

The News-Journal

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50¢

No. 11 Vol. 95

RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

Wednesday, June 12, 2002

Hoke's top stories
are on the web
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Around Town



By SAM C. MORRIS
Contributing Editor

Last week I wrote about the record-breaking high temperatures. Sunday morning a record was set for the low temperature. I can't remember the weather changing as much as it has this spring. What can we look forward to in July and August? We did get some much-needed rain last week. My rain gauge registered about an inch and a quarter. One man said his gauge registered two inches. We still need more rain.

The forecast for the remainder of the week, Wednesday through Saturday, calls for the high Wednesday to be in the high 90s and the low in the 70s. Thursday the high will be in the 90s and the low in the 60s. Friday and Saturday the highs will be in the 80s and the lows in the 60s. There is a chance for rain on Thursday and Friday.

Monday I talked with people who attended the reception at the Raeford Hoke Museum (McLauchlin-McFadyen House). According to these people, there was a large crowd and many came from out of town. A member of the committee said that around 200 signed the guest register. She also said that many did not sign because they moved on to speak or greet friends they hadn't seen in years or months.

Many old pictures and artifacts were on display. There (See AROUND, page 9A)

Public to comment on sheriff's cars

Board sets hearing

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

A continued debate over whether deputies should drive county-owned vehicles to and from work outside of Hoke ended in commissioners compromising, unanimously voting to allow a public hearing on the topic. Commissioner Bobby

Wright — seconded by Commissioner Charles V. Daniels — recommended the public hearing. Clerk Linda Revels said the date will be advertised for a July meeting, and also posted for citizens to view.

Some citizens attending the meeting pressed for the hearing — one shouting out of order, "we are of the people for the people; we have a right to be heard."

Citizen Odell Ashburn, chairman of

the Republican Party, said spontaneously, "Can we have some public input into this?"

Charles Patterson said prior to the meeting that he knew of 50 people who were going to withhold their county taxes and pay late if the board allowed Davis to have deputies drive county cars to their homes outside Hoke.

"That figure could increase to 500," Patterson said after the meeting. "Sheriff

Davis is wasting taxpayers' money so why should people pay their taxes on time?"

Hunt rapped his gavel at the outbursts from citizens and some verbal sneering from Patterson as Davis spoke. He said the board did not plan to address the matter in a public hearing.

"We are not," Hunt said emphatically until Wright swayed the board's decision (See SHERIFF CARS, page 7A)

Rising Hoke High seniors die in each other's arms in wreck

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

An early morning automobile accident on Friday resulted in the deaths of two popular teenage girls, both rising seniors and varsity cheerleaders at Hoke County High School. Jasmine Nicole Derry and Veronique Colette Odum, close friends, were on their way home from work at McDonald's in Raeford when slick, rainy conditions caused their car to apparently "hydroplane" on a curve on Pittman Grove Church Road around 12:45 a.m., according to a witness of the one-car crash.

The witness, whose name was unknown, called 911. Trooper E.D. Pender, investigating officer, said the 2000 Saturn driven by Odum was traveling south on Pittman Grove. Her vehicle veered off the road on the right shoulder, colliding with a tree approximately six miles east of Raeford.

"When they ran off the road they were sliding sideways and the driver's side took most of the impact," Pender said in his report. "The vehicle came to rest against the tree on the left side.

"Both had seatbelts on, but they were not ejected. They were trapped in the vehicle."

Pender did not cite speed as a factor in the accident, saying road conditions were wet and it was cloudy.

Derry, 16, of 787 T.C. Jones Road is the foster daughter of her great-aunt Jane Quinones. Odum, 17, of Peregrine Place near Rockfish, resided with her mother and step-father, Adrienne Benoit-Graham and Lacy Graham, a deputy with the Cumberland County Sheriff's



Veronique "Colette" Odum (left) and Jasmine Nicole Perry

Department. According to their parents, the two friends left work together around 12:15 a.m. driving home on their usual route. While Quinones volunteered to pick them up if it continued raining, at the end of their shift the rain had stopped so they did not think it was necessary, she said.

