

# The News-Journal

The Hoke County News - Established 1928

The Hoke County Journal - Established 1905

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Thursday, December 8, 1983

## Avian Flu Could Hit Hoke Hard

By Sherry Matthews

Hoke County residents are already feeling the pinch of a poultry disease that has killed or affected over 4.6 million birds in the Pennsylvania area, Hoke Agricultural Extension Agent Richard Melton said.

In addition, Melton said that if the Avian Influenza, a virus that affects and kills poultry, was not brought "under control" the Hoke poultry industry, including the House of Raeford Turkey plant that employs over 400 area residents, could be affected.

"Right now, Hoke residents are

being affected by higher egg prices as well as rising fryer and broiler prices," Melton said.

According to Melton, consumers are paying at least \$.25 more for a dozen eggs and \$.30 or \$.40 more a pound for a fryer or broiler.

"That is because of the millions of birds that have been killed in Pennsylvania," Melton said.

Chances of the virus, which has presently been isolated to 1,125 square mile area, contaminating North Carolina birds is still possible, North Carolina State University

Poultry Science Faculty member Dr. Ray Harris said.

"It has been a tremendous problem for Pennsylvania. I just hope it is stopped before it gets here," Harris said.

Although Harris believes that the virus will be under control before it reaches the North Carolina area, he admits that birds "migrating" South could transport the disease.

"There is a chance that it could get here, but we are doing all we can to see that it doesn't," Harris said.

"We are keeping a very keen eye on this thing," he added.

An Emergency Poultry Disease Task Force designed to keep the virus out of North Carolina, has already been set up.

Hoke County Commissioner Wyatt Upchurch, who also raises turkeys in the Hoke area, is a member of that state task force.

"If the virus reaches us, we have a plan," Harris said.

Under the plan, state agriculture officials would "quarantine" the affected area and "slaughter or burn" the fowl that have been diseased.

Although the disease will not affect humans, even if they eat an infected fowl, the influenza will kill thousands of birds in a matter of days, Harris said.

"If it were to spread into the Hoke area, it could destroy the poultry industry," he said.

"It could also affect a great many jobs in the area," Harris added.

"If the disease were to reach Hoke, it would probably affect the number of birds moving through the turkey plant," Melton said.

"It would not necessarily shut

the plant down, but it would slow it down considerably," he added.

"If that were to happen, a lot of jobs might be in jeopardy," Melton said.

"I think this virus will be under control before it ever reaches North Carolina," Melton said.

"If it comes, I don't think it will spread fast. It will probably be a gradual creeping," he said.

"I really don't think there is anything to worry about right now," he added.

### Around Town

By Sam Morris

The rain came Friday night and continued into Saturday night. I haven't been able to get up with Robert Gatlin, but according to other sources it must have rained over two inches. The sun came out Sunday and Monday and the temperatures have been in the 60s. Now, this is perfect weather.

The forecast for Tuesday is for the temperatures to reach 70 degrees, but it looks like more rain will follow. Maybe rain is better than snow.

The Pancake Supper sponsored each year by the Raeford Kiwanis Club will be held on Thursday night, December 15 at the Gibson Cafeteria rather than December 8th as announced earlier. A conflict has caused the supper to be moved up one week.

So change the date on your calendar to December 15, beginning at five o'clock.

The annual Christmas Parade sponsored each year by the Raeford Merchants' Association was scheduled for last Saturday afternoon. Due to the heavy rain the parade was postponed.

I haven't seen Raz Autry, parade chairman, but from a reliable person it seems that the parade has been rescheduled for Saturday, December 17 starting at 2:00 p.m.

If this isn't correct, then I will be in Raz's doghouse once again. Let's hope so because we still want to play golf.

The Christmas section of *The News-Journal* will appear in the issue of December 22. We need help from Hoke County citizens to make this section a success. The merchants furnish the Christmas greetings, but the pictures of doors, inside decorations, etc. must come from the local citizens. We again solicit your help.

