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Around Town



Saturday night or early Sunday morning a thunderstorm came through the county. We don't have many of these in the fall of the year. The temperatures have been about normal for this time of year, with the highs in the 60s and the lows in the 40s. It has been windy and it doesn't do much good to rake leaves. Some trees are almost bare of leaves.

The forecast calls for the same type of weather for the remainder of the week, Wednesday through Saturday. The highs will be in the high 50s or low 60s and the lows will be in the 40s. There is a chance of rain on Friday.

I had a call from Morgan Jackson, who is administrative assistant in the Rockingham office for Congressman Bill Hefner. He said that he would be in Raeford and Hoke County on Wednesday, Nov. 12. He will meet people at City Hall on that day. If you have some business that you need the congressman to help you with, Morgan will be glad to assist

I know that he can be of (See AROUND, page 8A)

50 cents

Expert says county voting districts not feasible

By NICOLE GABRIEL Staff writer

Drawing county commissioner districts in Hoke County that will pass the U.S. Justice Department's racial diversity test remains a difficult or even impossible task, a demographer from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte told the Board of Commissioners Mon-

Dr. Gerald Ingalls, a geography professor who developed three districting plans for the state and two other counties, said Hoke County fails to meet at least two of the three federally mandated legal

the need for districting.

The county opted for Ingalls to look into the legal viability of a districting plan after the Concerned Citizens for Effective Government, a group that wants to restructure the commission from at-large to district representation, presented its plan and a petition to the commissioners last month.

Ingalls focused on the Native American community, studying previous elections and voter registration population. Based on his initial investigation, he said the county should use districts "as a last resort.

"Basically, it doesn't look like preconditions required to prove districting is a feasible option,"

minority group you're looking at is Native Americans."

Ingalls said the county would have to draw eight to 10 districts to meet the federal legal conditions. Even then, Ingalls said, the districts might not give the Native American population the vote they

Drawing a district that will give the Native Americans a safe 60 percent majority vote will be difficult because of Hoke County's Native American voting population, Ingalls said.

Most of Hoke Native American ment, he said. voters live in three precincts — Blue Springs, Antioch and said, "but will they stand up in

Ingalls said. "Particularly if the Allendale — but those numbers aren't enough to meet the Justice Department's "sufficiently large and significantly compact" rule to justify a district, Ingalls said.

"In my opinion the Indian population is not large enough," Ingalls said. "I think the issue here is a lack of candidates."

Ingalls said in order to create a district with a Native American majority, the county would be forced to draw a skewed district that included all the county's Native Americans. That's a tough sell to the federal Justice Depart-

"You can draw districts," Ingalls

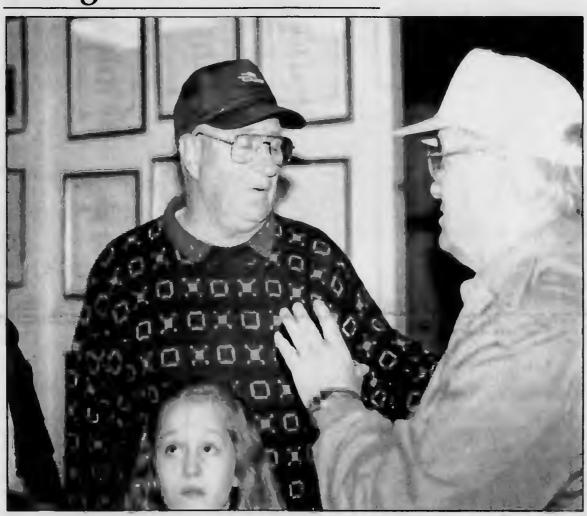
court? That's the question whether or not the (U.S.) Justice Department will accept it."

Another factor that makes districting difficult to justify in Hoke county is the county's history of electing minorities, Ingalls said.

Black candidates in the previous commissioners and Board of Education races showed the strongest rates of election, Ingalls said.

Of the black candidates that ran between 1990 and 1996, Ingalls said, the voters elected 81 percent of black candidates, compared to only 31 percent of the white candidates and 25 percent of the Native American candidates.

Doing what he does best



Nicole Gabriel/News-Journa

Newly re-elected mayor Bob Gentry talks about his victory Tuesday night at The News-Journal office with granddaughter Katie Robeson and James Guy. Several of the candidates were on hand for the posting of

Teen curfew passes for county

By NICOLE GABRIEL Staff writer

Hoke County's youth and their parents could face court time and \$100 fines for violating a county curfew ordinance that goes into effect Jan. 1. The Board of Commissioners unanimously approved the youth protection ordinance for a 6-month trial basis.

