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Three Mobile Home Fires Ravage County On Friday

By Sherry Matthews

Local firemen braved 100 degree temperatures Friday to fight a rash of mobile home fires that spread through the county, destroying two dwellings and partially leveling another.

Although no one was injured in the blazes, at least two families were supposed to be at home when the fires broke out.

The first mobile home, which was owned by Mrs. Emma J. McNair and located on Lake Elizabeth Road, apparently caught on fire around 10 a.m. Friday. The flames had almost destroyed the structure when firemen arrived on the scene.

"When we got there, the trailer was already half consumed with fire," North Raeford Fire Chief Johnny Baker said.

Baker also said that he and other firemen thought a woman and children were in the dwelling.

"When we got there, we were told that an older lady and some children were supposed to be in the trailer," Baker said.

"It really had us worried," Baker said.

"We searched throughout the remains of the trailer but could not find anyone," Baker added.

"We found out later that the woman had taken the kids and gone into town," Baker said.

The fire apparently started shortly after they left," the fireman added.

According to Baker, the blaze appeared to have started around the stove area.

"It is very possible that a burner was left on, but we can't be sure," Baker said.

Less than two hours after firemen had the Lake Elizabeth fire under control, a second mobile home was demolished by an "uncontrollable blaze."

According to Antioch Fire Chief William Gregory, firemen were alerted to a trailer fire in the Antioch area around 1 p.m. Friday.

The second mobile home, owned by B. Rose Henderson, was also consumed by the blaze when firemen arrived.

"The trailer was demolished," Gregory said.

According to Gregory, firemen at the scene also thought someone could have been inside the second trailer when the blaze started.

"People were supposed to be in the trailer, but they had just left. They were lucky," Gregory said.

Gregory said it was too early to

tell what started the blaze.

"I'm not sure where the fire started, but it only took a few minutes to completely wipe out the trailer," Gregory said.

"Trailers are highly combustible," Gregory added.

In addition to the daytime blazes, a third trailer fire was reported in the Antioch area around 10 p.m. Friday.

"We were called to the Rev. David Hunt's trailer around 10:10 p.m.," Gregory said.

"The back bedroom, bathroom and kitchen were already engulfed in flames when we arrived, but we were able to save about half of the trailer," Gregory said.

"No one was home, so no one was injured in the blaze," Gregory said.

Gregory said that the cause of the fire was still "unknown."

"We aren't sure what started the blaze. We would have to conduct a full investigation before that could be determined," Gregory added.

A fourth fire, that swept through a house in the Hillcrest area, was reported early Saturday morning.

Efforts to reach the Hillcrest fire chief for details on the fire were unsuccessful.



Taking a breather

This Antioch fireman took a break Friday afternoon during a blaze that destroyed a mobile home. Local firemen not only faced the heat of three mobile home fires during the day, but also braved plus 100-degree temperatures.

State Tests For Toxic Materials Inconclusive

By Sherry Matthews

Early testing for hazardous residue in the soil of three Ashley Heights dump sites have proved "inconclusive" according to Hoke County Health Director Lloyd Horne.

Soil samples, which were taken August 9 by state officials from the North Carolina Department of Human Resources (DHR) Solid and Hazardous Waste Branch, have proved to be a "little confusing," Horne said.

"We were getting high and low

level readings all over the place," Horne said.

According to the health director, results showed high levels of lead leaching into the soil in some areas, yet low levels of extractable leads were calculated.

In other areas low levels of lead in the soil were found with high readings of extractable metals.

"It's all a little strange," Horne said.

Horne said that DHR officials would be back this week to run additional soil tests on the property

used for a transformer and battery dismantling operation by Goldsboro businessman Woody Wilson Jr.

Test results from Grainger Labs of Raleigh, who were privately contracted by Wilson as part of an agreement with state officials, had not been released at press time.

