

Slated For Court Jan. 20

Commissioner Hunt Charged With Passing Bad Checks

By Bill Lindau

County Commissioner James Albert Hunt is scheduled to appear in Hoke County District Court January 20 for trial on charges of passing worthless checks, the Sheriff's Department records show.

The checks totaled \$13,543 and were made payable to Robeson County residents, according to the records.

Sheriff Dave Barrington said Monday two criminal summonses and a warrant were served Friday on Hunt by Deputy Sheriff Alex Norton.

Hunt had been admitted to Moore Memorial Hospital at Pinehurst about two weeks before

the warrant and summonses were turned over to the Sheriff's Department to be served.

A hospital spokesman said Monday Hunt was discharged from the hospital officially on Christmas Day, but was out on leave the day before. Hunt reportedly had gone to the hospital to undergo hernia surgery.

Hunt could not be reached for comment on the check charges Monday.

The sheriff said if Hunt made restitution for the checks before January 20, a District Court appearance wouldn't be necessary.

A defendant in a worthless check case can avoid going to District Court for trial by signing a

trial waiver in which he or she pleads guilty, then makes restitution for the amount of the check and pays court costs, which is a minimum of \$31, Barrington said.

He said no bond is required in connection with a scheduled court appearance on a criminal summons, and Hunt signed a written promise Friday before Magistrate E.B. Ingram to appear in court to answer the warrant.

The sheriff explained also that when a warrant is served, the defendant is taken before a magistrate but that in the case of a criminal summons, the defendant is simply informed of the charge and instructed to appear in court on a specified date.

The criminal summonses accuse

Hunt of writing a check for \$10,250 payable to Samuel A. Cox of Lumberton Datsun, and one for \$2,978 payable to Charley E. Bennett of Lumberton Machine and Welding Co.

The warrant charges Hunt with giving a \$315 check payable to Fred Baker of Box 131, Lumber Bridge. The warrant was issued December 15 by Magistrate J.M. Hall in Hoke County.

All the checks were written on United Carolina Bank of Raeford.

The sheriff said the warrants were not served until Friday because Hunt was in the hospital, and this was standard practice in the case of warrants and summonses charging misdemeanors.

Hunt is vice chairman of the Board of County Commissioners and is serving his third four-year term as a commissioner. He was reelected in the November general election after winning Democratic nomination in the July 27 runoff primary.

Hunt finished third in a field of 10 candidates for the party's nominations for the three seats in the June 29 regular primary and led the field of four in the runoff contest.

Hunt is a 40-year-old businessman, operating truck and rental firms among others in the South Hoke area. He and his wife and their three children live on Rt. 1, Red Springs.



James A. Hunt

NC Cites Raeford For Sewer Woes

By Warren Johnston

Because of the failure of one of the city's major industries to meet sewer discharge requirements, Raeford has been found in violation of a state consent order making the municipality subject to immediate civil penalty.

However, the city has been given a stay and a grace period to allow the House of Raeford time to meet its obligation to pre-treat waste discharged into the municipal system.

In a letter to Mayor John K. McNeill, dated December 15, State Department of Natural Resources and Community Development (NRCD) Director Robert F. Helms noted that the city's discharge into Rockfish Creek will be carefully monitored for the next 90 days to determine if Raeford can bring its system into compliance with state regulations.

Members of the Raeford City Council received copies of the letter this week.

"I have decided not to initiate a civil penalty action at this time, but to reserve the option to assess in an action which could be taken at any time," Helms said in the letter.

"This decision should in no way be taken by the city as an indication that an assessment will not be forthcoming," he said.

Each day the city is not in compliance with its permit will be subject to an additional penalty, the letter says.

Fines could exceed \$10,000 per day.

Helms said prior to levying assessments, the state will consider:

- The time it takes the city to achieve compliance.
- The magnitude of the permit violations.
- Any adverse impact the city's discharge has on the surface waters of the state.

•Efforts made by the city to "optimize" the operation of the Raeford Wastewater Treatment Plant.

•How actively the city enforces its Sewer Use Ordinance. "Of special interest will be the manner in which the City administers its surcharge provision against non-complying industries."

On April 8, the city signed a consent order which said that all industries would be in compliance by November 1, and that the city would complete work on its \$1 million renovation of the municipal treatment plant by the same date.

Although the city has completed the work on the treatment plant, "the discharge from the House of Raeford is causing an organic overload that the existing plant is unable to adequately treat," Helms said in the letter.

The state will be watching to see if city council members impose a fine on the turkey processing plant because of its non-compliance, the letter says.

Although Helms is on vacation this week and could not be reached for comment, Regional NRCD Supervisor Dennis Ramsey said indications are that the House of Raeford is attempting to correct its

discharge problem.

"We believe they are sincere and are going to get it corrected," Ramsey said Tuesday.

If the state was not optimistic about the Raeford problems being corrected, "we wouldn't have given them the grace period," he added.

