

The News-Journal

The 23rd issue of our 83rd year

RAEFORD, NORTH CAROLINA

25 CENTS

Wednesday, September 18, 1991

Byrd sworn in as Hoke's new sheriff

Hoke County has a new sheriff. County commissioners voted Monday night 3-2 to make Wayne Byrd, one of five finalists for the job, sheriff.

Commissioner L. E. McLaughlin nominated Byrd, Neill McPhatter seconded and Cleo Bratcher voted for Byrd. Tom Howell voted for Daniel Brock; Chairman Wyatt Upchurch voted against both nominees.

After commissioners narrowed the field down from 16 applicants, Byrd was selected from a group that included Daniel Brock, Frank Crumpler, Jim Madden and James Robertson.

Byrd told reporters he hoped his appointment would quell bad press Hoke County has been getting over the removal—for misconduct—of Sheriff Alex Norton by a Superior Court judge.

"I hope we can get down to making some changes in the department," Byrd said.

Chief District Court Judge Warren Pate swore Byrd into office before commissioners and an audience of about 50 Monday night.

Byrd chose some deputies to swear in the same night; others were unavailable; still others, Byrd said, he wanted to talk to first. Byrd swore more deputies in Tuesday morning.

Byrd said he had expected the swearing in ceremony to be held Tuesday morning, giving him more time to gather all the deputies together and speak with those he felt he needed to.

At least seven deputies had not been sworn by Tuesday afternoon, but Byrd declined to say which ones. He said last night only one deputy—Det. Weaver Patterson—definitely will not return to a job in the department, apparently by Patterson's choice. Byrd also said this morning he had not "heard a word" from Jimmy Riley.

Patterson, a captain under Norton who was shifted to the Hoke-Robeson Drug Task Force,

had applied for the job of sheriff and had failed to make the final five.

Patterson started his law enforcement career in 1978 as a Raeford policeman; he joined the Sheriff's Department in 1980, moving up through the ranks to detective in 1984 and chief of detectives in 1989.

Sheriff Norton moved Patterson to the Drug Task Force after firing Det. Jim Curtis, who had been the department's representative on the task force.

Byrd said when he got home last night he was informed Patterson had asked that officials come out and get his cruiser. Patterson was in the building when commissioners made their deci-

sion, but never approached Byrd about his job. Byrd said he had not heard from Patterson until he called about his equipment.

Jimmy Riley, who was chief deputy under Norton and was demoted to chief jailer, applied for the sheriff's job, but did not make the final five.

Byrd has made three significant additions to his staff: Brenda Price, Mike Wood and Alex Norton.

Byrd swore Norton in as auxiliary deputy Tuesday morning.

"He offered his services to me last Saturday for the transition period," Byrd said. "I told him, (See SHERIFF, page 6)

Judge blasts commission for court space problem

Chief District Court Judge Warren Pate blasted Hoke County commissioners Monday night for dawdling over plans to build a new courtroom and court office spaces.

The need for a new courtroom has become a crisis and the county had no plan to house court officials when the lease on their building expires Oct. 8, he said.

"Somebody has dropped the ball here," Pate said.

Commissioners have planned since September 1988 to renovate the Raeford Auto Company building on Main Street across from the county courthouse for courtroom and office space.

But soil tests showed the ground on which the building sat was contaminated with gasoline that leaked from rusty, underground tanks.

Meanwhile, the courts' case load has skyrocketed, Pate said, and District Court cannot be cancelled when Superior Court is held in the courthouse's one courtroom.

He and District Court Judge William McIlwain have been using the county commissioners' room in the county offices to hold District Court when Superior Court is being held in the courthouse. "We have really been using it on a very frequent basis since we joined with Scotland County in this new district," he said.

But there are just too many cases for the

commissioners' room to handle, he said.

"I had a session in the court room, we had 240 cases on the calendar that day," Pate said.

"Somebody has dropped the ball here"—
Chief District Court Judge Warren Pate

"The defendants and witnesses and so forth were in the street," he said. "We had to post a deputy at this door and that door to call out to see if the defendants were even there."

