

The News-Journal

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Paving nears completion

County office building workers should be able to get their feet out of the mud soon, as finishing touches are being put on the parking lot behind the

Main Street Pratt Building. This worker smooths out the paving in an effort to complete the rain delayed project.

Sewer Moratorium Is Lifted By NRCDD

A state ban which has curtailed industrial development in Hoke County for more than six years has been lifted.

After four months of testing, the North Carolina Department of Natural Resources and Community Development (NRCDD) has found that the Raeford's wastewater treatment plant is meeting state discharge standards, City Council members said Monday night.

In a letter to Mayor John K. McNeill dated Wednesday, NRCDD Director Robert F. Helms noted that the ban had been lifted, and the city treatment facility was removed from "non-compliance" status.

The non-compliance status had the effect of placing a moratorium on new industrial customers for the city system.

The ban was first imposed by NRCDD on November 29, 1977 and was renewed in September 1980.

Raeford has the only sewer system in Hoke County, and most new industries need sewage treatment.

"This is great news. I'm delighted to hear it," Hoke

Chamber of Commerce Director Earl Fowler said Tuesday.

"I see it as opportunity time for us to move forward. This will allow us to proceed with things that we have had planned for sometime," he added.

In addition, tough new effluent pre-treatment guidelines were adopted and fines were levied, but not collected, against one industrial user.

In order to get the ban lifted, present industrial users installed pre-treatment facilities, and the city spent more than \$1 million on upgrading the sewer plant.

In the letter to McNeill, Helms noted that based on data gathered by the city from September to December and on the results of tests taken by NRCDD on December 13, the Raeford facility is in compliance with final effluent limitations.

"I would emphasize, however, that continued efforts by the city will be most important to ensure that adequate pretreatment is maintained, and that the wastewater treatment facility will continue to be operated in such a

manner as to achieve optimum efficiency," Helms wrote.

Raeford is presently running about 2.5 million gallons of effluent through the treatment system per day. The plant has the capacity to handle almost twice that much, and could easily handle additional industrial users, city officials say.

Health authorities became concerned about the Raeford sewer problem when it was discovered that discharges were polluting Rockfish Creek.

After pre-treatment systems were installed at both the Burlington and Faberge plants, city officials cracked down on the House of Raeford processing plant.

Over \$30,000 in fines were levied against the plant and additional charges, which could have amounted to \$10,000 per day were threatened. However, when the turkey processing plant began construction on a pre-treatment facility, the fines were rescinded.

Recent tests results have shown that the discharge level of pollutants is about 10% of what it was before the plant began functioning efficiently, engineering consultants said. (See MORATORIUM, page 11)

School Committee Will Make Recommendations By May 1

A study of the physical needs of the Hoke County school system is expected to be completed by May 1, residents gathered at J.W. Turlington School were told Tuesday night.

Members of the "Committee of 21," who are studying the schools, are scheduled to meet with architects next week and then will begin developing recommendations for the facilities, committee Chairman Bobby Gibson said.

The group held its fourth and final fact-finding hearing Tuesday, and received a variety of recommendations from parents, teachers and taxpayers attending the meeting.

One speaker suggested that "dynamite" might be the best solution to correcting conditions at the aging Turlington School, while others recommended that the building be maintained for some use other than educating students.

No one suggested keeping students in the 49-year-old structure.

The last school study committee recommended 10 years ago that Turlington, then Raeford Elementary, be replaced and estimated the costs at \$3.7 million, Hoke Department of Social Services (DSS) Director Ken Witherspoon said.

"I become frustrated when I wonder why I am still standing in this building today," Witherspoon told the committee.

However, Witherspoon, who has children in county schools, said he had no solutions for how a county with the tax base of Hoke would be able to pay for the educational improvements that are needed.

"I would guess that the \$3.7 million back then was as hard to come up with as the \$12 to \$15 million will be today," he added, suggesting that the county attempt

to get more financial assistance from the state.

Although one committee member said she had been told by a number of residents not to recommend a tax increase, another parent pointed out that improvements could not be made without increased costs.

"No matter how you figure it, you can't have one without the other," the parent said.

At Turlington students are crammed into overcrowded classrooms, and 400 students are required to use inadequate bathrooms, a teacher at the school said.

"Forget renovation," she said. Five classes are taught in rooms under the gym floor. Trying to get students to learn in that environment is difficult, another Turlington teacher said.

It is equally difficult to teach

physical education classes in the gym, the school's instructor said.

Students must be restrained and given activities which will be as quiet as possible.

