

The News-Journal

Volume LXXIX Number 25

RAEFORD, NORTH CAROLINA

25 CENTS

Thursday, October 8, 1987

City-County dispute almost resolved

By Ken MacDonald
News-Journal Associate Editor

Members of the Hoke County Commission and Raeford City Council met Monday night to hash out details of a proposed joint city county central communication system.

The system would cost an estimated \$137,300 for installation of new radio equipment and operation during the first year. But it would reduce the total number of

dispatchers needed by the Raeford Police Department and Hoke County Sheriff's Department and more importantly, free up jailers who now have duties split between tending prisoners and dispatching for over 13 fire departments, the ambulance service, the rescue squad, highway patrol and wildlife and forestry services.

City councilmen and county commissioners thought they had reached an agreement earlier, but

there was a misunderstanding concerning the county's intentions.

Both groups were able to iron out a few difficulties. Most notably, was the controversy over who will supervise the new pool of dispatchers. City council had been concerned that placing the new department under either Hoke Sheriff Dave Barrington or any other law enforcement officer would expose dispatchers to undue pressure to please their superior at

the expense of others for whom they're dispatching.

Commissioner Mabel Riley began the discussion. "First, I want to know why after all these years city council doesn't want the sheriff over the department," she said.

City Councilman Gentry countered, "we don't have criticism of Dave Barrington, we don't want it under law enforcement period. Dave Barrington is

the best sheriff in N.C."

Another sticking point was a concern by Raeford Police Chief Zeke Wiggins that the proposal would make it impossible for him to continue to staff the office around the clock. City leaders told the commission that the objection could be overcome.

Still another problem is access to what used to be known as PIN machines which provide computer access to criminal records in

Raleigh. Law enforcement uses them to check driving and criminal records of suspects. Earlier it was believed that only those in law enforcement could have access to the information, but a check with state authorities revealed dispatchers could see most information but would be restricted from information typically used for investigative work.

The meeting ended without any decisive action taken, but both boards agreed to take up the issue again. Apparently there are a few remaining questions however about who will supervise the new system.

Discussion indicated it may be put under the jurisdiction of County Manager William Cowan. Neither board wants to offend Sheriff Barrington who has overseen dispatching for most local emergency agencies for years.

Barrington says he has no problem turning the operation over to someone else. He says, "in the beginning, double duties were not a problem, but as it has developed, it's a serious problem. My people are doing it (supervising the jail and dispatching), but it is not as effective as it should be." Barrington says, "we've been lucky in the past that we've not had a serious problem."

As work continues on resolving remaining issues another problem has cropped up. Radio traffic in Hoke County is being interrupted by transmissions in Scotland County and visa versa. City Council and the commission want to see if changes in Hoke County's dispatching system can correct the interference problem as well.

Both boards agreed to consider the system again to see if an agreement can be reached. The commission discussed it at their regular meetings following the joint session but tabled it for further discussion on a supervisor's pay rate.

Junk ordinance again tabled

The Hoke County Commission again delayed passage of the county's proposed junkyard ordinance after several commissioners expressed concerns that measures in the ordinance designed to clean up junkyards are too harsh.

The meeting, which was attended by about thirty proponents and opponents of the ordinance, got a little disorderly. After one man spoke out of turn, Commission Chairman Wyatt Upchurch called for a sheriff's deputy to help maintain order.

Upchurch began the discussion by saying forcing junkyards to locate at least 300 feet from the center of a road is unreasonable. Other commissioners agreed and suggested 100 feet might be a more reasonable distance. Upchurch also said requiring an eight foot fence around the perimeter of junkyards would be too costly and suggested a six foot fence. And he said requiring a fence

or shrubs to hide the yard from adjacent homes and roads might be sufficient instead of requiring the yards to be disguised around their complete perimeters.

The suggested weakening of the ordinance didn't sit well with some members of the audience. Joyce Thompson of Quewhiffle, who has addressed the commission a number of times supporting a strict ordinance submitted photos of rats killed in her house. She said they came from the adjacent junkyard and urged the commission for a strict ordinance. She said she asked for help from the yard owner but that didn't get her anywhere. "He told me to carry a gun and shoot them," she said, "but I told him I'm not Annie Oakley."

