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DOT: Public Can Get 401 Dual-laned

By Sherry Matthews

Public demand could put tabled plans to widen U.S. Highway 401 between Raeford and Fayetteville back on the project construction lists, state Department of Transportation (DOT) officials said this week.

The highway has one of the deadliest records in North Carolina and a fatality rate which is almost 10% higher than the state average, DOT records show.

"If there was a great push for widening the highway, the Board of Transportation might consider putting it back in the program," DOT Division Engineer E.J. Butler said.

However, despite the carnage on the highway, there has been little demand in the past from local residents and elected officials to correct the problem, the engineer said.

According to Butler, plans to make 401 a "dual-lane" highway had been considered, but a shortage of funds placed the project on the back burner.

"It was included in the highway program at one time...before money got scarce," he said.

"The board is aware that there are many highway needs. They must be prioritized," he added.

Although widening 401 would

cost "several million dollars", Butler believes it could get funded. "There has not been a lot of public demand to widen the road," he said.

"If the county commissioners or residents felt it was necessary to get the road widened, they should make us aware of that," Butler said.

"We can't do them all at once, but we can put them in the program," he added.

"The board is aware of the problems. We are weeding them out to fit the funding," Butler said.

The original plan called for 401 to be expanded from Fayetteville's

Seventy-First High School to Raeford's 401 by-pass, DOT Traffic Engineer Jim Stamp said.

"There was a proposal in the works," Stamp said.

Although plans to widen 401 were placed on the back burner due to the apparent lack of funding, both Stamp and Butler agree that the road needs improvements.

"I believe that highway needs expansion," Butler said.

"In my opinion, widening is necessary. It needs to be widened to a dual-lane road," Stamp said.

According to Stamp, 401 has "passing problems" and "a lot of hills" that could result in hazardous conditions.

"With the alignment of that road, there are very few passing areas," Stamp said.

"We have placed a lot of no passing signs and pass with care signs up to attempt to get people to better adhere," Stamp said.

"I would say that there are bound to be some hazards on that road," he added.

DOT accident data for the past year shows that both Hoke and Cumberland County have higher fatality averages than the statewide U.S. rural two-lane highway's average.

For the year, Hoke has a 10.4% fatality rate on Highway 401 while

Cumberland shows a 12.3% average.

The statewide fatality average for rural two-lane roads is only 2.6%.

"The state average is much less than both Hoke and Cumberland's," DOT spokesman Glenn Craig said.

Since October 1982, there have been 27 wrecks on Highway 401 inside Hoke County.

Two of those wrecks resulted in fatalities. Thirteen carried personal injuries and 12 resulted in only property damage, Craig said.

Of the 27 wrecks during the (See DUAL 401, page 12)

Around Town

By Sam Morris

The weather for the past week has been as we usually have for Hoke County winters. Cold nights and then warm days make for a nice winter. The Arabia Golf Course has been filled with golfers and you could see that the course took a beating from the severe cold weather of a couple of weeks ago.

The forecast is for rain Tuesday and colder weather on Wednesday and Thursday. The forecasters have been wrong many times this year and so we must wait and see what the weekend ahead has in store for us.

The two pro football games this weekend were closer in score than the games last weekend. The Raiders were superior to the Seahawks, but the Redskins had a tough time with the Forty-niners.

The Super Bowl will be played in Tampa this year, so the weather should not be a factor in the outcome of the game. We will be pulling for the Redskins, but have the feeling that the Raiders will pull the game out of the bag. No reason for this feeling, just think so. Time will tell.

As most writers and basketball fans have been predicting since the opening of the basketball season, the ACC teams will ruin the record of their members. Last Saturday Virginia and Wake Forest took undefeated records in their games with Duke and Georgia Tech and they came away with a blemish on their record. Carolina defeated N.C. State and remained undefeated, but must face Maryland at College Park Thursday night. This should give the Tar Heels a real test and it could mean another blemish for the undefeated.

The next two months will be a hard road for all the ACC teams as they face one another. It is unlikely that a team will get through their schedule undefeated.

