

# The News-Journal

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## Grant accepted for college study

By Sherry Matthews

Members of the Hoke County Commission accepted a \$1,500 grant Monday night in an attempt to speed up efforts to develop a community college satellite in downtown Raeford.

The grant will fund an architectural feasibility study of the old United Carolina Bank (UCB) building which is expected to be donated for the community college's use.

Forward Incorporated, a local non-profit "community betterment" group, donated the funds for the study, Hoke Chamber of Commerce Director Earl Fowler said.

"They feel that this is a very, very worthwhile project. They want to do their part," Fowler said.

Sandhills Community College board members gave the green light two weeks ago to a study that would determine if the UCB building is suitable as a satellite branch.

"All Sandhills was then waiting on was the funding of the study from local sources," College presidential assistant George Lewis said.

"Things look positive so far, but there are still some important decisions that have to be looked at down the road," Lewis said.

In addition to the feasibility study, which could begin this week, Lewis said Monday that surveys, taken from community and industrial residents, have indicated a "tremendous interest" in a community college satellite.

"Just from a first glance at these surveys, I would say that there is an overwhelming interest."

According to Lewis the surveys represent some 1,300 people who filled out the survey forms.

"They came from mailed-in surveys and those we did throughout the industries and school system," Lewis said.

Of the approximately 1,300

surveys, 70% of the adults indicated a desire for a satellite branch, according to the Sandhills spokesman.

"They were predominately parents who received surveys taken home by their school-age children," Lewis said.

"We have been very, very pleased with the positive results. It definitely shows us that there is an interest," he added.

The survey also showed that some 96 high school juniors and seniors indicated an interest in attending a community college with 78 of those preferring to attend classes in Hoke County.

"These surveys are very encouraging," Lewis said.

However, the county has got to look at the long-term expense that could be involved, he added.

"They are going to have to be responsible for the year by year cost," Lewis said.

"The building, if acceptable, has been donated by UCB. The county must, however, assume responsibility for the building's maintenance and utilities," Fowler told the commissioners Monday night.

Fowler appeared "confident" that he and a Progressive Action Committee (PAC), set up to study Hoke County's needs, could con-

tinue to come up with funding to back the satellite branch.

"I have no idea what cost we might be faced with down the road, but we are going to try in every way to have the cost underwritten by private sources," Fowler said.

"We have no guarantees, but we will only come back to you as a last resort," he added.

"This is an opportunity that this county cannot afford to let go by. We are going to do everything in our power to see that it doesn't," Fowler said.

"I hope this is a step in the right direction," Hoke Commission Chairman John Balfour said.

## Hoke sales increase \$4.5 million

By Ed Miller

Retail sales in Hoke County climbed more than \$4.5 million during 1983, according to figures released Tuesday by the North Carolina Department of Revenue.

In 1982, sales in the county were \$44,312,208.

A better than 9.5% increase was realized in 1983 as sales reached over \$48,961,000.

"Progress" is the reason for the increase according to Raeford-Hoke Chamber of Commerce Director Earl Fowler.

"There is an indication that more people are shopping in the county," Fowler said.

He also said that "people are coming across county lines to shop."

The opening of the Raeford-Hoke Shopping Center is in no small way responsible for some of the increase, according to Fowler.

In the first three months following the opening of the center last fall, retail sales in Hoke County jumped almost \$900,000 over figures recorded the previous year.

Fowler noted that shoppers are looking for "basically everything in general."

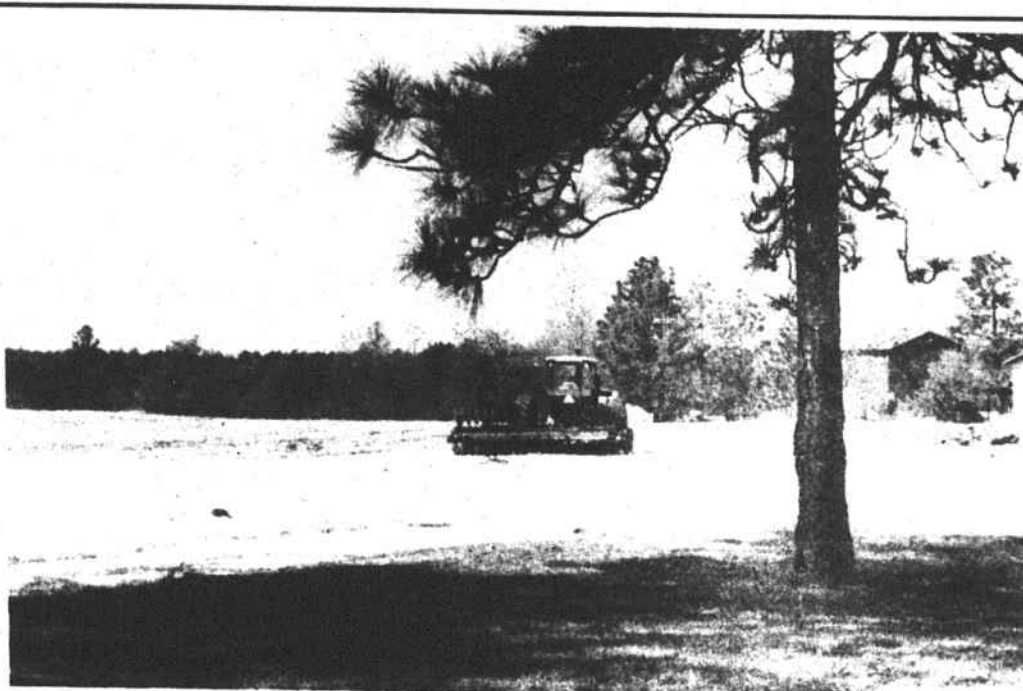
According to Younger Snead Jr. of Hoke Auto Company, sales in 1983 were up about 25% over 1982.

