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Incumbents Win Raeford Balloting

Five incumbent members of the Raeford City Council were returned to office Tuesday after what observers called "a surprising" number of voters went to the polls.

Incumbents Graham Clark, Bob Gentry, Vardell Hedgpath, Benny McLeod and Joe Upchurch won by substantial margins over challengers James Leach and Earl McDuffie.

Raeford Mayor John K. McNeill was unopposed in his bid for reelection.

Poll officials and other observers said they were surprised with the voter turnout Tuesday, after about 50% of the registered voters living in the city went to the polls.

A small turnout was expected because there were few issues raised by candidates during the lackluster campaign, and it was an off-year election.

Election officials recorded 589 ballots cast in the races.

No irregularities were reported during the voting, Hoke County Election Board Chairman J. Scott Poole said.

"We didn't have any problems at all," Poole said.

Upchurch led the race, garnering 455 votes, which gave him a one ballot edge over McLeod, who received 454.

Unofficial results show that Upchurch captured the voting in Raeford Precinct Two and Four with a two-vote margin over McLeod, who won Raeford One by three ballots.

The upcoming term will be Upchurch's second on the council and McLeod's seventh.

"Raeford will certainly have experience on the council with the whole board going back in," McLeod said.

"We've all been here before, and now we have a chance to finish some of the things we have started," he added.

Political newcomer Leach, who was attempting to be the first

black to serve on the Raeford Council, trailed the balloting with a total of 110 votes.

Gentry finished third among the incumbents with 428 votes. He will be serving his fourth term on the board.

"I feel good about it," Gentry said, noting that he was "a little" surprised by the turnout.

"There was more interest than I expected. That's the way it should be," Gentry said.

Clark, who has been serving on the council longer than any other member, finished fourth, 10 votes behind Gentry with 418.

Hedgpath was fifth with 415 votes, and will be returning for his fourth term.

Although the Raeford insurance executive was the low vote-getter among the incumbents, he finished 91 ballots ahead of challenger Earl McDuffie who received 324 votes.

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Around Town

by Sam Morris

Winter came to Hoke County over the weekend and it continued on into Monday. There was some rain Friday, but as I was out of town the amount is unknown to me.

If there was any frost it was gone Monday morning by the time we teed off on the golf course. We expect that it was too windy for frost.

Some of the folks who attended the Clemson-North Carolina football game told me that most people were bundled up because of the cold. This is somewhat different than the first two games when the temperatures were in the 90s.

I would say that we will still have some warm days in November and December.

Don't forget the dedication of the new National Guard Armory Friday morning. All former Battery "F" members are requested to report around 9:30 a.m. to the armory to register and get name tags. Then in the afternoon the local American Legion Post 20 will stage an Armistice Day Parade in downtown Raeford.

If you are a Veteran, come and join the parade. Some will walk, but rides will be available for those unable to walk.

See you at both events.

By the time this column hits the street, the city election will be history. As I have stated before, the losers may be the winners when the city problems come before the council. Remember if you didn't vote, then let the city be run with you being a silent partner. It doesn't cost anything to vote, so exercise your right.

The Sixth Annual Reunion of old Battery "F" was a big success. It was held last weekend at Litchfield Beach, S.C. and there were 60 or more in attendance. At the banquet on Saturday night 63 were fed. Some that were there over the three days had to leave early.

It was nice to sit around and hear the men tell about the times they had together from 1940 to 1945.

There were five officers in the outfit in 1941 and all were from Raeford. They were Capt. J.H. Blue, 1st Lt. Younger Snead and 2nd Lts. T.B. Lester, William Lamont and Paul Dickson. The two living officers, Snead and Dickson were in attendance.

