

# The News-Journal

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## This week



State's top judge  
to speak at banquet  
page 4A



High School stadium  
to be dedicated  
to Autry  
page 6A

Congressmen meet  
with Hoke farmers  
page 8A

## Index

Births ..... 3B  
Calendar ..... 2B  
Classifieds ..... 8-10B  
Deaths ..... 5A  
Editorials ..... 2,3A  
Engagements ..... 3B  
Legals ..... 6-7B  
Public Record ..... 5A  
Religion ..... 2,10B  
Socials ..... 3,4B  
TV Listings ..... 4-5B  
Weddings ..... 3B

## Around Town



By SAM C. MORRIS  
Contributing Editor

The 8 degree weather feels better than the high 90s that we had the first of last week. Saturday and Sunday the highs were only in the 80s and the lows at night were in the low 60s. The thunderstorms that came through the county last Friday produced more thunder and lightning than it did rain. My gauge registered about 3/4 of an inch of rain. I haven't heard of any damage in Hoke County, like there was in other parts of the state. My wife, daughter and son-in-law were returning to Raeford from Louisburg and they had to stop once and then travel slowly before they arrived safely home.

The forecast for the remainder of the week, Wednesday through Saturday, calls for the highs to be in the low 90s or high 80s and the lows to be in the high 60s. There is a chance of rain in the afternoons.

Last Wednesday afternoon I went to the Earl Hendrix farm to meet Congressman Robin Hayes. He and another Congressman from Kansas were there to talk with Hoke farmers about agricultural issues and how they affect farms.

There were many people there who were not farmers, like myself. I had some questions that I wanted to ask the congressman and he was very gracious in taking time to talk with me. I think the Congressman made a good impression (See AROUND, page 7A)

## Toxins from landfill found in water

### State warned Hoke about groundwater, never received response

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

Hoke County officials were informed by the state more than six months ago that groundwater monitored in wells at the closed Hoke Landfill had flunked acceptable ratings, but the warning went unheeded. If left uncorrected, the condition

could potentially contaminate drinking water in some county wells, says geologist Mark Poindexter of the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

"Volatile chemical compounds were detected" in November 1999 and June 21, 2000," Poindexter said. "These chemicals exceeded levels allowed. Hoke's well

samples did not comply with water quality standards," he said.

"County officials continued to ignore the condition existed," he added.

When the "low levels" of chemicals were discovered in the wells, Poindexter said the amounts definitely showed more than just traces.

"We are concerned," Poindexter said.

"We don't know if it could affect anybody yet, or not — or if it is an immediate threat to public health," he said.

"Locally, there has been some seepage into the groundwater table. We don't know how far it has spread, and that has to be determined."

In February, the state requested the county acquire the services of a licensed geologist for its solid waste division, and (See LANDFILL, page 8A)

A gathering first envisioned to unify men of Hoke County expanded to include as many women and children, and crossed lines of races and creeds. (Photos by Victoriana Summers)



## Fellowship proclaims Hoke unity

### 200 men plus women, children fill church for service

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

"I think this was one of the greatest unity programs in Hoke County, and will, perhaps, become a model for other counties," said the Rev. Ray P. Owens, host of the first 200 Men Fellowship held at Freedom Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church on Sunday evening, August 20. "People are still feeling the spirit of this event, and it's something that will last in the hearts and minds of those who participated."

More than 206 men stood hand to shoulder, forming symbolic pillars of strength in Freedom Chapel in a fraternity of brotherhood. Some wept, some lifted their eyes to God, while others stamped their feet in appreciation. Their daughters, sisters, wives, mothers and grandmothers — 259 women — sat across the aisle, applauding and supporting the men. For three hours, guests shouted "Glory. Hal- (See FELLOWSHIP, page 9A)



## Kennedy named Hoke High principal

By KRISTIN GUTHRIE  
Staff writer

Last Thursday night the Hoke County Board of Education met in a special session to approve the hiring of Donna Kennedy as Hoke County High School's new principal. Superintendent Mitch Tyler said Kennedy has been the administrator in charge since the school year began on August 1, and now with the

board's approval, her duties as principal are official.

Kennedy served as the school's assistant principal from 1995-97 and from 1999 until her recent promotion.

