

# The News-Journal

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## Suspect sought for Hoke bodies

A suspect is being sought for the killing of two women, whose decomposed bodies were found buried Monday in a wooded area near McCain.

Hoke County Sheriff Dave Barrington confirmed Tuesday that a suspect is being sought in the case and once enough physical evidence is collected, a warrant for arrest will be sworn.

Further comment about the matter might jeopardize the investigation, Barrington said.

The suspect is believed not to be from Hoke County.

Although the remains were identified through autopsy Tuesday, State Medical Examiner Dr. Page Hudson would not disclose the names of the victims until dental records were checked and next-of-kin were notified.

"I am virtually certain of their identities," Hudson said Tuesday in interviews.

Hudson was quoted as saying the victims may be from Wake County.

Other sources have said the murdered women may have been sisters.

The women are Caucasian.

Preliminary autopsies confirmed, both women died of gunshot wounds, a spokesman for the Medical Examiner's office said Tuesday.

The wounds are believed to have been to the head.

Two McCain residents, who were gathering pine straw, found the bodies Monday but did not report the finds until late afternoon.

Willy McNeill and Sammy McNair first thought they had come upon the carcass of an animal.

The two men later became suspicious after they discovered pieces of clothing near a stream.

At approximately 4 p.m., the men notified their employer, John R. Cagle, who accompanied the men to the scene.

Cagle notified the sheriff's department at approximately 4:45 p.m.

Monday night Barrington confirmed that two bodies had been discovered and called in the state medical examiners because he was unsure of the magnitude of the investigation.

Barrington said he thought there was a possibility of discovering additional bodies at the site because of suspicious depressions in the area.

Deputies guarded the site on the state-owned property Monday night until Hudson arrived with a team of state pathologists to remove the remains on Tuesday morning.

"One body had been there much longer than the other," Barrington said.

The remains were partially buried on the site near a beaver pond a half mile off the Line Road (SR 1219) near Sirother's Crossroads.

(See BODIES, page 2)



### Removing remains

State and local investigators assist North Carolina Medical Examiner Dr. Page Hudson (center in grave) removing a body of a woman found in a wooded area near McCain. The body was in what Hoke County Sheriff Dave Barrington called a muskrat hole and was wrapped in plastic bags. A prescription bottle, a calendar and a loan payment book were found with

the remains, which helped the pathology team tentatively identify the corpse. The body of another woman was found 100 feet away. Officers believe the two women were shot to death at different times, and the bodies transported to the isolated site on state-owned property near an old sand and gravel quarry.

## Carolina Telephone pledges to correct EAS ballot woes

Although errors have occurred in the ballots mailed out to determine the desire for extended area telephone service (EAS) between the Raeford and Fayetteville exchanges, Carolina Telephone is moving swiftly to correct mistakes so all votes will be counted, a company spokesman said Monday.

Complaints have been received that some of the ballots were blank on the side which is supposed to ask 875 exchange subscribers to vote for or against EAS.

Others also complained that ballots did not arrive in telephone bills or that ballots were not sent for each line.

"We're certainly sorry any of our customers received any of the blank cards," Carolina Telephone Division Public Affairs Manager, Bobby G. Suggs said.

"We've been very careful to get this letter perfect."

Telephone customers called the Raeford-Hoke Chamber of Commerce Office on Monday and Tuesday to complain that one side of their ballot was blank. Hoke County Economic Developer John Howard said.

On the printed side of the ballot was the address of the telephone company.

A ballot printed on one side may still be counted in the polling if the customer provides the phone company with three bits of information on the blank side of the card, Suggs said.

Customers must write whether they are for or against EAS, sign the ballot and include their telephone number.

If any of the three bits of information are not included on the ballot, the vote will not be counted in the polling, Suggs said.

All ballots, whether they are printed on one or both sides, must be postmarked by January 27 to be valid, Suggs said.

