

# The News-Journal

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RAEFORD, NORTH CAROLINA

25 CENTS

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## Team formed to battle increasing child abuse in Hoke

Hoke's Department of Social Services (DSS) has put together a team to fight the county's rising child abuse problem.

The team will review cases which seem more likely to merit criminal prosecution, according to social worker Susan Moss.

The team will channel the resources of social

services into reported cases of child abuse, rather than leaving them to the court system.

Social workers "will offer any input they may have or knowledge they have about the family," Moss said. Often, social workers—apart from those who take reports of child abuse—know a family involved in the alleged abuse and may be

able to suggest "services that they could offer to the family."

The team can also go to state and federal agencies to get special help for families stricken with a child abuse problem—help with housing, transportation or parenting not normally available through the county's limited resources.

"As far as there being a lot of available resources for our families, there aren't," Moss said.

The increase in Hoke's child abuse rate (Hoke ranks 64th in the state in number of reports) has been small this year, she said, but cases are getting worse.

(See ABUSE, page 5)



These children enjoy the "Merri Mixer" at the Jaycee Fair held in conjunction with the N.C. Turkey Festival. Perhaps the largest crowd ever attended the seventh festival last weekend. More photos page 10.

## Festival owes its success to volunteers, sponsors

Jean Hodges says she's a hard person to please.

But she had nothing but praise for the sponsors and volunteers that made the seventh North Carolina Turkey

Festival, held Thursday through Saturday, the "very best festival we've had."

President of a Fayetteville advertising agency which bears her name,

Hodges was chosen to lead this year's festival board of directors.

"Our board this year was an outstanding board," she said. "Everybody did their job."

"I had person after person after person telling me what a wonderful festival it was...and to please encourage the volunteers."

"The residents are really proud of the festival," said Hodges, a Raeford resident herself. "I have not heard one negative word about the festival."

"I had more fun in this festival than a person should have when (See FESTIVAL, page 4)



### Evacuation

The 66 residents of Autumn Care Nursing Home were evacuated and taken to the National Guard Armory after the home received a bomb threat Monday. A team of explosives experts from Fort Bragg used dogs to search the building but found nothing. The residents were ferried by ambulances and buses, and the home administrator said the efforts of volunteers and Hoke's emergency personnel made the evacuation run smoothly.

## Byrd: department is settling down

### Sheriff tackles three controversies

Hoke County's new sheriff is just now getting a little breathing room as widely published controversy, which has dragged on since 1989, threatened to smother the Sheriff's Department.

Wayne Byrd, sheriff of Hoke County now for just over a week, said his staff is getting used to new ideas he is bringing into the department.

Byrd was sworn in to the office a week ago Monday night.

"Friday, I felt like I had probably the largest portion of the deputies and detectives that felt good about what we're doing," he said.

"I think a hundred percent are willing to give it a try," he added.

"I never thought that it would be working as smoothly as it's working now," he said.

But in many ways, Byrd's first week as sheriff was a bumpy one, as public controversy continued to ride the department.

A question of conflict of interest arose Thursday when two patrol cars were taken to a repair shop, Byrd's Alignment, which Byrd's family owns.

County Manager Barry Reed ordered the department not use the shop until the county gets a definite opinion on whether there is a conflict of interest.

As of Tuesday morning, Byrd still had not gotten an opinion whether the shop could legally service his department's cars. The department now has seven cars which need work, he said.

Byrd's Alignment won a contract to work on the department's patrol cars in January, when Alex Norton was sheriff.

Byrd said the issue had been blown out of proportion and was hurting the county's reputation.

"I think people have really decided that this was the kind of thing that Hoke County didn't need and didn't deserve," Byrd said.

"And most of the people...said 'I wish they would leave you as sheriff...alone and let you get on with what needs to be done,'" he said.

"The guys that work here need to be let alone and be the professionals that they are," he said.

Meanwhile, Byrd has been sorting members of his staff, and is still looking for a few good officers. But there, too, Byrd has run into controversy.

The first stirring of public concern came when Byrd announced former Sheriff Alex Norton, who had been cast out of his job for misconduct,

"And most of the people...said 'I wish they would leave you as sheriff...alone and let you get on with what needs to be done,'" — Byrd

had rejoined the force as an unpaid auxiliary deputy.

Then, disputes arose between Byrd and deputies whom Byrd did not re-swear into office.

Byrd had said there were some deputies with whom he needed to speak before he could re-hire them.

Dan Hardin, a sergeant under Alex Norton, said though he went in for such a conference, he never had a chance to be rehired. He said Byrd didn't ask him any questions, but only told Hardin he wouldn't be hired.

