

# The News-Journal

Turkey Festival  
Preview Inside!



Hoke County's newspaper since 1907

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## This week



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## Around Town



By SAM C. MORRIS  
Contributing Editor

The weather for the past week can be called "Dennis." Hurricane Dennis decided to retrace its path along the North Carolina coast before coming ashore around Morehead City. The winds were not strong but it did bring plenty of water to the state. Along the coast they had over 10 inches of rain. Durham had over six inches. In Hoke County we had three inches or more on Saturday and Sunday. Let's hope that it has finally played out.

The forecast for the remainder of the week, Wednesday through Saturday, calls for the highs to be in the 80s and the lows will be in the 60s. There is a chance of rain late Thursday or on Friday morning.

Travel was not as heavy through Raeford over the Labor Day weekend because of the hurricane. Some people did go to the coast and it had cleared up by Sunday afternoon. Most of the businesses in Raeford were closed Monday and as this is being written the sun is out and everything is great for a holiday. Maybe many lives will be saved because of the light traffic.

Sunday morning at the Raeford Presbyterian Church the guest minister was the Reverend S. T. (Strad) Snively of Pinehurst. The Reverend Mr. Snively's wife is the niece

(See AROUND, page 8A)

## County complex building timetable set

### Agencies selected for spaces

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

County Commissioners gave

a green light on Tuesday night, approving a timetable when the future county complex to be constructed on the outskirts of Raeford would begin.

Just ten minutes prior to the County Commissioners going into an executive session that

subsequently determined the fate of the new proposed Hoke County Administrative Facility, Architect Robbie Ferris of Shuller Ferris Lindstrom & Associates of Fayetteville presented a Downtown Raeford Redevelopment Plan on behalf of the

Raeford Revitalization Committee.

Ferris said afterwards he didn't realize it might be too late to keep the administrative offices downtown.

During the earlier public input session, Ferris displayed an

aerial-scale rendering showing how administrative offices and the County Courthouse could remain downtown. In merely three minutes allotted to him, Ferris said "if the county could be brought back into downtown

(See COMPLEX, page 8A)

## Sudden drop in SAT scores raises flags

By KRISTIN GUTHRIE  
Staff writer

After receiving disturbing reports that Hoke County students scored on the average 25 points below last year's cumulative verbal and mathematical SAT score, Associate Superintendent Jeff Moss said Hoke County school officials plan to offer a few different options to help students better prepare for the SAT.

Moss said the Hoke County school system plans to begin offering SAT preparation courses on Saturdays, an elective SAT course during the regular school day and computer labs with drill and practice SAT questions before and after school and also during lunch. Time will tell just how many of these options become a reality, but Moss said the Hoke County public school system plans to implement as many of these offerings as soon as possible.

The sudden concern about SAT preparation came when Hoke County students scored 25 points below last year, that is, averaging 20 points less on the mathematical section and five points less on the verbal portion. This year, Hoke County students averaged 843, down from last year's 868 cumulative score.

Moss said, to a great degree, he attributes the low math score to the fact that two substitute teachers taught entire geometry courses at the high school last year. Moss said obviously this was not an ideal situation, however, teacher shortages last year forced the school system to fill the vacant positions with the most qualified substitutes instead of certified geometry teachers.

The five-point average drop in the verbal section, according to Moss was not significant enough to warrant great concern, but it did contribute to the total 25-point drop overall.

Looking at Hoke County against other school systems across the state, Moss said North Carolina as a whole averaged 986 this year, up from 982 from the year before.

Comparing Hoke County to the other four school systems currently involved in a high-profile low-wealth lawsuit, neighboring Cumberland County's average climbed six points, and Robeson County rose slightly four points on average, but the other two systems fell

(See SAT, page 8A)

## \$6 million high school expansion in progress nearly doubles space

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

One of the most ambitious construction expansions in the history of Hoke County High

School is presently underway, spanning the bridge between two centuries.

In 1961, Hoke High graduated its first class of seniors. Only 40 years later, seniors will enjoy

commencement exercises in an expanded facility in 2001 that almost doubles space.

The new wing will be dedicated to Chairman John D.

(See EXPANSION, page 6A)



Tony Strenke, Neil Hobbs and Bryan Rose of Raleigh-based Specialty Construction Company worked on the 250-ft. American Tower Corporation structure on Aberdeen Road last week. The men were at the site Saturday morning braving winds from a menacing Dennis.

## Board action topples tower plans

By PAT ALLEN WILSON  
Editor

The Hoke County Board of Adjustment turned down an appeal that would have allowed a cell phone tower to be placed in eastern

Hoke, and attorneys for the tower company say they will have to resort to court action in the matter.

Jeff Benson and Cheryl Pence, lawyers for American Tower Corporation, appealed Wednesday night a

decision made by the Hoke zoning administrator that they say leaves a missing link in a chain of towers the company plans to erect throughout the county with the goal of renting space to

(See TOWER, page 8A)



Mary Archie McNeill

## Endowment to enrich music ed

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

The Sandhills are alive with the sound of music as a living commemoration for former Hoke County music educator, Mary Archie McNeill, is being composed.

McNeill, a mentor of music in the Hoke school system and Sandhills Community College for over 30 years, will be honored by former students from three decades in a concert next year.

The gala celebration will be called "Choral Fest 2000." It will coincide with the announcement of "The Mary Archie McNeill Foundation Endowment Fund." A memorable weekend filled with a myriad of activities includes a pig-pickin' on March 31, 2000 and Saturday rehearsals followed by a premier banquet.

The Choral Fest on April 1 may conceivably feature as many as a chorus of 1,000 former students, who are all invited to sing. Among musical selections are: "The Star-Spangled Banner," "O Eyes of My Beloved," "Gloria Patri," and "Edelweiss." Former Hoke student Jerry Cribbs, director of arts education at New

(See ENDOWMENT, page 6A)

## Appointment of economic head nixed by commission

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

The appointment of a new Economic Developer to promote industrial growth in

Hoke County was delayed by dissent from County Commissioners on September 7.

Prior to the meeting, Commission Chairman James A.

(See ECONOMIC, page 10A)

## Deputies get new body armor

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

It was no fashion show at the Hoke County Sheriff's Department last Wednesday as deputies waited to suit up in black vests.

Deputies completed the task of wrapping on the newest "body armor" around their torsos. A tape measure in hand, Mark Baker, sales representative for Lawmens' Safety Supply of Raleigh, provided deputies with the custom-fitted vests designed for defense — not dress.

"These are a tool that will



Deputies (from left) Tasha Smith, Victor Lopez and Rachel Craven try on their new body armor.

save deputies' lives," Baker said. "There are law enforcement officers alive today because they

(See ARMOR, page 10A)



Architects' drawing of expansion under construction on the MacDonald side of Hoke High School.