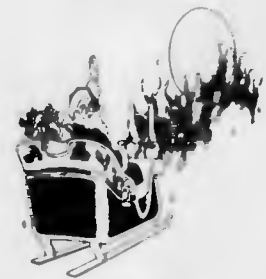


Fire destroys home
See page 7A

The News-Journal will be
closed Wednesday, Dec. 25
and Thursday, Dec. 26



'Tis the season to celebrate
See page 1B



8 days 'til Christmas!

The News-Journal

'If it happened, it's news to us'

No. 37 Vol. 88

HOKE COUNTY 50 CENTS

Wednesday, December 18, 1996

Industry has new leader

By Amy Clarkson
Editor

Burlington Industries' Raeford plant will soon have a new manager, according to officials at the plant.

Bill Archer, who has been managing the menswear plant since 1982, has been promoted to the industry's executive offices in Clarksville, Va. He will be responsible for division project management for Burlington Menswear. He has been in Raeford since 1977.

Taking his place at the helm of the Raeford plant is Bill Hill, a native of Clinton, S.C., began his career with Burlington in 1984 after graduating from Clemson University with a bachelor of science degree in industrial management.

Hill has held a number of positions with Burlington and is currently the plant manager at Burlington Menswear's plant in Bishopville, S.C. He is a member of the First Presbyterian Church in Bishopville, a member of the Lions Club, the Lee County Chamber of Commerce Board, chairman of the Lee County Business Expo and was the 1994 recipient of the Governor's Economic Ambassadors Award for Lee County.

Burlington Industries has two plants in Raeford, the menswear plant and the dyeing plant, and employs about 1,100 people.



Photo by Amy Clarkson

Visit with Santa

Daniel Salas tests the authenticity of Santa's beard at the Heritage Village Christmas party Saturday night. Santa was on hand to listen to last minute gift requests from the military community.

Hoke fund balance rises

By Nicole Gabriel
Staff writer

After two years of having a general fund balance below the state's allowed levels, the county now has an "adequate" balance, according to Frank Baker, a certified public accountant who performs the county's annual financial audit.

Baker presented the audit results for fiscal year 1996 to the board of commissioners Monday night. He reported the county now has a fund balance of more than 11.5 percent, a vast improvement from last year's balance. The lowest percentage the Local

Government Commission, the state agency that regulates county government, recommends is 8 percent.

While Baker commended the board for their efforts at getting the fund balance up to the appropriate levels, he cautioned it to ensure it stays at these levels and to keep improving.

"It still is not a position...in which you can deem yourself rich," Baker said. When the fund balance gets to 18 to 20 percent, then the county will be doing really well, he said.

The financial statement showed total revenues for fiscal year 1996 were \$13,744,835, (See COUNTY, page 7A)

Theft doesn't dampen spirits

By Kristin Guthrie
Staff writer

Despite a recent robbery, the spirit of Christmas has not been dampened at Hillcrest Baptist Church. The congregation has rallied to keep the joy in the holiday season.

On Saturday, Dec. 7, members of the church gathered for a Christmas covered-dish supper and a time of fellowship. Instead

of bringing gifts to exchange with each other, church members were asked to bring a present for one of their two missionary families.

For years, the Women's Missionary Union, WMU, at Hillcrest has been organizing an annual generous gift-giving project for at least one family in the Hillcrest community.

"We usually pick a family in the neighborhood or in the (See CHURCH, page 10A)

State officers visit schools

By Kristin Guthrie
Staff writer

Teacher turnover, school safety and special education certification were hot topics when members of the Department of Public Instruction left their offices in Raleigh and paid Hoke County a visit last week.

Their mission was not to administer any new program or evaluate the school system, but to discuss the problems facing Hoke County Schools. Eventually, the board hopes to visit every county in the state.

During their early morning meeting last Thursday, Deputy Superintendent of the Department of Public Instruction Rich-

ard Thompson said the goal of the visits is to "help the state Board of Education make better decisions because of the visits."

Some of the issues on tap included professional educator issues, standard course of study, basic education programs, pre-kindergarten/K alternative models, legislative issues, technology, satisfaction with public schools and funding.

One of the biggest concerns across the state seems to be the lack of available teachers.

"Everyone seems to be talking about the difficulty of recruiting and keeping teachers. Is it a problem in Hoke County?" asked Thompson. The whole room responded "YES!"

School systems all over the state complain that teacher turnover is a real problem, said Jim Barbour, associate superintendent for financial and personnel services.

"With growing enrollment, reduced class sizes and turnover, we have a problem," Barbour said.

He said most teachers leave the profession for personal reasons — family, lack of support or lack of compensation.

Things may be looking up, according to the state officials.

Thompson said the governor is planning to push the state to the national average in teacher pay and to deal with (See SCHOOL, page 8A)



Photo by Jen Osborn

The county has broken ground on the new jail, which will be adjacent to the current building. The prefabricated jail will be completed in 1997.

Around Town

By Sam C. Morris
Contributing editor

The weather was nice over the weekend and many of the towns and cities across the state had their Christmas parades. Monday it was damp and the thermostat didn't reach 50 degrees. It was warmer on Tuesday.

The forecast is for colder weather for the remainder of the week. Wednesday the high will be in the 50s and the low in the 30s. Thursday, Friday and Saturday will see the highs in the low 40s or high 30s and the lows will be in the 20s. There is a chance of

rain on Wednesday. I haven't heard any long-range forecast for Christmas. I hope it will be warm and sunny.

This will be the last time I will ask people to donate to the "Share Your Christmas" fund. This project helped more than 500 families last year and the need is great again this year. I know it will make you feel better Christmas morning to know that every child in Hoke County has had a visit from Santa.

So get out your checkbook and send your donation to: "Share (See AROUND, page 8A)

Jail progress is good, officials say

By Nicole Gabriel
Staff writer

Construction of the county jail addition is going as planned, according to county officials.

Although the county postponed construction last year because of a low fund balance, County Manager Mike Wood said that this year the county is in much better fiscal shape and money should not be a problem.

The Local Government Commission, the state agency that oversees county borrowing, froze all borrowing last year when the

fund balance dropped below the permitted 8 percent. According to the results of this year's audit presented at the Board of Commissioners meeting Monday night, the county now has a fund balance of over 11.5 percent.

The jail annex will cost \$850,000 — about \$100,000 above the original estimated cost. Wood explained that the LGC is aware of the situation and he does not anticipate any problems. He said the county only has to amend its application to reflect the additional amount.

Wood said the prefabricated

jail units are complete and ready to be shipped once the contractor is ready for them. He said that should be after the first of the year.

Sheriff Wayne Byrd is pleased with the progress of construction.

"It's moving along quite well," Byrd said.

He said the addition is needed. He explained the present jail has 28 beds and has three medical isolation cells. Because of a cap on the jail population, the county cannot exceed 31 prisoners in (See JAIL, page 10A)

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