Commissioner Cleo Bratcher suggested a committee be formed comprised of junkyard owners and others who aren't, to work out (see JUNK, page 11)



Work session
Members of Raeford City Council and the Hoke County Board of Commissioners try to work out differences concerning a proposed central communication system for law enforcement and emergency agencies in Raeford and Hoke County.

Unemployment rate up

Recently released figures from the Employment Security Commission indicate a slight increase in the unemployment rate in Hoke County.

From a low of 5.7 percent in June the rate climbed slightly in July to 5.8. Figures for August show a 6.2 percent unemployment rate.

According to Burnest Graham with the ESC office in Laurinburg the rise in unemployment in Hoke County is "not that significant." He said a 6.2 percent unemployment rate is pretty good for this area.

Graham said at this time of year there are seasonal factors to consider. He said a rise in unemployment is often seen at the end of the harvest season.

Unemployment figures for August for neighboring counties show Cumberland had 5.2 percent, Moore 3.4 percent, Robeson 7.0 and Scotland 7.1 percent unemployment rates.

The trend earlier this year toward lower unemployment rates in Hoke County can't be viewed with too much optimism, Graham said.

Growth of existing industries could well be the reason for that earlier decrease in unemployment in the county. However, without new industry in the county those decreases will not be dramatic.

Graham said new regulations affecting Social Services clients which became effective October 1 will require more people to register with the ESC. He said the additional people registering may have some effect on the unemployment rate. Unemployment would rise as more people are added to the potential workforce.



Hose class
Instructor Alan Cain of Fayetteville shows firemen the correct way to use a new larger capacity fire hose. The class coincided with Fire Prevention Week.

Firemen encourage escape route plans

By Ken MacDonald
News-Journal Associate Editor

Fire deaths aren't common in Raeford and Hoke County, and local firemen are trying to keep it that way by encouraging citizens to plan escape routes from their homes. The effort coincides with "Fire Prevention Week."

Terry Tapp, secretary of the Hoke County Firefighters Association and a captain in the Raeford Fire Department says thousands of people die in fires each year in the U.S. "Most of those people -- more than 80 percent -- die in their own homes. That's why it's important to spend some time to plan how they would escape in case a fire strikes," he said.

To get the word out, the Raeford Fire Department is holding an open house this weekend (Sunday, Oct. 11) from 1 to 4 p.m. to allow citizens an opportunity to ask questions, get help in preparing an escape plan, and even purchase a few basics of fire prevention - smoke detectors and fire extinguishers.

"We're pushing smoke detectors and fire extinguishers," Tapp says, "as inexpensive, but very beneficial items." The department is selling detectors for \$12 and extinguishers for \$18.

In addition, Raeford firemen and those from county departments which held open houses last weekend, will go to a citizens house on request and assist with escape plans.

But helping plan escape routes is only part of what area firemen are doing this week -- they're also honing their skills and demonstrating them as well. On Saturday at the Edinborough Shopping Center, firemen and rescue squad volunteers will display equipment and compete in firefighting techniques.

Earlier, firefighters association members took part in a class to learn how to safely and effectively use new hoses Raeford firemen have added to their firefighting arsenal.

Tapp says the 4-inch hoses, (see SAFETY, page 9)

Water rates low here

By June Lancaster
News-Journal Staff Writer

Statistics released recently by the Lumber River Council of Governments (LRCOG) show residents of the City of Raeford are getting water and sewer service at lower rates than other region towns.

The LRCOG includes Bladen, Hoke, Robeson and Scotland Counties.

Raeford customers pay .96 cents per 1,000 gallons for water. The rate applies to both residential and commercial customers. The average residential customer uses approximately 2,800 gallons of water per month, according to Tom Phillips, Raeford city manager.