In the event that telephone subscribers received postcards, which were printed on the ballot side, but not the address side, those customers may fill out the ballot and send the card to Carolina Telephone and Telegraph Company, P.O. Box 1630, Fayetteville, NC 28302.

Telephone customers with more than one phone number are entitled to a vote for each telephone line.

Some complaints have been received about only one ballot being in the bill when a customer has more than one line, Howard said.

Other customers received no ballots, he added.

In addition to the original ballots sent with January's billing, some subscribers with more than one line were sent additional ballots by separate letter.

During the first mailing, our computers were unable to tell which customers had more than one line, District Commercial Manager Bernie P. Barrett said.

The additional ballots were sent to customers with multiple phone numbers after telephone workers went through the printouts to determine who was entitled to extra votes.

The EAS polling was ordered by the North Carolina Utilities Commission on December 15.

After the results of the polling are tabulated by Carolina Telephone Company, they will be sent to the Utilities Commission for review.

If EAS is established, the 4,700 customers on the Raeford exchange will be able to call over 90,000 telephones for local rates.

Anyone who has questions about the EAS polling should call The Raeford-Hoke Chamber of Commerce at 875-5929 or Carolina Telephone's business office at 1-864-9011.

## Around Town

By Sam Morris

The weather was nice over the weekend and the temperature was 60° Sunday afternoon. It started turning colder Sunday night and the high on Monday was in the 40s.

The forecast on Monday was for a low of around 20° and for the high Tuesday to be in the 30s.

The remainder of the week calls for the thermometer to start rising and to reach into the high 50s by weekend.

There wasn't any rain predicted and we could sure use some.

We have had right many candidates to file for office in Hoke County, so the May primary should bring forth some good races.

Also with the U.S. Senate race now with seven candidates running in the Democratic primary, it should help bring out the vote in all other district and county races.

(See AROUND, page 16)



### Helping at city

Barry Richards (left) chats about municipal business with Raeford City Manager Tom Phillips last week. Richards is working with the city as an intern while completing a master's degree in public administration at Appalachian State University in Boone. Richards has been assigned to spend much of his time assisting with downtown revitalization, however, he will also work in all departments of city government. See story on page 13.

## Downtown group eyeing depot logo

A logo utilizing the Aberdeen-Rockfish Railroad Depot garnered the most support Monday during a meeting of the Downtown Revitalization Commission.

The logo, which was suggested by member Elvise Carter, would use a stylized rendition of the depot and the nearby railroad tracks to symbolize the revitalization of the city.

"Commerce came to town on these tracks," Carter said.

If the logo is approved by the commission, the rendition of the depot will appear on signs and shopping bags, and will be a symbol for the city.

Before being designed officially, commission members plan to broach the logo idea with the Raeford-Hoke Chamber of Commerce for suggestions.

The current push to revitalize the downtown began at the depot which is being renovated and com-

mission members believe the building has become special to the community.

"This little train station belongs to everyone now," commission member Joe Upchurch said.

Other suggestions for the logo included using a rendition of the county courthouse and drawings of two or more downtown store fronts.

In an unrelated matter, commission members were told that one of the reasons residents gave for not shopping in downtown Raeford is the absence of public restrooms.

A portion of the \$8,000 allocated to the commission by the City of Raeford could be used to build public restrooms, according to commission member and Raeford City Manager Tom Phillips.

The cost in maintaining these facilities, however, is high, Phillips said.

"We already have public restrooms downtown," Phillips said.

Restrooms are maintained in City Hall, the county building and the post office.

The answer may be to inform people where the restrooms are, Upchurch said.

In other business, commission members:

• Requested that the finance committee look into the feasibility of incorporating the commission.

• Were informed that a marketing seminar sponsored by Sandhills Community College will soon be available to local merchants.

• Agreed to invite the public to the next meeting so residents can view the film "Main Street."

The next meeting will be held on February 10 at the Raeford City Hall.

• Heard the results of a survey of local merchants conducted by Rev. Frank L. Lloyd.