"He said I didn't fit his program," Hardin said.

"I ain't got no harsh words to say to him," he added. "He's the boss, he made his decision."

Hardin said he had no idea why he was not rehired.

Other former deputies, who did not wish to be quoted, said there were discrepancies between *The News-Journal's* account of what happened the night Byrd was sworn in and what they saw.

Byrd did not ask all deputies who had not been sworn in to come speak with him the next morning, they said.

Those former deputies said they got their answer when Byrd pointed to them in the hallway where they stood among other deputies and told them they would not be re-sworn.

Byrd disagrees. During the swearing in, deputies "were told that if you see someone that is not in here, tell them to come in the morning," he said.

Byrd attributed some miscommunication to the "utter confusion" caused by the legal necessity to swear in immediately at least enough deputies and jailers to get through Monday night and Tuesday morning.

"It was not so much an intention not to swear them in," he said.

But he is certain now that Hardin, Det. Weaver Patterson, former Chief Deputy Jimmy Riley, and Deputy Johnny Riles, will not return to the department. (See SHERIFF, page 3)

## Man shot at on way home

A Parkton man was shot at and his truck damaged as he drove home from work Sunday morning.

Duncan Bunnell, an employee of House of Raeford Farms, Inc., reported he was driving home from work along N.C. 20 about 6:30 a.m. when he saw an Indian man near a white pickup truck parked along the highway, according to a sheriff's report. The man had a gun, Bunnell reported.

As Bunnell passed, the man pointed the gun and shot at him, damaging his vehicle, a 1985 Dodge pickup.

Bunnell continued to Joshua Hayes' residence, where he phoned the Sheriff's Department.

### Man accused of robbing employer

A Raeford man was charged Saturday with stealing merchandise from his employer's stockroom.

Jonathan Leon Jones, a 21-year old employee of Jones Store #39 on S. Main Street, was charged with one count of felonious larceny by employee after Raeford police recovered stolen goods.

Jones Store officials reported over

\$1,100 worth of goods stolen at first, said Police Chief James Murdock. But police recovered almost twice that value—\$2,144.09—in stolen goods.

The arrest followed a confidential tip, Murdock said.

### Motorcycle chase ends in ditch

A high speed chase ended in a wreck Monday; luckily, no one was hurt.

Hoke County Sheriff's Det. Greg Beard reported he saw two motorcycles speeding on Scurlock Road.

When he gave chase, one motorcycle's driver pulled to the side of the road; the lead motorcycle, carrying two riders, failed to stop, according to Beard's report.

Beard, driving a sheriff's department cruiser, followed the motorcycle onto Hillcrest Drive, then across a field.

The chase ended when the motorcyclist tried to cross a ditch; he failed and the motorcycle fell over.

Beard swerved into the ditch to avoid running over the two motorcyclists, damaging the front end of his car.

(See CRIME, page 5)

## Around Town

By Sam C. Morris

The fall weather came in several days before the time on the calendar. The official arrival of fall was Monday, but it was cold on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The lows at night during these days were in the 40s. The rain last Thursday night didn't interfere with the Turkey Festival. Most of the reports stated that about two inches of rain fell during the night.

The forecast for Wednesday through Saturday calls for the highs to be in the 70s and the lows will be in the 50s. There is a good chance of rain on Wednesday. I would say that from this forecast the fall season is with us.

The Hoke High School Bucks upset the Seventy-First football team last Friday night. The Bucks' record for the season is 2 wins and 1 loss. The team plays here this weekend.

The Turkey Festival had perfect weather this year and the attendance should have set a record. All events were well attended and the events were well received.

The committee should be congratulated for the splendid job they did during

the week. Now they can start preparing for next year.

Don't forget to sign up for the Hospice Golf Tournament that will be played at the Arabia Golf Club on Friday, October 4. Tee times will be 8 a.m. and 1 p.m. So call the Arabia Golf Club - 875-3524 or Raz Autry - 875-3787 if you want more information.

Last week I ran an article in this column written by W.T. Covington, Jr. of Charlotte on the Covington House located on West Donaldson Avenue. Mr. Covington is a native of Hoke County and now resides in Charlotte, where he is a senior member of a large law firm. This week the article on the Covington Farm, located in Blue Springs Township appears in this column. I want to take this space to thank Mr. Covington for taking the time to write these two articles. They are both interesting and very informative and add to the historical facts that many of us have on file. Thanks again William.

### The Farm

The Covington Farm - consisting of about 800 acres — is located about two (See AROUND, page 9)