

The News-Journal

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RAEFORD, HOKE COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

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Still needed

Although this Montrose windmill cuts a desolate figure, it probably could still be used today to slake the thirst of the dry soil and to combat rising utility cost; however, the mill has fallen on bad times and would need work to become operational.

Ambulance Plan OK'd, County Enters Service

By Sherry Matthews

As of December 31, Hoke County will be in the ambulance business, as a result of action taken by the board of Commissioners Tuesday.

"We have had nothing but problems since we began contracting the ambulance service out," Commission Chairman John Balfour said.

"I believe we would have better control if the ambulance service were run by the county," Balfour added.

In another move, the commission selected Hoke Emergency Management Coordinator Bill Niven to head the new service.

Niven's present position will be merged into a new office of Emergency Management. He will serve as the director, and will have responsibility over rural fire departments and the ambulance service, County Manager James Martin said.

Although no exact figures had been determined, Martin estimated that the county would have to spend some \$200,000 to get the ambulance service running.

Included in the \$200,000 package would be the purchasing of new medical equipment and two ambulances that the county will need when they take over the business.

At present the ambulance service is owned by Jim Henley, who has been receiving monthly more than \$105,000 per year from the county as a subsidy. Henley recently filed a re-organizational bankruptcy because of mounting bills and apparently dwindling funds.

Henley has been in a financial rut for the past four months despite a recent February subsidy increase of more than 63.3%, which hikes the payment from \$60,000 to the present figure.

The county bailed Henley out of financial woes by approving a new contract that would allow for a \$40,883 increase over last year's tax-

payer subsidy and gave the ambulance service \$105,436 to cover expenses.

Two months after receiving the increase, Henley informed the county board that he would not renew his contract once it expired in December.

At the March meeting, Henley cited financial reasons for his decision not to renew his county contract.

Since March, the ambulance service has compiled some \$4,700 in judgements for failing to pay bills, and in early August the service filed bankruptcy.

According to Balfour, contracting the ambulance service has been "trouble" since the beginning.

Although the commissioners agreed to go into the "ambulance business", they tabled discussions on the level of service they should provide and what size staff they would need.

"I think we should get the input of our county doctors before deciding," Commissioner Wyatt Upchurch said.

"I think we should get their feelings on what level staff we need," Upchurch said.

The commissioners agreed to hold a joint meeting between the county doctors, the rescue squad and the county board to discuss the needs of the ambulance service.

"We need to provide the best service possible and get as much input as we can," Balfour said.

Presently Henley is providing intermediate Emergency Technician service, but has been encouraging the county to upgrade to a paramedic service.

County officials have said that the increased service would be too costly and local doctors believe that it is not needed.

Commission Approves Site For Animal Pound

By Sherry Matthews

Hoke County Commissioners voted unanimously Tuesday to build a new animal shelter facility at the city landfill.

The decision came after a site feasibility study was submitted to the commissioners by the Laurinburg architectural firm of Jordan, Snowden and McVicar.

The firm was called upon to study both the landfill site and a 2.5 acre tract of land at the end of North Main Street.

In a letter, written to the commissioner, architect Sam Snowden recommended that the new animal shelter be built at the landfill.

"I think we should follow his recommendation and get this thing behind us," Commissioner Wyatt Upchurch said.

The debate over the dog pound and its new location has been brewing for over a year with city and county officials butting heads with members of the Hoke-Raeford Humane Society over a site for the new facility.

The Humane Society and its members favored the 2.5 acre tract donated to the organization by Ray Calloway of Elizabethtown and opposed the landfill site as a possible location for the new shelter.

City officials apparently favored the landfill as the location for the pound and budgeted money for the new shelter, only if it was built on the landfill property.

County Commissioners also budgeted money for a new shelter, but did not specify any particular location.

The landfill site was recommended by Snowden after the state Department of Transportation (DOT) decided that the Calloway property might cause traffic problems.

DOT officials noted that a pound on the Calloway property could cause access problems into

the on-coming traffic on U.S. Highway 401.

In an earlier interview, DOT engineer Jerry Maddox said that there were problems stemming from a right lane that merges directly into 401.

According to Maddox, persons entering the Calloway property would have to cross into the lane that is merging onto the highway.

According to Snowden's letter, DOT officials felt that intersection was not a safe place.

Because of the DOT report, Snowden recommended the landfill property in his feasibility study. Humane Society Director Jack

McGinnis said Tuesday he was not pleased with the commissioners' decision.

"I am not very pleased with the decision, but I guess it is one I will have to live with," McGinnis said.

McGinnis and other Humane Society members have repeatedly opposed the landfill site because of its stigma as a "dump."

Although opposed to the landfill location, members agreed to support the site if a "good" facility were built and animals housed before the coming winter.

"That is our main goal, to get the animals into a decent shelter," McGinnis said.

"I preferred the Calloway property and do not understand how it would have created a traffic problem," McGinnis said.

"If a private enterprise were to come in here and want to build a convenience store, they would allow that," McGinnis added, noting that there would be a higher volume of traffic for that use than there would be if an animal shelter were on the property.