"That figure is off the top of my head, but it's not far from right," Snead said.

Most of the people buying cars from outside the county are from "Ft. Bragg and Cumberland County," Snead added.

"Some are from Scotland County," he said.

The report from the State Dept. of Revenue also noted that Scotland County's 1983 gross sales are down from 1982 by about \$2 million.



### Trying to catch up

During a dry day last week, farmers attempted to sneak out in the fields to plow the soil before the April showers marred production. Despite the

rains, Hoke Extension Service Chairman Willie Featherstone said "everything was still on schedule."

## Weather not hampering farmers

By Sherry Matthews

Although temperatures have fluctuated from cool to warm and April downpours continue to soak the ground, Hoke County crops have not suffered, according to Agriculture Extension Service Chairman Willie Featherstone.

"The rain has not hurt us yet. It really has helped us," Featherstone said.

"The rain has really helped us build our water table back up after the droughts that we have had in the past," he added.

Although the rains have apparently "not put" local farmers behind, they are working "12 to 14 hours a day" trying to get the corn planted during dry intervals, while peach growers are anxiously waiting for the passing of April 20.

"That is usually when we have our last frost," Featherstone said.

"If the peach growers can get past that, they should have a good crop," he added.

"Right now everything seems to be pretty close to schedule," Featherstone said.

According to Featherstone, farmers are trying to get their corn in the field while they are also preparing their land for cotton and tobacco.

"When it is dry enough, they will be breaking land, putting out herbicides and keeping a careful check on their tobacco beds," the extension chairman said.

"The bed covers will have to come off as the weather gets warmer," he added.

From there farmers will begin pulling the plants and setting them in the field," Featherstone said.

If the weather clears up, all these things should be happening by the end of April.

"We should see some tobacco being harvested by early July," Featherstone said.

At present Hoke farmers plant approximately 1,300 acres of tobacco and 8,000 acres of corn despite the unknown price market that may exist for the season.

"We cannot predict this early what prices will be like. There are too many variables," Featherstone said.

"I don't think anyone will know until closer to harvest time," he added.

In addition to corn, soybeans, tobacco and cotton, there are a few peach farmers who are weathering the storm in hopes of harvesting a good crop this year.

For the past two years, peach crops have been devastated by late frosts and bitterly cold temperatures.

This year there are approximately 110 acres of peaches divided among four or five producers, Featherstone said.

"If nothing happens, we should have a good crop," (See WEATHER, page 2A)

## Trio in jail, await hearing

By Sherry Matthews

Three area residents are scheduled to make an appearance in Hoke District Court next week on charges ranging from armed robbery to rape and kidnapping, Hoke Sheriff Dave Barrington said.

Jimmy Sinclair, 28, of St. Pauls, Daphne Childers Boyd, 24, of Rt. 1, Shannon and Anthony Johnson, 24, of Rex, were arrested last Tuesday afternoon by Robeson and Hoke Sheriff's deputies in connection with the March 27 rape and armed robbery of a local convenience store employee.

Johnson was in the Hoke County Jail this week under a \$100,000 bond on charges of unlawful use of a vehicle, armed robbery, kidnapping and rape.

Sinclair, who is charged with one count of armed robbery, also remains in the Hoke Jail under a \$50,000 bond while Boyd was confined to the Cumberland County Jail under a \$100,000 bond.

Boyd is charged with armed robbery and a "possible second charge of common law robbery," Barrington said.

"There may be other charges," Barrington said.

According to Barrington, "a trace" on money orders stolen from the victim's pocketbook helped Hoke detectives and State Bureau of Investigation (SBI) agents make last week's arrest.

"The money orders taken from the victim's pocketbook were cashed in St. Pauls," Barrington said.

A clerk in the St. Pauls store recognized Boyd and Sinclair and notified law enforcement officials, according to Barrington.

"Boyd and Sinclair were arrested around 3:50 p.m. Tuesday while Johnson was taken into custody later that evening by Hoke detectives," Barrington said.

