

The News-Journal

If it happened, it's news to us

No. 27 Vol. 92

50 cents

Wednesday, October 6, 1999

See us at
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In A

Fire Prevention
Week always
first week in Oct.
page 3A

In B

Stained glass
windows glimmer
with parables
1B

4-H week
marked with
pullout section
inside B

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Around Town



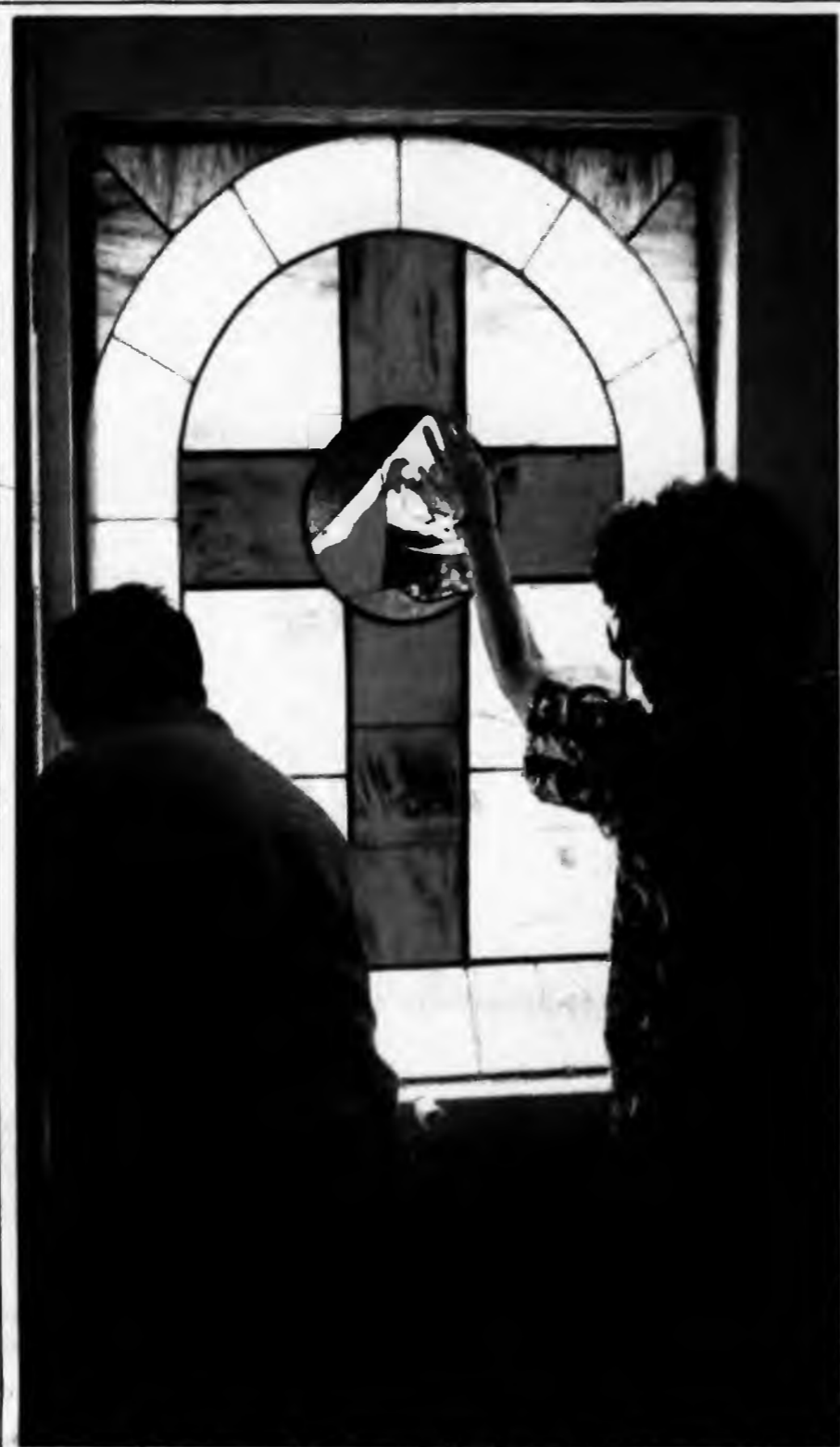
By SAM C. MORRIS
Contributing Editor

The fall weather is with us and you don't know whether to have heat or let the air conditioner run. As I stated last week, it was raining when I was writing my column. We didn't get as much as some parts of the state but we did get from four to five inches of rain. This just added to the flooded conditions in the eastern part of the state. Maybe it will stop for a while and let things get back to normal.

The forecast for the remainder of the week, Wednesday through Friday, calls for cooler weather, the highs for the period will be in the high 60s or low 70s and the lows will be in the high 40s or the low 50s. Maybe the rain will hold off during this period.

Most of us feel sorry for the flood victims and we all want to help in any way we can. Be sure when you make a donation that the person or organization is on the up and up. It is in times like this that the con artists are at work. There are many reliable places to place your donations and they are needed. Just be careful!

Last week there was an item in this column about the upcoming Centennial Celebration of the Raeford Baptist Church. The big day will be on Sunday, November 21 beginning at 10:30 a.m. (See AROUND, page 5A)



Labor of love
Phillip Musselwhite and his wife, Beth, a stained glass artist, finish installation of a window in the vestry at Hillcrest Baptist Church. All 19 of the church's windows were handmade. In the vestibule, twin stained glass mission windows depict the symbol of the Lamb. See page 2B for story and other photos.



