

The News-Journal

RAEFORD, NORTH CAROLINA

Covering Hoke County Like A Roof Since 1905

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Volume LXXVII Number 47

Thursday, March 13, 1986

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Hoke County lands new industry

By Ron Anderson

A new industry will begin in May to manufacture rubber products in the Rockfish area of Hoke County, it was announced Tuesday.

Presti Rubber Company of New Britain, Pennsylvania, will establish a manufacturing plant in the old Hadley-Peoples building in Rockfish. Economic Developer John Howard told members of the Raeford-Hoke Economic Development Commission on Tuesday.

Initially about 20 local workers will be employed. Long range plans are to hire up to 50 workers at the plant, a company spokesman said.

Earlier this year, it had been leaked by the Cumberland County Economic Development office that the firm was heading there.

Those rumors surfaced during negotiations on the Rockfish building, and proved to be false.

The firm's investment in Hoke County will be more than \$1.1 million, Howard said.

The plant will operate under the name of North Carolina Rubber Products Inc., and will mix rubber compounds that will be used to manufacture retreading tire envelopes.

The rubber will be shipped to the company's existing plant in Pennsylvania where it will be made into the envelopes, or sleeves, that are placed between old tires and caps in the tire retreading process.

Eventually the local plant will manufacture large rubber envelopes that are not being manufactured in the Pennsylvania plant.

Howard said the 25,000 sq. ft. plant will be reconditioned and equipment for the production process will be arriving soon.

Frederick J. Presti, the president of the company, has scheduled a visit to Hoke County today.

The firm is expected to begin hiring workers the beginning of May.

At first, 16 local residents will be hired, and a plant manager and quality control manager will be brought in.

Eventually, the firm is expected to employ 50 workers.

"It is significant that the Raeford-Hoke Economic Commission has been able to successfully participate in locating this new industry in less than one year of our operation," Howard said.

Presti has been looking in the greater Fayetteville area for two years for a location of his new plant, according to Howard.

The company currently distributes products to 49 states in this country and throughout the world.



New industry

Hoke Economic Developer John Howard announces that the establishment of North Carolina Rubber Products in the old Hadley-Peoples building will initially create 20 new jobs in the county.



Signs of spring

Mild temperatures and plenty of sunshine have brought forth daffodils through the county.

Weathermen are predicting that the springlike temperatures will continue through the weekend.

EAS timetable could move up, Carolina Tel spokesman says

Extended Area Telephone Service (EAS) between Raeford and Fayetteville may be established before the summer of 1987, a spokesman for Carolina Telephone Company said on Tuesday.

EAS was approved by the North Carolina Utilities Commission on Monday and ordered to be established between the 875 exchange and Fayetteville before July 1, 1987.

The commission's decision is viewed by local leaders with jubilation and as a beginning point for economic growth.

"EAS is something everybody has been working on for a long time. It has been a common goal," Chamber of Commerce President and Economic Development Commission Chairman Tom Howell said.

EAS is a beginning and the sooner it is implemented, the sooner Hoke County will begin its economic rejuvenation, Howell said.

New telephone equipment being installed in Raeford may speed up the timetable for EAS.

"Since we're installing a new of-

fice in Raeford in August of this year, it's my opinion that we can probably have EAS prior to July, 1987," said Carolina Telephone Division Public Affairs Manager Bobby G. Suggs.

Suggs said "the latest state of the art" equipment will be installed in the local telephone office this summer.

"I would think that in a very short time our engineers can give us an estimate as to when Raeford will get EAS," Suggs said.

"I'm sure the customers want the service as soon as possible, so we're doing everything we can to offer it to them as quickly as possible," Suggs added.

No cost estimates have been made by Carolina Telephone as to how much it will cost to install the equipment for EAS between Raeford and Fayetteville customers, Suggs said.

Monday's public announcement by the N.C. Utilities Commission ordering EAS came a little more than a month after members of the commission received the results of a poll on the extended service conducted in Raeford, according to

Public Staff Communications Division Director Gene A. Clemmons.

That poll, ordered by the commission on December 19, showed customers on the 875 exchange favored EAS by a three to one margin.

"The commission found clear and convincing need for the implementation of EAS between Raeford and Fayetteville," Clemmons said. "We got a good decision in this case."

According to Clemmons, the commission agreed with all the major points proposed by the Public Staff.

These points ordered by the commission are:

- That EAS should be established by July, 1987.

- Only Raeford subscribers will have an increase in rates (\$4.52 for residential subscribers and \$10.78 for businesses).

- Fayetteville customers should not be charged a matrix rate.