All industries that were not in compliance were given an extended deadline by the city council until January 1. If improvements are not made to pre-treatment facilities by then, firms will be subject to fines from July 1.

Since work has been completed on the Faberge pre-treatment facility, the House of Raeford remains the only major industry not to meet the city's requirements.

Until the city meets the discharge standards, the state will also continue its ban on industrial expansion here.

"In addition to the assessment of a civil penalty, we would also have no choice but to recommend denial of any request by the city for any future sewer line extensions or any increase in wastewater flow until such time as final compliance is achieved," Helms said in the letter.

The state imposed the moratorium on future development earlier, and as a result at least one industry thinking of locating here went elsewhere.

Industrial developers feel that the availability of sewer is a major factor considered by firms seeking plant sites.

Ramsey said that because of recent heavy rains, it has been difficult to monitor accurately the Raeford plant's effect on Rockfish Creek.

However, monitoring at the plant itself has shown improvements in the city's discharge, he said.



1982 was a year of increasing taxes, record traffic deaths and political elections in Hoke County. Associate Editor Bill Lindau looks at the events of the year on page 1 Section II of today's News-Journal.



Sitting Out The Season--This old harrow is idly parked in a Hoke County field awaiting another season of work.

Housing Construction To Start In January

Construction is expected to begin here in January on over \$2.2 million in low income housing developments.

The two projects, which will be located on sites near Raeford, are being developed by firms from High Point and Winston Salem, but will be managed locally.

Work is expected to begin in early January on 15 duplex buildings, known as "The Meadows", on North Fulton Drive.

Ground breaking is also slated for a second project off of Wooley Street behind the Hoke High School Stadium in late January.

Winston Salem developers Anderson, Benton, Holmes Inc. have obtained a city building per-

mit to construct 48 units on the Wooley Street site, Raeford Manager Ronald Matthews said.

The permit calls for the \$1.2 million Yadkin Trail Homes project to be constructed with 24 single family units and 24 duplex units.

Contractors for both developments are expected to use local sub-contractors and local laborers.

Yadkin Trail Homes is financed through the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency.

High Point developers John Loving and Douglas Brown closed the financing agreement on the

Meadows with the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) and with HUD under the Section 8 Program on December 1.

Brown and Loving, who are also the general contractors, said earlier that the project should be completed by October.

Under a prior agreement, the Raeford Housing Authority will manage both projects and will begin taking applications for residents this summer, Matthews said.

Each applicant will be screened carefully, Matthews said, noting that backgrounds will be checked and current residences inspected.

During January, Housing Authority Board members will

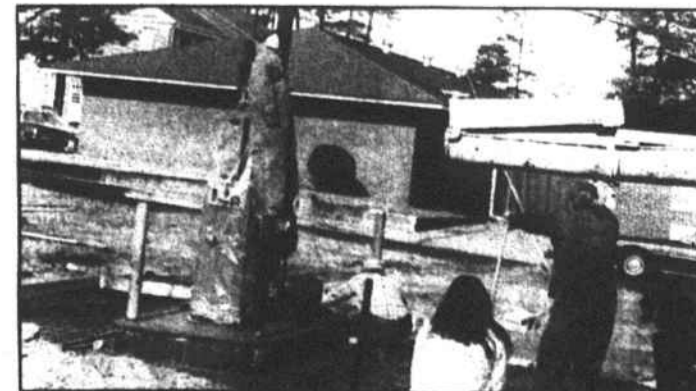
begin organizing the management unit and will take applications for the position of director, Matthews said.

Additional office and maintenance staff will also be hired, he said.

Other developers are looking at Hoke County as a potential site for low income housing units, and those developments are also expected to be managed by the Housing Authority.

Authority board members feel that local management should help to keep the quality of the projects' residents high.

The Raeford housing management plan is unique in North Carolina.



JUST HANGING AROUND -- Men installing the gas pump for the Hoke County Sheriff's Department found this dummy hanging around, at the end of the cable of a crane, when they came to work last week. Nobody knows who hung the dummy there. In this picture, concrete is being poured for the pump area, which is across the street from the sheriff's department. Raeford Police Maj. J.C. Barrington said, keeping a straight face while indicating the dummy: "That's what you get when you take county gas."

Around Town

by Sam Morris

Can you remember as many warm days as we have experienced this Christmas season? It has now been in the 70s every day for a week and the forecast is for it to drop into the 50s for the high, come Saturday.

Now this is good for the fuel bills, but is it good for our health. When it does turn cold it will be unbearable. The seasons of the year, with hot and cold weather, takes care of the killing of insects that can destroy our crops and also our gardens.

Nature must have the correct seasons to keep the supply and demand in balance. So maybe we can

use some cold weather.

The Sun Bowl in El Paso, Texas on Christmas Day could have been called the Snow Bowl. It was hard to imagine that type of weather there for the game. Anyway the result of the game was well received by Tar Heel fans.

The New Year's Bowl games will be on Saturday this year and should be viewed by a record number of fans. The only trouble is that some of the games will be

(See AROUND TOWN, page 10)