

The News-Journal

The 30th issue of our 85th year

RAEFORD, NORTH CAROLINA

25 CENTS

Wednesday, November 3, 1993

Commission agrees to improve jail

Hoke Commissioners agreed to a proposed settlement of a lawsuit seeking improved conditions for prisoners at Hoke's jail. Meeting in executive session at its regular meeting, the board, in essence, agreed to make improvements at the jail that would bring it into compliance with state regulations.

County Manager Mike Wood and Finance Officer Charles Davis said Tuesday they are inves-

tigating the costs of the jail improvements, but estimated them as follows:

- To install air-conditioning, \$30,000-\$40,000;
- To make plumbing improvements, less than \$10,000;
- To erect a double fence to enclose an outdoors exercise area, less than \$5,000. The exercise area would be located adjacent to Edinborough Avenue

between the radio tower and the jail's kitchen.

•To hire five additional jailers and transport officers, \$100,000. (The current-year cost would be half that.) In all, PLS had wanted 12 new jail officers. The County added four with its new budget; the five to be hired by December will bring the total to nine.

•To house overflow prisoners at another jail, \$40

per day, per prisoner. It's the last expense that concerns Wood the most. The Hoke jail will have an inmate cap of 28. Any other prisoners will be transported to another jail, most likely Robeson County's, Wood says. It's not unheard of for the Hoke jail to have 20 extra inmates; that could cost the County \$288,000 extra per year.

(See JAIL, page 14)



Reluctant princess

Samantha Horne appears unsure about visiting several Raeford businesses dressed as Princess Leah. But seconds later she was all smiles as she and other children from Raeford Playschool stopped by the Hoke ASCS office to trade a song for a few treats.

Commission again puts off forming Board of Adjustment

The Hoke County Board of Commissioners decided to wait until April to appoint a new board of adjustment, turning

down a motion by one member to honor a slate already selected by the Raeford-Hoke Planning Commission.

Six people had been chosen by the planning commission — at the direction of the Hoke Commissioners — and had been trained in a series of workshops, but on the day of the members' swearing-in, were told by the County attorney their selection was possibly illegal.

At the time, Neil Yarborough, who had just become county attorney, said the problem stemmed from a joint city-county board appointing a county-only board of adjustment. And, he said, state law limits an elected body "to allow someone else to make a legislative decision. The fact that we have a joint planning board somehow throws us out."

Commissioner Tom Howell (See ADJUSTMENT, page 7)

Around Town

By Sam C. Morris

The fall weather turned to winter the first of the week. Monday morning the temperature was in the 30s and the high for the day was in the low 50s. By Monday night the thermometer was to show freezing temperatures here. We had frost on the cars Monday morning. This is the second time this fall that I have scraped ice off my car. We had rain Saturday, but the amount varied in the county. Bobby Carter said we had 1.6 inches in Raeford and that his gauge at his place between Timberland and Montrose showed over two inches. Jim Plummer of the Wayside-Rockfish sec-

tion said he had 2.4 inches of rain. We needed the rain.

The forecast for the remainder of the week calls for the highs Wednesday through Friday to be in the 60s and the lows in the 40s. Saturday the high will be in the high 50s and the low in the 30s, with a chance of rain Friday and Saturday.

I don't believe I can remember when so few children came to my house for trick or treat. Since Halloween came on Sunday and it was cold and rainy, it kept the little ones inside. Less than 20 came by and in years past I have had that many (See AROUND, page 14)

All incumbents win re-election

Hoke turns down amendment; approves bonds

Incumbents were overwhelmingly returned to office by Raeford voters Tuesday. Mayor Bob Gentry reclaimed his title, soundly defeating challenger Steve Phillips 589 votes to 284.

Gentry will return to office with two familiar faces — those of City Councilmen Eddie McNeill and Benny McLeod.

"I'm overwhelmed," Gentry said. "I just think the message tonight is that the citizens are happy with the way our city is run, with the leadership," he said after the returns were in just after 10 p.m.

"I'm pleased we got our board members back," Gentry said.

"I'm very grateful to the voters and all for all the support I got."

Eddie McNeill was top vote-getter in the Council race with 523 votes. McLeod followed with 423 votes. Newcomer Clyde Thomas, a postal worker, was third with 305 votes.

Obviously disappointed, Thomas said he would seek office again and take consolation in a good showing for his first run.

"I like Eddie and Benny both," he said of McNeill's and McLeod's victory. "If I weren't running I'd probably vote for them myself," he said.

"I'd like to thank all of my supporters. I feel good about the turnout, but I ran against two strong candidates. I intend to run again in the next election for City Council," he said.

In a distant fourth place was first-time candidate Erick Wowra, personnel director at House of Raeford. He garnered 163 votes.

Wowra was followed by the Rev. Elle Graham, another newcomer, with 143 votes.

Insurance agent Charles Fields, another first-time candidate for Council, received 122 votes.

George McGuire trailed in last place with 19 votes.

Hoke County voters approved all bond issues on the ballot Tuesday, but resoundingly turned down an amendment to the state constitution (See chart, page 11).