- "Seldom, if ever, has the commission seen community enthusiasm and organization for (See EAS, page 3A)

SBI finds Jail hanging death suicide

By Ron Anderson

Results of an investigation conducted by the State Bureau of Investigation (SBI) show there was no "foul play" in the death of Robert Chappelle, who was found hanging in the Hoke County Jail on October 5. District Attorney Ed Grannis announced Tuesday.

However, Grannis did say another SBI investigation into an assault complaint filed against the Raeford Police Department by Willie Howard Graham will result in a probable cause hearing scheduled for district court on March 20.

The District Attorney would not elaborate on the other investigation and did not name the officers or offices involved.

The SBI investigation of the death of Chappelle, was conducted at the request of the Hoke County Black Leadership Caucus, Gov. James G. Martin and others, Grannis said.

Chappelle, who was 28 when he died, was arrested around 4:40 p.m. and was found dead about 5:40 p.m.

The 255-page report has been completed for two months, and Grannis apologized for taking so

long to make the results public.

Sheriff David Barrington has urged Grannis to open the files on the case.

The report "clearly indicates that this was an act by Chappelle" and that "there is no evidence to draw any conclusion that he was harmed by law enforcement officers," Grannis said during a press conference held Tuesday at the Raeford City Hall.

The report also states that a number of people examined Chappelle and found no bruises or injuries on his body except the rope burns around his neck, the district attorney said.

"I'm genuinely sorry he saw it fit to take his own life," Grannis said.

Grannis said the report further indicated that Chappelle did not seem to have suicidal tendencies and was not suffering from depression.

What the report did clearly indicate, Grannis said, was that Chappelle was intoxicated on the day he was arrested.

An autopsy report showed that Chappelle, who weighed 140 pounds, had a blood alcohol content of .27 when he died.

Grannis said those facts were taken into consideration in the SBI

(See SBI, page 3A)



Further investigation

Fosiland Chappelle, sister of Robert Chappelle, who was found hanging in a Hoke County Jail cell on October 5, tells reporters Tuesday she doesn't believe her brother's death was a suicide.

Around Town

By Sam Morris

The cold weather of Saturday left Sunday and the temperature began to rise. As this is being written Monday afternoon the thermometer registers 76 degrees. This is not a record for this date as a reading of 81 degrees was recorded some years earlier.

The forecast is for the temperatures to stay in the 70s all week, except for Wednesday when some rain is expected. This is my kind of forecast.

Let's hope that this warmer weather will continue and that the peach crop will not be destroyed. Raz Aubry said last week that everything was fine as of this date. I hope to talk to him more about peaches for next week's column.

(See AROUND, page 2A)



First license

Raeford resident David Smith displays a license plate from the county's first automobile. The 1909 rug top Cadillac was purchased by Smith's father, J.P. Smith, who drove the vehicle for "close to" five years. J.P. Smith, a former farmer and manufacturer, was the inventor of the Smith Plow.

Gibson man wounds girlfriend, then kills himself on US 401

With his wounded girl friend beside him, a Gibson man apparently shot and killed himself Sunday morning while he was driving on U.S. Highway 401 south of Raeford, a report filed by Hoke County Sheriff's Department Detective J. R. Riley says.

A 1985 Nissan driven by Keith Franklin York, P.O. Box 343, Gibson, was found smashed against a tree in a wooded area off the highway at approximately 5:32 a.m. by Hoke County deputies J. Brown and B. Tew.

York, 20, apparently shot himself in the neck with a .12 gauge shotgun.

According to N.C. Highway

Patrolman B.T. Burr, the car ran off the left shoulder of the road approximately seven and one-half miles south of Raeford.

In the passenger seat of the car the two deputies found Kimberly Michelle McLean, 17, 228 Highland Village, Laurinburg, who was suffering from gunshot wounds.

York appeared to be dead, and the two deputies when the police arrived on the scene, according to the report.

Law enforcement officers learned later that the driver of the car had been involved in a shooting in Scotland County around 4 a.m.

Reports say the driver of the car

shot his girl friend and forced her into the car.

York was pronounced dead at the scene by Hoke County Medical Examiner Dr. Riley Jordan.

Jordan found a suicide note in York's right front pants pocket, reports say.

York's body was taken to Buie Funeral Home and later transported to the Medical Examiner's Office in Chapel Hill.

McLean was taken to Scotland County Hospital in a Hoke County Emergency Services vehicle.

A .12 gauge shotgun with the barrel pointed toward the ceiling of the car was found in the Nissan, reports say.