As of the first of the year, the county will restrict juveniles 15 and under from public places between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m., seven days a week. It also restricts ju-

Detective takes

stand in

Ferguson trial

By NICOLE GABRIEL

Staff writer

Former Hoke sheriff's detec-

tive Bob Conerly will take the

stand again today, continuing his

testimony of a controversial state-

ment he says Rodriguez Ferguson

made the day after the New

Year's Eve shootings at the

Puppy Creek Family Fun Center

and Zodiac Lounge three years

B. Hill and Lisa Dubs moved to

(See TRIAL, page 8A)

Defense attorneys Henderson

veniles not attending school from Howell offered the motion to public places and establishments adopt the curfew for six months between 7:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.

on school days.

The ordinance holds parents, guardians and establishment owners responsible for violations. Juveniles who violate the ordinance could face time in juvenile court. Any person other than a juvenile found guilty of violating the ordinance is subject to a fine for as much as \$100.

The curfew does not include the Raeford city limits.

Commissioner Thomas rather than one year, as the county's curfew committee originally suggested to the commis-

sioners in August. Despite Howell's reservations about how the county will enforce the ordinance and how much money it will require to restrict juveniles 15 and under during daylight and nighttime hours, he said, six months will give the county sufficient time to determine whether or not the

(See CURFEW, page 10A)



Kristin Guthrie/News-Journa

Shooting victim Mary Ann Hunter talks with former sheriff's detectives Bob Conerly (left) and Randy Howell as accused shooter Rodriguez Ferguson confers with his attorneys in a Bladen courtroom.

Gentry wins again

McNeill and McLeod return with newcomer Jordan to Council

By NICOLE GABRIEL Staff writer

Bob Gentry returns for another four years as Raeford's mayor after winning yesterday's election by 175 votes.

Also returning to Council for four more years are Eddie McNeill and James "Benny" McLeod with 732 and 661 votes respectively. Newcomer John Jordan beat out the competition for Joe Upchurch's unexpired seat with 533 votes.

"I'm just thankful the voters of the City of Raeford have came forth and said who they wanted to spend their tax dollars," Gentry said last night, "and who they wanted to lead us into the next century. I'm grateful they gave me back two great council members and one new one."

Mayor candidate Milton Williams said he re-

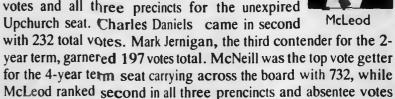
spected the voters' decision.

"I wanted it to be a decision by the people and the people have decided," Williams said.

An excited John Jordan shook hands with bystanders after watching the results go up on The News-Journal board last night. "It was a good learning experience and I enjoyed getting out and talking with people and learning

what their views are on certain issues," Jordan said. Approximately 40 percent of Raeford's 2,410 registered voters turned out yesterday to cast their ballots, with 1,856 in Raeford No. 1, 1,380 in Raeford No. 2, 363 in Raeford No. 4 and 101 absentee ballots

Gentry carried Raeford No. 2 and 4 and the absentee votes while Williams carried Raeford No. 1 in the mayor's race. Jordan carried in absentee votes and all three precincts for the unexpired Upchurch seat. Charles Daniels came in second



McNeill



BY KRISTIN GUTHRIE

Staff writer

After an uneventful public hearing, the Rae ford City Council voted Monday night to adopt the 1997 thorough fare plan recommendations from the N.C. Department of Transportation (D.O.T.)

Disagreeing with a small portion of the plan, Council member Clyde Thomas voted against adopting the resolution while the rest of Council voted in favor. Thomas said one of the recommendations from D.O.T. seemed to indicate that a Raeford house would have to be torn down in order for the plans to proceed as recommended.

The plans propose the realign-

ing of U.S. 401 Business to intersect Harris Avenue at Magnolia Street. According to Thomas, this plan would mean road construction where Frank Crumpler's home currently stands. "I don't agree with this," Thomas said.

Council member Eddie McNeill reminded Thomas that this thorough fare plan is just that, just a plan, but Thomas still voted against the resolution.

D.O.T. associate Chad Edge reiterated that this plan is simply a proposal that Council would have to agree upon before any construction would begin.

"These plans are subject to how hard local officials want to push it," Edge said, and it also depends on state funding as well

(See PLAN, page 10A)