The arrests follow a week-old investigation into the late-night armed robbery of the Davis Bridge Short Stop.

(See SUSPECTS, page 2A)

## United Fund kicks off effort for coming year

By Ed Miller

April is designated in Hoke County as drive month for the United Way.

The local chapter, called the United Fund, has set its 1984 goal of \$26,230. This goal is expected to be met and exceeded as was last year's goal according to Hoke County United Way President, Ken Witherspoon.

"I feel good about the strength of the United Fund in Hoke County," Witherspoon said. "We're the strongest we've been."

In Hoke County, the United Fund is broken into different areas. There are 12 key volunteers that take care of these areas; however, within plants and work places, there are many more.

Witherspoon feels that total participation, especially from industry, is essential to the cause. "We try to involve enough people

so it cannot sink on one or two people," said Witherspoon.

According to Witherspoon, April is the best time of year to have a fund drive. "The fall of the year is very busy in this area. Last year, I could have spent \$128 just on tickets to various activities," he said. Therefore, the United Way holds its drive in Spring.

The money collected this year is to go in 22 directions, according to the 1984 proposed budget. The largest amount of funding, \$4,783 is to go to the local chapter of the American Red Cross. The area Boy Scout Council is budgeted \$4,500, Girl Scouts \$3,000, 4-H Council \$2,590, and St. Joseph's Home Health Agency is to receive \$2,000.

Other organizations to receive (See UNITED FUND, page 11A)

## Around Town

By Sam Morris

The misty rain Monday put a stop to my golf game. According to the forecast Monday it will be this way for the remainder of the week. The temperatures will be in the 50s and this is below normal for this time of the year. You would think that the GGO was played a week early this year according to the forecast.

The farmers of the county took advantage of the nice weather last week and if you were riding around, you could not miss the tractors in the fields. I don't know how much this week's weather will affect them and their soil preparations and planting. It is always a gamble when you farm, since you are dealing with the weather.

According to most of the older people, the cool weather will be with us until after Easter. So according to the calendar, since Easter is April 22, we still have a few more days to wait before warmer weather is here to stay.

The registration books closed Monday for the May 8 election. So (See AROUND, page 2A)

## Low-interest funds on tap for downtown

By Sherry Matthews

Raeford's Main Street business area is dotted with eight vacant buildings, but efforts are underway to fill the spaces and get funding for a downtown facelift.

"We want to do everything we can to make downtown a viable area," Southern National Bank (SNB) Branch Manager Steve Parker said.

Parker, United Carolina Bank Branch Manager Bobby Conoly and Heritage Federal Savings and Loan Branch Manager Frank Teal are combining efforts to offer downtown merchants low interest loans for revitalization.

"We have a definite commitment from Southern National and UCB; Heritage is still considering the proposition," Hoke Chamber

of Commerce Director Earl Fowler said.

"They all seem very interested in reviving downtown," he added.

The proposed money pool will allow downtown merchants to borrow money at a lower interest rate.

"We are thinking in terms of lending at 8.5%," Parker said.

"All the details have not been worked out yet. We have got to see if there is interest in this sort of thing before we get too far down the line," Conoly said.

"I am and have always been encouraged by the merchant's interest in reviving Main Street. Their interest just needs to be channeled," Fowler said.

According to the Chamber Director, the pool will "encourage

and assist merchants in their efforts."

"It can only help," Fowler said.

Although the final teeth have not been added to the loan pool proposal, Parker and Conoly see their role as minimal.

"We will provide the money with low interest rates. The city or county government will be the ones to dictate who qualifies and who doesn't," Parker said.

"This is a big endeavor. We hope the merchants will show a big interest in this opportunity," Parker said.

"We are not doing this just to provide people with low interest loans. We want to see some accomplishments," he added.

In addition to proposed revitalization loans, there are at

least three downtown buildings that may soon be filled.

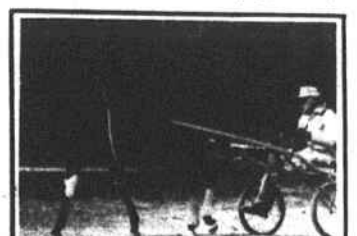
Plans for a beauty shop, a restaurant and a manufacturing plant on Raeford's Main Street have been eyed and may become a reality over the next two to three months.

"There is also the possibility that a retail agency may locate in the downtown area," Fowler said.

Although the Chamber director was reluctant to discuss the agency, he did say "every effort was being made to encourage him to move to Main Street."

"Every building that we fill downtown will be a help," Fowler said.

"They will be the springboards (See FUNDS, page 3A)



## Inside Today

**A morning ride**  
Trainer Dick Richardson is not just enjoying a morning stroll around the Timberlane track, but preparing one of his horses for an upcoming race. We take a look at Timberlane and other horse farms in Hoke County in this week's B-section of The News-Journal.