

The News-Journal

The Hoke County News - Established 1928

The Hoke County Journal - Established 1905

Volume LXXVII Number 3

RAEFORD, HOKE COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

\$10 PER YEAR

25 CENTS

Thursday, May 9, 1985

Key telephone EAS vote expected Monday

By Warren Johnston

A decision on an order, which could open the door for direct telephone service between Hoke County and Fayetteville, is expected to be made next week by members of the North Carolina Utilities Commission.

Carolina Telephone Company placed the issue of establishing the extended area service (EAS) into focus Monday during a hearing before the commission, when the firm's attorney objected to a provision of the order which would jeopardize a decade old "matrix" rate-setting system.

If that matrix system were used to set the rates for EAS from Raeford to Fayetteville, Carolina Telephone would generate almost \$2 million in additional revenue each year, company officials have said previously.

The proposed order calls for the Carolina Telephone to determine the actual costs of establishing EAS between the Hoke County's largest exchange and Fayetteville, and ask for the issue of the service to be aired at a public hearing scheduled for Raeford in September.

Members of the utilities commission are expected to rule next Monday on the order.

The order, which was proposed by members of the commission's public staff on behalf of telephone customers in the 875 exchange, was supported by a delegation of Hoke County officials and residents during the hearing Monday in Raleigh.

After hearing testimony from Hoke County Economic Developer John Howard, state Rep. Danny DeVane (D-Hoke), representatives

of Carolina Telephone and others, the commissioners voted to "take the matter under advisement in executive session" before acting on the order.

A decision could come Wednesday morning, public staff Communications Division Director Gene A. Clemmons said.

Although Carolina Telephone Attorney Dwight Allen said the firm has no objection to the public hearing planned for September 10 at Turlington School in Raeford, the company does oppose a section of the order which would require that a study be made to determine the costs of connecting the service from Hoke County to Fayetteville.

Currently Carolina Telephone bases extended service rates on the matrix system, which is determined by using companywide averages of EAS costs.

Under the proposed rate structure for the Raeford-Fayetteville service, Carolina Telephone would increase annual revenues over present charges by at least \$1.75 million, company officials have confirmed.

If the proposed charges were in force, Carolina Telephone would receive a "windfall," company officials have said.

Basing the rates for the Raeford-Fayetteville service on costs would be unfair to other customers in the state who have already obtained extended area service based on the matrix system, Allen said Monday.

It would also be "illegal," he added, without elaborating on the point.

In addition, the matrix system, which was adopted by the utility commission in the mid-1970's, allows Carolina Telephone to give

"immediate" rate information to customers who call about extended service.

Allen did not say how many such calls Carolina Telephone receives from customers.

The proposed order drawn by the public staff would require:

•A hearing to be held before the commission on September 10 at Turlington School at 7 p.m. to receive public testimony.

•The public hearing to resume at 11 a.m. on September 11 in Raleigh to receive expert testimony.

•Carolina Telephone to make a study to determine the incremental costs of providing EAS between Raeford and Fayetteville and file the results of the study with the Commission before August 15. "For the purposes of determining the EAS equipment requirements,

the study should assume that EAS will be established in 1987."

•Carolina Telephone shall also mail as a bill insert the notice to customers of the public hearing.

In moving to consider the matter in executive session, Commissioner Hartwell Campbell questioned the public staff's request for a costs study, and noted that he thought rates should be determined prior to the public hearing.

"I can't see what value it would be to have a public hearing if the people don't know what the rates would be," Campbell said.

"Costs should be evaluated prior to the hearing to determine the proper forum for thinking about rates," Clemmons responded.

"We're not asking you at this point to decide between costs or (See TELEPHONE, page 9A)



Gov. James G. Martin

Martin speaks in Raeford Fri.

Governor James G. Martin will be visiting Raeford and Hoke County on Friday, May 10.

Martin will be in town as the guest speaker for the Raeford-Hoke Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner.

According to Chamber spokesperson Beverly Pasternak, there are still tickets available for the dinner at the Chamber offices, Southern National Bank or from Gerald Wright Realty.

Tickets are \$10 per person. There will be a reception beginning at 6 p.m.

Dinner will start at 7 p.m. A fare of roast beef is planned for the event which will be held at the new National Guard Armory.

