

The News-Journal

If it happened, it's news to us

50¢

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Hoke's top stories are on the web
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Around Town



By SAM C. MORRIS
Contributing Editor

The weather has been more seasonable for the past few days. It is still hot for this time of year and I wonder what it will be like in August. We had a little rain but we still need much more. One weather reporter said Sunday that we needed 12 inches of rain to get us anywhere near normal. As you know, many cities and towns have put restrictions on the use of water. I can't ever remember Raeford being short of water. I guess it could happen.

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

My health was not the best for Father's Day, but a visit from my son and a call from my daughter made my day. My son also gave me cards and presents, and my daughter sent me the same through the mail. Even had a card from my wife. In my youth we always wore a flower on Mother's Day and Father's Day. There wasn't enough money to purchase a present. It seems now that each recognized day being advertised by stores have the perfect cards and gifts for that day. It is good to be remembered even (See AROUND, page 12A)

City passes budget with no tax hike

By PAT ALLEN WILSON
Editor

Raeford councilmen pared approximately \$16,000 from the city's FY 2002-2003 budget before passing it in a special session Monday night.

The new budget leaves property taxes at the current 47 cents per \$100 valuation, but residents will pay a \$2 monthly increase in sanitation fees and water rates

will increase by five cents per 1,000 gallons.

Councilmen agreed on a general fund budget of \$2,989,080 and a water and sewer budget of \$1,911,800. Capital reserves are at \$409,500.

The new budget will dip into the fund balance, but approximately \$1 million remains there. That amount is 25 percent over the minimum of eight percent allowed by the Local Government Com-

mission.

Mayor Bob Gentry commented that the fund balance was "healthy" but added, "It won't be if we hit it every year."

Included in the budget are \$251,000 in assets frozen by North Carolina Governor Easley this year. If that amount had not been included in the budget as revenue, City Manager Mike McNeill said a 21 cents tax increase would be needed to offset the loss.

Budget planners also contended with \$100,766 in taxes that cannot be collected from Burlington Industries due to that industry's bankruptcy filing. The taxes, due September 1, are included in the budget as revenue.

McNeill said the city also experienced less revenues from interest earned on deposits as well as from taxes collected from the state — all due to a down economy. (See CITY BUDGET, page 11A)

Raeford soldier dies in Afghanistan crash

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

A Raeford U.S. Army Green Beret described as an "outgoing and dedicated" soldier is the first known Hoke casualty in the war on terrorism in Afghanistan.



Sgt. 1st Class Peter Tycz II

Sgt. 1st Class Peter Tycz II, a native of Tonawanda, New York, had told his family he was the "best" he could be and was willing to make "great sacrifices" to protect the American way of life.

Tycz was one of three servicemen who were killed while riding in a military transport plane that crashed in Afghanistan last Wednesday. Initial reports indicated the crash was accidental, but the cause of the incident is still under investigation, according to a Special Forces Public Affairs spokesman.

Tycz died when the Air Force MC-130H crashed shortly after takeoff. His remains were flown to Dover, Delaware on Monday. There, the 50th anniversary of the founding of Special Forces' Green Berets at Fort Bragg is being celebrated.

"Be proud, not sad," Tycz urged his mother, Terry Harnden, in an e-mail he sent prior to going off to war. A patriot, Tycz was remembered for his love of the Star-Spangled Banner and commitment to keeping his family safe from harm, said one out-of-state relative. (See CRASH VICTIM, page 11A)

School board resolution urges complete funding

Asks commissioners to divert sales tax

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

The Hoke Board of Education is banking that county commissioners will release money from the one-half cent sales tax, keeping the school system solvent next year. In a unanimous decision, the school board passed a resolution last week, requesting commissioners fully fund the 2002-2003 local school budget

of \$327,000. It would provide that dollars be diverted from the one-half cent sales tax — money customarily reserved for school construction or expansion projects, said Hoke School Superintendent Allen Strickland.

"We know down the road that school construction may be a problem," Strickland said. "However, right now (See DIVERT SALES TAX, page 11A)

Commissioners cut travel allowance - or did they?

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Did commissioners vote or not vote to cut their travel allowances for next year during a budget session on May 28? Only the clerk to the board, Linda Revels seems to think she knows for sure. "They did not vote on the issue or it would be written in my minutes," Revels said positively on Monday.

"Commissioners did discuss cutting the monthly travel from \$500 to \$300 for in-state travel during the afternoon session," Revels said. "That is not something that I would forget."

However, the consensus of the board is that money will be saved by some of the remedies agreed upon at the meeting on the 28th in spite of some confusion over "when, where or how" it occurred. The board has devoted several weeks "walking through" the budget line item by line item.

According to Wright and Daniels, who were instrumental in the board reducing expenses, no more separate mileage reimbursement will be paid to commissioners for taking trips or going to conventions outside of Hoke. This was being paid to some commissioners in addition to the (See TRAVEL, page 12A)



Public TV appointee

Col. (U.S. Army-Ret.) Don Porter, executive director of the Raeford/Hoke County Economic Development Commission, has been appointed to serve on the board of trustees of the University of North Carolina Center for Public Television. His term begins July 1, and he will be eligible to serve two consecutive four-year terms.



Kathryn McPhatter of the Hoke Senior Services Board hugs N.C. Representative Dan Blue, a U.S. senatorial candidate.

Dan Blue greets supporters

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

attracted more than 200 guests. Blue roses adorned every table.

N.C. Representative Dan Blue was in town to campaign on Friday, wooing more "Woman for Blue" supporters and primarily African American voters. A Raleigh attorney, Blue seeks to be elected to the U.S. Senate seat being vacated by Sen. Jesse Helms.

Held at the Cape Fear Conference B Headquarters in Raeford, the private fundraiser and luncheon held in his honor

Improving educational opportunities, more benefits for senior citizens and not "flip-flopping" on issues are major goals, Blue pledged.

"My interests are for the people of this state and improving our society," Blue said. "I am concerned on how people are best served. I am not just interested in what are the bottom line profits for our corporations.

(See BLUE, page 10A)

Sullivan: 'Bridge digital divide'

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Poised to provide high-speed Internet access to Hoke County, E-Champion Donna Sullivan, distance learning facilitator for Hoke County Schools, told the board of commissioners on Monday night that she will be seeking a grant available out of \$8 million designated by the Rural Internet Access Authority. "Help us bridge the digital divide," Sullivan urged.

"There is no minimum or maximum on this grant amount," Sullivan said. "I will be submitting a proposal for Hoke before July 8.

"We are pleased to announce that Hoke's e-Communities plan has just been submitted to the state for approval. Our objective is to support Hoke's public, private and non-profit sectors and citizens in improving productivity by increasing awareness and use of technology."

The board congratulated Sullivan on her "hard work" and determination to help Hoke's children and citizens by establishing an e-NC Technology plan. The board also thanked volunteers on the steering committee who helped formulate the plan.

Sullivan, chairwoman, said the plan was derived after discussions and meetings between the Hoke Technology Consortium, a group of volunteers with expertise, and citizens during the past nine months. She is the successor to Hoke finance (See DIVIDE, page 10A)



Donna Sullivan at a technology forum held at East Hoke Middle School recently.