

The News-Journal

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RAEFORD, NORTH CAROLINA

25 CENTS

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Judge to issue decision Monday in hearing to remove Hoke sheriff

A Superior Court judge will decide whether Sheriff Alex Norton will keep his job Monday morning, District Attorney Jean Powell said this morning.

The hearing of a petition to remove Norton

from his job—delayed for several weeks—will resume 10 a.m. Monday when Judge Donald W. Stephens from Raleigh returns to the Hoke County Courthouse to deliver his decision. Powell and County Attorney Duncan

McFadyen filed a petition to remove the sheriff from office for "willful and habitual neglect and refusal to perform the duties of his office and... willful misconduct and maladministration in office."

The petition includes claims the sheriff:
• ordered a deputy to falsify records,
• failed to pursue criminals who shot up a nightclub as he watched,
(See SHERIFF, page 10)



This is just the first stack librarians have to go through as they add bar codes to their books. Connie Marlowe (left) is helped by Sally Markham.

Library computerizing check-out services

The Hoke County Public Library is going high-tech!

Beginning in mid-August, the library will be placing bar codes — those black and white stripes that computers can read — on its entire collection of books.

Library Director Connie Marlowe says the system of bar codes will provide:

- faster check-in and check-out
- easier renewals
- easier telephone renewals
- automatic renewals for vacations

• the ability for librarians to determine if a book is on the shelf or when it is due back.

To switch over to the system, the Library will be closed Monday, August 12 through Thursday, the 15th.

All library customers will be issued a new library "credit card." The cards are free, but duplicates are \$3.

When customers come in to check out a book, the librarian will wave a wand across the bar code on the book, and voila!, the

transaction is complete.

Customers will also be able to use a computer to find books on subjects they're interested in.

The bar coding system is being paid for with a \$50,000 grant for Anson, Hoke, Montgomery, Moore and Richmond counties. Each county provided \$10,000 in matching funds.

For the last five years, each county's library has been typing book titles into
(See LIBRARY, page 10)

18 to take part in first leadership program

Eighteen people will take part in Hoke County's first leadership institute.

Leadership Hoke will begin at the end of August and continue through April, said co-organizer Mary Archie McNeill.

McNeill, who heads the Hoke County campus of Sandhills Community College, said participants will learn leadership techniques such as parliamentary procedure and how to motivate volunteers.

"This will probably have the biggest impact on the future of Hoke this decade," she said.

The program is co-sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce and Sandhills; it was advertised largely through the Chamber, McNeill said.

The purpose of the course is to "produce informed citizens who can assume leadership roles in the community," she said.

"We hope they'll be leaders on the Chamber board," she said. "We hope they'll run for city council."

The institute will begin with a two-day retreat in Moore County August 29 and 30. The retreat will be led by professional instructors.

"Each participant will learn about

"This will probably have the biggest impact on the future of Hoke this decade"—Mary Archie McNeill

himself, his strengths and weaknesses in leading others," McNeill said.

Besides getting to know each other on an equal and personal level, she said, participants will identify what they think Hoke County's problems and assets are.

Each participant will take on a problem specific to Hoke County, study it and, at the end of the course, offer solutions to the problem.

"They will identify needs and problems specifically identifiable in Hoke County."

"We're going to deal with issues," she said.

After the retreat, the group will meet one day each month until April. Each day will be dedicated to learning about a different aspect of the area; for instance, in their first meeting, participants will hear from several local historians.

At the end of the monthly sessions,
(See ACADEMIC, page 4)

Gravestone con artist to pay last of victims

A con artist who bilked over 20 Hoke County customers out of money for gravestones has been ordered to pay back the last of his victims.

Donald Reid Nelson, 48, of Spartanburg, South Carolina, was convicted Wednesday of eight counts of misdemeanor larceny in the crime.

He was ordered to pay back a total of \$12,355.96 to people who never received gravestones and mausoleums. He has paid back around \$16,000 in a previous judgement.

Nelson is to pay his victims back over a period of a year and a half.

If Nelson falters in his payments, he stands to spend up to 16 years in jail; he was sentenced to two years suspended for each of the eight charges.

