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Turlington, Upchurch schools should be saved

By reducing student populations, two aging local schools can be refurbished without major construction costs and made viable parts of the Hoke County system, members of the board of education were told Monday night.

J.W. Turlington School and Upchurch Junior High School should be remodeled and should not be scrapped from the system, Lumberton Architect Elizabeth B. Lee said.

However, Lee, who was hired by the board to review all the county schools, warned that both of the older facilities contain fire hazards

which need immediate attention. Chip board partitions in Upchurch should be replaced immediately, and an office blocking the entrance to the Turlington auditorium should be removed, Lee warned.

"Those chip board partitions are a fire hazard. They should not be in any school," Lee said, noting that in at least one part of the facility, students must exit one room by going through a chip board partition into another room.

With the exception of Upchurch and Turlington, all of the county's

schools are in "fine" shape, Lee said.

Overcrowding is a problem, but the facilities are "well kept and attractive."

It would not be cost-effective to build one or two classrooms at each school to meet the demands of a growing student enrollment.

Student populations could be reduced by building one new school which could cost as much as \$4 million to accommodate 600 pupils, the architect said.

Board members should estimate construction costs at \$55 per square foot for a school to be built

within the next few years.

State guidelines say each student needs about 120 square feet, Superintendent Dr. Robert Nelson said.

Land costs would be an additional expense.

Turlington, which was built for 400 students, now houses over 800.

With half the student population at Turlington, the school would be an asset to the system, and the need for a new cafeteria-auditorium at Scarlock School could be solved with less pupils attending there, Lee said.

Fewer students would also allow

the board to phase out and demolish the front building at Upchurch School.

"The front building looks dreadful. You're not losing anything by removing it," Lee said.

If it came to a choice of having to keep either Upchurch or Turlington and phasing out the other, Lee said Turlington was the better school.

The auditoriums at both schools are luxuries, which could not be afforded by most schools systems if they were to be built today.

Turlington is in the heart of the

community and could become more of a center for civic activities, Lee said.

Renovation costs for Turlington would be limited to removing asbestos from the right wing of the two-story building and replacing wooden stairs in the same structure.

"The rest of it is cosmetic," Lee said.

Once improvements were made to Turlington, the facility would be suitable for another 25 years.

Removal of the 16 mobile classrooms from the campus (See NEW, page 2A)

Teens charged for break-ins

Two suspects have been apprehended and charged in connection with a series of recent car thefts that have occurred throughout Raeford and Hoke County, Police Chief Leonard Wiggins said on Monday.

Also, items stolen from approximately eight or nine vehicles have been recovered.

Because the case is still under investigation, Wiggins said he would not release the names of the two suspects.

Wiggins did say, however, that one of the suspects is 16 years old, and the other one is a juvenile.

According to reports at the Hoke County Sheriff's Department, a battery was stolen last Wednesday night from a Chevrolet truck owned by Ralph Currie, Rt. 5, Raeford.

The battery was in the truck parked beside a carport when Currie and his son went to bed at approximately 8:30 p.m.

When Currie's wife returned home from work at approximately 12:30 a.m., she noticed the hood of the truck was up and asked her husband why it was left opened.

Two extension ladders were stolen from a duplex apartment construction site on Palmer Drive between 5 p.m. last Saturday and 9 a.m. the following morning.

The apartments are being built by J. Sam Edwards.

In another incident, Edwin Glenn Johnson reported that he saw someone open his bathroom window and attempt to crawl inside early Saturday morning at his residence on Rt. 5, Raeford.

Glenn said he hollered at the suspect who left the area running.

The suspect was described by Glenn as a white male approximately 5 ft. 10 inches tall wearing a green army jacket and black gloves.

Around Town

By Sam Morris

Monday, February 17 at 2:30 p.m. the reading on my thermometer was 74°. It is supposed to get into the 70s again Tuesday. The forecast is for warm weather the remainder of the week.

Don't put up your winter outfits yet though, because March is usually a cold month. It seems that we get more snow in March than at any other time.