Around Town

By Sam Morris

The inch or so of rain last Friday could be a lifesaver for the cotton farmers. We still need more rain, but this inch was well received. The cooler weather after the rain also was a help in that it let the rain soak into the soil.

It seems Monday that the cool weather is leaving and the 80 to 90° weather is back with us for the remainder of the week. There isn't any forecast of rain as this is being written Monday.

• • • • •
The annual meeting of the Raeford-Hoke Chamber of Commerce will be held Friday night, May 10 at the National Guard Armory on Teal Drive. The reception will begin at 6 p.m.

Tickets are still available at the chamber office, but when 400 are sold, that will end ticket sales. If you haven't purchased your ticket call the office or go by and pick them up. If you have mailed a check to the office for tickets, they will be mailed to you immediately. If you haven't received tickets from a mail-in order, then get in touch with the office.

The speaker for the occasion will (See AROUND, page 10A)

Man escapes blast, but lands in jail

By Ed Miller

A Hoke County man, who escaped a blast from a shotgun, was in jail this week after he was charged with breaking into a house while the resident was at home.

Larry Chavis, of Rt. 1, Red Springs was charged last Monday with first degree burglary and jailed under \$20,000 bond, according to reports from the Hoke County Sheriff's Department.

Chavis allegedly broke into the home of Robert McPhaul while he was in his bed, reports say.

Chavis ripped the screen off a window in the McPhaul home's front room and entered the house, reports say.

The man then left the house through the front door, but returned shortly afterward and began rummaging through some personal property in the house, according to reports.

Chavis then went into McPhaul's bedroom and struck a cigarette lighter, reports say.

McPhaul asked the man to strike the lighter again, and he did.

When Chavis struck the lighter the second time, he saw McPhaul holding a shotgun on him.

The man then fled the house followed closely by a blast from the gun, reports say.

McPhaul told deputies that he fired over the intruder's head.

In other area incidents, a Raeford man has been released from jail under \$500 bond after being charged with assault.

Gertrude Batton was released from Cape Fear Valley Medical Center last Monday after her husband, Johnny Batton allegedly swung and hit her in the head with a 20 gauge shotgun, Sheriff's Department reports say.

According to the Battons' two children, an argument had erupted the day before the assault when Gertrude Batton had returned from a trip to visit her mother.

According to a statement by the daughter of the couple, both participants pulled knives on each other during the course of the fight.

(See BEATING, page 10A)



Photo by Pam Frederick

No one home

One of two house fires in 48 hours, the unoccupied home of the Artis Gay family burned Sunday night. Hillcrest Fire Department responded to the fire at about 8:40 p.m. North Raeford Fire Department showed up shortly afterward. Fire officials would not comment on how the fire started. They did say that the house was being torn down at the time of the fire. In an unrelated fire, the home of Jeff Goins caught fire two times in less than 12 hours.

Flames shot through the roof of the trailer as North Raeford, Antioch and West Hoke fire departments showed up to battle the blaze. The trailer has been classified as destroyed. The first fire was reported to have started from a toaster and was called in at 2 a.m. Tuesday. The second fire, reported at about 9 a.m. Tuesday, was said to be in the area with the washing machine and dryer.

Misconception leads to roof funds confusion

By Ed Miller

A "misconception of where revenues were coming from" caused members of the county commission to table a request Monday from the Hoke County Board of Education for \$235,000, according to school administration officials.

School Superintendent Dr. Robert Nelson asked the Hoke commissioners Monday to earmark one-half cent sales tax revenues for school roof repairs.

However, the superintendent's plans to start the repairs in June were cut short when he was told the funds for the work have not

been sent to Hoke County by the state.

School officials had a misconception about the revenues, said Nelson after the meeting.

"It was purely a matter of communications," Nelson said Tuesday.

According to Nelson and Schools Business Manager Don Steed, administration officials and the Board of Education did not realize that the \$200,000 spent last year for roofing projects was money that was coming into the county on a quarterly basis.

What the county did was to take money out of their fund balance

and put it into a reserve fund for roofing repairs.

County administrators then replaced the fund balance as tax revenues from the state came into the county, Nelson said.

