

No greenery even in the summer

This tree, arching its way skyward, has lost all of its splendor to age and possibly disease. No leaves blossom out from the skinny limbs even during these hot summer months.

Hunt's Arrests Mount

By Sherry Matthews

County Commissioner James Albert Hunt was arrested and jailed for the second time in four days Tuesday night, Hoke County Sheriff's records show.

Under the second warrant, ordered by Scotland County District Court Judge Herbert L. Richardson, Hunt is to remain in jail "without bond" until July 20. The arrest order against Hunt was issued because he failed to appear in court June 22 on six counts of worthless check charges, records show.

Hunt, who has been plagued with financial woes for the last six months, was arrested Saturday by Hoke Sheriff's deputies after District Court Judge Joseph Dupree ordered a warrant be taken out on the commissioner for not appearing in court Friday, June 24.

Reports show that Hunt was arrested and confined to the Hoke County Jail under a \$1,000 cash bond.

The commissioner remained in confinement for about three hours until approximately 7 p.m. Saturday when bail was posted, records indicate.

Records show that Hunt was also issued three criminal sum-

monses on worthless check charges in Scotland and Lee Counties totaling over \$500.

In addition to weekend charges, the nine-year veteran commissioner faces five new criminal summonses for worthless checks from Robeson and Harnett Counties totaling \$826.08.

These orders were received by Hoke authorities on Monday, records show.

Scotland County Sheriff C. Alfred White said Tuesday that he was going to issue four additional criminal summonses against Hunt for bad checks written in Scotland county.

Hunt is supposed to appear in court July 6 on those charges, Sheriff White said. On Monday, some 39 acres of Hunt's property was put up for sale by United Carolina Bank after the commissioner apparently failed to catch up on payments.

The property was apparently "bid in" by UCB for \$78,195.22, a bank spokesman said, noting that Hunt or anyone else will have 10 days to "upset the bid."

The three tracts of land that were put up for sale are located in the South Hoke area that Hunt renamed "Huntsville."



James A. Hunt

Hunt, vice-chairman of the County Commissioners, is also apparently allowing court judgments to mount up against him.

Since January, at least seven judgements have been entered in the court records against Hunt or Hunt Enterprises, totaling over \$13,000.

According to the records, none of these judgments have been satisfied.

Hunt, 40, has been plagued with mounting bills and other financial troubles since January when he was first charged with passing bad checks totaling \$13,543 in Robeson and Hoke counties. Those charges were dropped when Hunt repaid two of the debts in full and one in part.

(See HUNT, page 2A)

Around Town

by Sam Morris

The weather still remains hot and of last Thursday very little rain had fallen in Raeford. The forecast was for hot weather the remainder of the week.

Don't forget the American Legion Golf Tournament to be played at the Arabia Golf Course on July 4th.

There will be breakfast at the Edinborough Restaurant before the tournament play begins. Also many prizes will be given in every flight and the fellowship will be top rate.

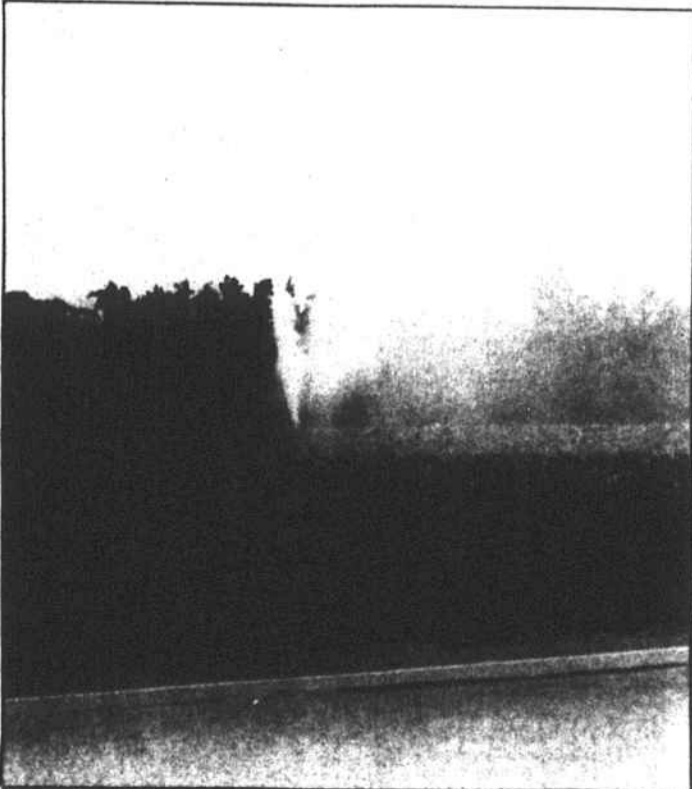
Complete details can be obtained from Earl McDuffie, Chairman of the event.