In December I was told that Jimmy Greene, a Raeford native, had died in California. As I don't figure much in the running of this newspaper anymore, it slipped my mind that the obit never appeared in the paper. Last Saturday Mrs. Jean Johnson called and asked if I would mention it in this column.

Jimmy Greene died December 6, 1983 in Riverside, California. He was 62 years of age and finished Hoke High School in the Class of 1939. After high school he joined the armed services and then went to California to live. He married while in the service, but didn't have any children.

Jimmy was the son of the late Judge Harry Greene and Mrs. Thelma Johnson Vann. Mrs. Vann is still living in Riverside, Calif.

He was the grandson of the late J. Worthy Johnson, the first chairman of Hoke County Commissioners. Frances Ward Greene is a half sister. He has many first cousins in the county including: Clyde, Bill and Joe Upchurch, Agnes Mae Campbell and Paul Johnson.

We knew Jimmy in high school; (See AROUND, page 13)



Trying to avoid the rain

Shirley Boyer, armed with boots and an umbrella, tries to avoid the pouring rain that fell on Raeford Tuesday bringing with it chilly temperatures.

FBI Nosing Around Airplanes' Sabotage

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agents are checking into the possibility that federal laws may have been broken when two passenger airplanes were sabotaged recently at the Raeford Airport, North Carolina FBI Agent in Charge Robert L. Pence said.

The FBI "was not" conducting a full scale investigation, but was checking to see if the sabotage fell under the bureau's jurisdiction, Pence said. "We will get involved if we find out any federal laws have been broken," Pence said.

On the surface, the apparent sabotage did not look like a federal violation because the aircrafts were not used for interstate flight.

At present, the FBI is just "checking" into the situation, Pence said. "Normally we don't get involved but if a federal law has been broken, it will be investigated," Pence said.

Parachute jump school owner Gene Paul Thacker, who owned both planes, said Wednesday that neither plane was used for out-of-state travel.

The craft are used primarily to take up parachutists, Thacker said, noting that the craft rarely cross state lines.

The two planes were apparently tampered with during the late night hours Wednesday, December 14.

Pilots were reported to have been readying for takeoff when the damage was discovered.

Sheriff's reports indicate that pennies were dropped in the oil reservoirs and sugar was placed in the gas tanks on Thacker's planes.

Thacker also noted in his report to county authorities that the oil sticks had been broken off so the caps could not be replaced.

According to an aircraft manufacturing expert, although sabotaged, the planes probably would have taken off and would have malfunctioned in flight.

Hoke County authorities have left the case open for investigation, but a spokesman for the department says it could be difficult to solve because there were no witnesses to the alleged sabotage.

Discharge In Limits, Ban Could Be Lifted

By Sherry Matthews

A sewer moratorium, placed on Raeford nearly eight years ago, may soon be lifted, members of the city council were told Monday night.

If the city stays below the state mandated sewer discharge level, the state ban on additional industry could be removed, Raeford Mayor John K. McNeill said during the board's regular monthly meeting.

"The city has been in compliance for the past four months," McNeill said.

"If we can stay in compliance through January, I believe the state will lift the moratorium," he added.

Acting City Manager Bill Sellers said Tuesday that state authorities have been "running their own tests" at the city's sewer plant.

"They are planning to perform those tests again during January," Sellers said.

"I am hoping that they will decide to lift the moratorium at that time," he added.

Although Sellers "would like to see" the ban on industry here lifted, he believes the state needs "proof" that the city will "stay in compliance."

"We are going to have to show them that this is going to be a continuing thing," Sellers said.

In addition, The House of Raeford turkey processing plant is also meeting mandated requirements on the firm's discharge into the municipal sewer system.

"They have been in compliance for a good while now," Sellers said.

Sellers credits the turkey plant's "in-house improvements" and their outside pre-treatment unit for the adherence to the city sewer requirements.

"They have been working to get in compliance for a long time," Sellers said.

"I think they have come up with a money saving thing now," he added.

If the city remains in compliance, McNeill believes the state

will be prepared to lift the ban on industry here.

