

The News-Journal

If it happened, it's news to us

50¢

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RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

Wednesday, October 29, 2003

One captured after jail break

Though state had threatened to close facility, jailer positions weren't filled

By PAT ALLEN WILSON
Editor

Four men climbed out a window of the Hoke County Jail during last night's cold rain and made their way to freedom.

Sheriff Hubert Peterkin said it was learned of the escape at 10 last night. At first it was believed only three men had escaped but a "head count" found another inmate gone.

Among those who escaped is Hector Noel Mojarro Frausto, 23, the alleged kidnapper of Dana Pevia, who was taken from her bus stop June 6, 1999 at age 11 and has since returned to her family in South Hoke.

Other escapees are identified as Christopher Damien Handon, 22; Steven Ray Locklear, 20 and John Shannon Phillips, 32. Phillips was apprehended this morning.



Locklear

Phillips



Handon

Frausto

Last night, Sheriff Hubert Peterkin said all four men are considered dangerous.

(See ESCAPE, page 6A)

Officers continue search for escapees

Charged with felonies, 3 are said to be dangerous

By PAT ALLEN WILSON
Editor

Sheriff Hubert Peterkin said Hector Frausto, Christopher Handon, Steven Locklear and John Phillips escaped from a Hoke Jail shortly after 10 last night by squeezing out a narrow win-

dow. They used sheets and blankets to lower themselves out the window and dropped 6-8 feet. Regarding a 10-ft. fence they had to climb to make their run for freedom, Sheriff Hubert Peterkin said, "If you are small enough, you can wiggle your way through."

(See PRISONERS, page 9A)

Ready for Halloween



Halloweenish...

Above: It was fun for all at the Head Start Fall Festival last week. Shown from left are Anga Roper, assistant teacher, pupil Jasmine Woods, clown volunteer Demetria Augularo, pupil Demonta Malloy, a/k/a Superman, Brenda Lowery, associate teacher, and pupils Shannon Beard and Justice Bullock.

Right: The overall winner of The News-Journal Halloween Costume Contest is Cassey Garrison, 6, daughter of Dana Young. Photographs of all 108 contestants begin on Page 1B.



McPhatter embezzlement trial begins Monday

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

The long-awaited embezzlement trial of former Hoke county manager Bernice McPhatter, who was distinguished as the first female and also African American county manager hired in Hoke, begins on Monday in the Cumberland County Superior Court in Fayetteville.

McPhatter resigned in October 2001 under suspicions of embezzling \$269,000 of county funds. At the time, she was earning more than \$80,000 at the pinnacle of her career as the highest-paid county employee. Her salary was nearly quadruple the amount of the average annual income earned by a Hoke citizen.

Many Hoke citizens wonder how it could have happened as alleged — between 1994 and 2000 without other county officials or employees being aware of it.

A former teacher of McPhatter's described her as an "above average" student when she attended Hoke County High School — a leader in her class.

The fraud case — estimated to last at least three weeks — follows a two-year period since she resigned as county manager. In August 2002, McPhatter was arrested after being indicted by a Hoke Grand Jury on allegations of four counts of embezzlement and 64 counts of forgery and uttering. These indictments ended a nine-month State Bureau of Investigation probe that was completed at the request of Hoke

(See MCPHATTER, page 7A)

This Week



More than 100 trick-or-treaters compete page 1-4B

Six vie for three city council seats page 3A

Moore's marks 30 years here page 4A

Raeford Pediatrics opens page 4A

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

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General implores Hoke to approve land use plan

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

In a plea for compromise, the executive committee of the Fort Bragg-Pope Air Force Base Regional Land Use Advisory Commission requested last Thursday that opposing municipalities or counties endorse the Joint Land Use Plan study already recommended.

In exchange, General Clint Willis, Scotland commissioner and chairman of the RLUAC, agreed that attachments of separate plans submitted by formerly dissenting counties could accompany the compatibility plan to Raleigh for the legislature to review.