According to the health director, DHR officials will be re-testing one area of the Wilson property where a transformer and battery dismantling operation were conducted.

"Additional tests will probably be run on the hot spots where high readings were found," Horne said.

According to Horne, the additional tests will determine the magnitude of the area sampled.

"They are going to determine the width, depth and length of the spot," Horne said.

These additional test will help state and local officials determine whether Wilson will have to "remove some of the soil."

"It is possible that he may have

to do some clean up out there," Horne said.

After soil samples are taken and the clean-up operation is completed, officials from the North Carolina Department of Natural Resources and Community Development (NRCD) will take samples to determine the amount of Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCB) that may still be in the soil.

"Once DHR completes their tests, and Wilson has cleaned up the site, we will be ready to take composite samples and do a PCB

analysis of the area," NRCD Environmental Engineer Tommy Stephens said.

According to Stephens, NRCD officials don't plan to run any test until the lead sampling is completed.

In addition to all the soil results, Hoke Health officials are continuing to get some elevated lead levels in the blood of Ashley Heights residents.

According to Horne, one unidentified employee, who works (See PCB, page 13A)

Around Town

By Sam Morris

If I didn't write about the weather this week then this column wouldn't appear. The writer has been staying out of the hot weather for the past few days in an air conditioned house. Saturday, Sunday and Monday were as hot as I can remember. The thermometer was 107 degrees Saturday, 110 degrees Sunday and as this is being written the thermometer is over 105 degrees. This section of the state was the hottest place in the United States Sunday. What have we done to deserve this kind of weather?

According to Robert Gatlin, who reports data for the National Weather Service for Hoke County, we had some hot days in July and also the first few days of August. His charts show that from July 14 until August 13, 31 days, the average high temperature was 96 degrees. This included 11 days, July 14 until July 24 of an average high of 101.7 degrees. In those 11 days the high was 104 degrees and the low was 100 degrees.

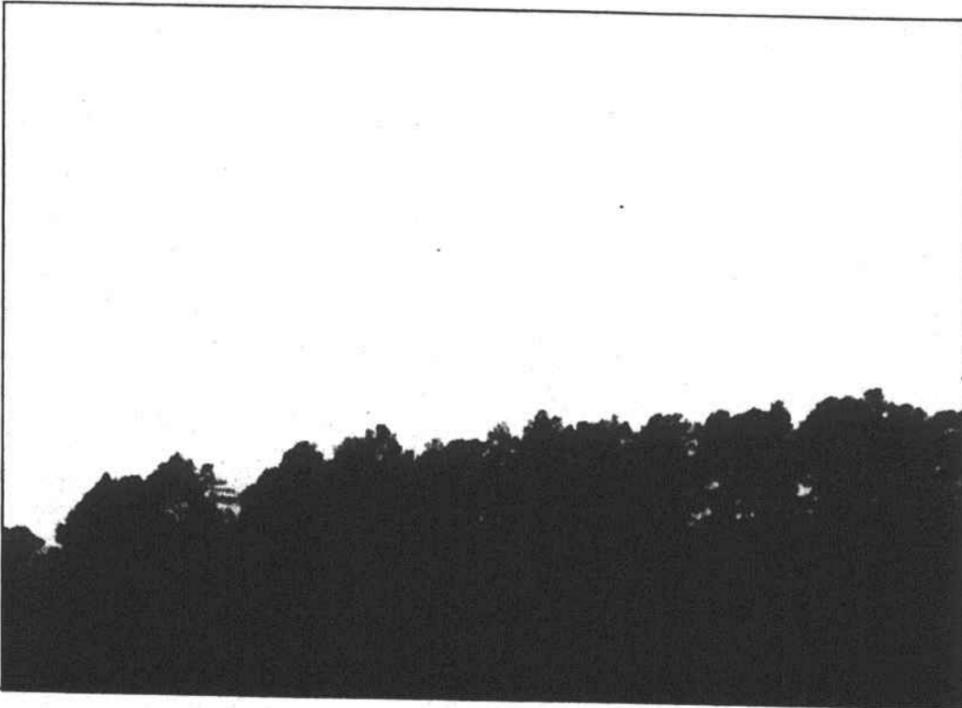
In the first nine days of August we had no rain, but then in the next two days we had 1.55 inches. This is not enough rain to do any good with the hot weather.