(See ELECTION, page 11)

House of Raeford wins case against City

The N.C. Court of Appeals has set aside nearly \$70,000 in fines and costs assessed by the City of Raeford against turkey processing plant House of Raeford. The court said City Manager Tom Phillips didn't have the authority to levy the fines against the company for wastewater permit violations.

House of Raeford's attorney Henry W. Jones Jr. of Raleigh said the company assigned 26 errors in the way the City levied the fines, but the case was determined by only one. "We felt the record was rather error prone," Jones said. "The court picked just the authority issue and ordered to send it back in toto. "I think the case could have fallen on any

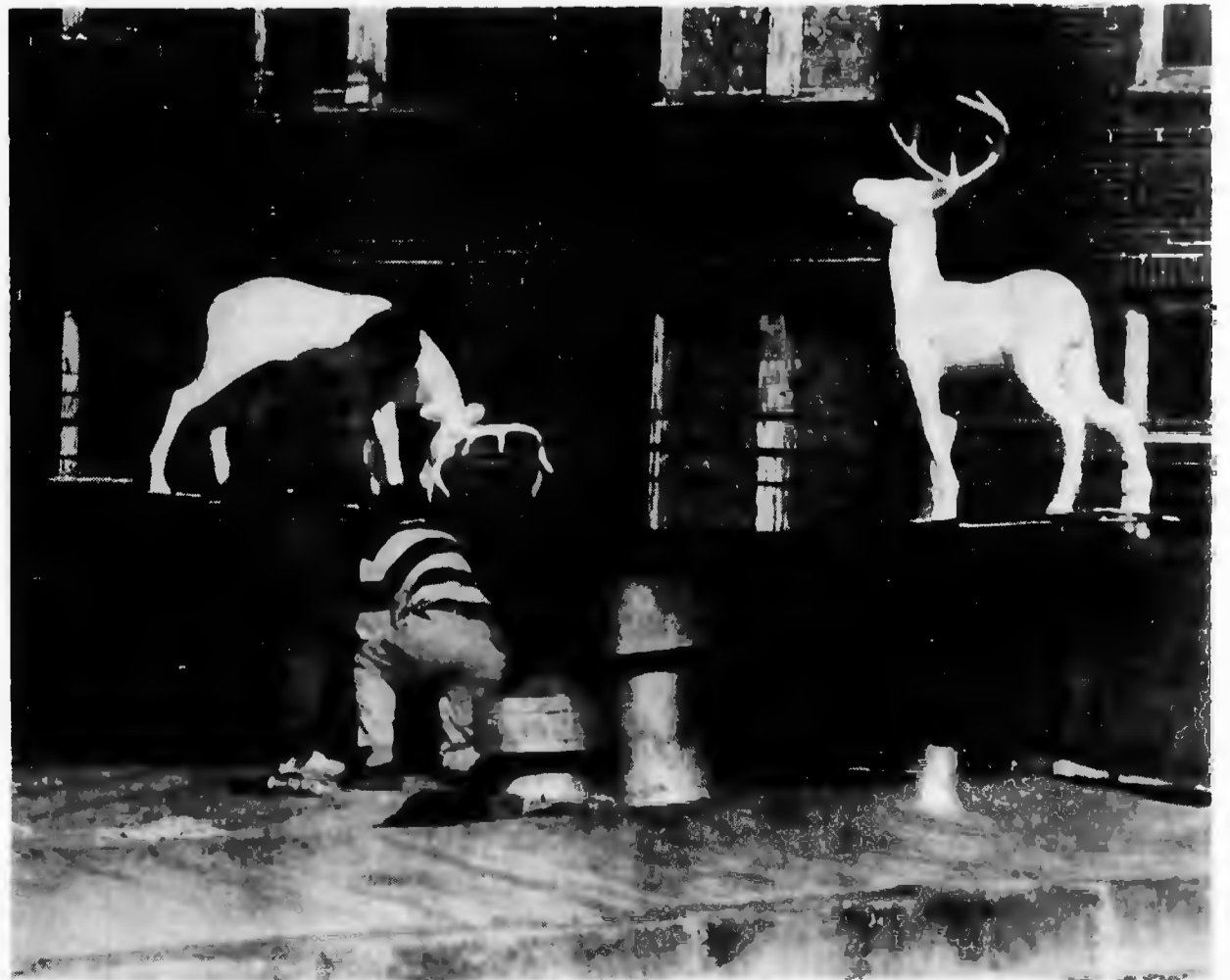
but a few of those (26 errors).

"Mr. Phillips never had the authority to levy the fines, penalties and costs that he did some three years ago."

Mayor Bob Gentry said this morning he can't speak for City Council, but his inclination is the City's response should be to "mend fences."

"This takes the monkey off our back," he said. "We did what we had to do. I don't regret doing it."

"My thought is let's drop it. Marvin (Johnson, company president) and them have done a good job fixing things. He's been staying in compliance ever (See SUIT, page 11)



Deer reclaim vantage

In disrepair for five years, the deers atop the old Gulf station at Main and Central have finally reclaimed their spot as a Raeford landmark. The deer were removed in 1988, fell into disrepair, but were given new life by a grassroots fundraising effort. Related photo, page 7.