

# The News-Journal

The Hoke County News - Established 1928

Volume LXXVII Number 8

RAEFORD, HOKE COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

\$10 PER YEAR

25 CENTS

The Hoke County Journal - Established 1905

Thursday, June 13, 1985

## Phones, US 401, school sites tied to progress

By Ed Miller

The four-laning of Highway 401, better school locations and getting extended area telephone service with Fayetteville will help slumping real estate sales in Hoke County, area real estate brokers said last week.

The lack of the telephone service is "one of the biggest drawbacks" to developing land in Hoke County, said Cumberland County developer Ralph Huff.

Currently, Huff is exploring several tracts of land in eastern Hoke County near the Cumberland County line, he said. According to Huff, who is a Hoke County native, a shortage of land in Cumberland County will force people to start looking at

land in Hoke, but that land will be near the Cumberland County line. That raises another problem, said Huff.

Hoke County schools are located in Raeford and people who live so close to Fayetteville will have to drive or have their children bussed to Raeford.

Huff was careful to add that the quality of the schools in Hoke County is good, but their locations are unattractive to families living on the Cumberland-Hoke line.

"If there were a school in that area, it would help developers justify building in that area," he said.

"The problem is not with the schools themselves," he said.

In addressing the Highway 401 situation, Huff said: "The four-laning is very vital."

"People moving into Hoke need the road," he said.

"They (Hoke County officials) had better do something soon about county zoning," he added.

According to developer Julian Wright, "most people (buyers) we depend on now, are military."

Wright agrees that phone service between Hoke and its larger neighbor is a very important factor in the development of Hoke County.

The houses Wright deals in mostly are in the \$20,000 to \$60,000 range, he said.

"Most houses stay on the

market from 30 to 90 days," he said.

During the first quarter of this year, 28 houses were sold in Hoke County. Some of those transfers of title were between business associates and family members.

In the same three month period, Cumberland County brokers sold 446 houses. The average sales price was \$55,085, a spokesman for the Board of Realtors said.

Wright substantiated what other real estate brokers in the county say about sagging real estate sales.

"Most people who live here (in Raeford and Hoke County) are rooted and not looking for new homes," Wright said.

"There is no new blood moving

in," said real estate broker Gene Carter.

According to most real estate brokers and developers in the area, the demand for housing in Hoke County is low now, and land prices show it.

"You've got to have people knocking on your door to get the prices up," Carter said.

According to Carter, his business is not bad, but it is not as good as last year.

Most of his \$30,000 to \$40,000 houses stay on the market from six to nine months, he said.

"In our personal situation, it looks like our people who are able to pay for that kind of house are buying in Southern Pines," he said.

"The phone service and Highway 401 could change that," he said.

Carter said that lots west of the Cumberland County line are selling for \$500 to \$800 per acre.

On the Cumberland side of the line, they are selling for close to \$3,000 per acre, said Carter.

"There is no young people's market," said broker Avery Connell.

"We have lots of houses, but they are not the right kinds of houses," he said.

"We don't have the people coming into this area. There are plenty of houses, but no people," said Connell.

"I don't know how you're going to attract those people," he said.



### Studying the budget

County Manager William Cowan (left) studies the recommended budget with commission members (from left): Wyatt Upchurch, Cleo Bratcher, John Balfour, Neil McPhatter, James Albert Hunt and finance officer Charles Davis during a recent work session.

## Fire district tax rates hiked

By Ed Miller

Members of the Hoke County Commission voted to raise taxes in three of the county's 10 fire districts during a budget meeting Monday night.

Taxpayers in Crestline, Tyertown and Pine Hill will be paying more for fire protection following the action by the commissioners.

In the Crestline Fire District, taxpayers will be paying an additional 2 cents per every \$100 of property valuation.

It will cost residents in the Tyertown area an additional penny on the tax rate for protection.

The biggest hike came in the Pine Hill Fire District, where members of that fire department requested and were granted a 4 cents hike.

Pine Hill, which had the lowest tax rate last year, now is even with all but two fire districts in the county with a rate of 10 cents.

Commissioner James Albert Hunt, who is the county's representative with the rural fire departments, said Pine Hill needs that tax hike to pay for a recently purchased truck.

The only districts in the county which have tax rates below the 10 cents mark are the Puppy Creek and Stonewall districts.

Puppy Creek has a 7 cents tax rate and Stonewall is 8 cents.

Neither of those departments asked for an increase this year.