So go out on the holiday and help the Legion build up funds to help worthy causes.

Later on as you read this column, you will see why the first two items are not written with complete details.

Another thing is the visit of congressman Bill Hefner's staff assis-

(See AROUND, page 2A)



Aiding Mother Nature

With temperatures climbing into the 90's and humidity almost unbearable, area farmers are having to aid mother nature by setting up rain systems to keep their crops from wilting in the blazing sun.

Cleanup Continues

More PCB Found

By Warren Johnston

Recent samples taken from the fourth and fifth suspected hazardous waste dumping sites in Hoke County have shown concentrations of PCB (Polychlorinated Biphenyls), a state health official said Tuesday.

An analysis of the soil taken from one of the two new sites has shown the highest level of PCB found during the state's two-month probe of alleged illegal dumping and burning of toxic waste in Hoke County, a state Department of Human Resources (DHR) spokesman said.

Samples taken from the other site, which is on state-owned property, indicates lower levels of PCB, DHR Solid and Hazardous Waste Branch spokesman Terry F. Dover said.

Results from tests for heavy metals, like lead, have not been completed, Dover said.

Tests have shown that soil samples taken from an oil soaked site, which is located within 50 yards of an area investigated earlier by health officials, contained PCB concentrations of 30 parts per million.

The federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) considers 49 parts per million hazardous, however, some state laws put the safe level at 10 parts per million.

Samples taken from a state owned site, located about one mile behind the Sandhills Youth Center on a dirt path off of State Road 1219, show concentrations of almost 12 parts per million.

"No matter what, we are going to see that these sites are cleaned up," Dover said.

State and local officials have linked the dumping to a transformer dismantling operation being conducted by Goldsboro resident Woody Wilson Jr.

Wilson is presently cleaning two earlier sites where officials found low to mid levels of PCB and high concentrations of lead.

The lead apparently came from a battery dismantling business also operated by Wilson.

The sites, now being cleaned, and the new oil dumping site are located on property owned by Wilson's aunt, Della Wilson and are in the Ashley Heights area.

Earlier during the investigation, health officials feared that the hazardous materials may have leached into the ground water and contaminated a well used by a nearby mobile home park, however, Hoke County Health Director Lloyd Horne said Tuesday that samples taken from wells have shown no contamination.

"We feel real good about the water," Horne said, noting that his department will soon begin taking blood samples from residents in the area.

Sources have told *The News-Journal* that the Hoke County transformer dismantling business has been operating since 1978, and that oil from the units was either dumped on the ground in different locations or used to ignite fires.

The oil in earlier transformers contained PCB, but federal law curtailed the use of the hazardous material after 1978.

According to the sources and state and local officials, here is how the operation worked:

• Large fires were built in the Ashley Heights area on almost a nightly basis to burn asbestos insulation away from copper wire contained in the transformers. The heat from the fires would also separate the wire from magnets.

(See PCB, page 10A)

Commission Approves Budget, Cuts Schools, Raises Payroll

By Sherry Matthews

After nearly three hours of round-table discussions Monday night, members of the Hoke County Commission approved a 1983-84 budget, which trims the \$1.02 million requested by the schools and funds a 7% pay increase for county employees.

