

Editorials

Held hostage

Members of the Raeford City Council voted properly on a tough question last week when they decided to fine the House of Raeford \$30,000 for past sewer discharge violations.

Despite a year of warnings, some, apparently including House of Raeford officials, were surprised that council members were able to put aside veiled threats of plant shutdowns and other personal pressures to vote unanimously in favor of levying the fine.

In reaction to the move, a House of Raeford spokesman said the firm planned to correct its discharge problems and be within city and state regulations by the end of March.

Although the firm is working with the city to solve the problem, the state is making the solution more difficult by imposing harsh regulations on the plant, the spokesman said.

The picture painted by the spokesman is that the House of Raeford has been spending its resources to keep 950 employees working during these tough economic times, and has been seeking, at the same time, a compromise solution with the state to the discharge problem.

However, officials from the state Department of Natural Resources and Community Development (NRCD) have not been in the mood to give.

In the meantime, city council members have been tossed between preserving existing jobs and opening the door for future employment, and the residents of Hoke County have been held hostage.

According to a recent letter to the city from NRCD's environmental management chief, until the council corrects the problem with the House of Raeford, a ban on new industry here will continue and municipal taxpayers will be subject to heavy fines which could go as high as \$10,000 per day.

Last week the council let both the state and the House of Raeford know that the city was serious about ending the squabble and getting on with future industrial development here.

With the improving interest rates and signs of economic recovery on the horizon, the council's action was well timed.

Under these apparent brighter conditions, many firms are beginning to resume selved plans for expansions and new plant sites.

Although the cloud of a moratorium, which has hovered here for the past several years, has been bad, its effects have been eased because few firms were looking around for sites.

It would be a tragedy for Hoke County to remain under the industrial expansion ban now that there is a chance for garnering new employers.

Here's hoping the turkey plant is able to complete the work on a pre-treatment system by the March date.

In the past the firm may have had some legitimate arguments for delaying the construction of a pre-treatment facility.

To continue to thwart the laws would serve little purpose now for the firm, and it would be indefensible to knock Hoke County out of contention for a new industry because of a lingering struggle of wills between the House of Raeford and the state.

Afraid of the public

It is unfortunate when officials elected by the public apparently find it more comfortable to conduct their business in private and away from scrutiny of their constituents.

Members of the Hoke County Board of Education have rarely missed an opportunity lately to duck behind closed doors into an executive session to discuss matters that perhaps belonged in the open.

Although the board may not be violating the letter of it, they are certainly violating the spirit of the state's Open Meeting Law.

We encourage the County Board of Education to let the electorate know what they are doing, and to allow parents, teachers and students know that their interests are being looked after.

We also encourage the voting public, and those interested in the school system to attend the monthly board meetings.

Who knows, maybe they will leave the doors open.

A touch of irony

There was a touch of irony in the actions taken by the Hoke County Commission during a December closed-door meeting.

In that private meeting the commission ordered an audit to be conducted of the books of the financially troubled Hoke Ambulance Service.

The county has been blindly paying the service more than \$55,000 per year for the past three years with no true picture of how the money was being spent.

Now, that it appears that service is having difficulty surviving, even with this year's payment of more than \$64,000, the commission last month asked for the audit.

Although in December there were two new commissioners aboard who did not attend the 1979 meeting, at least three of the present members must have recalled Mable Riley's efforts then to have the ambulance service audited on a regular basis.

Mrs. Riley made several motions in public meetings to require the monitoring of the books.

All of those motions were never seconded and never voted on by the rest of the commission.



"IT SEEMS LIKE THE MORE I SOW, THE LESS I REAP."

Letters To The Editor

Ruined reputation

Dear Editor,
I, as an eighth grade member of the Upchurch Jr. High School Chorus, would like to express my feelings on an article December 23 concerning us.

You have added comedy where it is uncalled for.

You have also hurt the reputation of the chorus and a very good choral director.

I feel the seventh graders alone should not be blamed for the problems, because chorus is a joint effort of both grades.

I feel like the cartoon (January 6) or "so-called" joke in the paper was not needed. You have not helped us at all to improve our reputations. I, myself, do not see why the article was needed.

Our chorus had lots of chances to be known as a good chorus, all of which you have ruined.

Shawn Brock
Raeford, N.C.