In the second budget session in as many weeks, the Hoke County Commission took no action to cut a budget which contains a recom-

mended seven cents tax rate increase.

Although commissioners searched for about two hours, no ready cuts were found in the budget.

According to Commission Chairman John Balfour, this year's budget has been substantially cut by County Manager William Cowan.

"This is the first year that you have gotten a school budget already cut," County Finance Officer Charles Davis told commissioners.

No commission member proposed any cuts on the board of education budget although education in general was a topic of discussion.

(See BUDGET, page 2A)

## Hoke College fund raising goal set at \$1 million for 10 years

A 10-year financial goal of \$1 million has been set for a foundation to support the Hoke County branch of Sandhills Community College.

Members of the Hoke County Higher Education Foundation set the long-ranged goal during a meeting last week.

For the first 12 months, the group also hopes to raise \$30,000.

The majority of the funds raised by the foundation will be held in a trust and interests from the money will be used for the future needs of the school.

Foundations have tax advantages, and members hope that local residents will rally behind the need for a school in the county.

An initial donation of \$200 was approved last week by the Raeford Kiwanis Club board of directors.

Although local funding for the school is still pending before members of the Hoke County Commission, foundation members are proceeding with plans to raise money, which will primarily be used for construction of facilities and the general support of the college.

In addition to approving the fund raising goals, foundation members also gave a green light to Director Betty High to actively begin soliciting students for fall classes.

High was named director by the Sandhills Board of Trustees on May 20.

She has been serving as the Coordinator of Continuing Education in Hoke County and has been on the Sandhills faculty since 1975.

To stimulate student interests, a survey is being conducted in the county, High said.

A copy of the survey appears in today's News-Journal and will be available in other locations around the county.

The College will primarily offer courses that will focus on basic skills and will emphasize vocational training, High said.

"Sandhills wants to play a vital role in the economic development of Hoke, and these new classes will help this cause," she said recently.

It is hoped that residents will indicate through the survey a preference of study. Courses can be developed with that information, High said.

"The college hopes to work well with existing agencies, services and the public schools to meet the higher educational needs of all Hoke County citizens," High said.

If the local budget for the college is approved by the county commissioners, classes will begin on September 9 at Hoke High School in the late afternoon and evening.

Saturday classes can also be held, High said.

Registration will be held in late August.



Betty High

An office for the director will be located in the old County Office building on Elwood Avenue in Raeford.

Some daytime classes will also be held in that building.

The satellite will offer Hoke County residents a chance to attend a wide variety of classes in one location and will make the school and training more accessible to persons who work during the day, foundation members have said.

A grand opening ceremony is being planned for the fall, and supporters hope to unveil a sign for the school then.