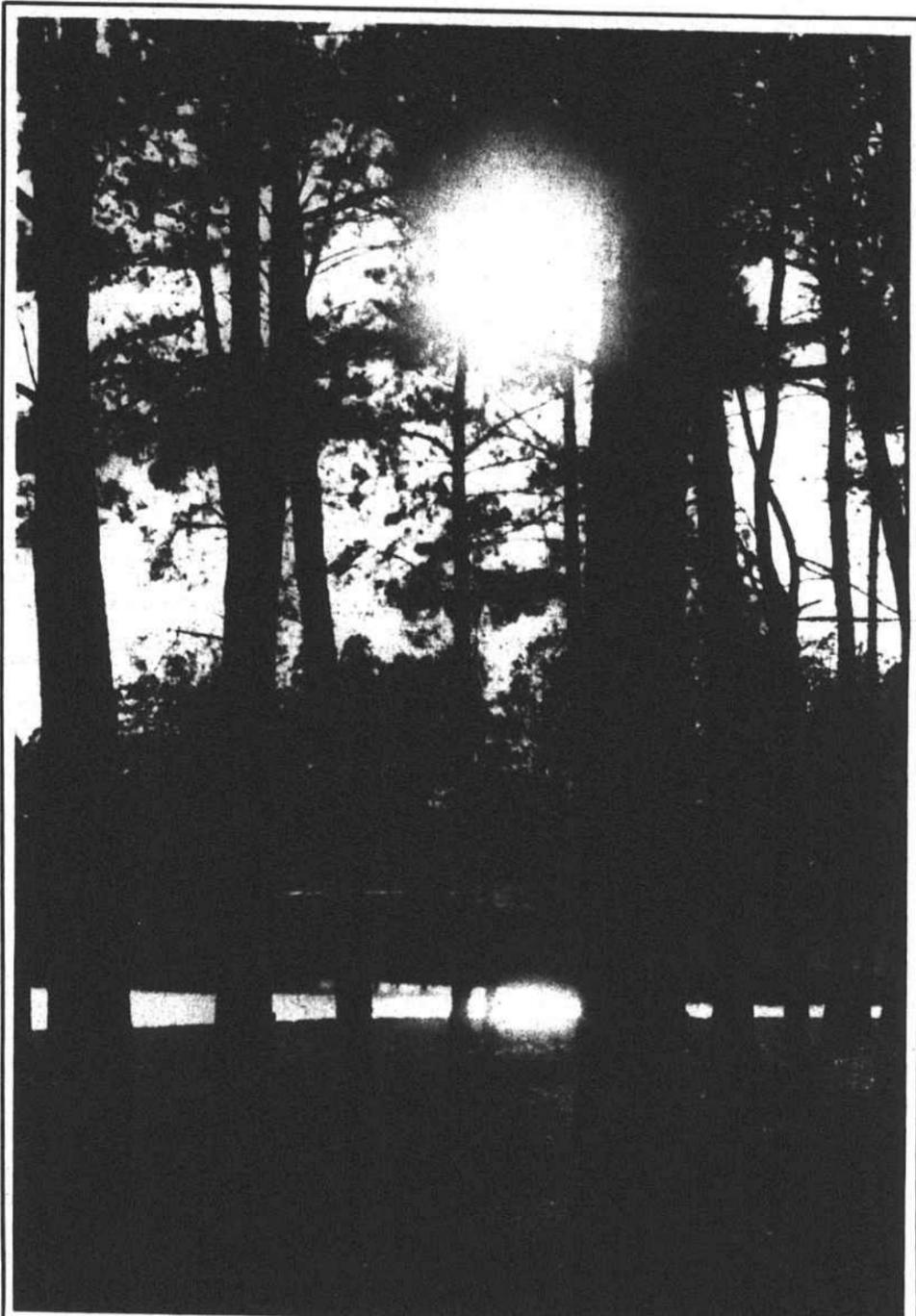
If you have a door front, beautiful tree, inside or outside Christmas decorations then please call *The News-Journal* office, 875-2121 and let us know. There is one thing that you must adhere to. If your pictures are to make the issue, all pictures must be taken by Monday, December 12. This is due to production schedule at Christmas time.

All Christmas greetings or ads must be in by December 14. Please cooperate and let's make this the best Christmas section we have ever had in *The News-Journal*. Thanks.

Now this item is for the folks who attended the Old Battery "F" Reunion at Litchfield Beach in November. Bob Bullard took individual pictures of the couples in attendance and they have now been printed. A set of these pictures is on display at *The News-Journal* office.

We invite you to come by and see them. They sell for \$6.50 a set. If you are from out of town and would like a set, you must pay postage on top of the price. You

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#### Tranquil setting

The afternoon sun seeps through the foliage apparently warming the forest animals who are getting ready to seek shelter from the coming winter chill. During the first six days of December, over six in-

ches of rain have pelted Hoke County, and for farmers, who are having difficulty getting soybeans out of fields, a day like this one is a welcome sight.

## School Committee Eyeing Buildings

A committee of 21 residents, who are studying the condition of Hoke County schools, will have completed much of their task by the end of January, members of the county Board of Education were told Monday.

By January 31 the blue ribbon committee, which met for the first time last week, is expected to have visited each of the schools, held four public hearings and received architectural and engineering reviews of all buildings owned by the board, Superintendent Dr. Robert Nelson said.

"They hit the ground running and hit it hard," Nelson said during a luncheon meeting held in lieu of the regular monthly session which had been scheduled for Tuesday night.