"We can't have a physical education program like we want because of the noise," she said.

"I was in the last class to graduate from high school in this building, and it's all right with me if you push it down," a Hoke High teacher said about Turlington.

If the committee's recommendations include the construction of a new facility, that school should be built on the Cumberland County side of Hoke, parent Steve Phillips said.

Efforts are being made by the Hoke County Chamber of Commerce and others to attract new residents from Cumberland, and a new school facility in an area convenient to Fayetteville would help, Phillips said.

Phillips also suggested that Turlington be saved and used for some type of public facility.

Conditions are bad at Turlington, but they are equally bad at Upchurch Junior High School, another parent said.

"There is a cesspool under the library at Upchurch," Jim Wadsworth said. "I smelled it."

Wadsworth said he has mailed letters describing the conditions of the schools to President Ronald Reagan, both U.S. Senators from North Carolina, U.S. Rep. Bill Hefner, state legislators and the governor.

"We have got to let people know what our needs are. They are there to help us," Wadsworth said.

Another public hearing is scheduled once the committee has completed its preliminary recommendations, Gibson said.

The Turlington hearing, which drew about 150 residents, was the

last of a series of meetings the committee has been holding in schools around the county.

The group will meet Tuesday with the architects, who have toured the schools and inspected their structural conditions, Gibson said.

Following that meeting, the committee will begin formulating recommendations for the needs of the schools and will suggest ways of raising needed revenues.

The process is expected to be completed before decisions are made on the upcoming fiscal year's budget, he added.

The committee's recommendations are not binding on the school board or the county commission.

School Board members Bobby Wright, Mina Townsend, Ruth McNair and Bill Cameron, along with County Commissioners Wyatt Upchurch and James Albert Hunt attended the hearing.

Around Town

By Sam Morris

Now this is the kind of winter weather that I like. The past weekend was perfect. As this is being written Monday afternoon, the wind is blowing and clouds are coming in from the west.

The forecast is for colder temperatures Monday and Tuesday nights, but after that the nice weather will continue with the high getting to 60 by Saturday.

This is perfect golf weather, but a cold has me confined to the house for several days.

Most folks I talk with these days will finally, during the conversation, ask, "How do you like retirement?" The answer is always the same. "Fine, nothing like it."

There is one thing that being retired causes me to miss; that is seeing folks that come by the office. These people are usually from out of town and will drop by to say hello as they are passing through.

Last week I found a note on my desk saying that Mr. and Mrs. L.S. Gordon of Waldwick, N.J. had stopped by to see me. Mrs. Gordon is the former Nannie Russell Harris, a classmate of mine at Raeford High School. We started in the first grade together and finished in the class of 1935. She was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Harris, who lived on the Fayetteville. (See AROUND, page 14)



Animal shelter on go

This worker inspects the concrete after floors on the new animal shelter were poured last week. Over the weekend, county workers raised the walls on the

shelter. County manager James Martin said he expects the building to be completed by the end of February.

Four Lane May Get Annual DOT Review

Although the four-laning of U.S. Highway 401 between Raeford and Fayetteville is not on the schedule for immediate construction, the project will be reviewed on an annual basis, state Department of Transportation (DOT) Secretary William R. Roberson Jr. said.

In a letter to Hoke County Chamber of Commerce Director Earl Fowler dated last week, Roberson said the widening project would be reassessed "on an

annual basis and will be considered, within funding capability, for scheduling in future programs."

The highway project, which had been funded by DOT in 1971 but was later dropped, is now listed on the Example of Needs section of the 10-year Transportation Improvement Program.

Presently U.S. 401 is competing for funds with U.S. highways 1, 17, 74 and 220, Roberson said. (See 401, page 12)

News-Journal Wins NC Press Awards

The News-Journal captured two honors at the annual North Carolina Press Association (NCPA) awards ceremony held Thursday.

Newspaper editor Warren Johnston garnered first place honors for editorial writing in the weekly division.

Johnston received the honor for three editorials which were carried the headlines: "James Albert Hunt, no longer serving," "Hoke students falling behind" and "Commission wins point, schools lose future."

Second place honors in the weekly division were also awarded

to Johnston for spot news photography.

The award was made for a photo of an Antioch fireman taking a break during a mobile home fire which erupted on one of the hottest days of the year.

This year's NCPA contest was judged by members of the Tennessee Press Association.

In the community newspaper division, 1,101 entries were received.

The awards ceremony was held Thursday afternoon during the NCPA's 59th Press Institute in Chapel Hill. Governor James Hunt Jr. presented the awards.