

The News-Journal

Hoke County's newspaper since 1907

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This week

News-Journal may attempt special edition

If Hurricane Floyd causes extensive damage to Hoke County, *The News-Journal* will attempt to print a special edition on Friday to disseminate information on cleanup efforts.

If electrical power to run our press is unavailable, we plan to print the paper in a newsletter form using a generator.

We will attempt to distribute the papers free of charge at our usual rack locations.

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Around Town



By SAM C. MORRIS
Contributing Editor

The weather for the past week has been about normal for this time of year. The highs have been in the 80s and the lows at night have been in the high 50s. We finally got rid of Dennis, but Hurricane Floyd is approaching the east coast. As this is being written Monday, it is a category four hurricane with winds up to 150 miles per hour. Of course the path the hurricane will take will control our weather for the remainder of the week.

The forecast for the remainder of the week, Wednesday through Saturday, calls for the highs to be in the 70s and the lows in the 60s. There is a chance of rain for Wednesday and Thursday.

The Turkey Festival is scheduled for this week. Many events are planned for the week. Of course many plans will have to be changed if Hurricane Floyd comes in on the North Carolina coast.

The Shriners fish fry is also held during the festival. It will be held on Saturday in the Edenborough Shopping Center.

The following item was left out of this column last week:

Mary Alice and I were surprised Monday when Joe and Sue Hancock of Salisbury came by the house for a visit. Joe is the son of my late sister, (See AROUND, page 8A)

Hurricane Floyd aims for Hoke

By PAT ALLEN WILSON
Editor

"It's going to be the worst storm Hoke County has faced," Hoke County Emergency Services Coordinator Al

Schwarzbher said at a called meeting last night of governmental department heads and emergency, safety personnel and others.

Schwarzbher said he had just come from a conference call with

state Emergency Management officials. "When they mention Hoke County, it's serious. Hoke County popped up along with Robeson County.

"We are looking at hurricane force winds beginning at 8 a.m.

Thursday," he said. "It's going to be extremely bad from 8 o'clock on."

Floyd is expected to arrive at Charleston, South Carolina tonight (Wednesday) with winds at 138 mph. "Affecting winds"

are expected at 9 p.m. The winds are expected to be 80 mph sustained with gusts above 100 mph. Tropical force winds are expected by 11 p.m. tonight with gale force winds coming in between 2 and 3 (See STORM, page 9A)



Top: Hoke Emergency Services Coordinator Al Schwarzbher. "By predictions, this is the worst hurricane to hit Hoke County." Right: Clara Hines contemplates empty shelves at Bo's Food Store last night: "Where's the bread?" she asked. Bottom: Hoke lies in the projected path.

Festival Parade on hold

By PAT ALLEN WILSON
Editor

The 15th Annual N.C. Turkey Festival events have been put on hold or postponed due to Hurricane Floyd's expected arrival. Original plans were for the events to be September 16-18.

Festival planners have postponed (See FESTIVAL, page 8A)



Don Porter

Economic developer picked

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

The County Commissioners debated in executive session for 45 minutes in a special meeting called on September 10 in Raeford, and named Retired (See DEVELOPER, page 5A)

SBI sheriff probe alters purchase policy

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Is it over yet?

District Attorney Jean Elizabeth Powell, Judicial District 16A for Hoke and Scotland counties, still has no final word from the SBI on the status of the investigation surrounding Hoke's Sheriff Jim Davis.

On the county front, County

Manager Bernice McPhatter confirmed she's finished her segment of the inquiry with the SBI.

However, the SBI office in Fayetteville was "mum" on Monday, directing any questions to the Attorney General's office in Raleigh, who subsequently said they had no information. Investigating SBI Agent Eric Hooks in Raleigh didn't return a phone call to *The News-Journal* either.

In the interim, Davis is conducting daily operations with Hoke deputies as usual, protecting the county.

