

The News-Journal

The 51st issue of our 83rd year

RAEFORD, NORTH CAROLINA

25 CENTS

Wednesday, April 1, 1992

Hoke taxpayers will be asked to pay more for social services

Hoke taxpayers will be asked to pay more for public services at county budget time, says the director of the Department of Social Services.

Bob Mercer said Monday he expects to ask for about \$1.43 million in county money, a 10 percent increase over last year that will mean about five or six cents more on the tax rate.

Inflation is partly to blame, Mercer said. A

new agreement over a court ruling against the state is another; the state itself is also to blame, he said.

"The state is doing some good and bad and ugly," Mercer said.

For instance, he said, the state changed the Medicare matching rate for counties from 5.003 percent to 5.067 percent.

"That ... becomes significant when you start talking about two million dollars," Mercer said.

The county will pay \$557,000 this year in Medicaid compared to last year's \$443,000, he said.

"I increased it a little over the state budget," Mercer explained, "because they always come back around in May and say, 'oops, we made a

mistake.'"

The state changed the rate at which Hoke will pay for Aid to Families with Dependant Children (AFDC), too, from 16.730 percent to 16.965 percent. With inflation, Mercer said, that will cost the county an extra \$33,000.

Perhaps the biggest kick to Hoke taxpayers, at (See DSS, page 14)

Candidates seek votes at forum

Hoke County voters got the chance for a peek Monday night at candidates in the upcoming primary May 5. But other than the candidates themselves, few took the opportunity.

The Raeford Woman's Club sponsored a "Meet the Candidates" forum 7 p.m. at the Hoke County Library in Raeford. Although the conference room was standing room only, most of the attendees seemed to be candidates, family and campaign managers.

Candidates were given just a few minutes to introduce themselves to the crowd; each finished to rousing applause.

Candidates for county commissioner, which will be decided in the primary because only Democrats are running, were the first to speak.

Some spoke in favor of economic growth in the county. Jean Hodges, president of a Fayetteville advertising agency, said Hoke should meet incoming developers "with some controlled expansion of our own."

Elizabeth Jones, who owns a ceramics shop in the county, said she wants Hoke Countians to keep their money in the county.

She said she would like to see "closed stores open up here." Maggie Hunt of South Hoke simply said Hoke County needs more jobs.

The county needs to find a way, she added, to generate revenue without raising property taxes.

Les Sandy of Arabia said the key to Hoke's economy is encouraging business and industry to grow and enforcing "environmental and zoning regulations."

Herman Sanders, a manager at Fayetteville's Kelly-Springfield tire plant, cited his experience dealing with environmental and safety laws and state regulators. "I would like to see large scale industry encouraged to locate in Hoke County," he said.

Charles Crowder, who owns an advertising firm in Raeford, said elected and appointed boards should meet once or twice a year to set common goals and make plans for up to 25 years in the future. "You hear negative mess all over the place," he said. "I love Hoke County."

Riley Jordan, a physician and former School Board member, decried all the bad news he has heard recently about the county.

"It's becoming actually almost an embarrassment to me," he said. "We've been on a continual downgrade."

He said he was concerned with Hoke's "splintering" into various factions.

