



Hoke citizens say 'yes' at EAS meet

Extending local telephone calling between Raeford and Fayetteville is essential to the economic vitality of Hoke County, members of the North Carolina Utilities Commission were told Tuesday night by more than 30 witnesses testifying at a public hearing held at J.W. Turlington School.

Over 800 persons packed the school's auditorium in support of extended area telephone service (EAS) between the Raeford and Cumberland County exchanges.

Although some questioned the proposed cost of the service, all 31 witnesses spoke in favor of EAS in testimony before the full commission.

Prior to a break in the almost three-hour hearing, Commission Chairman Bob Wells polled the capacity crowd on the issue.

All but about a dozen stood in favor of the issue.

Only one person stood when Wells asked who was opposed.

Following the meeting, utility commission members said the gathering at Turlington was the largest crowd they had seen at a public hearing.

The hearing was scheduled to resume on Wednesday at 11 a.m. in Raleigh to hear "expert" testimony from Carolina Telephone and the North Carolina Utilities Commission Public Staff, who represent Hoke County.

"We need this thing," Raeford-Hoke Economic Development Commission Chairman Tom Howell said, noting that EAS was just one of many things Hoke leaders were doing to improve the economic plight of the county.

Both the Development Commission and the Raeford-Hoke Chamber of Commerce are strongly behind EAS and see the service

as essential to expanding the local economy, Howell, who chairs both groups, said.

EAS would open Hoke County to military personnel, who do not want to live outside of Cumberland County because of the cost of long distance dialing, resident Sally Lowery said.

"Economic growth could be trippled, if Hoke County had EAS," Lowery said to the applause of the audience.

The way to keep the youth in Hoke County out of the court system and out of jail is by finding them jobs, 12th Judicial District Court Judge Warren Pate said.

"If the young people had jobs they would not be in the court system. EAS will help develop jobs," Pate said.

Residential development is mushrooming on the borders of Hoke County, but few subdivi-

sions are coming over the line, Cumberland County Realtor Ralph Huff said.

Within a mile of the Hoke County border, dozens of homes are selling for more than \$100,000.

Not more than five or six residences in Hoke have ever topped the \$100,000 mark, Huff said.

EAS, widening of U.S. Highway 401 and a school in the Rockfish area are the three things standing in the way of future development in Hoke County, Huff said.

If EAS were in place, land near the Cumberland County border, now worth \$1,000 to \$1,500 per acre would be selling for more than \$3,000 per acre in the first year, Huff said.

"EAS could open the flood gates for development in Hoke County and could help close the flood gates of the county's youth leaving to find work elsewhere,"

Huff said.

Huff confirmed his Cumberland County company would benefit from having local calling to Raeford during cross examination from Carolina Telephone Company attorney Dwight Allen.

Through questions to Huff and other witnesses who own businesses or work in Cumberland County, Allen attempted to lay the ground work for Wednesday's arguments before the commission.

Carolina Telephone has maintained the firm is not opposed to EAS, but have said Fayetteville customers should be charged \$1.22 per month to connect the service.

Charges to the Fayetteville customers are opposed by Hoke County supporters of EAS, and the Utilities Commission Public Staff members will argue the Cumberland County fees would

generate \$1.2 million in additional revenue for Carolina Telephone.

In a re-evaluation of a cost study conducted by Carolina Telephone, the public staff concluded a charge of \$4.52 per month paid by Raeford customers would generate more revenue than the company is currently charging for the service between the two exchanges.

Currently more revenue is being generated by long distance calling between Raeford and Fayetteville than is being charged for basic service on the Raeford exchange, Hoke EAS supporter Bubby Blue told the commissioners.

"EAS is not a supplemental service for Hoke County. It is an essential service," Blue said.

The commission is expected to make a decision before the first of January on the EAS question, Chairman Wells said.