McGinnis believes that the commissioners used the feasibility study as an excuse because they "wanted" the shelter built at the landfill.

(See ANIMAL, page 3A)

Around Town

By Sam Morris

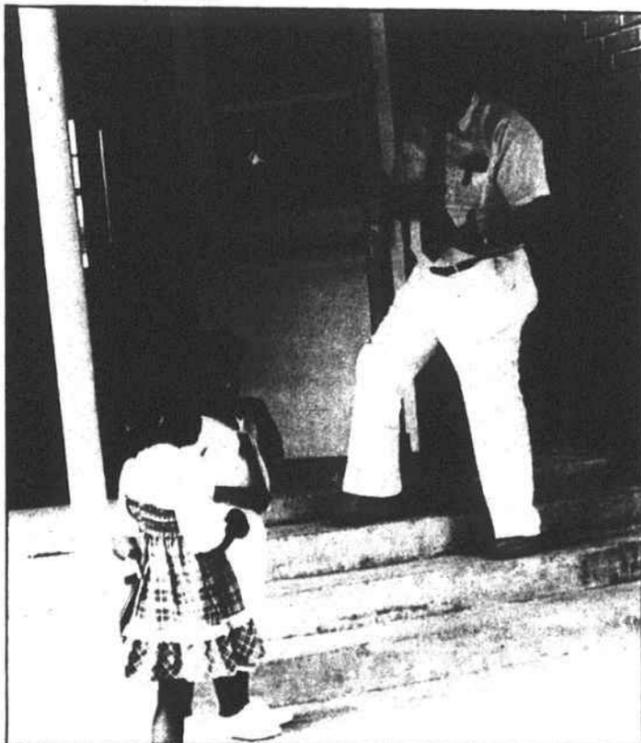
Maybe the hot weather has finally left us for the year. I didn't ever think that 90-degree weather would be considered cool for North Carolina. This has been the hottest summer that I can remember. It should become cooler as fall is only three weeks away.

The rain helped and should make the soybeans that are still in the fields. Many farmers are now harvesting corn, but the yields will be low. I heard last week where one farmer in Iowa expected a yield of 15 bushels to an acre. Last year the same acreage averaged 150 bushels to an acre. The hot weather has played havoc with the corn crop.

The weatherman has returned from Oklahoma, but I haven't been able to obtain any figures for August from him at this time. Maybe by next week.

The holiday Monday, Labor Day, had the city almost closed down. Many of the stores were open, but the schools, industries, county & city offices and the financial institutions were all closed down for the day.

There were many people playing (See AROUND, page 3A)



Giving first day instructions

McLauchlin School principal F.W. Caldwell Jr. tries a little unsuccessful encouragement on two new first graders last week as school officially opened for another year. Caldwell seems to be trying to get the new students to go back into the building but something outside has apparently caught their attention.

Elderly Woman Raped

By Sherry Matthews

Early this week, Raeford police officers were still investigating the rape of an elderly city woman, who was accosted Friday night as she slept in her home.

Police Chief Leonard Wiggins said Tuesday the attack apparently occurred during the early morning hours as the woman, believed to be in her late 70's, was in bed asleep in her Robbins Heights area home.

According to the chief, someone broke into the back door of the residence and entered the home.

After the culprit entered the house and found the victim, apparently asleep, he raped her, Wiggins said.

Although the victim was transported to Moore Memorial

Hospital, she only received minor injuries, the chief said.

"No arrests have been made, but this case is very much under investigation," Chief Wiggins said.

In an unrelated incident, the Hoke County Sheriff's Department arrested a 23-year-old Hoke man Monday for a rape attempt.

According to the sheriff's records, James Handon was arrested August 29 after he apparently attempted to "physically" restrain a Hoke County woman in a grocery store owned by the victim and her husband in the Lumber Bridge area of the county.

Handon was arrested and placed under a \$3,000 secured bond, but was released the afternoon of his arrest in the care of his parents.

Cookie Thief Strikes

The Labor Day weekend and the days leading up to the holiday brought a wave of thefts from vehicles in the Raeford area.

A cookie thief apparently went on a food binge Monday when a case of raisin cakes and a case of moon pies were abducted from a Sunbeam Bread Truck that was parked outside the Pantry Convenience Store on E. Central Avenue.

Although the culprit's sweet tooth was apparently satisfied,

Raeford Police Chief Leonard Wiggins said no suspects had been identified.

The case is still under investigation according to the chief.

In an unrelated incident, Harrison Dickson of Rt. 1, Lumber Bridge left his truck hood up while he went in the East Central Avenue Pantry Store Wednesday to get oil for his vehicle.

According to Chief Wiggins, (See VEHICLE, page 2A)



Inside Today

Horsing around

Kids visiting Betsy-Jeff Penn, a 4-H camp in Reidsville, were introduced to a lot of outdoor activities that they had never participated in before including horse-back riding. After hours of practice these kids, enrolled in the horse-back riding class, strutted their animals in a rodeo to entertain the rest of the campers. We take a look at the camp on page 1-B of today's News-Journal.