On August 14, 15 and 16 the temperature was in the 80s and low 90s during the day and on those nights the thermometer dropped into the 50s.

According to the forecast for the remainder of the week, we should have readings in the middle 90s for the days. This should feel like fall weather after the days we have had over the weekend.

Thanks to Robert Gatlin for supplying these figures so that they could be published.

Don't forget that the school children will be out waiting for the (See AROUND, page 7A)



End of another hot Hoke County day

Temperatures reported in Fayetteville made this area the hottest spot in the nation over the weekend. While Fayetteville was reporting a national high of 106 degrees on Saturday, local weather prognosticator Robert Gatlin recorded a Hoke County high of 109°. Sunday was no better as the thermometer soared over 110°. Here the sun sinks over a fallow Shannon area field to bring an end to a sizzling day.

Man Sentenced For Police Assault

By Sherry Matthews

A Raeford man, arrested and charged with three counts of assaulting a police officer in June, was jailed Friday after being found guilty of those charges in district court.

Stephen LeGrande of Raeford, who was shot in the shoulder during an alleyway struggle with Raeford Police, was given a six-month active sentence by Hoke

County District Court Judge Joseph Dupree last week.

The June 10 assaults and shooting left LeGrande and two policemen injured.

Raeford patrolman Richard McNeill and Sergeant Jack Martino both received minor injuries during the alleyway struggle and a chase up a flight of stairs.

LeGrande was wounded after the gun Martino was carrying dur-

ing the chase went off, lodging a bullet in the defendant's shoulder.

The shooting and assault incidents occurred after the two policemen had been dispatched to Jack's Video Village on Main Street where a man was reportedly "passed out" on the sidewalk.

LeGrande, who was apparently related to the man on the sidewalk, reportedly verbally abused the of- (See MAN, page 2A)

Mission School Opens For Class

By Warren Johnston

Fourteen local students are set to begin classes Friday in the newly organized Cherokee Indian Christian Mission School of Hoke County.

All of the students, who range in age from kindergarten through the eighth grade, have been removed from the county's public schools and enrolled in the Mission School, Principal and Head Teacher Rev. Douglas Maynor said, noting that the new facility will give Cherokee children the educational attention they need.

"We're setting up the school because we don't agree with the way our children have been educated. They have been pushed aside and haven't received the attention they need," Maynor said.

Maynor is the only paid staff member. He was appointed principal of the school on July 19, according to a press release signed by Rev. Edgar Bryant, Superintendent.

The new principal said last week that he does not have a college degree and is not certified to teach under state public education standards.

"I think that I am qualified because I have worked with preschool children and taught an adult education class," Maynor said.

The school is going to use the highest quality text books and will make an effort in the future to become accredited, the mission school principal said.

Under North Carolina law, which was passed by the General Assembly in 1979, teachers in private schools do not have to be certified, state Office of Non-

public Education Director Calvin Criner said.

Those wishing to establish a private school are asked to fill out a voluntary report form which outlines testing programs and notes that the facility has met fire and safety standards, Criner said.

"They really don't even have to do that, and many of them don't," he added.

North Carolina has approximately 415 private schools and about 53% are directly affiliated with some form of religion.

There are about 59,200 students enrolled in private schools in the state.

All of the schools are overseen (See MISSION, page 13A)



Inside Today

Downtown Revitalization

In a three part series, we are taking a look at the problems facing downtown Raeford and efforts to revitalize the area. The first part of the series appears in today's News-Journal on page 1-B.