Two elections slated Tuesday

Voters will go to the polls next Tuesday to decide on a future Raeford City Council and to determine if a volunteer fire department should be created in the Allendale and Blue Springs township areas.

In Raeford, voters will have six candidates from which to choose five council members.

Because of a recent change in the city's laws, this will be the last election all five incumbents will seek office at the same time.

In the future, city council members will hold staggered terms of office.

Mayor John K. McNeill is running unopposed for his ninth term in office.

The 65-year-old McNeill has served the city since 1969.

Restaurant owner Earl McDuffie Jr., who has unsuccessfully sought a seat on the council in past elections, is hoping to knock off one of the five incumbents in this year's election.

McDuffie is 53. Councilman Graham Clark, 69, will also be seeking his ninth term on the council, where he has served since 1969.

Veteran Benny McLeod has (See ELECTIONS, page 10)



Downtown's future

Members of the newly appointed Raeford Downtown Revitalization Commission listen as NRCD

spokesman Jim Dougherty explains the need for improving the community's central business district.

Downtown group begins task

A newly appointed commission got started on the job of returning economic vitality to the downtown Raeford business area Monday night.

Unlike groups appointed in the past, the new Downtown Raeford Revitalization Commission has the authority to get the job done, Raeford-Hoke Economic Developer John Howard said.

"This commission has bylaws with teeth in them. You have the authority to get downtown revitalization going and keep it going," Howard said.

The group was appointed by the Raeford City Council and the bylaws were drawn from those used in several other cities, City Manager Tom Phillips said.

The adopted bylaws are only a starting point and can be expanded by the commission with the city council's approval.

"If the commission sees a need to expand its authority, then the group should petition the city council to do so," Phillips said.

Downtown Raeford has a

character which is representative of the entire Hoke County community.

That character is the heritage of the community, state Natural Resources and Community Development (NRCD) spokesman James Dougherty said.

Dougherty, who is with NRCD's Division of Community Assistance, said his department would be available to assist the commission on its task of revitalizing the downtown.

"There is the potential here to have a beautiful downtown Raeford and make it economically viable," Dougherty said.

Downtown buildings can be restored to their original facades for less money than remaking the area to give it a new appearance, Dougherty said, noting that changing the look of the buildings would destroy the heritage and character of the community.

"Downtown Raeford is uniquely Raeford. A mall can be anywhere, in Illinois or at Cross Creek in Fayetteville," Dougherty said.

Raeford is fortunate that many downtown buildings have retained their original beauty and are in good physical shape, although many are in disrepair, Dougherty said.

Restoration of the original facades is a part of the National Heritage Trust Endowment's Main Street program.

In order to be part of the program now, Raeford would have to hire a fulltime downtown manager.

Efforts are underway to change the program to allow a circuit manager to cover several downtowns in more than one community, Dougherty said.

The Downtown Revitalization Commission will meet the second Monday of each month at City Hall.

Members of the commission are: Larry Calloway, Eloise Carter, Mary Neill King, Rev. Frank I. Lloyd Jr., Ivery McNair, Phillips, Abdullah Shareff, Kay Thomas, Joe Upchurch and Tommy Wright.

Youth gets 18 years for June kidnapping

An 18-year-old Sandhills Youth Center resident was sentenced in Hoke County Superior Court last week to 18 years in prison for a June escape and the kidnapping of an Ashley Heights resident.

Jonathon P. Venable, 18, plead guilty to escaping on June 8, larceny, second degree burglary and to the June 11 kidnapping of Ashley Heights residents Sidney Allen Johnson.

Presiding Judge D.B. Herring Jr. sentenced Venable to one year at the expiration of his present term for the escape, three years for the larceny and burglary charges and 14 years for the kidnapping.

Venable broke into Johnson's home, stole a shotgun, which he held on the Ashley Heights resident as he forced him to drive to Mt. Airy.

The escapee forced Johnson to drive down a dirt road, and then Venable fled into the woods.