Committee members began scheduled inspections of the county's seven schools and administration building on Tuesday at Turlington School.

The group is slated to complete the on-site inspections with a January 31 visit to Hoke High School.

Representatives from an architectural and engineering firm will conduct inspections of the schools on January 5 and 6, Nelson said.

Public hearings will also be held at different schools in the county.

Committee members have been charged with the task of determining a comprehensive building plan for schools, and are expected to recommend solutions for the overcrowding at Scurlock School and

the deteriorating condition of Turlington School.

In other action, board members voted to leave the decision of when to close the schools because of inclement weather up to Nelson.

"For ice and snow, it's a judgement based on the safety of the roads," Nelson said, noting that the decision to stay open or close has to be made by about 6:30 a.m.

Although a number of complaints were received by board members for not closing during last August's hot weather, Chairman Bill Cameron and others said the decision to remain open was the correct one.

"We got a number of phone calls about the heat, but after it was over, there was more support for not closing the schools,"

Cameron said.

"It was uncomfortable, but we have to do a lot of things that are uncomfortable," board member Walter Coley said.

"It was a lot more comfortable in the classroom than it was in the tobacco field," member Bobby Wright added.

In still further business, Nelson was given a green light to study supplemental salaries now being paid to athletic coaches and administrative personnel.

Presently the supplements are being paid coaches at Hoke High under a system derived by the school.

Members noted Tuesday that they would like to see the system of supplemental pay come under the

(See SNOW, page 13A)

## Cable TV Change Mulled By Raeford

By Sherry Matthews

Raeford residents, along with others living in five neighboring communities, may be getting expanded cable television coverage within the next few months if a planned merger is OK'd by members of the city council.

If the plan is approved, the cable expansion will come after Jones Intercable sells its franchise to Alert Cable T.V. of Selma, North Carolina.

The Alert Cable Company must have approval from all six town boards that are served by Jones before the franchises can be taken over.

The Jones Intercable franchise was approved in 1978 by Raeford board members, three years after the city first entered into a cable franchise.

The city entered the franchise for a 15 year period. There are six years left on that agreement.

"We have set a closing date for January 31 if the town boards can agree," Jones Intercable Divisional Vice-President Charlie Railey said.

According to Railey, the Jones Company is severing its partnership and is eager to close the deal for "tax purposes."

"We are ready to sell to Alert Cable. They are a good company and will provide good service to these communities," Railey said.

Under the Alert Cable Company, Raeford residents and the five adjoining towns, will have a "wider option" of channel capabilities to choose.

Alert Cable Vice-President E.R. Pettis told councilmen Monday night that if the new company were allowed to come into the area, at least five basic channels and three "premium channels" would be added to the existing 12-station viewer selection.

A converter box will be added for customers who want the additional channels, Pettis said.

A \$3 charge will be tagged to customers who want the seven additional channels.

In addition, at least three "pay channels" will be offered to viewers. Home Box Office, Showtime, The Movie Channel and The Playboy Channel may be options that Raeford residents can select, Pettis told the councilmen.

The additional "premium chan-

nels" will cost viewers approximately \$8 to \$8.50 each, Pettis said.

"We really have not set a definite rate structure yet," Pettis said.

Railey and Pettis wanted councilmen to take the first step in "getting the ball rolling" during Monday night's meeting, but city board members were hesitant to take action.

"I think we need to study this before we make any decision," City Councilman Bob Gentry said.

Under the North Carolina law, the city must hold two regular meetings before final approval of the franchise could be made.

"We were hoping that you could use tonight for the first reading," Railey said, noting the tentative January 31 closing date that Jones Intercable had set.

"I don't think we should jump into this without studying the situation," City Manager Ron Matthews said.

"Our town residents may have to live with our decision for the next six or seven years," Matthews said, noting that the franchise agreement will not end until 1990.

Matthews said he was "strongly opposed" to a quick decision by the council.

"Making this decision by January 31 is a mistake. This is a very serious decision that ought to be studied very carefully," Matthews said.

"If we don't meet the January 31 closing date, it could very possibly kill the entire deal or postpone it indefinitely," Railey said.

Councilmen decided to hold the first public reading at their regular January 9 meeting and to reschedule their February meeting for January 30.

"By doing this, it will give us some time to review the company, and it will hopefully help your situation," Councilman Vardell Hedgpeth said.

"I am not opposed to cable expansion. We very definitely need to have additional service," Matthews said Tuesday.

"I think we need more time than they want to give us to study all the possibilities," Matthews said.

Matthews feels that all six com-

(See CABLE, page 2A)



### Inside Today

Hoke School Dentist Dr. Mike White checks all of his dental equipment to see if it is in working order before he gets started on his morning patients. We take a look at the routine and the dental program working in the schools on page 1 of Section B in today's News-Journal.