4-H, worth effort

Dear Editor:
Hoke County is privileged to have such a dedicated and knowledgeable extension agent to lead the 4-H work in our county.

Alice Lancaster, our agent, is working very hard to get more clubs organized in Hoke County and more young people interested in 4-H.

4-H has a lot to offer Hoke County boys and girls between the ages of 9 and 19.

It provides the opportunity for them to develop in leadership, character and citizenship.

These skills will be useful during their growing up years and will be carried with them into adulthood, when they will be the leaders of Hoke County.

There is a little effort required of the youngster's parents to make 4-H a success. The youngster's need assistance with their projects and encouragement to keep trying when things may not be going smoothly.

They also need to be reminded of meetings and they need transportation to and from meetings.

As a parent of a Hoke County 4-H'er, I am convinced that the time I spend with 4-H work is well worth the dividends, both to my child and to me.

Sincerely,
Janet L. Hendrix
Raeford

East explains

To the Editor:
I wish to express to you and your readers several (there are many more) of my objections to the recent \$29 billion federal gas tax bill. The new tax of five cents on a gallon of gas is a regressive tax that comes in a time of recession and is added to the existing four-cent federal tax and to the North Carolina state gas tax which is already one of the highest in the nation.

That is not good economics nor sound tax policy.

This tax will hit the working people of this country harder than any other single group and that alone made it worth resisting.

In addition, this gas tax of five cents a gallon will have an adverse effect in our rural areas. North Carolina is a major agricultural state, and thus this state will experience a negative impact.

Senator James Exon (D-Neb.) stated in a letter to his colleagues and on the Senate floor: "The clear predictable effect of the cost of this program will fall disproportionately on the rural areas."

Why?
Among other reasons, this tax is called a "user fee" but in fact it is not a "user fee," for one-fifth of this tax will be diverted to mass transit use in large cities of the North and particularly the Northeast.

As a practical matter then you are taxing agricultural and rural users of roads, bridges and highways to subsidize mass transit use in other parts of the country.

Call it what one will - that is not a "user fee," and the economic impact is negative in agricultural states.

Moreover, the formula used to compute what North Carolina will receive from its contribution to Washington indicates North Carolina will not receive back a dollar for every dollar paid into the trust fund.

Historically we have gotten back 74 cents on the dollar. We have tied with Texas and Oklahoma for last place as a "donor" state, and under the new formula we will remain a "donor" state receiving far less in return than we will be contributing.

Furthermore, this tax will adversely affect the trucking industry of this nation and North Carolina. Trucking is a major industry in North Carolina (we are the seventh largest trucking state in America) and many trucking businesses, particularly those of middle and small size, will feel a heavy brunt from this tax and added license fees. In this time of a weak economy it could force many of them out of business. In good conscience, a senator from North Carolina, keeping in mind the trucking interests of this state, could not support this tax and the dramatically increased license fees this legislation imposes.

Beyond burdening agricultural and trucking interests so vital to the economic well-being of North Carolina, this tax also could have a negative impact on tourism in our state. To increase the costs of driving clearly may discourage tourist activity so critical to the economic health of our entire state.

As regards the use of the filibuster to prevent passage of this bill, Senator Russell B. Long (D-La.) stated on the Senate floor that the North Carolina senators "had every right to do what they did. The people don't want faint-hearted senators. People want senators who will fight for their position."

Finally, it is worth noting that the fruit of this lameduck session of Congress is basically two-fold.

One, it raised the pay of members of Congress (nearly \$10,000 per member in the case of the House of Representatives) which I vigorously opposed.

Secondly, with enactment of the gas tax, it imposed a new tax on the working people of the country, and likewise I strongly opposed that even to the point of filibustering.

I felt enough was enough. I make no apologies for my stand. I think it was right that this tax be resisted, and I trust that the people of this state, if they study this measure carefully and fully, will understand this was a carefully reasoned and principled decision, and there was no alternative but to stand and to resist.

Sincerely,
John P. East
United States Senator

Misquoted

To the Editor:
In your article last week, (January 13) on the Raeford City

Council, you reported that I said there was no better system in reference to the method by which the City of Raeford charges sewer fees.

I asked the question if this was the best system that the city could use.

I do not know whether it is or not.

If we are using the best method to charge sewer fees, then everyone should be treated equally under this system.

If there is a better way to do it, then we should find that system and use it.

