

The News-Journal

If it happened, it's news to us

50¢

No. 43 Vol. 95

RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

Wednesday, January 15, 2003

State challenges key points of Leandro case

Denies it has responsibility to ensure basic education

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

The N.C. Attorney General's Office has filed the first legal brief in the state's appeal of the verdict in the lawsuit Hoke and other counties filed over unequal education funding. The state rebutted a 2002 trial court ruling that students who perform at a lower level on achievement tests are not on target to receive a sound basic education.

The State Attorney's office wants the N.C. Court of Appeals to overturn Superior Court Judge Howard Manning Jr.'s final April 2002 ruling, according to State Attorney General Roy Cooper.

"Judge Manning ignored other measures of student performance,

including grades from teachers and a high school diploma, as evidence that students were getting a sound basic education," state attorneys said in the brief this week.

After Hoke was victorious last April in its nine-year legal battle to ensure "at-risk" students receive a sound basic education, the state filed an intent of appeal in May 2002. This was followed by a formal appeal in July 2002.

"If the appeals court reverses the legal victory won by Hoke, it would reverse nine years of litigation, testimony and research devoted to help disadvantaged students receive an education equal to those students in wealthier counties," Hoke School Superintendent Allen Strickland said. "It has cost our low wealth consor-

tium, paid by many counties, well over \$2 million to fight the state for our children to receive the education they are entitled to.

"When will this ever end?"

Strickland said Hoke students and other students from low wealth counties are the ones suffering through this ordeal.

"We will not give up this fight until the state concedes they must provide additional financial assistance to counties who are more socio-economically deprived," Strickland said. "Our students are not going to be the losers."

In the 65-page rebuttal of Manning's ruling, the state said it is not at fault if students do not receive a sound basic education. However, (See LEANDRO, page 7A)

Board hesitant to give up land

Plans tour to study impact of losing 400 acres to Robeson

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Some 400 acres of land assessed at more than one-half million dollars, and \$4,000 in annual tax revenue could be permanently lost by Hoke. After a quest to determine the county's eastern perimeter, some commissioners are griping over the results. The survey, conducted by the N.C. Geodetic Survey, basically backfired on Hoke, said Commission Chairman Bobby Wright.

According to Wright, the state's survey concluded the boundary be-

tween Hoke and Robeson counties is not accurate, granting more land to Robeson.

"We could end up on the shrinking side of the adjoining county lines," Wright said. "Until a tour is conducted of the proposed border on February 12, we will not approve the new line, or we may debate it."

"What is our advantage for giving this up? We are going to lose revenue and acreage."

Wright, who operates a large family farm in the northwest region of Hoke, said the tax assessor's listing on the land value does not even in-

clude an estimate on the potential retail market value.

"If it were later sold or developed by property owners, it could be a tax revenue boost," Wright said. "If Robeson gains the land, we will also lose the opportunity for additional economic growth for jobs in that area."

To establish the county line, state surveyor Roger Barnes utilized the global positioning satellite system, state archives, old maps, and information from local surveyors. He said the updated border should have been (See LAND LOSS, page 8A)



Ann Hostetler (center) accepts a \$10,000 check from Linda and Ralph Huff at the McLauchlin-McFadyen House with Grace McDonald and Lockie MacDonald (back row), founders of the Raeford Hoke Museum.

Couple gives \$10,000 to Raeford museum

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Linda and Ralph Huff presented the Raeford Hoke Museum Committee with a \$10,000 check for the acquisition of the historic McLauchlin-McFadyen House. This is a pledge to use any resources available, said Ralph Huff, so the historic museum becomes a reality for future generations.

The Huff contribution brings the total proceeds collected to \$149,000 of the \$250,000 needed to purchase the Raeford estate on Highland Avenue. They are urging every citizen of Hoke, and corporations to donate whatever they can to participate

in the undertaking to preserve Hoke's history.

The couple, partners in Coldwell Banker United Realty and Huff Pennick & Strother real estate, have their own stake in Hoke. The Huffs, natives of Raeford, have erected 110 upscale homes, 63 of them in Hoke.

"Give until it hurts," said the Huffs, also owners of H & H Constructors in Fayetteville. "We feel like everything we are and enjoy has been achieved because we had a good, solid foundation when we grew up in Hoke County."

"We grew up in a time in Hoke when teachers taught you how to be good students and good citizens. We were able to (See MUSEUM GIFT, page 7A)

Sheriff tells South Hoke citizens drug situation is 'bad,' seeks help

By PAT ALLEN WILSON
Editor

"It's bad," Sheriff Hubert Peterkin said about illegal drug problems in Hoke County as he asked citizens at a South Hoke community meet-the-sheriff event to "give us a chance to work; give us a chance to fix it."

"When (drug) roundups are made — you're not going to believe some of the people involved," the sheriff said.

Listening to one resident speak of people repeatedly mistaking his home for the

nearby house of a drug dealer, Peterkin promised to respond to calls and information provided him. "You won't know what we are going to do," he added.

Speaking of the "10 drug busts" made since he took office just over a month ago, Peterkin told residents of the importance of their involvement. "Every drug bust came from somebody calling my office, my house," he said.

Peterkin introduced key staff members to the gathering of about 35 people at South (See CRIME ISSUES, page 8A)

Shotgunned dog rescued in Rockfish

By CHRIS SHUPE
Staff writer

Skippy Hynes rescued another dog on Saturday, but this time, the dog was different. It was a stray hanging around Hardin's in Rockfish, and by all accounts was a beautiful, friendly labrador/golden retriever mix. It also had a gunshot wound in the chest.

Hynes spoke of her previous encounters

with the dog. "It started last August. There were two dogs in that area that someone had dumped and I had been trying to catch them." Hynes, owner of the Gots Spots Etc. animal rescue, hoped to find homes for both animals.

"That Saturday, I went to feed them and the black lab let me put a noose around him to take him somewhere safe. The blonde wouldn't come near me." Hynes said that (See DOG SHOT, page 5A)

This Week



We're cooking with Cheerwine
page 1B

Bids on Unifi building continue
page 4A

Information needed for business directory
page 5A

Index

Anniversaries	3B
Births	3B
Business/Farm	5A
Calendar	2B
Classifieds	5B
Deaths	3A
Editorials	2A
Legals	4B
Public Record	3A
Religion	5A
Schools	6B
Socials	3B
Sports	6A
Weddings	3B

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



Calvin House, Burlington's plant manager in Raeford, displays an array of military uniforms the manufacturer produces.

Burlington bouncing back from bankruptcy filing

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

This is the final article in a series on economic development in Raeford and Hoke County.

Burlington Industries in Raeford may not be bursting at the seams with extra business yet, but it is steadily emerging from a Chapter 11 bankruptcy with a positive outlook for the future. It continues to improve its operations, acquiring new U.S. government contracts for its yarn and dye factory, according to Calvin House, plant manager.

"In restructuring the international firm, 900 workers employed a year ago have been reduced to 650," House said.

"We are not planning any further layoffs at this time, and we are retaining our staff of 650. That is the staff we see required to fill our orders."

"Our employees took a negative situation and made it positive. They really worked together as a team and made tremendous progress this past year. I am very proud of them."

As orders continue to pour in for wool and wool polyester tops and yarns, House envisioned Burlington could likely pull out of its bankruptcy by mid-summer.

House said substantial contracts with the U.S. military branches comprise most of the orders for products manufactured at the local plant, a division of (See BURLINGTON, page 8A)