



End Of Winter -- These Hoke County barns are silhouetted against a late winter sky, seemingly waiting for bright spring sun. (Photo by Dale Dees)

## April 28 Recall Slated

# Membership Group's Bid Upheld

By Sherry Matthews

Although a compromise was apparently reached Friday in the struggle between Lumbee Electric Membership Cooperative's board of directors and a membership action group, a restraining order was upheld Tuesday in Robeson County Superior Court which could open the door for the eventual ouster of the present board.

The restraining order, which was upheld by Superior Court Judge D.B. Herring, allows the action group to circulate new membership petitions calling for an April 28 recall vote of the present board of directors.

The restraining order calls for: --The prohibition of the board or its agents destroying any existing or future coop records.

--The allowance of a recall meeting to be held in the Cumberland County Memorial Auditorium or any other arena of the same size or larger, with the exception of the Pembroke area.

The LREMC Board will call the special meeting for April 28 if petitions containing the required 10% of the membership are presented to the coop. Interim General Manager Ronnie Hunt said Tuesday during a press conference.

According to the order, the only say the board has in the recall meeting is to name the location.

Despite petitions containing more than 2,000 members names, the board denied an earlier effort by the action group to hold a March 3 recall.

Action group leader Carl Branch

was at the Lumbee press conference, and said he was not worried that the recall petition would get the required 10% of membership names.

"I don't think there is any question of us getting names on the new petition. I would guess that this time around we will get around 5,000 names," Branch said.

With this new injunction, the board will have a difficult time of refusing the action group if they get the required amount of names on the petition, Hunt said.

The new charges listed on the action group's petition are:

--Improper use of corporation funds for expenses to conventions and meetings, resulting in waste and misuse of those funds.

--Improper use of cooperative

funds for transportation and other expenses for director's wives to attend meetings and conventions.

--Failure to call a special meeting of the members after a petition was filed by more than 10% of the members in violation of the By-laws of the Corporation.

With these charges, Carl Branch said he felt certain that the present board members would be ousted.

"The coop is going to be stronger when this nasty situation is cleared up," Branch said.

While the press conference was being conducted Tuesday, the Lumbee board members held an executive session and refused to comment publicly.

"I personally feel great," Branch said.

## Trial Scheduled Here This Week For Ex-SBI Agent

A former State Bureau of Investigation (SBI) agent will be arraigned here in Superior Court Thursday on charges that he altered evidence and obstructed justice in four Hoke County drug cases.

Arnett Andrew Dove, 25, who is charged with changing an SBI lab report in the case against Julius Locklear and of obstructing justice for falsifying lab reports in the cases of Clarence Bratcher, Elwood McNair and Ervin Benny Ross, was fired by the SBI on January 10 and indicted by the Hoke County Grand Jury seven days later on January 17.

Dove had been an agent for three years until he was fired for "gross misconduct," according to State Senior Deputy Atty. Gen. Andrew Vanore.

A source close to the Dove investigation said Dove falsified the reports out of laziness and not because of any effort to improve the SBI cases against the four defendants.

The source also said that Dove faked the report and testified at the hearings rather than admit to Assistant District Attorney Jean Powell that he wasn't ready.

The bill of indictment against Dove states that he, "did alter evidence relevant to a criminal offense and court proceedings" in altering a report of the SBI lab regarding a criminal offense--felonious possession with intent to sell and deliver marijuana.

Dove has pleaded not guilty to the charges and was released under a \$1,500 secured bond.

# Radio Not Required, Airport Issue Brews

By Sherry Matthews

Despite a decision made last week by the Raeford City Council to require that a radio be monitored at the municipal airport, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) officials say they do not regulate or require that a radio be operated.

The decision to purchase the radio caused some verbal fireworks during last week's meeting and re-opened a long standing disagreement between the operator of a parachute jump school and the city.

Although FAA officials said Tuesday that the radio was not required, members of an airport study committee feel its use is essential for safe operation of the Raeford facility.

A Unicom radio will probably cost the city around \$2,000, parachute jump school owner Gene Thacker said.

The city must also apply for a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) license before the radio can be operated.

A radio, which has been used on a parttime basis at the airport, has apparently been operated without a license and in an apparent violation of the federal requirements, *The News-Journal* has learned.

"We are in the process of looking for a radio, and once that is done, we will apply for our license," City Manager Ron Matthews said.

According to Thacker this is all for nothing.

"The Raeford Airport is an uncontrolled airport, and we are not required to monitor a radio unless we are jumping," Thacker said.

FAA official Bill Ayton confirmed what Thacker said Tuesday.

"The FAA does not require that a Unicom be in operation. It is not one of our regulations," Ayton said.

"The Unicom is a way for pilots to call in to an airport and let them know a plane is landing, and it should be monitored, but it is not a requirement," FAA official Tommy Roberts said.

As for operating the radio while jumping is in progress, Thacker said he was required to do that anyway.

The heated battle over the airport is something that confuses Thacker.

"I have been here for 12 years, and there has never been an accident at the airport," Thacker said.