The approved budget will not raise the county's tax rate, leaving it at .70 cent per \$100 valuation.

Members of the Hoke school board, who were not present at Monday night's budget session, had requested \$1,024,799 in local funds for the coming fiscal year; a 17.2% increase over last year's appropriated monies.

On a motion by Commissioner James A. Hunt, who claimed he had "sharpened" his "hatchet", the commissioners unanimously decided to cut the school budget by 7.2%.

The decision gives the school board a 10% increase over last year's appropriation or \$87,422 more than the monies allotted in the 1982-83 budget.

According to County Manager James Martin, the school board now has seven days to call for a

meeting between the two boards to appeal for more money.

The commissioners also cut the school board's revenue sharing request by about \$16,000.

Even with the cut, the commissioners are allowing for a 10% increase over last year's appropriations.

Other original budget requests were altered by the commissioners at Monday night's meeting.

Although the recommended budget called for a 5% salary increase for county employees, the commissioners voted unanimously to raise that amount by 2%.

County employees will now receive a 7% blanket raise for the coming fiscal year, which begins July 1.

Smaller budget changes were also approved, including the transfer of one employee from the health department to the social services area.

The move will abolish a clerk-typist position at the health department and give the food stamp division of social services an apparently much needed employee.

According to Martin, the transfer will move a "fully" local-

ly funded employee to a position that is only 50% funded by the county.

The commissioners also approved a \$4,000 increase in the recommended rescue squad budget.

According to Martin, rescue squad members requested the increase to allow for the eventual purchase of a heavy duty truck.

The \$4,000 increase will be put into a reserve fund to aid in the purchase of a new truck, which will be needed by 1986, squad member Mark Posey said.

The commissioners approved the request with the provision that the county hold the money and "earmark" it for use by the rescue squad.

After a short executive session to review the county manager's salary, the commissioners unanimously approved a \$2,768 raise for Martin.

"You are doing a great job, and we appreciate it," Commission Chairman John Balfour said.

In further budget discussions, the commissioners deferred action on allotting further employees for the food stamp program.

(See BUDGET, page 2A)

Reprieve Granted For Stamp Plight

By Sherry Matthews

The Hoke County Department of Social Services (DSS) has been given the option to temporarily suspend the food stamp "early reporting" program that has been bogging down client processing since early March, state officials said last week.

"Hoke County may withdraw from the food stamp early reporting program until October," Regional North Carolina Department of Social Services Supervisor Robert Stewart said.

According to Hoke DSS Director Ken Witherspoon, Hoke County will take advantage of the "moratorium."

Local officials hope the move will allow DSS employees a chance to bring "client service" back to normal.

The monthly reporting program, which was implemented in Hoke and Pitt counties earlier in the year, was expected to crack down on fraud and misinformation.

According to Witherspoon, the monthly reporting system was "doing what it was supposed to," but the manpower that it required

was far more than the DSS staff could handle.

Since March, hundreds of Hoke residents have been clogged in the endless paperwork that staff members have been unable to complete on time.

According to Witherspoon, 30% of the county's caseload has fallen behind schedule.

Pitt County, the other pilot agency in the state, has not shown the stress that DSS officials in Hoke have felt.

"They (Pitt) have not asked for a moratorium," Stewart said.

According to Stewart, Hoke's problem was that "there was not enough manpower resources to handle the early reporting program as it presently exists."

"Pitt has more help," he added. Stewart and other state officials are now hoping that by October the early reporting program will be modified so that it will not require the time that the present system demands.

Problems have plagued Witherspoon and his staff since the program was implemented.

With every month that forms

(See STAMP, page 2A)



Inside Today

School is out and youngsters have a lot of time on their hands. The Hoke County Recreation Department is trying to fill that time with useful and fun activities during the lazy summer months ahead. We took a look at the recreation department and its plans for the summer in this week's B-section of *The News-Journal*.