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RAEFORD, NORTH CAROLINA

25 CENTS

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Head Start teachers accused of overdosing students fired

Two teachers at the Duffie Head Start school were fired last Wednesday for allegedly overdosing a four-year-old student in November.

The two teachers, whom officials would not name, were removed permanently following a suspension period while state and agency investigators tracked the complaint of one parent who said the pair overmedicated her son on his Ritalin

prescription and never reported the incident to her.

A North Carolina Daycare Licensing Agency official in the abuse and neglect office said the agency received a report on December 30 regarding the southern Hoke County center at Duffie and was conducting an investigation in cooperation with the Department of Social Services.

The executive director for the grantee agency of Head Start, Four County Community Services, said "all of our concerns have been appropriately dealt with."

Richard Greene, the executive director, said in an earlier interview that his agency was conducting an investigation of claims of wrongdoing at the center.

Tammy Kahabak said her son, who began attending the center this fall, was given too much of his medicine by teachers. And, she said, they never told her or the administrator on the day of the incident.

Four County board member Charles Davis said he was "shocked" when he learned of the allegation. (See TEACHERS, page 5)



Mrs. King's McLaughlin School class enjoys the company of D.A.R.E. officer Janice Mincey. The class won a contest sponsored by program organizers.

Officers 'D.A.R.E.' to make a difference

By the glint in her eye and the easy smile, you can tell Janice Mincey likes her job.

After all, police officers usually receive jeers and curses, not hugs.

Either way, Mincey doesn't mind - as long as she can make a difference.

As one of two Hoke D.A.R.E. officers, Mincey says she gets many hugs and even more satisfac-

tion.

"When you have to arrest a high school or middle school student, you feel a certain sadness," Mincey said. "Sometimes I wonder what if their lifestyle had been different, if they had been taught a more positive alternative, what then?"

That "sadness" drives her to work in the Hoke schools in addition to her normal schedule to try to help children stay away from drugs and crime.

Mincey, a police officer with the Raeford Police Department, said she initially heard of the Drug Abuse Resistance Education program in Cumberland County and it impressed her with its positive reinforcement of children.

As a mother of five and a law enforcement officer, she wanted to see a D.A.R.E. program in Hoke County schools.

"It's geared to making them feel

good about themselves and feel good about saying no," she said.

The D.A.R.E. program stemmed from a joint effort by Los Angeles law enforcement and its school system, where gangs and drugs permeated even to the elementary school levels.

To many Hoke parents, the Los Angeles scenario may seem more like a "not in my backyard" (See D.A.R.E., page 9)

Grass roots planning kicked off Committee picks officers

Hoke's growth will have direction if a grass roots group has its way. On Monday night, leaders from around the county formed a steering committee for strategic planning in Hoke.

After a presentation by representatives from the Lumber River Council of Government, Pembroke State's Office of Economic Development and the state, the group of about 25 selected Kay Thomas as president to guide the steering committee through the beginning stages. Other executive officers are Jean Hodges as vice president, Barbara Buie as secretary and Jan Dial-Smith as treasurer.

Just what this new committee will do rests largely with members and the community, speakers said.

The committee must "take all the issues and boil them down and come up with three to six key issues." Bruce Maddox told the prospective committee members. Maddox, with PSU's economic development office, worked with several counties to form their individualized growth plans.

"We're not here to tell you what to do with your community," Jim Dougherty, chief planner with the North Carolina Department of Natural Resources and Community Development's Fayetteville Regional office, told the assembly.

He said the steering committee would, with the aid of task forces, help spark action among community members to carve out a plan for Hoke's future.

"You'll see positive results that will advance Hoke County and move it where you want it to be," Dougherty said. "You need to decide the most important three to six issues facing Hoke County. Develop a range of things that are achievable and inexpensive, but highly visible. The most important things you think will move Hoke County ahead. You're actively involved in making the future the way you want it to be."

The consensus seems to be that growth is the future.

Hoke's last census count of approximately 22,000 residents (See STRATEGY, page 4)

"Change comes whether you want it or not. Do you want to sit back and probably be overwhelmed?" — Jim Dougherty

Voters are asked to approve funding for next phase of Hoke's water system

February 9 will be the day of reckoning for Hoke County's water system. That's when voters will decide whether to approve issuance of \$3.7 million in bonds to finance expansion of the current water system.

A vote for bond issuance in the referendum will allow the county to close out Phase I of the water system

and move into Phase II.

County Manager Barry Reed said it will allow the county to bring water to virtually all geographic areas of the county and "fill in some gaps to make Phase I better."

He said the primary focus of Phase II of the three-part plan would bring water to western Hoke without in-

creasing the tax rate.

The bonds would total \$3,730,000 and would cover construction and installation of wells and water treatment facilities, water storage tanks and include the cost of purchasing additional land and rights of way for the project.

Tentative plans include adding a

new tank and well in the Arabia area and a well in the airport area. Also slated for the next step is the takeover of the extant McCain water system

and treatment facility in the western part of the county.

Reed said last year that the McCain (See WATER, page 9)

Axe falls on local Sears

Raeford will lose an old friend as the Sears catalog store prepares to close its doors.

Operator Carroll Scarborough said he was surprised when he heard the news Monday morning that the company will close the store some-

time this year.

The "Big Book" will fall to the wayside amid company cutbacks and following what retailers believed to be a revamping.

Scarborough said about 100 of (See SEARS, page 5)



Sarah Margaret McNeill (right) pins on a corsage for her daughter, Kay Thomas, the Citizen of the Year.

Thomas named Kiwanis 'Citizen of the Year'

The Raeford Kiwanis Club named Kay Thomas its Citizen of the Year, and presented the award at its annual Ladies Night event, held at Chason's Barbecue in Lumber Bridge Thursday.

Thomas was the second woman honored with the award since the club established it in 1950; Josephine Hall received the honor in 1960.

The award recognizes the "prime movers" in Hoke County, said club member Harold Gillis, who recounted Thomas' involvement in civic activities.

Gillis said the award goes to the person who "enhances the quality of life of our people" and best typifies

the Kiwanis motto of "we build."

He said Thomas' church and civic contributions had a "thread of assistance woven throughout everything."

She has served in various offices, including presidency, of the Raeford Woman's Club, and was the club's Clubwoman of the Year in 1979. Gillis said her leadership was instrumental in establishment of the campership program for underprivileged children; The Attic, the fore-runner of Share-Your-Christmas; and Hoke County's Festival, part of the celebration of the Bicentennial.

She has been involved with RIF (Reading is Fundamental), the (See CITIZEN, page 5)

Around Town

By Sam C. Morris

I don't believe that we need any more rain for a few weeks. Thursday and Sunday it rained, and with the ground already soaked, it left puddles in the fields. There was wind and lightning on Sunday and I read where power lines were down in the western part of the county. The temperatures over the weekend had highs in the 70s, so part of the weekend was good for outdoor activities.

The forecast calls for the temperatures on Wednesday to have a high of about 50 and the low will be in the 20s. On Thursday, Friday and Saturday we will see the highs in the 50s and the lows in the 30s. There could be some rain on Wednesday.

So far this winter we have escaped the snow and sleet, but we have had several big frosts.

The Raeford Kiwanis Club held their annual ladies night last Thursday night at Chason's in Lumber Bridge. Every year since the late 1940s the club has announced the "Citizen of the Year" at the banquet. This year the 1992 Citizen of the Year for Hoke County was Kay Thomas. (See article about her achievements in the writings elsewhere in the paper).

Kay is the second woman to win the award. The other winner was the late Josephine Hall. We want to offer our congratulations to Kay and I (See AROUND, page 12)