In another incident, Pate said he found himself in a doorway between two men held on murder charges and four felons; and their friends who had been talking to them through the locked door. "There I am sandwiched between these four men who are friends with these other six dangerous men with one armed guard."

He worried that packed crowds in the commissioners' room could get rowdy, even violent, with no way to control them.

"There is no way for a deputy even to get to a knife fight if one broke out in the court room."

"It is just a matter of time before we have an incident in this courtroom in which someone will be seriously injured or even killed," he said.

It's time, Pate said, for commissioners to hurry up and do something about court space.

(See SPACE, page 9)



New Hoke Sheriff Wayne Byrd (left) takes the oath of office as Judge Warren Pate presides.

County gets new ag agent

Hoke County got a new agricultural extension agent Monday night, almost a year after the last agent moved on to another job.

John Gary Warren will start working out of Hoke's Agricultural Extension office October 1.

The Hoke County Board of Commissioners approved Warren unanimously at Monday's meeting.

A graduate of North Carolina State University with degrees in crop science and adult education, Warren most recently spent three years with the

Northrop-King Seed Co., and has 10 years experience in agricultural extension.

He has also worked for a chemical company.

Warren will answer public questions on crops, livestock, home planting and trees, said Hoke Extension Director Carol Birkhead; Warren's answers will be backed up by research at North Carolina State University and North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University.

"Everybody that checked up on him

said he was really good," Birkhead said.

Warren, whose specialty is tobacco, may also plant demonstration crops and perform research.

Warren replaces Willie Featherstone, who moved on to another job last October, and Richard Wood, whose job was phased out last summer.

Commissioners pass law for garbage fees

Commissioners passed a law Monday (See AGENT, page 4)



The South View Tigers claimed the Turkey Bowl, the first contest of the N.C. Turkey Festival. South View defeated the Hoke High Bucks 28-3. Un-

daunted, Bucks Coach Walter Barnhill says the team is readying for its game Friday against number one-ranked Seventy-first.

N.C. Turkey Festival ready for thousands

This is it. The week thousands will flock to Raeford for the seventh North Carolina Turkey Festival.

The city is cleaning roads and trimming grass; the weathermen keep predicting perfect weather for Friday and Saturday; and the Turkey Festival board of directors has held its last meeting.

A few highlights:

• For the first time in festival history, a magic show has been scheduled. Magicians David Vanderveer ("the chainsaw juggler"), Eddy Wade and Rosie the Magical Clown will delight the crowd at Raeford's Armory Park Friday starting 6 p.m.

Tickets are \$2 in advance (you can get them at the Chamber of Commerce office in the old depot on Main Street) or \$3 at the gate.

In the unlikely event of rain, the magic show will be held at Turlington Middle School's auditorium on W. Prospect Avenue.

• Saturday is the only day postal officers will be cancelling cards and letters with the special Turkey Festival rubber stamp.

Letters cancelled with the special stamp are already a big hit with collectors. Festival board member Lawanna (See FESTIVAL, page 4)

Around Town

By Sam C. Morris

Summer is going out as it came in, hot. The temperatures over the weekend and the first of the week were in the 90s during the day and the lows at night were in the 70s. We haven't had any rain and many plants and grass need rain. It is good for the cotton farmers as they pick their crop.

The forecast calls for it to cool off for the remainder of the week. The highs for Wednesday and Thursday will be in the 80s with the lows in the 60s. Friday and Saturday we will see the mercury drop into the 70s during the day and the lows will be in the 50s. There is a chance of rain on Wednesday and Friday.

The Turkey Festival is now in progress with some events starting the first of the week. The opening ceremonies will be Thursday morning and the parade will be at 5:30 p.m. Thursday. Other events are planned during the remainder of the week, but the big day will be Saturday.

Let's hope we don't have any rain.

It was 51 years ago this week that the two National Guard units of Raeford were called to active duty. They were 1st Bn. Headquarters Battery and Battery "F" of the 252nd Coast Artillery. The (See AROUND, page 6)