

The News-Journal

If it happened, it's news to us

50¢

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RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

Wednesday, September 4, 2002

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

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Get election results

The News-Journal will post election results precinct-by-precinct as they become available Tuesday beginning after the polls close at 7:30. As is our tradition, we will host the public in our office at 119 West Elwood Avenue, across from the post office. We will also post the results on our website at www.thenews-journal.com

Record turnout expected at polls

'One-stop' voting draws 650 so far

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

With just six days remaining until the primary on September 10, it's beginning to look like turnout will be near record levels.

Caroline Shook, director of Hoke's Board of Elections, says she's ready to shake the hand of voter number 18,325, the one who completes 100 percent turnout. "We have never experienced a 100 percent turnout, but we would probably be making history statewide if we did have all 18,325 voters come to the polls next Tuesday," Shook said. "I would record the results and just smile."

Shook said the number of registered voters has increased by about 1,500 since the 2000 election.

"In 2000, there were about 17,800 registered voters, including those on the inactive list, but we have removed well over 1,000 voters from the state's duplicate list and the 20-year death report," Shook said. "We are ready for the primaries for the Republican and Democratic parties. "Everything is going smoothly."

There will be a total of 15 local candidates vying in the primary. Included are five sheriff's candidates, eight commissioner contenders, and two clerk of court competitors on the ballots.

(See TURNOUT, page 10A)

Davis' press conference angers Brittany's family

Mother says sheriff is using case for election

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

An angry Connie Chavis, mother of five-year-old Brittany Lynn Locklear, who was kidnapped, sexually assaulted and drowned in a ditch, said Sheriff Jim Davis is using her daughter to receive media attention prior to the election "for himself" instead of finding the murderer. The Chavis family walked out of a press conference held by Davis at Heritage Village last Thursday, protesting Davis' "blaming them" for any involvement in their daughter's murder.

Chavis said Davis is trying to tarnish the memory of Brittany for "political gain" to get reelected instead of solving the case that is more than four years old.

"Sheriff Davis cares more about being sheriff than really finding the killer of my daughter," Chavis said after the press

event. Davis said witness Jordache Leach changed his original story that the pickup truck of the abductor was brown. He said Leach now swears that he saw a blue truck driven by Robin Byrd, son of former Sheriff Wayne Byrd, in the vicinity on the morning Brittany was kidnapped on January 7, 1998.

District Attorney Kristy M. Newton denied last week that Leach is considered a "credible" witness, or that there is any evidence that Robin Byrd was ever involved. Family members said Byrd had an alibi at the time of Brittany's kidnapping/murder, but Davis still circulated Byrd's name in a press release.

"I do not like what Sheriff Davis is doing," Chavis said. "Sheriff Davis has ignored the pain of my family. He is trying to make my daughter's murder a racial (See PRESS CONFERENCE, page 8A)



Barbara Moseby of Electronics Systems and Software Tabulators demonstrates a one-stop voting machine to Director Caroline Shook of Hoke's Board of Elections.

County seeks customers for sewer line on US 401

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

The Board of Commissioners is seeking new sewer customers along U.S. 401. The new lines along the corridor to the Federal Express corporate building are ready for service, and customers could be hooked up by the end of September. Hoke commissioners last night discussed future user fees and costs for connecting potential customers to the main line, but

postponed a decision.

"We are not requiring people to tap on to the sewer lines," County Manager Neil Yarborough said. "It is voluntary — not mandatory."

The Raeford Hoke Economic Development Board has been asked to review a proposed schedule of user fees.

It will also consider capacity of the line and how to balance the need for service to residential customers with that of service (See SEWER, page 11A)

Firefighters, veterans, churches mark 9-11 anniversary

By TOM SQUIER
Hoke Veterans Service Officer

When the tragic attacks of September 11 took place last year, 270 ninth graders at Hoke High School were in the media center participating in the Young Writer's Conference that was a part of last year's North Carolina Turkey Festival. Many of those students wrote about the terrorist attacks as their writing assignment. None of them nor the rest of Hoke County has been able to forget about the attacks on America since then.

The victims and heroes of 9-11 will be remembered and honored in the coming week in several ceremonies. "It's a time when we need to appreci-



ate those who serve us with their lives," says Dr. Gene Schuyler, pastor of Hillcrest Baptist Church. "Everyone of them do — whether it's military, law enforcement, our firefighters, and EMS. They put their lives on the line every minute for us."

Hillcrest is planning a special program this coming Sunday and will join churches across the county and the nation in marking the anniversary of the September 11 terrorist attacks.

Firefighters remember

Firefighters in Hoke will join others nationwide

in an observance on Wednesday. Somber recognition will begin at 9:45 a.m. when fire engines will pull out of their stations. All available firefighters will assemble in front of their flag poles and stand silently at attention. At 10:05 a.m., at the time the South Tower of the World Trade Center collapsed, church bells are to be rung and sirens will sound. This is to be followed by the lowering of the U.S. flag to half mast. At 10:28 a.m., when the North Tower collapsed, the bells and sirens will sound again before flags are returned to full mast.

Veterans remember

On Saturday, September 7, Raeford's Ellis B. Williamson American Legion Post 20 will hold a ceremony with the assistance of the other veterans

organizations in the county. At 11 a.m. at the Hoke County courthouse there will be a remembrance ceremony. In this celebration of heroes and victims, Judy Strother will sing the National Anthem accompanied by Hoke High's band. The City of Raeford and the County of Hoke have signed resolutions in support of the event. In case of rain the ceremony will be held in Raeford City Hall. Bells will be rung and a rifle volley fired. Other participants include the National Guard, the Hoke County Emergency Service, Hoke High Junior ROTC, Mayor Bob Gentry, Police Chief Mack High, and several churches. A special event, weather permitting, will be a flyover of civilian (See OBSERVANCE, page 4A)

Davis asks feds to observe election

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

In yet another appeal for federal assistance, Sheriff Jim Davis said he has requested the civil rights division of the U.S. Department of Justice to assist in social intervention during next week's primary, and in studying

the "pattern of violence" in Hoke.

However, Davis' four challengers said race is not an issue in the September 10 primary, but only who is the "right man" for the job.

With racial concerns publicized at his recent press conference, Davis, a Democrat, said he has asked for representatives

from the federal voters' rights section to be present for the election Tuesday. A Hoke Board of Elections official had no knowledge of any federal observers who would be present.

Davis has also asked for members of the community relations division at the Justice Department (See ASKS FEDS, page 11A)

County manager nixes bus trips for election day

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Signs advertising 50-cent fares to take a county van to the polls on election day were spotted in the county last week. However, the signs were removed from public places by Hoke's Transportation Director Frances Jackson almost as quickly as they

appeared.

It was not legal to advertise that the county buses would provide transportation to a statewide election, according to Hoke County Manager Mike Wood. He applied brakes to Jackson's promotion on Thursday.

"I did not know anything about it, and Ms. Jackson never consulted me about it," Wood said.

"Some of the commissioners contacted me and told me about it. I called the state and realized it was not something allowed by the state's transportation board.

"I requested Ms. Jackson to remove the signs, and I believe she has done so."

Jackson, puzzled over the controversy, said she came up with (See BUS TRIPS, page 8A)



Where the faeries dance

From left, Max, Lizzie and Elena Brewer stand in a "fairy ring" created by recent excessive humidity behind Hoke County High School. Folklore has it a fairy ring is the dancing court of fairies — and woe unto those who would trod upon the mushrooms for they would be visited by blindness or sickness.