"These two girls were the best of friends because they did everything together," 73-year-old Mrs. Quinones said. "I had raised Jasmine since she was just two years old because her father who passed away was my nephew.

"She called me at 10 that evening and said it was lightning and thundering. The last thing we ever said was on the phone when she told me, 'I love you.' That was always the last thing we would say."

Mrs. Quinones said their home has been filled with students and teachers "paying their respects." She said the site of their fatal wreck apparently has been showered with wreaths from mourning classmates.

"I understand that the stranger who reported their accident was the one to take the first flowers to the accident location," Mrs. Quinones said. "We would all like to know the person's name so we can express our gratitude for getting (See ACCIDENT, page 11A)



The big moment
Danella Cruz, 5, prepares for the big moment, graduating from the Children's Developmental Center Friday. Nine children graduated and will begin public school next year. The ceremony was held at Raeford Presbyterian Church.



Museum open house

From left, Augusta White, mother Kathryn McPhatter and McPhatter's sister Eula White check out a display of tax receipts from years ago at Sunday's Raeford Hoke Museum open house.

New museum opened doors to visitors, memories Sunday

By PAT ALLEN WILSON
Editor

Only two families owned the McLauchlin-McFadyen House, built circa 1905, but the 6,000 square foot home has sheltered many. Now it is to house the history of Raeford and Hoke County.

The Raeford Hoke Museum Committee bought the home this past April, and on Sunday well over 200 people visited the grand home at 111 Highland Avenue for an open house. For many visitors, it was a first look at the home's interior; for others, being in the home brought back memories.

Standing in the dining room on the first floor, Raeford resident Gordon Ragsdale pointed toward the ceiling and said he once

lived in a bedroom apartment just over where he was standing when he first came to Raeford; that was in 1975.

Back in the 1940s, the home served as a bed and breakfast known as The Pines. Those who commuted on the well-traveled route from New York to Miami found The Pines a restful stop halfway between the two cities.

The home, built for Hoke leader John Williamson McLauchlin, was known as the home away from home for visiting ministers and other guests. There was even a room known as the Prophets Room that was kept in readiness for visiting ministers. During World War II, soldiers often found refuge there.

(See MUSEUM, page 10A)

County embezzlement investigation widens

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

The State Bureau of Investigation has postponed turning over the remainder of its final report concerning criminal misuse and embezzlement of county funds to District Attorney Kristy M. Newton. The SBI contends it need to check some further information that was reportedly

uncovered. Criminal Specialist Janie Pinkston, serving double duty as lead agent in Hoke and interim SBI supervisor in Fayetteville, said an investigator has been called in from the N.C. Tax Division's office recently to "examine" the county records.

According to Pinkston, the state wants to see if taxes are (See PROBE, 7A)

Sheriff unable to return to work indefinitely

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Sheriff Jim Davis is out of work indefinitely, he says.

After Davis was injured when a Cheerwine tractor-trailer struck his sheriff's vehicle in a parking lot off U.S. 401 on May 21, he did not return to work at the Sheriff's Office for two weeks. He is still not back at work on a full-time basis, according to Major Thomas Carlton, second in command.

Davis officially advised the commissioners in a letter on June 4 that he will be out of work indefinitely because of the accident.

Carlton said Davis met with him for a brief time yesterday and the sheriff is periodically checking in to take care of any "hot" issues that need to be resolved.

"I am constantly in touch with the Sheriff," Carlton said. "Everything is running smoothly."

Davis was treated at Cape Fear Valley Medical Center's emergency room on May 21 in the late afternoon, and released around 7 p.m. A hospital spokesman said Davis condition was stable when he left the facility.

"As you know, I was the victim of a very serious automobile accident which totaled a county-owned vehicle and caused me very trauma (See DAVIS, page 11A)