Nelson committed the crimes while he operated Sandhills Monu-

ment Corporation and Highland Biblical Gardens between January 1987 and September 1989.

Nelson was arrested a year ago in Cowpens, South Carolina, charged with 27 counts of obtaining property by false pretenses, and extradited to Hoke County to stand trial.

"The majority of the victims were senior citizens," Detective Weaver Patterson said at the time, "and all victims had recently lost a loved one. They were in a vulnerable state of emotion at the time."

Witness in sheriff's trial not guilty of shooting

A major witness in the petition to remove Hoke County Sheriff Alex Norton from office was found not guilty Thursday in a case that
(See COURT, page 4)

Zoning scorned in Quewhiffle

Opposition stiffens since recent Rockfish meeting

Residents of western Hoke County appeared wary of plans to divide the county into zoning districts at a meeting Monday night in the Pine Hill Volunteer Fire Department building.

The meeting, the second of three scheduled by the county, was held to explain zoning to county residents and get their input before county commissioners vote on the plan.

But some among the crowd of 40 to 50 people who came to Monday's meeting felt their input wasn't valued highly.

"This is going to pass whether anyone wants it or not, isn't it?" one man asked near the end of the meeting.

"I won't say that," County Commission Chairman Wyatt Upchurch answered. "I think most of the people in this county want it."

"If we have enough opposition that the board feels like we need to do some changing, then we'll change it," he said.

If commissioners vote for zoning and the people don't like it, "then don't vote for those people the next time out," Commissioner Tom Howell said. Zoning laws could be repealed, too, he said.

Howell said he supports zoning.

One woman said she felt it was unfair that she could invest in land in Hoke County "and then someone in Raeford comes up and says this is what you can and cannot do. I don't call that freedom."

"I hate that it's construed as a posse coming up out of Raeford and changing things because it's not," Patric Zimmer, Hoke's planner, answered.

The Planning and Development Commission, which drew up the proposed zoning law, is made of four members from Raeford, four from Hoke County and two from the one-mile wide extraterritorial ring around Raeford.

Another asked if there was anything important in the plan that had not been explained to the crowd.

"We've got no reason to try to hide anything because it'll come out in the end and it'll end up coming out of our hides in the long run," Zimmer said.

Several people pressed Zimmer to say what he would report to the Planning Board about the consensus of the crowd. They wanted to know whether he thought the crowd was in favor of zoning.

"Yes," Zimmer told The News-Journal after the meeting ended. "They are in favor of zoning but I believe they were concerned about the process itself. But I do feel that we addressed most of their questions."

"As long as they feel that they have input, I feel that they are for it," he explained. "I feel we've had good interaction at our meetings."

What will be gained?

People at the meeting had one question in common: what
(See ZONING, page 5)

Around Town

By Sam C. Morris

The rains came to Raeford last Saturday morning and it has been raining off and on ever since that time. I was told Sunday morning that it has rained over three inches and since that time it must have rained another inch. It was raining as this column was written Monday afternoon and the forecast called for rain on Tuesday.

The temperature is at a normal reading with the cloud cover and all the rain. It has been in the high 80's and low 90's for the weekend and Monday. This has stopped the air conditioners from running all the time.

The forecast calls for the rains to stop on Wednesday. The thermometer will register in the 80's during the day Wednesday and Thursday and the lows will be near 70. Friday and Saturday the temperatures will once again hit the 90's during the day and the lows will be in the 70's.

The weather and crop growing has been hitting it off very well. I don't know how much more rain the farmers can take. It is time to take in tobacco and the cotton crop is blooming and the weed is large and green. Wet tobacco doesn't cure as well as the dry leaf and the heavy stalk could hamper the growth of the cotton boll.

One farmer stated this week that the price of grain was not enough to make money for the farmer. I heard on television that some of the grain wasn't selling for enough to take it out of the field.

Yes, the farmer has to gamble every year with his crops.

According to Raz Aury the peach season is about over. Maybe the orchard will have a few peaches left, but most of them will close shop this week.

Watermelons and cantaloupes are selling at most of the road-side stands.
(See AROUND, page 4)