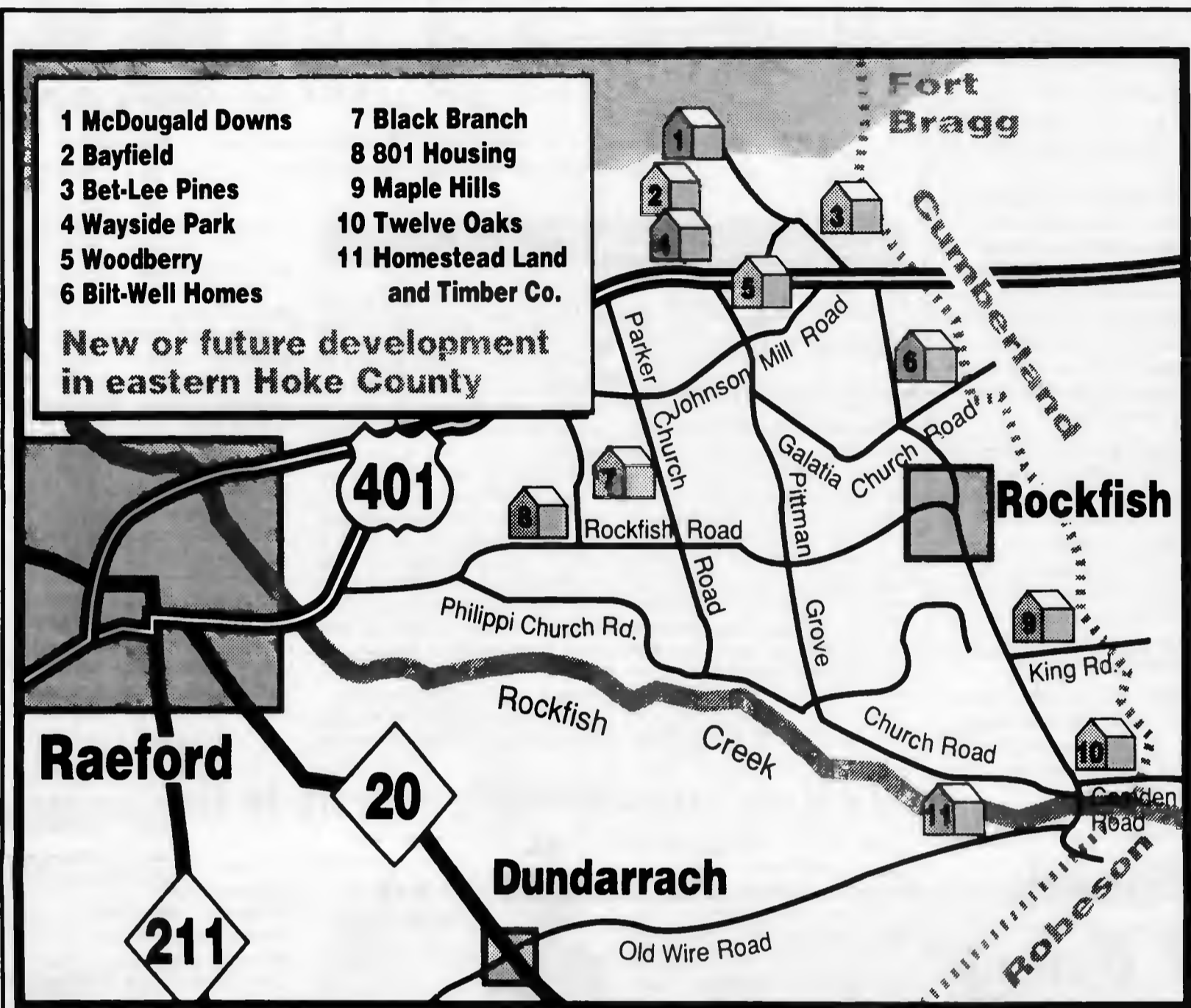
Jimmy Morrissey, president of Hoke's chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), attacked concerns he said some might have about bias in favor of blacks.

"I'm looking at the total picture," he said.

District attorney race

Both candidates for district attorney cited their many years of courtroom experience.

Incumbent Jean Powell said she has essentially acted as Hoke's district attorney since 1978 when then-DA Ed Grannis assigned her (See CANDIDATES, page 10)



Pate: zoning sparks building boom

Hoke's zoning law has spurred housing development in eastern Hoke County.

That's the assessment of Ann Pate, chairman of the Planning Board.

Eastern Hoke County is the site for 11 housing subdivisions that have either started or been planned by a mix of local and Fayetteville developers in the last three years, according to county records.

By far the largest of those planned subdivisions is 801 Housing, which will provide military families with 250 homes.

The next largest is McDougald Downs, a neighborhood of double-wide mobile homes nestled against Fort Bragg's border. Built in phases by Fayetteville developer Dan Kinlaw, McDougald Downs will eventually comprise 198 lots.