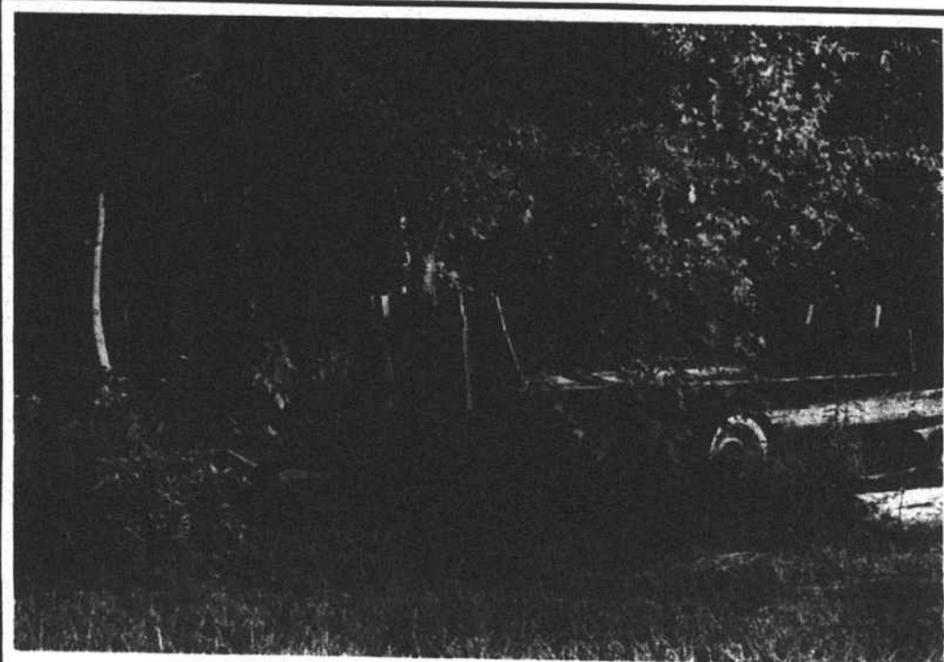
In the spring of 1941 some of the officers and men were sent to Trinidad and they were replaced by reserve officers and selective service personnel. Many of these men stayed with Battery "F" until the end of the war and many were in attendance at the reunion.

Two men were present for the first time and these were William Turnmire and Frank Bartles.

Everyone had a chance to make remarks at the banquet and all were in the opinion that "F" was the best place anyone could have served during World War II.

One man from Lexington that was inducted and sent to Battery "F" remarked something like this, "Many times since the war I have

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Not getting much use anymore

This old tobacco wagon probably carried more than its share of Hoke County poundage some years ago, but today it seems to be lying useless.

With the dwindling tobacco prices that have left some farmers in a slump, the tobacco wagon may continue in retirement.

Bound For Elizabeth City

Raeford Manager Resigns

By Sherry Matthews

During a 25-minute executive session Monday night, Raeford Mayor John K. McNeill Jr. told city councilmen that City Manager Ron Matthews would be leaving his position in mid-December.

Matthews said in an interview Tuesday that he regretted not being able to attend the meeting to explain his decision. Matthews was in Winston-Salem because of his father's death.

Matthews, who has been Raeford's City Manager for over five years, has accepted a city manager position in Elizabeth City.

According to Matthews, he did not apply for the job, but was "approached by them."

Matthews will leave Raeford in mid-December and will report to his new job January 3.

In Elizabeth City, Matthews will be handling a budget of nearly \$20 million and will head a staff of 230.

The city manager works with a \$2.5 million budget and oversees 53 employees in Raeford.

In his new position, Matthews will also be responsible for the operation of Elizabeth City's electrical utilities.

"It has been a privilege for me to work for one of the finest political bodies in the state," Matthews said, noting that he had "mixed feelings" about leaving.

"City residents are blessed with an exceptional group of depart-

ment heads that have made my job easier," he added.

Although Matthews appears excited over his new job challenge, he said he would complete all unfinished business before departing.

"I am proud of the accomplishments we have made with the help of the mayor, the city council, the city employees and the city residents," Matthews said.

The airport situation is on the verge of being merged with Hoke County and a commission established to oversee it; a new animal shelter-landfill building is "almost a reality"; the industrial moratorium that has prevented industry from locating in the Raeford area has almost been

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Hoke Required To Start Inspections

By Sherry Matthews

Within 19 months, Hoke and other counties with populations less than 25,000 will have to conduct county-wide building inspections, state officials said Tuesday.

"In a sense we are already doing that here," Hoke County Manager James Martin said Tuesday.

According to Martin, the law which will go into effect July 1, 1985, requires that counties do all inspection work within the county which includes electrical, structural, insulation, plumbing and heating inspections.

"Right now we are doing electrical, plumbing, and heating inspections in the county and within the city limits," Martin said, adding that the city did structural and "insulation-type" inspections within the city limits.

