewer system, City

Manager Ronald Matthews said.

"With Hoke Concrete, it's not that big of a deal. But with other industries it could cost us \$2,000 a month," Matthews said.

Hoke Concrete owner Clyde Upchurch told council members that he had been charged over \$200 per month for water for several years.

The bills were apparently estimated, and when a new meter was installed in August, the firm's bills dropped to \$70 per month.

"I think that I have been taken to the cleaners," Upchurch said.

"Bygones should be bygones," Upchurch said, but noting that he would feel satisfied if the council waved the sewer charge to the concrete plant.

The city sewer charge is based on 109% of water usage for all municipal customers.

Commercial Products President (See SEWER, page 13)

## Towns Seek Cable Changes

by Bill Lindau

Jones Intercable has corrected problems and is looking into the feasibility of adding channels to its six-city area system, Raeford city officials and representatives from other service areas were told Tuesday.

The meeting held here included officials from St. Pauls, Red Springs, Pembroke and Elizabethtown, and was called after Jones Intercable requested a rate increase recently.

A representative of a cable consulting firm, Spectrum Communications of Pittsboro, also attended the meeting at the request of the municipalities.

Spectrum has represented Raleigh, Fayetteville, Cumberland

County and other North Carolina cities in disputes with cable companies.

The information about the service was given as answers to the many questions put by town officials.

Most were answered by Charlie G. Bailey of McDonough, Ga., division vice president for Jones's Eastern Division, with other explanations given by Jones's Raeford systems manager, Harrison Daniels.

Raeford now has 12 cable TV channels.

City Manager Ron Matthews said the additional channels wanted in Raeford are: a 24-hour sports (ESPN) channel, a 24-hour news network (CNN) channel, and

(See CABLE, page 13)



Mrs. Edmund administering the oaths of office to County Commissioners (L-R) John Balfour, Cleo Bratcher, Jr., James A. Hunt, and Wyatt Upchurch.

## Commissioners Sworn

by Bill Lindau

Four men were sworn into office Monday morning as Hoke County commissioners by Juanita Edmund, clerk of Hoke County Superior Court, then joined the two other commissioners and went into their board's regular first Monday-of-the-month meeting for December.

Taking the oaths were John Balfour, Cleo Bratcher, Jr., and James A. Hunt, all winners of four-year terms in the November

general election; and Wyatt Upchurch, appointed last month to serve the unexpired two years of Commissioner Danny DeVane's four-year term.

DeVane resigned November 4, two days after he won a State House of Representatives seat from the 16th District of Robeson, Hoke and Scotland Counties.

He had been reelected to the Board of County Commissioners in the 1980 elections, with Com- (See COMMISSION, page 14)