

The News-Journal

RAEFORD, NORTH CAROLINA

Covering Hoke County Like A Roof Since 1905

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heads for mountains**
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Early morning blaze
Members of the Raeford Fire Department examine damage done by a blaze Sunday morning which destroyed Room 22 at Hoke High

School. It is believed the fire was started by arsonist.

Arson investigated in school fire

By Ron Anderson

The State Bureau of Investigation (SBI) is conducting a probe into the cause of a fire which destroyed a classroom at Hoke High School early Sunday morning, Raeford Police Chief Leonard Wiggins said on Monday.

Wiggins said "arson is suspected" as the cause of the blaze which completely destroyed the contents of Room 22 on the McDonald side of the high school.

The room was used to instruct handicapped students in life skills, and the loss of equipment was high, school officials said.

Sergeant George Brown and Patrolman Brian Linsby were the first to notice the fire when

they saw smoke coming from the classroom window at approximately 6 a.m.

The officers notified the Raeford Fire Department.

"When we got there, the fire was just about out," Raeford Fire Chief Crawford Thomas said. "We probably didn't use 20 gallons of water."

Thomas said the fire apparently started in a dresser under the window.

Firefighters remained at the scene for close to an hour.

Upon further investigation on Sunday, police officers discovered a microscope that had come from a room two doors down from Room 22, and evidence of another fire that had been started on a teacher's

desk top in a room on the Gibson side of the high school.

"Apparently it was a fireproof desk top because just the desk was burned," Wiggins said.

According to the police chief, someone entered the room on the Gibson side by raising a window. The glass was not broken out.

School Business Manager Don Steed said on Monday it will take three or four days to complete an estimate of the amount of damage done to Room 22.

"It was almost totally destroyed," teacher Shirley Wright said. "There's not too much that can be salvaged."

Wright, who used the room to teach trainable mentally han-

dicapped students, said many of the items in the self-contained classroom had been collected over the years.

The classroom was equipped with a completely furnished living room, a dining area and a washer and dryer.

However, a quilt with silhouettes of each of the students sewn into it is something that can never be replaced.

"I'm more upset with our handmade quilt being destroyed than anything else," Wright said.

The students attending school in Room 22 had a day off on Monday, but were back in school on Tuesday meeting in a room in the gymnasium.

Bus wreck injures 12

A bus driver and 11 students were injured Monday in an accident between two Hoke County school buses, a spokesman for the Board of Education said.

Bus number 18 was picking up students on State Road 1302 approximately one-quarter mile north of the airport when bus number 47 bumped into the right rear of the stopped vehicle, according to Hoke County Schools Business Administrator Don Steed.

Both vehicles were headed south when the incident occurred at approximately 7:30 a.m.

Steed said the driver of bus number 47, Paul Kelton, 17, Box 250, Raeford, said he saw the stopped bus, applied the brakes, but was unable to stop before running into the other vehicle.

The driver of bus number 18, Mary McCullum, 30, 1932 Tyler Loop Road, Raeford, was treated for neck injuries at Dr. Robert

Townsend's office and released that day.

Sixty-seven students were riding on bus number 47, and 25 students were on bus 18 at the time of the accident.

Seven students on bus number 47 and four students on bus number 18 were injured.

"It's very fortunate that the children weren't hurt any more than they were," Steed said.

Dr. R. M. Jordan, who treated 10 of the students involved in the accident, said none of his patients were seriously injured.

"It was just a matter of bumps and bruises for the most part," Jordan said.

Jordan said he advised three of the injured students to go home for the day.

No disciplinary action was taken against the driver of bus number 47, who is a student at Hoke High School.

(See BUS, page 2A)

Hoke celebration planned on April 1

To celebrate some of the positive events which have recently taken place in the community, the Raeford Hoke Chamber of Commerce and the Committee of 100 are sponsoring "Hoke County Appreciation Night" on Tuesday, April 1.

The public is invited to the new armory beginning at 6 p.m. to celebrate the recent decision by North Carolina Utilities Commission to establish Extended Area Telephone Service (EAS) between the Raeford and Fayetteville exchanges.

"The celebration is a chance to say thank you to the people of Hoke County for such an outstand-

ing effort to get EAS approved," Rep. Daniel DeVane said.

Sponsors of the event also feel there is reason to celebrate the announcement by Presti Rubber Company to open a manufacturing plant in the old Hadley-Peoples building in Rock Hill.