This weather, cold and then warm, has the flu bug hitting many people. Maybe it will settle down and get cool and winter will be over with for this year.

The committee that is making plans for the 75th Anniversary Celebration of Hoke County has just about completed their plans. If you have any suggestions, now is the time to get them to the committee.

The News-Journal will have a special section during the celebration and will have the history of the county. Kay Thomas has been hired to help with this section and will soon be calling on businesses

(See AROUND, page 10A)



Saturday morning fire

Firefighters from all of the county's fire units battle a blaze at Food Lion supermarket in Raeford-Hoke Village Shopping Center early Saturday morning.

The fire was believed to have been started by an arsonist.

Hoke Co. suspect is charged for setting Food Lion fires

A warrant was written Tuesday charging a Raeford man with the Saturday morning burning of Food Lion.

Donald Martin Calloway, 24, of Rt. 3 Box 47D Raeford, was officially charged with setting the fires which broke out shortly around 1 a.m. Saturday, Raeford Police Detective James Murdock said Tuesday.

Calloway was a suspect in the case from the beginning, but remained officially unidentified until Tuesday.

The suspect was sent Saturday morning to Danforth Dix Hospital in Raleigh for evaluation, Raeford Police Chief Leonard Wiggins said earlier.

Calloway was still in the hospital on Tuesday and had not been served the warrant, Murdock said.

Meanwhile, store employees were busy Tuesday cleaning the building and assessing the damage.

The building suffered mostly smoke and water damage, firefighters on the scene said.

"We don't have any estimates of the amount of damage yet," Food Lion manager David Sanders said.

"We probably won't have any answers until we're ready to open," he added.

The grocery store has been closed since the fire, but Sanders said it should re-open sometime near the end of the week.

The fire was allegedly set in seven locations inside the building.

Three of the fires were in the main section of the store and four in the stockroom, according to Wiggins.

Paper towels, diapers and other flammable items were set on fire throughout the store.

"He knew what was going to burn," Wiggins said.

The fire was first discovered shortly before 1 a.m. by a store (See SUSPECT, page 10A)

City pledges to curb smell

By Ron Anderson

A resolution which might eventually help to eliminate unpleasant odors coming from the Raeford Wastewater Treatment Plant, was given unanimous approval Monday night by members of the City Council.

According to the resolution, the city is in an emergency situation and City Manager Tom Phillips has the authority to order new blowers for the plant and to begin seeking money to pay for the new equipment.

The motion also waives the requirement that the city seek bids for the equipment due to the emergency situation.

Four new blowers should be installed within 90 to 120 days at an estimated cost of \$160,000.

The new high-powered blowers will replace the plant's existing six 20-year-old blowers which have all worn out.

Council members rejected an alternate plan to replace the existing blowers with six new blowers with the same capacity at a cost of \$120,000.

The blowers are needed to provide oxygen to the bacteria in the wastewater, Hiram Marziano, an engineer with the firm of Black and Veatch, told the commissioners.

(See CITY, page 2A)

Balfour seeking farm tax relief

By Ron Anderson

The chairman of the Hoke County commissioners is looking into the feasibility of lowering the tax value of all local farmland.

Since farmers have had a year when the value of land has decreased, reductions should be made on the tax books by at least 10%. Chairman John Balfour said Monday night.

"I'd like to see it (the tax rate) changed and see it become effective by the new tax year," Balfour said.

Hoke County tax bills go out in June and are due September 1.

Balfour was asking the commissioners for permission to find out if the increase is feasible, he said after the meeting.

Back during the days of inflation, there was a move to raise tax rates. I don't know if you can lower it, Balfour said.

Taxes on farmland represent 20% to 25% of the county's tax base, which was approximately \$340 million for fiscal year 1985-86.

"So many people want so many services, it's hard to lower taxes," commissioner Wyatt Upchurch said.

"Farmers have it rough, but they're not the only ones having it rough."

If the motion to lower the tax value of farmland came up to a vote, Upchurch said he would need to do more research on the matter.