At present, the county does not do structural inspections.

Under the new law, the county inspection department would be responsible for doing "just those

kinds of things."

According to Martin, the county could adopt the law now instead of waiting until 1985, but he sees very little possibility of commissioners agreeing to make that move.

During their regular meeting Monday morning, commissioners unanimously authorized the North Carolina Department of Natural Resources and Community Development (NRCD) to prepare a feasibility study that will help show the commissioners what the new law will require from the county.

"The study is definitely a good idea," NRCD Chief Planner Jim Dougherty said Tuesday.

"Our study would examine the county inspection department records and find out how many inspections they do," Dougherty said.

"Then we would check the expected growth for the county, what staffing requirements the new law might demand and just how much inspection and permit fees should

cost," Dougherty added.

According to Dougherty, the study helps a county prepare for the "inevitable."

"It is a good thing because it allows local government officials and managers to look at the issues involved and get a fairly good idea of what they will be facing with this new state requirement," Dougherty said.

Although Dougherty was in favor of his departments feasibility plan, he refused to comment on how good he felt the state law was.

"I don't think I could give an opinion on that," Dougherty said.

Martin, too, is not sure what the true effects of the law will be.

"I think it is going to cause some growing pains as far as the public is concerned," Martin said.

"We will have to do business in a more formal manner once we are required to do structural inspections. It will take some time for the public to get used to that, I'm sure," Martin added.

County, City Meet On Pound

By Sherry Matthews

Members of the Hoke County Commission and Raeford City Council agreed Monday to meet jointly to determine the feasibility of constructing a proposed \$126,040 animal shelter-equipment shed facility.

During a joint session, scheduled for Tuesday November 22, the two governmental bodies are also expected to discuss the appointment of a five-member airport commission that will run the Raeford Municipal Airport.

During Monday's county commission meeting, members were told that the construction of a previously approved animal shelter facility could cost as much as \$55,500.

An adjoining landfill equipment shed building would cost an additional \$39,540 if commissioners decided to approve the plan developed by the Laurinburg architectural firm Jordan, Snowden, and McVicker.

During Monday's meeting, commissioners tabled the decision until they could meet with city officials who are sharing in the cost of the shelter-equipment shed facility.

Under the agreement between the two bodies, the county will pick up 75% of the tab, while the city will take care of the remaining 25% of the cost.

"That is just too much money to spend," Commissioner Wyatt Upchurch, who also is on the animal shelter study committee, said.

"I agreed to build a dog pound, but I am not going to agree to spending that kind of money," Upchurch added.

The plans for the new facility, which will be located at the city-county landfill, call for a 2,220 square foot building with a 10 x 10 inch office, a bathroom, a room with 20 dog cages, and another room for puppies and cats. The plan also calls for a storage room.

The storage facility, which will be designed to house at least three pieces of landfill equipment, is

designed to be 1,797 square feet with a six-inch concrete slab and three overhead doors.

"It is way too much money," Commissioner James A. Hunt said.

"The way that building looks, it should be put on Main Street," Hunt added.

"I think it can be done better and cheaper than this," Hunt noted.

"I don't think we should make any decision until we talk with the city," Commission Chairman John Balfour said, adding that he agreed that the price was "too high."

Another consideration on the minds of commissioners is the expected useful life of the present landfill location.

Although city officials believe the facility has enough room for another 10 years of dumping, County Manager James Martin pegs the useful life of the landfill at five years.

Under the proposal from the Laurinburg architectural firm, the \$35,000 equipment building would be adaptable to some other use after the landfill closes.

The new facility would be constructed out of wood on a concrete slab and would be heated with overhead blowers.

A metal building, similar to the proposed wood structure, would cost about \$30 per square foot, or about 27% more than the highest figure estimated by the architect, a Fayetteville contractor said.

In other business, commissioners accepted \$14,856 in Jobs Bill funds that will go to increase the county health department's budget.

The funds will be used to increase funding to the previously cut school health and medical assistance budgets. The monies are used to provide dental care and medical assistance to Hoke residents.

Commissioner also approved

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Inside Today

On Friday Hoke County will honor those residents who have served their country in the armed forces with a parade on Main Street and with the dedication of the new National Guard Armory. We take a look at the plans on page one of Section B in today's News-Journal.

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