Kennedy's duties at the high school began in 1990 when she taught math.

She also worked as a math teacher at Upchurch Junior High School from 1979-90.

Her masters of school admin-

istration and her undergraduate degree in mathematics both came from Pembroke State University.

While studying education, Kennedy did her student teaching at her own alma mater, Hoke County school system.

Prior earning to her college degrees, she attended Hoke County High School where she graduated in 1971.

Tyler says as far as he knows, Kennedy is the first female prin-

cipal of the high school and also the first alumna to hold the position.

In a comment about how the first year is going, Kennedy said, "I'm loving it... I think it's going to be the best one we've ever had."

She said that the teachers, students and parents are all excited about this new school year, and she has high hopes for all that is to come.



Donna Kennedy

## Heated meeting sinks one-stop voting grant for county

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

Hoke County Board of Elections held a heated meeting to consider whether to establish one-stop voting sites for the upcoming November election. The meeting was described by some as "more than lively." The term "racist" was reportedly said to have been used by Hoke Elections Chairman Willie McCaskill as he debated with board Member Delbert Minshew, a Republican, treasurer Roman Jacobs and two other precinct judges that were

present.

However, McCaskill denied it, saying he did not consider Minshew a racist — merely a "conservative." Minshew said he recollected the name-calling, but did not think McCaskill specifically called him a racist during their debate.

"Mr. McCaskill claimed he had been hoodwinked, because he wanted the one-stop voting really bad," Minshew said. "He was pretty hot, and he did use the word racist during our discussion, but I did not take it personal."

In a two-to-one vote, McCaskill and

Jacobs, both Democrats, voted to establish a one-stop voting site at the Hoke County Public Library for absentee voters, after opposition from Republicans to McCaskill's suggestion to designate three sites in Antioch, Blue Springs and Robbins Heights. Those sites were predominantly African American voting districts, says Minshew, who voted against the issue.

"There wasn't adequate time to prepare a plan required by the state, or time to train staff to man three sites in order to qualify," Minshew said. "The locations did not seem fair for all voters, and I thought there

should be a balance," Minshew said. "Besides that, I felt it was uncalled for and it would have just cost our state more money out of taxpayers' pockets."

Minshew's one dissenting vote automatically disqualified Hoke to request a \$15,000 grant from the state for one-stop voting sites. The Elections Board was required by the state to garner "unanimous" approval.

At the August 15 meeting, Chairman Gene R. Shelnett of Hoke's Republican Party had submitted a letter, which sug- (See ONE-STOP, page 8A)

## Commissioners unravel leases, consider costs, other options

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

Hoke Commissioner L.E. McLaughlin, along with help from fellow commissioners, put the brakes on county spending at the commission's one-hour meeting Monday night.

Commissioner Charles V. Daniels "brainstormed" how the county could save more money by eliminating some needless office leasing.

McLaughlin, outspoken about wasting taxpayers' money, quizzed Hoke's Transportation Department supervisor about

why she expanded their offices into the adjoining suites vacated by Hoke's Senior Services, after that agency moved to new offices on Elwood Avenue. Transportation Director Kimberly Morrison said County Manager Bernice McPhatter was aware of the expansion. However, McLaughlin said the board had not been privy to the development.

"Does transportation need this space?" McLaughlin asked Morrison. "I recommend Senior Services move back, because they are using the same space at the new location as they were using back there."

Originally, Transportation and Senior Services agencies shared side-by-side office space, totaling \$575 per month. Since Senior Services moved, its agency alone is spending approximately \$575 for offices. Avery Financial Group is requesting Transportation's monthly rental fee for occupying both spaces be increased to \$750 in the new lease. This would more than double the combined rental expenses of the two departments.

Morrison said it was necessary for her agency to expand due to congestion, with three office staff and additional bus drivers who operate 13 vans. "We average

2,500 trips per month," Morrison said. "Now, we have a drivers' room, where they can wait between scheduled trips to fill out reports."

Commissioner Charles Daniels recommended an alternate solution, moving Senior Services and Transportation into office space at the old National Guard Armory building on Central Avenue. It will soon be vacated by FirstHealth EMS, Daniels said.

"I would like to table this lease and have the chairman (James Leach) report back to us at the next meeting about both (See LEASES, page 8A)