"They are going to have to take another look if we continue to meet the requirements," McNeill said.

"I think we are going to stay in compliance this time," he added.

"It has been a long hard pull, but I think we are almost there," McNeill said.

In other business during the meeting, the city councilmen unanimously approved the first reading of an ordinance designed to transfer the municipal cable franchise to another company.

A second reading on January 30 must be approved before the franchise transfer is allowed, City Attorney Palmer Willcox said.

If the plan is approved, Raeford residents, along with others living in five neighboring communities, may be getting expanded cable television coverage within the next three to six months, Alert Cable (See MORATORIUM, page 12)

Murder Probe At Standstill

By Sherry Matthews

State and local authorities have apparently reached a "standstill" in the investigation of the December slaying of a Raeford business man, Police Chief Leonard Wiggins said Tuesday.

However, despite the slow progress, Wiggins says he is optimistic that the case "will be solved."

"This case is still our top priority," Wiggins said.

"Everything is basically at a standstill right now," Wiggins added.

"We have talked to several more people since the roadblock, but we don't have anything solid yet," Wiggins said.

State Bureau of Investigation (SBI) agents, city police, highway patrol and rescue squad members set up a roadblock at the intersection of Harris Avenue and Bethel Road, in front of Morrison's Grocery where William Daniel Morrison was found shot to death around 9:30 p.m. on December 22.

"The roadblock was a success," Wiggins said.

"I think we got some good information," Senior SBI agent Frank Johnson also said.

"Everything is still about the same, but we are definitely continuing our investigation," Johnson added.

Although Wiggins and Johnson would not comment on possible leads they had uncovered during the four-week old probe, the police chief did admit that some new information had been uncovered.

"We got a few things from the roadblock, but we really have not come up with anything new," Wiggins said.

"We are working very hard to come up with some leads in this case," he added.

The body of the 54-year old Morrison was found around 9:35 p.m. by a customer. He had been shot to death.

Hoke Medical Examiner Robert Townsend said earlier that Morrison died from multiple gunshot wounds.

Wiggins still believes that "rob-

bery" is still a strong motive in the case.

"Nothing is definite," he said. "I still believe that we will get a break in this case. We are not giving up," the chief said.

In an unrelated matter, SBI agents and county authorities are still seeking information that will lead them to the owner of an airplane, loaded with marijuana, which was confiscated at the Raeford Airport over a month ago.

"We are still investigating," Johnson said about the probe which netted authorities over \$750,000 in marijuana and a twin engine aircraft.

"We have got plenty of leads to follow in this case," he noted.

"We are working on this case. We are not just sitting around," Johnson said.

"Right now, the murder is our number one concern," Johnson said.

"We want to see both of these cases solved," he added.

Old Newspaper Editions Sought

Efforts have been launched by the Hoke County Library and The News-Journal to locate missing editions of past county newspapers.

Residents who may have past editions of The News-Journal during the 1930's, The Hoke County Journal prior to 1918 or copies of Facts and Figures are encouraged to contact the newspaper or a member of the library staff.

The past volumes of the newspapers will be microfilmed and then can be returned to the owners.

Presently the library only has volumes of the newspaper dating

from 1968 which were provided by The News-Journal.

Under a program now underway the newspaper and the library are microfilming copies of past editions from the files of The News-Journal.

It is hoped that missing volumes of Hoke County's newspapers can be found to complete the written record of the county's history.

The News-Journal is giving the library access to all volumes of the newspaper, dating from 1918.

Through a federally funded LSCA grant, the Hoke County Library will be able to microfilm all the volumes of the newspaper.

The News-Journal is presently working with the library to establish a complete set of newspapers that were published in this county, beginning with Facts and Figures.

Facts and Figures was started four years after Editor D. Scott Poole began the paper in 1904.

Poole continued to publish until 1929, when Paul Dickson, who owned the Hoke County News bought the newspaper.

For a time, Facts and Figures continued to be published, but was eventually turned into The Hoke County Journal.

In 1930, the paper merged into The News-Journal. Poole stayed on as editor.