Sincerely,
Benny McLeod

Puppy Creek Philosopher

Dear editor:
One of the problems Congress is faced with dodging this year is the MX Missile.

The problem is not where to get the \$30 billion it'd take to build them. That's easy. You borrow it.

The problem isn't what part of the country they should be located in. That's easy, too. You locate them in sparsely populated area, on the sound principle that the sparser the population the fewer mad voters there are in the area to object to them.

The real problem is where to put them so the Russians can't get at them with their missiles.

One group says bunch all the missiles in steel-reinforced concrete in one spot deep underground.

Another group says scatter them out all around the country, if you can find enough sparsely populated, light-voting spots.

Another group says put them on rails in underground tunnels and keep moving them back and forth so the Russians will never know where to aim.

Another group just scratches its head and says the problem needs further study.

As I understand it, the purpose of building the MX missiles is to insure that they'll never be needed, on the theory that Russia isn't going to commit suicide by shooting at us when we can shoot back with devastating destruction. This is based on the theory that Adolph Hitler has no descendants rising to power in Russia.

I have given the matter of where to locate the missiles some prolonged thought, and the only spot I can figure out is a place nobody can discover. We should locate them just around that corner where politicians are always economic recovery is.

Yours faithfully,
J.A.

CLIFF BLUE... People & Issues

LOCAL TAXES...Which states and communities charge their citizens the most taxes?

The figures for 1981, the latest available show that among the continental forty eight, the District of Columbia charges their residents most -- an average of \$1,771. Wyoming is next at \$1,704 and New York third, at \$1,630.

Fourteen other states are expensive to live in, from this measurement citizens being assessed, on average, more than \$1100. These are: California, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon and Washington.

States where the local and state tax bite are lowest?

The low eight (under \$800) are: Alabama, Arkansas (lowest of all states \$678, Mississippi, Missouri, New Hampshire, South Carolina and Tennessee.

States where these taxes raise the greatest sum of money are California (29.8 billion), New York, Texas, Illinois, Pennsylvania and Michigan, in that order.

NEW REVENUE IDEA...It has been suggested that consideration be given by the 98th Congress to a new idea for raising federal revenue: proponents believe it could be used to fund and stabilize the social security system.

If not used for bailing out the red-ink social security system, the new tax -- which is what the proposal is -- would provide general revenue funds for the Treasury, which would also enable it to make the retirement system solvent and sound.

It is estimated by some economists that as much as \$1.5 trillion is in trust investments managed by corporate fiduciaries, which escape estate taxes under present law.

While it is true that the trend (in the Reagan Administration) is to reduce taxes on family estates, an idea the majority of Americans support, it's also true that most trust money today has been set up by lawyers and tax experts simply to avoid taxes.

TRUST FUNDS?...Huge trust funds need not necessarily be exempt from estate taxes.

The opposition to estate taxes in recent years arose from the fact that family businesses, farms, etc., were often faced with such high estate taxes, survivors were forced to sell to pay taxes.

But there would be scant opposition from the public, one assumes, for taxes in very large trusts well able to afford paying estate taxes, which for so long now have escaped paying taxes via one loophole after another.

Under present reform law by 1986 all estates of up to \$600,000 value will be entirely exempt from the federal taxation -- as per the recent Economic Recovery Act reform law. There is an unlimited marital deduction.

This means that no matter how large, estates and trusts can pass to a surviving spouse without incurring a dollar in federal estate taxes.

One suspects the great majority of Americans would accept unlimited estate inheritances up to a million dollars or so, or businesses, farms or home inheritances valued even higher.

But the tremendous flight of trusts by those smart enough to utilize clever lawyers in recent decades has amassed enormous trust capital which would be taxed, and which should be taxed.

AUTOS...Ford Motor's request to delay paying \$12.4 million in damages and interest to a California man injured in a 1970 car accident pending an appeal which was denied by the high court. Separately, Ford paid \$7.5 million to settle a suit in which a California man was awarded \$127.8 million due to a 1972 Pinto car accident, reports *The Wall Street Journal*.



The News - Journal

MEMBER NNA NATIONAL NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION

Published Every Thursday at Raeford, N.C. 28376
119 W. Elwood Avenue

Subscription Rates in Advance
In County Per Year—\$10.00 6 Months—\$5.00
Out of County Per Year—\$12.00 6 Months—\$6.00

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