"One accident, and I would be out of business," he added.

The sparks were ignited at the city council meeting over the radio and have continued to smolder since.

Thacker, who is one of two Fixed Base Operators (FBO) who run the airport for the city, claims it is in his best interest to make sure the airport is safe and in good condition.

"I do a great deal for this airport that is not required, like mowing the lawns and keeping a watch on the planes at night," Thacker said.

"If a strange vehicle goes over there at night, I will investigate. I'm not required to do that," Thacker added.

Thacker has a short term lease agreement with the city and pays \$75 per month. Most of his operation, however, is located on his own property.

At last week's city council meeting an incident involving a local industrial plane was brought

(See AIRPORT, page 12A)

# Committee Supports Main Street Pound

By Sherry Matthews

A 2.5-acre tract at the end of North Main Street will be recommended next week to members of the Hoke County Commission as a site for a proposed dog pound, a member of a committee appointed to study the facility said.

After only three meetings, the committee has completed its task and will submit its recommendations for the site and for a suitable building to house the new facility. Chairman Jack McGinnis said.

"We did a lot in a short period of time but no one decision was made in haste," McGinnis said.

The committee voted unanimously Wednesday night to recommend that a 2.5-acre site donated by Ray Calloway of

Elizabethtown be chosen as the location of the new shelter.

Members felt that the Calloway property, which is located at the end of Main Street and on the U.S. Highway 401 by-pass, was the ideal area for the new facility because of its easy access, McGinnis said.

The property adjoins a practically landlocked 23.3-acre tract owned by the City of Raeford and its use for the shelter would provide access to that land, McGinnis added.

"We all agreed that this would be the best place for the new shelter," McGinnis said.

McGinnis videotaped three areas

(See POUND, page 12A)

# Guard Sgts Sentenced

By Sherry Matthews

Two Raeford National Guard sergeants, who resigned from their positions last month, were found guilty of misapplying state property in Hoke County District Court Friday.

Sgt. First Class Richard Alfred Wolf, 32, of Rt. 3, Raeford who was charged on three counts of misapplying state funds and Staff Sgt. Franklin C. Brown, 40, of Lumberton who was charged on one count were both given suspended three year sentences by District Court Judge Joe Dupree.

The two guardsmen were ordered by Judge Dupree to pay restitution to the North Carolina National Guard in care of the Raeford National Guard.

Judge Dupree also instructed the guardsmen to refrain from being affiliated with the National Guard for a period of six months and to pay the cost of the action.

The positions left open by the two guardsmen have not been filled, but efforts are being made to fill the vacancies, a spokesman for the National Guard in Raeford said.



BREAK-1-N: Detective Ed Harris dusts for prints at the scene of the robbery at Christy Oil Company.

# County Man Nabbed, Charged With Robbery

A 23-year-old Raeford man was arrested last week in connection with the March 9 robbery of the Christy Oil Company.

Terry McGregor of Rt. 3, Raeford, was arrested by deputies and charged with breaking, entering and larceny, Hoke County Sheriff's records show.

The arrest was made after a door at the oil company was busted out and a large sum of money was stolen from the property.

McGregor was arrested later that day.

The report did not show whether the money was recovered and Sheriff Dave Barrington could

not be reached for comment.

According to the records these other cases are still under investigation:

--A breaking, entering and larceny at the Carolina Country Mobile Home Park where someone gained entry into the residence and took an undisclosed amount of items and cash.

--A breaking, entering and larceny at the residence of Dorothy McLaughlin where a bicycle parked in the storage shed was stripped of its gears and tires.

These cases are still being investigated, according to the sheriff's report.

## Around Town

by Sam Morris

The cold weather and the rainy weather finally moved out into the Atlantic ocean and it has been nice for the past several days. We hope that this is a sign of early spring, but we can't forget that Easter is still a couple of weeks away. There is usually a cold snap around Easter.

The buds are coming out on the trees and some trees are in bloom. It wouldn't surprise me to see the peach and dogwood trees in bloom if the warm weather continues. We hope that the peach crop doesn't get killed again this year.

The Hoke County Ministerial Association announces through its spokesman, the Rev. Douglas Mark, that the Annual Easter Sunrise Service will be in a new location this year. For the past several years the services have been held in the Hoke High School Stadium and the size of the crowd in the huge stadium made it seem as if the crowd was smaller than was actually in attendance. Besides the above it seemed colder on the hard cement seats than it was by the thermometer.

The site of the service for this year will be on the steps of the Raeford Presbyterian Church. In case of inclement weather the services will be moved into the church.

The Sunrise Service this year will be Sunday, April 3 beginning at 5:40 a.m. The speaker for the service will be the Rev. Fred Sharrar, pastor of the Raeford Foursquare Church.

Immediately after the service, coffee and doughnuts will be served in the Fellowship Hall of the (See AROUND TOWN, page 4A)

## Inside Today

Hoke County History is fading in neglected cemeteries around the county. Efforts are underway to map and preserve the county graveyards. The story is on page 1-B of today's New-Journal.