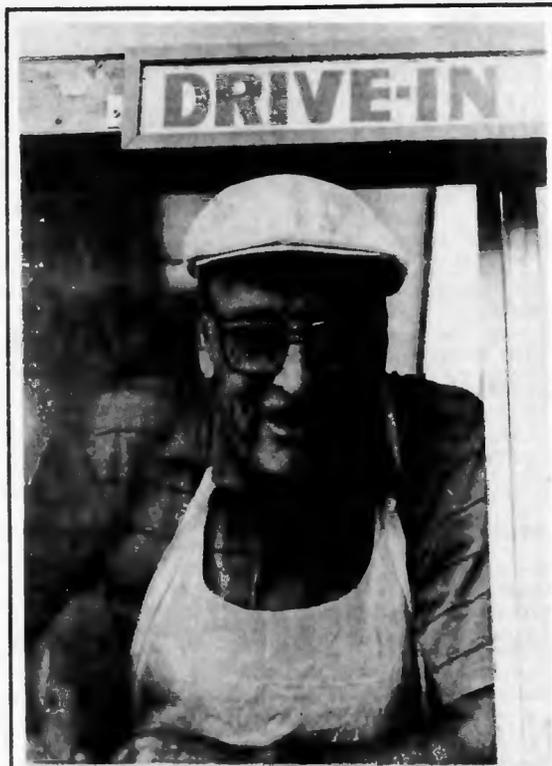
Raeford residents pay the .96 cents rate for the first 3,000 gallons of water. The cost decreases according to the amount of water used to a low of .59 cents for more than a million gallons.

Currently four customers use more than a million gallons of water a month. The four are the major industries, Burlington, Faberge and House of Raeford and the Hoke County Board of Education.

Water rates charged by other towns in the LRCOG include Clarkton which charges \$6.50 per 3,750 gallons; Dublin \$4.00 per 2,000 gallons; Elizabethtown \$5.41 per 2,000 gallons; Fairmont \$4.00 per 1,000 gallons.

Laurinburg charges \$3.50 per 2,000 gallons; Lumberton \$4.40 per 3,000 gallons; Maxton \$4.00 per 2,000 gallons; Bladenboro \$5.00 for the first 2,500 gallons.

Parkton charges \$6.93 for the first 3,000 gallons; Pembroke (see WATER, page 14)



Friendly service

Bar-B-Que Hut owner Raymond Bedsole greets drive-through customers at his restaurant, now open across from the old National Guard Armory.

2 restaurants open

Raeford is getting two new fast-food restaurants. One has already opened and the other will open in three to four weeks.

The Bar-B-Que Hut on Central

Avenue directly across from the old Armory opened for business on September 14.

Owned and operated by Raymond (see RESTAURANT, page 9)

Drug cases go to court

The people arrested in last week's drug round-up in Hoke County had their first appearance in District Court on October 1. Their probable cause hearings were set for October 16. The Honorable Warren L. Pate presided.

In other cases Troy La Bombard, 18, of Rt. 2, Raeford, pleaded guilty to assault with a deadly weapon (ADW). He was sentenced to two years in the Hoke County Jail. His sentence is to begin at the expiration of any sentence he is now serving.

In another case, La Bombard pleaded guilty to attempted larceny. He was sentenced to two years to begin at expiration of the sentence imposed in the previous case.

Malcolm Kelly Carver, 49, of Lumber Bridge, pleaded guilty to driving while impaired (DWI) and to having no operator's license (NOL). He was given a one-year suspended sentence and placed on (See COURT, page 7)

Around Town

By Sam Morris

The cold weather came over the weekend. It didn't frost in Hoke County, but the thermometer was down into the 30s Monday morning. It warmed up to the 70s and the same is expected for Tuesday and Wednesday. Some rain could move in Tuesday night.

The forecast for the remainder of the week is for the temperatures to be in the 60s during the day and dropping down into the 40s and 30s at night. No rain is in the forecast after Wednesday.

Once again -- perfect football weather.

Many people have been talking about the gravel placed on N.C. 211 West or better known to some folks as West Prospect Avenue. (see AROUND, page 14)