

# The News-Journal

If it happened, it's news to us

50¢

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RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

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Hoke's top stories are on the web  
www.thenews-journal.com

## This week



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Whitley earns Eagle rank  
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## Around Town



By SAM C. MORRIS  
Contributing Editor

The weather hasn't been as hot and we can't get any rain that will push up the water level. Every day last week there was rain in the forecast but my gauge only registered two-tenths of an inch. At least we are not having the fires that are in the west. Let's hope that it will rain in the coming week.

The forecast for the remainder of the week, Wednesday through Saturday, calls for the highs to be in the 90s and the lows in the 70s. The forecast also calls for rain Thursday and Friday.

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Don't forget there is still plenty of time to sign up for the Dr. Bob Townsend Scholarship golf tournament. It will be held Friday, July 26 at the Bayonet Golf Course.

There are different sponsorships or you can sign up as an individual. For more information, write or call Mildred Maxwell at 209 E. Elwood Avenue, Raeford, NC 28376. Help some worthy student go to college.

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How much longer will it be before a date for the primary election will be set? I noticed that some advertisements for candidates are now appearing on television. It seems that politicians this day and time want districts that will be to their advantage rather than what is fair for the people of our state.

Let's hope that we will get  
(See AROUND, page 3A)

## County passes budget, no tax increase

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

Tony Hunt.

Hoke commissioners thrashed out every expenditure line by line for several weeks of budget sessions, finally passing the county's "lean" fiscal budget for 2002-2003 yesterday morning in a 4-1 vote.

The board worked "some kind of magic" without cutting services or raising taxes, said Commission Chairman

Some departments such as purchasing were restructured in order to avoid layoffs. The purchasing manager was transferred into offices in the finance department, and the assistant purchasing manager was transferred to the Register of Deeds office. In a cost-saving freeze, some positions already vacant will not be reopened for hiring.

"I am glad we have gone through this

budget and tightened up things," Hunt said. "Not nay, as the Indians say, not nary a one is willing to look at the option of raising taxes."

Commissioner Charles V. Daniels was the only one opposed to passing the recommended budget, saying some of the board members were "wishy-washy" on spending items. He criticized them for rescinding an approval on a low bid for a new lawn cutting company. It would have

saved the county \$19,000, he added.

On Monday, while Daniels was not present, Commission Vice Chairman James A. Leach, Commissioners Cleo Bratcher Jr. and Bobby Wright, expressing reluctance, voted to reconsider the firms and reopen the bids. Hunt voted against it, saying it was unfair. Hunt said later he thought reversing their decision would make the board appear "shaky."  
(See COUNTY BUDGET, page 9A)

## Summer colors



### Cool and colorful

The green thumbs of Robert and Frances Tyner (plus lots of watering) turned both the front and back yards of their home on East Donaldson into splashy displays of yellows and pinks.



### Budding Entrepreneurs

Shown at the Hoke Boot Camp for Budding Entrepreneurs last week, sponsored by the Center of Entrepreneurship at Methodist College, are Dr. Sid Gautam, director, (front, center) Kenan Walker of the Center (back row, far left), Wyatt Upchurch, president of Tarheel Hatcheries (back row, center) and John Fux, a Hoke teacher, (back row, far right). Students are (left to right seated) Jazmine Pierce, Jessica Kellermann, Ritisha Blue; (standing) Catherine Willis, Jo Blank, Kelvin Harvey and Kara McCoy. Students visited businesses and learned what it takes to eventually become entrepreneurs.

## Former Southland manager indicted for allegedly embezzling \$1.1 million

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

A Guilford County grand jury recently handed down six criminal indictments of embezzlement and one charge of corporate malfeasance against a former general manager at Southland Pine Needles in Ashley Heights. James Jordan Cobb III of Pinehurst was fired in May from Southland after the alleged \$1.1 million embezzlement scam was uncovered by Southland officials, according

to Dan Camia, chief operating officer of the parent firm, Southern Importers, Inc. in Greensboro.

"This loss of moneys has really hurt our company," Camia said. "We are uncertain at this point if anyone else was involved. The only name on the transactions appeared to be that of the individual that was indicted."

Cobb was arrested after he allegedly misappropriated "massive" amounts of moneys from  
(See EMBEZZLEMENT, page 10A)



John T. Peterson

## Raeford police charge sixth man in Robbins Heights shooting death

Raeford Police have charged a sixth man in the January 23 shooting death of 26-year-old Timothy Lavelle Stephens.

John Theron Peterson, 21, of Vestal Avenue, Fayetteville, has been charged with felony aid and

abet. Peterson was not present when Stephens was murdered in the middle of the afternoon in front of a Robbins Heights grocery store, Raeford Detective Richard Jenkins said.

(See ARRESTED, page 5A)

## Crime overall is up in Hoke

Number of violent crimes decreases

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

Hoke County experienced a significant rise in property crime last year, and saw incidents of "overall" crime increase by approximately 23 percent from 1999 to 2001. Hoke also ranked approximately six percent higher in overall crime than the state's average in 2001, but dropped in incidents of violent crime, according to the Annual Summary of Crime in North Carolina published last week.

Hoke County experienced a decrease in overall crime in 1998, the year with the lowest number of cases reported since 1992. Records reflected there were 1,372 cases reported in the city and county during 1998 under the administrations of Sheriff Wayne Byrd and Raeford Police Chief Mack High. In 2001 under Sheriff Jim Davis and Chief High, there was a jump to 1,801 incidents of overall crime. These cases of violent and property crimes involved murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny and motor vehicle theft, said the State Bureau of Investigation.

Based on information released by the N.C. Department of Justice in a statewide crime index, Hoke's overall crime rate of 5,301 per 100,000 people ranked higher than the state average of only 4,996 per 100,000 in 2001.

State Attorney General Roy Cooper indicated crime also rose statewide by 1.5 percent in 2001.

"More North Carolinians were victims of theft and burglaries last year than the year before (2000), and if more jobs are lost the trend could continue," Cooper said. "As the economy begins to recover, we hope to see these numbers decline again to continue our decade-long  
(See CRIME RATE, page 9A)

## School board hires finance officer, assistant superintendent

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

An elated Hoke School Superintendent Allen Strickland said he was enthusiastic about accepting two top notch educators — one seeking his doctorate in low wealth studies — to join Hoke County Schools. In a special meeting on Monday morning, the Board of Education voted unanimously to hire two key personnel. A new assistant school superintendent for K-12, Timothy Farley, was accepted for the post previously held by Strickland, and a new finance officer, George McFarley, will assume the responsibilities of former finance officer Carolyn Olivarez.

Farley, 46, is current assistant school superintendent in Stokes County. He will begin as second-in-command to Strickland the first of July as assistant superintendent, supervising curriculum and instruction.

McFarley, 47, is currently employed at Fayetteville Technical  
(See SCHOOLS HIRE, page 9A)