Backers also hope the evening will not only celebrate the successes of the EAS and the new industry, but will help launch public enthusiasm toward other projects needed in Hoke County, like the widening of US Highway 401.

Turkey bog and soft drinks will be served, and music will be provided.

Admission is \$1.

61-year-old Shannon man given 10 years for drug charges

A 61-year-old Hoke County man was sentenced to a 10-year prison term after a jury found him guilty on drug charges last week in Hoke County Superior Court.

Leroy Locklear, Highway 211, Red Springs, was found guilty of possessing cocaine with intent to sell and deliver; possessing marijuana with intent to sell and deliver; maintaining a building to be used for the unlawful keeping or selling of controlled substances;

and keeping and maintaining a vehicle for the unlawful keeping and selling of controlled substances.

Court records say Locklear was arrested on July 26, 1985 at his residence after law enforcement officers obtained a search warrant.

Officers found 26 bags of cocaine and a quantity of marijuana at Locklear's residence, records say.

The search warrant was obtain-

ed after Locklear allegedly sold cocaine to a state undercover Alcohol Law Enforcement agent.

In an unrelated case, Chris Edward Brahin, Rt. 1, Box 627, Lexington, was sentenced to a four-year prison term as a committed youthful offender after he pleaded guilty to a charge of assault with a deadly weapon with the intent to kill.

Reports say Brahin, 19, assaulted John Bradley Moore by

shooting him three times with a .12 gauge shotgun on January 18.

Moore required medical treatment which included surgery and hospitalization.

Also, Mary Bullard, Rt. 1, Red Springs, was sentenced to a three-year prison term after she pleaded no contest to two counts of selling marijuana.

Bullard, 42, sold marijuana to an agent with the N.C. Alcohol Law Enforcement Agency on

February 10, according to records.

Bullard also had a suspended sentence revoked for violating the terms of probation and was sentenced to an additional two-year prison term.

According to records, Bullard had previously been sentenced to two years, suspended for three years, in Superior Court after she pleaded guilty to charges of possession with intent to sell a controlled substance and possession of drug

paraphernalia.

In another case, Jerry McNeill, P.O. Box 721, Raeford, was sentenced to a six year prison term after he pleaded guilty to charges of breaking and entering and larceny.

Records say McNeill, 30, broke into a building on Rt. 1, Aberdeen, on November 22 and stole a color

(See VERDICTS, page 2A)

Sewer help request tabled by commission

A request for a portion of Hoke County's state water funds to help pay the cost of replacing blowers at the Raeford wastewater treatment plant was tabled Monday by members of the county commission.

A committee was established to study the request.

The request, made by Raeford City Manager Tom Phillips, was for a portion of the county's Senate Bill Two grant money.

The grant money is available to both municipalities and counties for funding 50% of non-federal public water and sewage projects.

The total cost to replace treatment plant's existing six blowers with four new more powerful blowers is \$160,000.

The city manager said half the money for the project would come out of the city's water fund.

Phillips asked the commissioners for \$40,000 of the county's grant money and said the other

\$40,000 would come from the city's Senate Bill Two funds.

By replacing the blowers, Phillips said the city hopes to "take out the offensive part of the smell" coming from the plant.

Phillips said he hopes to order the new blowers in a couple of weeks.

The motion to table a decision to give the city a portion of the county's grant money was made by Commissioner Wyatt Upchurch, who said he wanted to sit down with city officials and study the problem before voting on the matter.

Upchurch said the county also needs money for projects such as the replacement of equipment at the county landfill.

A committee was formed with Upchurch and Commissioner Cleo Braucher as members to study the problem.

In other business, the commis-

(See COUNTY, page 3A)



Studying the situation

County Manager William K. Cowan (left) and Commissioner Wyatt G. Upchurch look over documents

at Monday night's meeting of the board of county commissioners.

Around Town

By Sam Morris

The weather for the past week has been all anyone could ask for at this time of year. It has been warm and then the rains on Friday and Saturday were much needed. The temperature on Monday afternoon (as of this writing) is 70°.

The forecast is for the thermometer to fall into the 50s by Thursday, but this should be the daytime low for the week. There is no freezing weather in the forecast.

I had a short note from H. Clifton Blue, former editor and publisher of *The Sandhill Citizen*, last week. It is as follows:

Dear Sam,
I noticed that you would be publicity man for the 75th Anniversary of Hoke County. I was born August 28, 1910. I hope you have a big time on (See AROUND, page 2A)