One governmental source claims a "stalemate" exists over gathering any substantial evidence or information to implicate Davis in any sort of criminal wrongdoing.

Powell said former Hoke deputy Gary Hammond filed a

complaint with the DA's office regarding Davis' alleged misuse of funds.

It was reported by other sources Hammond reportedly alleged Davis used funds from the Sheriff's budget to equip a police car belonging to his brother, Wagram Chief of Police William Davis. The vehicle was allegedly installed with emer- (See PROBE, page 10A)

Resort may hold up woodpecker preserve

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
staff writer

The recent announcement by the North Carolina Department of Transportation it plans to purchase 2,504 acres of land in southwest Hoke County as a preserve for the red-cockaded woodpecker has elicited mixed responses.

County officials have expressed concern over tax loss, and County Manager Bernice McPhatter verified the County has requested a public hearing be

held. Thus far, no date has been set.

One member of the Hoke County Planning Commission is doubtful about the acquisition and a local Raeford man wants to see the land turned into a resort.

Carl Goode, head of Citizens participation Unit in Raleigh said he's received a letter from John Pope of St. Pauls Road in Raeford, expressing dissent about converting the pine forest into a preserve for the endangered woodpecker species.

"Mr. Pope has said he would like to see the land used as a golf course," Goode said.

In Pope's letter to Goode, he said, "We had hoped Mr. Wood would develop the Callaway tract into one of the finest resorts in the state."

Goode said no explanation is given in Pope's letter if he planned to purchase the land, too.

"Mr. Pope has just asked for a public hearing on the matter and said he would like to see it used for something other than a pre- (See PRESERVE, page 8A)

United Way sets goal of \$60,000

By PAT ALLEN WILSON
Editor

Hoke County United Way kicked off its 1999-2000 campaign at a breakfast last week and set a goal of \$60,000.

This year's Campaign Chairman Don Koonce told those gathered, "We look forward to exceeding the goal."

Last year's goal of \$58,500 was surpassed.

Among its projects, United Way plans to provide funds for the Hoke County Chapter American Red Cross, Bethesda Inc. (alcoholic/addict recovery program), Cape Fear Council Boy Scouts of America, Golden Gate CDC (educational activities for at-risk youth), Hoke County 4-H Council, Hoke County Reading/

Literacy Council, Hoke County Rescue Squad, Hoke County Association for the Developmentally Handicapped, Pines of the Carolina Girl Scouts Council, Senior Citizens, H.E.L.P./Share Your Christmas, and S.E. North Carolina Radio Reading Service (for the visually impaired).

Representatives of some of the agencies that will benefit from United Way services were in at- (See UNITED WAY, page 9A)



Don Koonce



An aerial view of the envisioned Downtown Raeford Redevelopment Plan is premiered by Shuller Ferris Lindstrom & Associates of Fayetteville.

Historic hotel donated to City, possible anchor for revitalization

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

A Fayetteville bank bestowed the old Raeford hotel as a gift to the City of Raeford on Monday night with no ribbons and no strings.

Raeford officials expressed gratitude to become the beneficiary of the vacant hotel.

"We're looking forward to seeing downtown Raeford rejuvenated," Raeford Mayor Bob Gentry said. "We've been concerned and for years Kay Thomas, who unfortunately passed away, was the force behind downtown revitalization. She was so outgoing and full of ideas. The revitalization sort of died with her.

"This downtown redevelopment is becoming the thing in small towns across the state now."

Gentry envisions a Raeford historic district with renovated store fronts on each building with underground electrical cables "with no more crisscrossing across the streets." He hopes the Raeford hotel will be feasible to restore.

Originally known as the Hotel Bluemont back in 1939, Hotel Raeford has remained boarded up since 1996. It recently underwent a foreclosing procedure.

Now City officials predict the empty shell, designed originally with marble floors and opulent dark wood fixtures, could be revived to its former (See HOTEL, page 10A)