Lowering the tax value of farmland is a question that should be explored, but there would be a lot of legal ramifications involved by lowering land values for one section of the population, county attorney Duncan McFadyen said.

The only way of lowering the tax value of the land may be to re-evaluate the entire county, Balfour said.

A total tax re-evaluation of the county takes about 12 to 18 months, according to county finance officer Charles Davis.

An appraiser would be required to visit the 9,000 parcels of land located throughout the county, Davis said.

"To be honest about it, it may be a selfish suggestion because I'm so familiar with the problems of the farmer," Balfour said.

The chairman plans to explore the feasibility of lowering the tax rate with the executive director and (See BALFOUR, page 2A)

Plans for Jubilee take shape

Events are being scheduled to celebrate Hoke County's 75th Anniversary. Hoke County Diamond Jubilee Chairman Sam Morris said on Tuesday.

The celebration is to be held Sunday, May 4 through Friday, May 9 with festivities beginning Sunday evening with a prayer service to be held in the Hoke High stadium.

Dr. Albert Edward of The First Presbyterian Church in Raleigh will be the speaker at the service.

Monday, May 5 has been designated Industrial Day and will feature a daytime parade followed by a fireworks display at night.

The fireworks display will be presented by the same group that puts on displays at the state fair, Morris said.

No events have been scheduled for Election Day on May 6.

The dedication of the Hoke County War Memorial is scheduled for Wednesday, May 7.

The memorial's sculptor, A.D. Gore Jr., will be in town to be honored, and Gore's photographs will be displayed in the Hoke County Library.

Also, a reception at the library has been planned.

U.S. Sen. Gary Hart, D-Colorado, has tentatively scheduled a visit to Raeford on Wednesday.

Hart and Gore are personal friends, Morris said.

The county's schools will be holding open house on Thursday which has been designated as School Day.

The one-room school house next to the Board of Education building on Wesley Street will be open all day, and members of the United Daughters of the Confederacy will be serving punch and cookies and answering questions.

Also at the school house will be a teacher who taught in the building.

The last day of the celebration

has been designated Reunion Day.

Kay Thomas and Nellie Flowers will co-chair Reunion Day which will include historic tours of county churches. Other activities planned for the day will be announced soon.

A Diamond Jubilee Pageant directed by Mary Archie McNeill and Dr. Ray Hines will be presented Wednesday, Thursday and Friday evenings at Turlington School.

Only 800 tickets for each performance will be available at \$3.00 each.

The pageant will be written by Grace Ellis of Cameron.

During the week, 750 raffle tickets will be sold for the Hoke Diamond, worth over \$4,000.

The proceeds from the raffle will help pay for the Jubilee festivities.

Commemorative Diamond Jubilee plates will be on sale throughout the week, and there will be a special baseball game played. The game will be sponsored by the American Legion.

Raeford city mechanic bound over for killing

Probable cause was found Friday for a second-degree murder charge against John Baxley Jr. in connection with the shooting death of his stepson, James Thomas "Bones" Rickerds.

District Court Judge Warren Pate ordered Baxley, who is a Raeford city employee, bound over to Superior Court.

Baxley, 61, of Rt. 12, Fayetteville, is charged with shooting Rickerds on Saturday, December 7 in front of David's Food Store.

Rickerds, 27, was pronounced dead on arrival at Cape Fear Valley Medical Center after law enforcement officers found him lying in front of the store on Davis' Bridge Road at approximately 6:11 p.m.

Baxley, who is chief mechanic at Raeford's municipal garage, was released from Hoke County jail on a \$40,000 bond on December 13.

The court order stated that Baxley was not to travel outside of Cumberland or Hoke counties.

Pate ordered that Baxley remain under the bail conditions.

During the preliminary hearing on Friday, two men, Marvin Stephens, 26, and his cousin Kenny Stephens, 24, testified that they were with Rickerds when he drove up to David's Food Store to buy some beer shortly before 6 p.m. on December 7.

Both men said they had been with Rickerds since 10:30 that

(See BAXLEY, page 2A)