It was just a paper transaction that school administrators did not understand, said Nelson.

"The reason I suggested the commissioners table (the request) was so we could have time to clear up the misunderstanding," Nelson said.

According to the superintendent, the matter will be discussed at next week's Board of Education meeting, and he and Steed will

return to the commissioners at their May 20 meeting to ask for action on the request.

Nelson said in the meeting Monday roofing contracts need to be committed to before school is out this year so construction can begin just after the school year is over.

"We want to get a good portion of the work done before the students get back," Nelson said.

"We want some assurances that the money will be there," said Nelson during Monday's meeting.

In other action at the meeting, members of the commission voted not to support a piece of legislation that would increase the fees col-

lected by registers of deeds around the state.

The legislation would also increase the salaries of the registers of deeds, according to an explanation given commissioners by Della Maynor, Hoke County Register of Deeds.

According to Maynor, her salary would increase from \$17,112 to \$31,440.

The Board of Directors for the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners did not give the proposals a good endorsement, said Hoke Commission Chairman John Balfour.

(See FUNDS, page 9A)

City OK's office term change

By Ed Miller

Members of the Raeford City Council voted unanimously to change their terms of office after no members of the public attended a hearing held Monday night or voiced objections to the move.

According to an ordinance outlining the new terms, after the November 1985 election, all city councilmen and the mayor will have staggered terms and will eventually hold office for four years.

For the upcoming election, the two councilmen elected with the most votes will stay in office for four years. The other three will have two year terms.

Also in the ordinance is a clause saying the mayor will have a four year term.

Action was taken three months ago when members of the council became concerned that the whole city government could be voted out

of office at the same time.

In other action, members of the council refused to approve a contract for \$12,000 allowing an Asheboro engineering firm to design a course of action for installing a water and sewer line to the site of a proposed new motel in town.

According to City Manager Tom Phillips, the engineering work is required by the state for the sewer project, but councilmen Bob Gentry and Vardell Hedgpeth were concerned that the money to be spent paying the costs of engineering would be wasted if the motel does not go in.

According to Phillips, the \$12,000 figure includes supervision of the construction whenever it gets underway.

Gentry asked how much of the total figure was contained in the supervision aspect of the contract

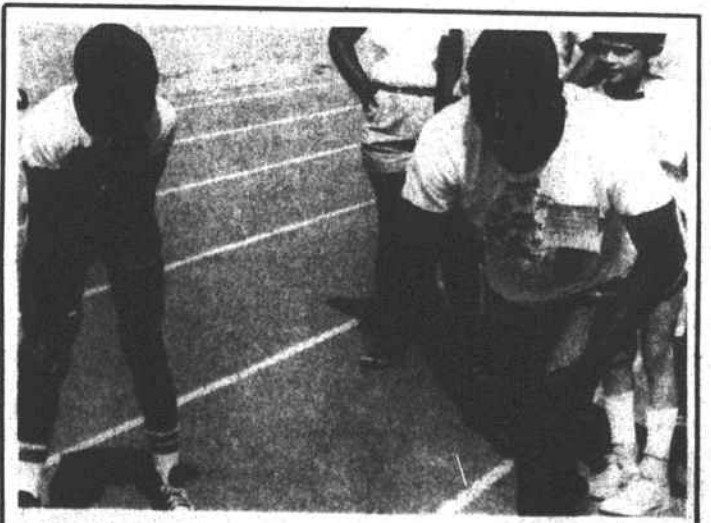
and if the price tag was worth the effort if the motel does not locate in Raeford.

A whole neighborhood will be open to hook onto the city lines if the construction project goes through, but Phillips could not say how much of the cost will be included in supervision.

"In case something falls through, I want to know where we stand," Hedgpeth said.

Members of the council also voted in favor of an amendment to the existing city personnel insurance policy that will save Raeford \$8,000 per year in premium payments.

By adopting a policy that uses a pre-admission review of all employees that need hospitalization, the city will defer an eight per-cent premium increase, according to Raeford Personnel Director Rhonda Holt.



Under the gun

Lining up for the 100 meter dash is a tense moment for anyone. It is especially so for these youngsters. We will take a close look at the Hoke County Special Olympics on Page 1B of today's News-Journal.