Venable was apprehended later. In an unrelated case, a 24-year-old Hoke County man plead guilty last week to involuntary manslaughter and was given a probationary sentence for the beating

death of his father-in-law.

Carl George Brewer Jr. of the Hillcrest Mobile Hoke Park, was sentenced by Judge Herring to three years in jail suspended with five years supervised probation.

Brewer was originally charged with voluntary manslaughter for the death of Harvey Hilton Stocks on March 29.

Stocks was 54 at the time of his death. He died in Cape Fear Valley Hospital of a brain hemorrhage, which apparently resulted from head injuries.

Brewer was given credit for 13 days he spent in the Hoke County Jail, and was ordered by the court to pay restitution for medical expenses of \$5,922.64.

In an unrelated case, John Junior Clark, 24, plead guilty to cutting his wife's throat and cutting the arm and hand of his sister-in-law.

Clark was sentenced to five years in the North Carolina Department of Correction for the incident which occurred on July 13.

Both women required treatment (See PROBATION, page 11)

Around Town

By Sam Morris

The weather early Tuesday morning felt like winter had come to be with us for awhile. It was still about 50° at nine o'clock. The wind was from the north and it felt like it was going right through you.

The forecast is for rain to come in on Wednesday and it could hang around for the remainder of the week. The temperature is to be in the 60s most of the time during the day and in the 50s during the night. So maybe winter is here to stay.

Last Thursday I was invited by the Vocational Class at Hoke High School to attend a Textile Luncheon. Last week was Textile (See AROUND, page 10)

SBI to conclude hanging probe this week

By Lee Harris Potter

Agents for the State Bureau of Investigation (SBI) were expected to conclude a probe this week into the death of a man found hanging in the Hoke County Jail on October 5.

Findings of the investigation into the death of Robert Chappelle by three SBI agents will be turned over to District Attorney Ed Granis for disposition, Hoke County Sheriff Dave Barrington said Monday.

Barrington said he hoped the results of the investigation, which included interviews with about 20 witnesses, would be made public immediately.

Chappelle, 28, was found hanging from the bars in a holding cell, where he was the lone occupant,

about an hour after he was arrested for being drunk and disorderly.

Family members and other residents have questioned the death.

The SBI entered the investigation after a request from Barrington and after a petition signed by about 20 local residents was sent to Gov. James Martin asking the state to determine if Chappelle's death was suicide.

An autopsy conducted by pathologists in the North Carolina Medical Examiner's office on October 5, showed there was no evidence which showed the death was inconsistent with hanging.

There were no bruises on the body, and "in my opinion hanging was the cause of death,"

pathologist Dr. J. Michael Sullivan said in the autopsy report.

"The autopsy showed an abraded linear impression around the neck. This is compatible with the imprint of a noose and fits the overall description and circumstances in which he was found," the report says.

"I found no evidence of abuse, beating or mayhem," Sullivan said in the report.

By 4:45 p.m. last Thursday almost 400 black residents had assembled in front of Raeford City Hall to attend a "prayer vigil for Chappelle."

Thursday's prayer vigil was organized by Alexander Edwards, chairman of the Hoke County Black Leadership Caucus, as a gesture of respect and support for

the Chappelle family and for the community.

Edwards described the vigil as a "peaceful assembly, (not) a hate campaign."

The assembly was scheduled for 4:45 p.m. because Chappelle had been arrested for drunk and disorderly conduct at 4:45 p.m. on the day he died.

Sister Catherine McPhatter led the crowd in singing "Sweet Hour of Prayer," and then read from Matthew.

The Rev. Dr. J.J. Johnson, pastor of First Baptist Church of Fairmount, prayed for the Chappelle family and for justice to the black community.

Edwards began his speech by thanking Raeford Police Chief (See SBI, page 10)



Here for the cause
Resident attending a "prayer vigil" Thursday look on as speakers talk about the recent death of Robert Chappelle.