Designed to restrict growth and development in a one-mile corridor around the military bases, the JLUS would prevent noise complaints, preserve military training and protect the civilian population, according to Willis. However, Hoke and Raeford officials want more control over the use of land in the county without military interference.

"We believe your adoption of the JLUS

with your attached concerns will be the first step in beginning a collaborative process in developing a small area plan," Willis read from a draft letter he proposes to send to Cumberland commissioners. It would also pertain to other counties who disagreed with the plan once other area plans are submitted.

Hoke and Raeford officials, who previously rejected the JLUS plan, and Cumberland officials, who offered a counter proposal in August, postponed approving the JLUS update. Without revisions to the JLUS plan, Willis proposed attaching development plans that each government wishes to adopt. The issue will be voted on at the next meeting in November. One of the main disputes between the RLUAC and Hoke, Raeford and Cumberland officials concerns a recommendation that only one home per 19 acres could be contained in critical or low density areas. This original recommendation has still not been altered by the RLUAC.

"The Joint Land Use Study is a 20-year plan," Willis said. "It is a regional plan,



Mulling over proposals at the meeting of the Regional Land Use Advisory Commission are Raeford City Manager Mike McNeill, Raeford City Attorney William Fields and Hoke County Commissioner Jean Powell.

and the implementation of the plan are in the details.

"We do not want to change the plan. The Department of Defense said it is a great plan, and they would not like to see it changed. We want to satisfy our con-

cerns in order to maintain the regional integrity of the plan," he said.

"With your approval, we will include your area plans and attach them to the JLUS."

(See LAND USE, page 9A)

The News-Journal

News Other stuff

By KEN MACDONALD
General Manager

"Good afternoon, News-Journal."
"Hi, may I speak to Ken?"
"Sure, just a moment please."
(pause)
"Good afternoon, News-Journal."
"Um... I was holding for Ken."
"Oh. Sorry. Hold on just a moment."
(pause)
(pause)
"Good afternoon, News-Journal."

"Um... I was holding for Ken, but people keep answering the phone."
"Oh, well I think he might be at lunch. Would you like his voice mail?"
"Sure, thanks."
"Hi, this is Ken. I'm out of the office. To leave a message press 1..."
(1)
"Hi Ken, this is..."
"Thank you for calling."
(Click)

Okay, so we're still having some difficulties with the new (See OTHER STUFF, page 6A)

New health building on county calendar

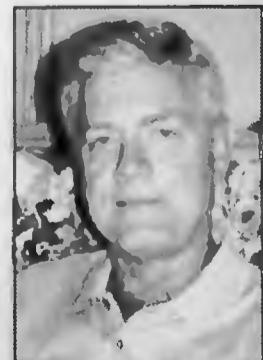
By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

County officials are "brainstorming" over a proposal to build a new \$2 million Hoke County Health Department building at the county-owned land located on West Palmer Street.

In the preliminary plan, the health structure would consist of an 18,000 square foot facility on a 20-acre site that would enable the hiring of more health staff and increase patient programs.

The idea to erect a new health facility will be presented to the board of commissioners at their next meeting, according to Hoke Commission Chairman Bobby Wright, also a member of the Hoke Board of Health.

If approved, Wright said, the far-reaching plan



Don Womble

would accommodate offices in the existing health facility on Central Avenue for the federal Farmers Service Agency and the N.C. Cooperative Extension Agency to transfer operations. The county owns the Health building. Thus, leasing to the FAS would generate income for Hoke. FSA is currently housed in smaller offices in the U.S. Post Office on Elwood. Cooperative Extension staff operates services in a wing of Turlington School on West Prospect Avenue. Neither agency has room for expansion at their current locations.

"With a struggling economy and more Hoke citizens in need of medical services, constructing a new health building would provide additional services to people in need," Wright said. "It would also alleviate space constraints, allowing Cooperative Extension and the FSA more flexibility to enlarge consumer and agricultural programs that benefit farmers and citizens of all income levels."

Currently undeveloped, the West Palmer land (See HEALTH BUILDING, page 10A)