

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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Commissioners say buffer plan premature

Others at meeting laud efforts to protect Fort Bragg training, Hoke forms task force

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Hoke Commission Chairman Bobby Wright and Commissioner Bill Cameron think the presentation of the Fort Bragg-Pope Air Force Base regional land use

plan was prematurely celebrated last Thursday evening by state, military and local leaders.

The largest stakeholders, Hoke — joined by the City of Raeford — and Cumberland counties have still not approved the project, according to them.

The proposed project devised by a land-use commission, impacts six counties and numerous municipalities. It would create a one-mile "greenbelt" around the bases as a buffer for military training, reducing the development rights on at least 8,800 acres of Hoke's land.

"The proposed plan would negatively impact many northern and western Hoke property owners and could potentially reduce industry retention," Wright said. "Because of the controversy, this plan could be stalled for another year."

Voting not to endorse it were Hoke and City of Raeford governments. Cumberland County has postponed a decision on the issue until June. The plan requires approval by the N.C. General Assembly.

Senator Tony Rand of Fayetteville said on Monday it is "unlikely" a legislative bill could be presented to the N.C.

General Assembly during this session. Supporting the bases' attempts to prevent encroachment on military training exercises, Rand says he understands the purpose, but sympathizes with Hoke's concerns.

"Everybody has not agreed on this plan so there probably is not enough time to present it to the state," Rand said. "It may not be heard until another year goes by."

"We need to form a state committee to iron out how to provide the revenues required to fund some of the financial (See **BUFFER PREMATURE**, page 9A)



Commission Chairman Bobby Wright and Commissioner Bill Cameron review the Joint Land Use Study that was released last Thursday during a meeting at Fort Bragg.

Military leaders say 1-mile buffer is crucial

Governor's official 'jokes' Hoke could lose state funding; not funny, says Cameron

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Scotland County Commissioner Clint Willis, a retired U.S. Army general, predicted the failure of Hoke or other counties to ultimately implement a proposed regional land-use study could undermine the "viability" of Fort Bragg, Pope Air Force Base and Camp Mackall.

It could also lead to the destruction of the surrounding natural environment, he said while presiding at a celebration held last Thursday at the Fort Bragg Officers' Club, attended by state, mili-

tary and local leaders. The results of the two-year study by the N.C. Department of Commerce and a local, joint land-use commission were released at the event.

"If our results are successful, we will be the most military friendly state," Willis said. "Unsuccessful? It is not an option. We must succeed."

"We request all stakeholders to incorporate this into their future land use plan."

Hoke, the City of Raeford and Cumberland County officials have not endorsed the controversial plan that (See **CRUCIAL**, page 8A)

This Week



East Hoke steppers work hard page 1B

Autry, Rankine to address FMA grads page 8A



Relay For Life kicks off event Friday page 3A

Index

Anniversaries	3B
Business/Farm	10A
Calendar	2B
Classifieds	7-8B
Deaths	5A
Editorials	2A
Legals	5-6B
Public Record	5A
Religion	9A
Schools	4B
Socials	3B
Sports	6-7A
Weddings	3B

Hoke's top stories are on the web; send us stories, subscribe

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Hoke designated '21st Century Community' for state aid

By PAT ALLEN WILSON
Editor

Hoke is one of five North Carolina counties to be named a 21st Century Community.

County Manager Mike Wood said he thinks the status will allow Hoke to take

the next step toward the planning and developing of an industrial park. "What it would do is provide access to the commerce department and their technicians."

Areas have been identified that are best suited for a park, Wood said, but added that there's "a lot of work to be done with which the commerce department can help."

Steve Yost of the dept. of commerce's southeastern regional office agreed with Wood, "What this means for Hoke is the N.C. Dept. of Commerce will provide a concentrated effort to work with the leadership in Hoke County to pinpoint probably three or four economic development initiatives that need to be implemented."

Hoke would also receive preferential treatment on some grant requests. Yost added, "And it also means that a large amount of dept. of commerce staff time will be devoted to work hand-in-hand with the county."

The 21st Century Community program (See **DESIGNATION**, page 9A)

Commissioner Daniels: 911 department fully staffed, no risk to citizens

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Hoke's 911 Communications Center is operating smoothly, said Commission Vice Chairman Charles V. Daniels. He says the department, under the interim supervision of Chris Jacobsen, is in good shape, citizens have no reason for concern, and emergency calls will be handled without delay.

Daniels, Hoke's Emergency Commissioner who was appointed by the board of commissioners, said he thought it was necessary to reassure citizens after 911 emergency supervisor Al Schwarzbher and Ron Fairbanks, 911 data base technician, were demoted recently. Fairbanks has resigned. After receiving countless phone calls from residents "panicking" that the temporary supervisor might be too inexperienced,

Daniels said he also wanted to tell fire departments, law agencies and the ambulance service they can count on 911 service and the caliber of Jacobsen's work.

"I want to assure the citizens of this county that the communications department is being staffed 24 hours a day with qualified personnel," Daniels said. "It is being overseen by County Manager Mike Wood, who is making two trips a day to the department."

"I am personally in constant contact with the emergency dispatchers."

Daniels said a special meeting will likely be called next week to implement changes in the operation of 911 after a committee was established two weeks ago. Unlike Fairbanks and Schwarzbher who were also handling budgetary and technology needs for 911, (See **911 DEPARTMENT**, page 3A)



From left: 911 telecommunicator Candace Corcoran, interim 911 supervisor Chris Jacobsen, Commissioner Charles Daniels.

Former Hoke High assistant coach accused of sexual misconduct

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

A Raeford man who was employed as an assistant basketball coach at Hoke County High School was arrested Thurs-

day on felony sexual allegations reportedly involving from four to seven female students, according to authorities.

Raeford Police Department conducted a joint criminal investigation with the SBI after a "concerned citizen" reported

suspicious of the alleged incidents. The sexual misconduct allegedly occurred while he was coaching at Hoke High, according to the SBI.

Tony Demond Crawford, 23, of the (See **CHARGED**, page 4A)

The News-Journal

News Other stuff

By KEN MACDONALD
General Manager

If it weren't so sad, our situation here would be funny. "Okay Hoke," the federal government is saying in the No Child Left Behind legislation, "You've got until 2013 to achieve 100 percent proficiency in your public schools, and until 2005 to get your teachers 'highly qualified', and certify your assistant teachers. We were going to give you some money for this, but we had to cut that back, besides, you can do it without money... and did we mention we may need to cut back the military impact money you're getting? And by the way, we need some more of your land for Fort Bragg."

At what point are we going to respond, (See **COLUMN**, page 9A)



Sheltered

From left, Dorothy McKoy; Lillian McAllister; Angelo Bratcher, pastor of Mt. Sinai Church of the Living Word; behind him, Martha Beatty; City Manager Mike McNeill; Emma Evans, Jean

Brunson; behind her, Hoke Sheriff Hubert Peterkin; Bishop J.L. Glenn; L.C. Chapel and Daphne Burt were among those who joined hands to sing at the dedication of the shelter at Raeford City Park. See related article, page 4A.