## Around Town

By Sam Morris

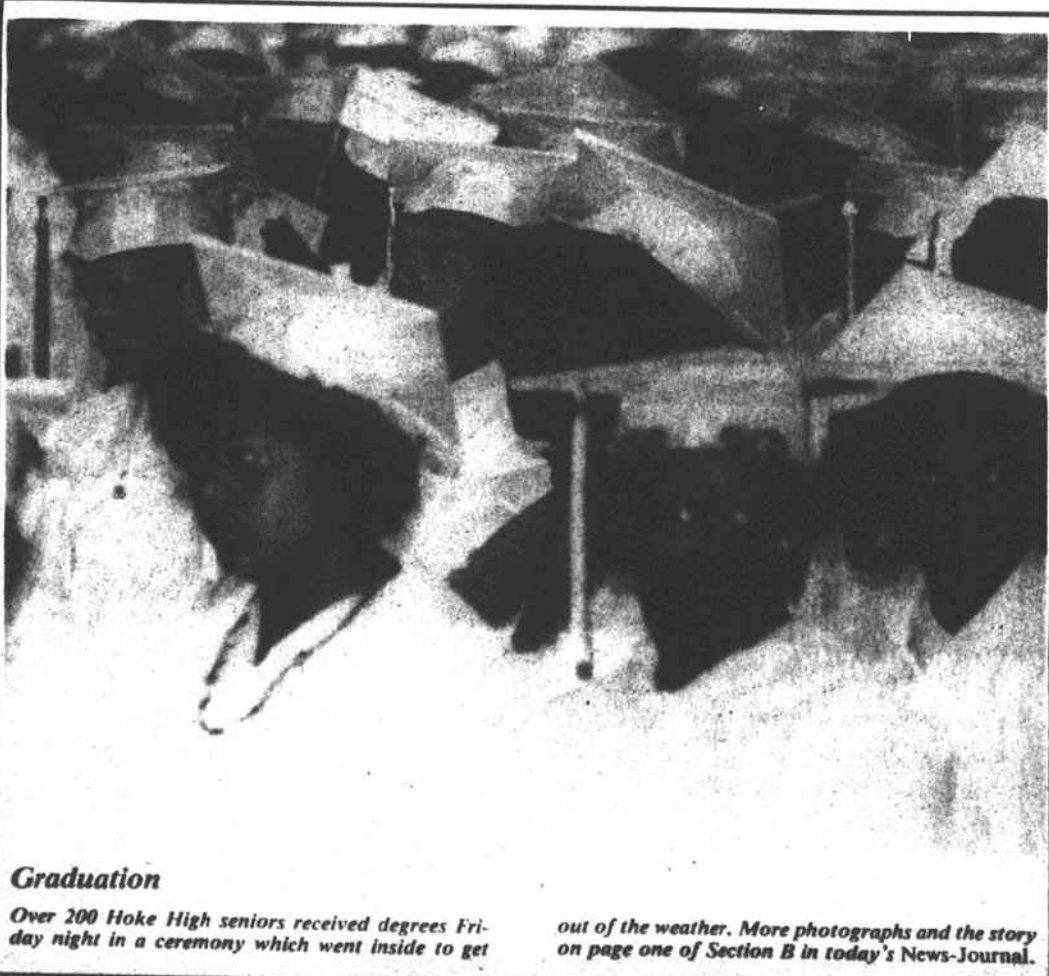
I can't remember in my 67 years ever seeing or hearing lightning and thunder like occurred here last Wednesday night. It seems like a miracle that there wasn't much damage from the storm. There were also high winds and we received about two inches of rain, that was needed.

Then, on Friday night it kept flashing across the screen of the television that a tornado was in the area. It makes me shudder to read "prepare to protect your lives." The wind went north of Raeford and hit somewhere in the reservation. I don't believe there was much damage. Another two inches of rain fell and this could have brought us close to normal for this year.

This week the temperature has hit the 90s for Sunday and Monday. All you can say is that it is hot!

Recently Mr. and Mrs. Clayton Buoyer attended a convention in Charleston, S.C. After his return I engaged him near the post office to find out about his trip. Lo and behold, he asked if we could step inside the newspaper office to talk. Of course I thought he would have some juicy gossip to give me about the convention.

(See AROUND, page 9A)



### Graduation

Over 200 Hoke High seniors received degrees Friday night in a ceremony which went inside to get

out of the weather. More photographs and the story on page one of Section B in today's News-Journal.

## School facilities needed for redistricting plans

By Ed Miller

New school facilities are needed to make a long-range school district zoning plan feasible, Hoke County Board of Education members were told Tuesday night.

School Superintendent Dr. Robert Nelson said he had hoped a plan could be worked out for the long run redistricting, but that consideration now seems almost impossible without more school facilities.

"Our essential problem is we have more students than we can house at Scurlock and are approaching the same conditions at McLaughlin," Nelson said.

In a previous meeting, Nelson told board members that the only elementary schools in the county with any room at all are South Hoke and West Hoke schools.

Nelson offered alternatives to Board of Education members, but said they would do well to last over three years because of growth in the Scurlock and McLaughlin areas.

A plan that would, for next year at least, solve the overcrowded conditions at Raeford's McLaughlin School would take a group of children living at the intersection of the Vass Road and Highway 401 and place them in West Hoke School.

There is one extra classroom available there, said Nelson.

There is another classroom at the school currently being used by Four County Community Service for the Head Start program.

"I don't see any problems with letting them use it for next year, but we should have it back in 86-87," Nelson said.

Another part of the plan to improve conditions at Scurlock School may involve moving from 77 to 107 students now attending that school to South Hoke School, Nelson said.

"If not this year, certainly next year" the Board of Education will have to reclaim a classroom at South Hoke currently being used by a full-time dentist for students, said Nelson.

A problem facing Board of Education members is how to transfer the children from the Scurlock area to South Hoke.

The children would have to be bussed 17 miles to the school, the superintendent said.

According to Nelson: "If this were a perfect world and I could wave a magic wand," another elementary school would be placed in the eastern part of the county to

(See SCHOOLS, page 2A)