Local developer Steve Connell, along with area investors, plans to build on 141 lots near McDougald Downs.

Next in size is Woodberry, well under way with a total of 116 lots planned for

development. Fayetteville developer John Koenig is building single-family brick houses on the site.

Only three lots in the 41-lot Black Branch subdivision have been built; however, all three are large, expensive homes, promising a boost to the county's tax base should the subdivision take off.

"About the time the ordinance was adopted a lot of these developments sort of took off," Pate said yesterday.

Hoke's county commissioners put zoning on the books October 1 last year.

"Some of the developers that would come...might look elsewhere without it," she said.

The new county water system and current widening of U.S. 401 to four lanes have also been cited by county officials as sparking the growth.

Pate says the list of new subdivisions jives with the length of her board meetings, which used to be over "just like that." Now,

meetings last as late as 11 p.m., she said.

"I can see how our agendas have extended," she said.

Part of the reason Planning Board meetings run so long is the addition of public hearings on zoning issues. Most of those hearings, Pate said, are on zoning changes for proposed housing subdivisions.

"Most of them are directly (related to) requests for subdivision sketch reviews," she said.

Pate said zoning has been opposed by some who thought, or found, it would hurt them.

"There are those that resent zoning because they think that it restricts," she said.

But planning is necessary to good growth, she said, and the recent spate of new developments shows zoning works.

"Hoke County's right at that point where all those issues are becoming just that much more important."

(See DEVELOPMENT, page 14)

Cable TV rates to go up

Raeford cablevision subscribers will see their rates increase June 1.

Cablevision Industries (CVI) has announced a rate increase to offset the increases in "our single largest operating expense — the cost of programming."

General Manager Ted Crane cited TV rights contracts, escalating sports salaries, big star guarantees and the cost of live coverage of world news events, such as the 1991 war in Iraq as factors increasing the cost of programming.

"Sacrificing service in an effort to contain costs is just not acceptable to our customers or our company," he said.

On June 1 the cost of the Basic Reception Service will increase from

\$10.95 to \$11.50. Full CVI Service (basic reception service, plus expanded channels) will increase from \$18.95 to \$20.95.

Crane says with the increase in cost comes a new channel for subscribers to the Full CVI Service.

CNN Headline News will be added to the lineup and will appear on CVI Channel 32.

Crane says CVI will also improve its service to customers with the addition of a new computer billing system operated by a subsidiary of American Express.

CVI last increased rates 20 percent in June, 1990, less than two months after City Council renewed the company's franchise. CVI serves Raeford and parts of Hoke County.



Adding insult to injury

Not only did these folks have their day ruined by an auto accident with injuries, but Monday's rain made matters worse. The accident happened on Hwy. 401 Bypass.

Around Town

The weather has been spring-like for the past week. The daytime temperatures have been in the 50s and 60s and the lows at night have been in the 40s and 30s. The freezing weather seems to have run its course, but with Easter still about three weeks away, we could still have some freezing weather. The rain Monday and Tuesday helped, but we could use some more.

The forecast calls for the temperatures to be in the 60s or low 70s Wednesday and Thursday and the lows will be in the 50s. It will cool off Friday and Saturday and the highs will be in the 50s and the lows will be in the 30s. There is a chance of rain on Friday.

Raz Autry said last week that his peach crop was hurt more than he first thought. He said that the two cold nights in succession, with temperatures in the 20s, did considerable damage to his early peaches. If the weather remains about

freezing for the next two weeks, he thinks the crop will be about normal. Let's hope so!

I found a note on my desk last week that stated James Currie had been by the office and that he said he was in India during World War II. In talking to James on Sunday, he said he was in India in 1945 and that he didn't care anything about going back there.

So, to set the record straight D. B. McFayden, Berder Niven, Bernie Bristow, James Currie and the Rev. Tom Groome were in India during World War II. Maybe we will have someone else by next week. Some folks who take *The News Journal* are a couple of weeks late in receiving the paper. Anyway it is pleasing to know that people read this column and that they will inform me of errors and left out names in items. Con-

(See AROUND, page 14)