City Council annexes House of Raeford, receives clean audit report

By KRISTIN GUTHRIE
Staff writer

After a rather uneventful public hearing at the City Council meeting Monday night, Council members voted to annex the House of Raeford into the City limits effective February 1, 2000.

As described in the request for annexation, the said property is lying and being in Raeford Township, lying on the south side of

and adjacent to U.S. Highway 401 Business, being bounded on the east by D.P. Chaudhuri and Hoke County Committee of 100s, Inc., on the south and west by Nash Johnson and Sons Farms, Inc.

In other items of annexation, a public hearing was set to take place during the Council's regular November meeting to discuss a request for annexation from Oscar James Adams and wife for

their property at 826 West Avenue and from Sandhills Community College for its property located South of U.S. Highway 401 Business.

After taking a close look at the City's books from the last fiscal year, Frank Baker, CPA, reported "a clean opinion of the financial statements," during the Council meeting.

In his audit, Baker said, "In our opinion, based on our audit,

the general purpose financial statements referred to...present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of City of Raeford...as of June 30, 1999 and the results of its operations and the cash flows of its proprietary fund types for the year then ended in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles."

Pointing out some of the audit's highlights, Baker commented that the City's non-des-

igned available fund balance ended with \$807,697, that is, approximately 30 percent of a current year's expenditures. In his professional opinion, Baker said, this figure should be around \$1.1 million, or approximately 50-some percent of the year's expenditures.

Commenting briefly on the City's financial statements, Baker pointed out only one ma- (See CITY MEETS, page 10A)

County complex timetable delayed by environmental assessment, survey

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Nestled in a forest of green pines, the new Hoke County Administrative Facility's 22-acre campus will shelter a number of department agencies under one roof for the first time.

Encompassing 16,156 square feet, the \$2.3 million project is estimated for completion in April, 2001. County officials cited the preliminary project schedule for the county complex is on

track. However, a few targeted tasks are running behind schedule.

"Everything is running pretty smoothly," said Dennis Baxley, Hoke's public building director. "The building programming is completed and ahead of schedule for space needs. Most of the smaller departments will be accommodated there. We really haven't had any of the larger departments knocking on the door asking to be included in the new building."

Baxley said the programming entailed getting input from department heads about how many employees they would have and the space needed. Department heads were also interviewed, informing Baxley what type of equipment they would prefer in (See COMPLEX, page 9A)



Director Dennis Baxley of Hoke's public building department. (Photo by Victoriana Summers)

County meeting packed by crowd Debates proposed subdivision change

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

The Hoke Board of Commissioners devoted hours of debate over whether to approve a proposed subdivisions regulation amendment, or oppose a reduction in acreage from 10 acres down to 2-1/2 acres. A meeting room packed full of Hoke residents pitted many in favor and others against making any changes.

The County staff urged the subdivision

amendment not be passed; the planning board was recommending it be considered.

Commissioners were requested to change the current definition of subdivisions from "the division of land into parcels greater than ten acres where no street right-of-way dedication is involved," to a proposed change that would allow "the division of land into parcels greater than 2-1/2 acres where no street right-of-way dedication is involved."

(See SUBDIVISION, page 9A)

Court takes break, suit on education prolonged

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Bridging the gap... The State of North Carolina is defendant while five of the poorest counties in the state are fighting to balance the scales for public education based on the right to learn, rather than it being determined on how much tax base a county earns.

Hoke County school officials contend a schism exists; it divides the school

system's status quo between students in counties straining for more educational dollars and affluent counties spreading wealth to enhance educational opportunities for its own.

In the current low wealth lawsuit addressing this controversial issue, culling children to succeed educationally should not be determined by whether they live in a wealthy county or a poorer neighbor. A responsibility rests on the state to ensure (See LAWSUIT, page 5A)

Dog credited with saving friends, deputy investigated

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

A "cruelty to animal" incident report was filed by the Hoke County Sheriff's Department on September 14. It lists one of its own employees as the alleged suspect.

According to the written investigation report, Deputy David Bloedorn, who resided in a home on Sparrow Drive, allegedly "had locked two golden retriever dogs in his garage and did not provide

food or water for the dogs." Neighbors alleged the dogs had been left at the home abandoned.

Thus far, no charges have been filed (See DOG, page 10A)



Winnie

\$74,000 state grant approved for teen pregnancy prevention

The Blue Springs-Hoke County Community Development Corporation was recently notified that it has been awarded \$74,250 in teen pregnancy prevention initiatives funding by the N.C. De-

partment of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health.

Funding is expected to begin this month.

Hoke County has the (See GRANT, page 7A)

Rape Crisis Center opens

What is one of the most unreported crimes occurring in Hoke and Cumberland counties?

Rape. That's the consensus of opinion coming from Rape

Crisis Volunteers of Cumberland County, a nonprofit organization established in 1923.

The organization is currently opening its first Rape (See OPENS, page 8A)

Local guardsmen deployed

The first line of assault is to the noses of the Army National Guard troops who are deployed to flood-stricken

areas of North Carolina. The smell is described as that of a combination of animal car- (See DEPLOYED, page 10A)