



Flamingo-ed
If you woke up yesterday morning and drove down Fulton Street you may have thought that you were in Miami. Ninety-eight pink flamingos flew in overnight. The home belongs to Tom and Linda Lee, who were unavailable for comment.



Museum Christmas party
Last year's Raeford-Hoke Museum Christmas open house was a full house. This year, the Christmas party is in memory of the late Bob Gentry, Raeford's mayor of 13 years, and honors members and contributors. The event will be Sunday, December 7 at 3-5 p.m. The museum is located at 111 Highland Street.

DOT responds to Raeford's requests regarding roads

US 401 widening still not funded, Palmer St. Extension on schedule, Highway 13 to miss Hoke

By PAT ALLEN WILSON
Editor

The N.C. Dept. of Transportation has responded to specific requests by the City of Raeford concerning transportation issues and development in Hoke.

G.R. Kindley of DOT's 8th Division, which represents eight counties, to include Hoke, said the department is planning on widening, constructing turn lanes at critical intersections, and improving the pavement on a section of US 401 from US Business east of Raeford to US 401 Business north of Laurinburg until funds are available for four-laning the highway.

The Lumber River Rural Transportation Planning Organization, of which Hoke is a member, has requested funding for the US 401 widening be moved up on the 10-year Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), where it has remained unfunded for more than a dozen years. This request was made formally at a TIP hearing in Southern Pines last month.

Buddy Blue and Dr. Bob Nelson, representing the City of Raeford, also spoke on behalf of the project and others at the TIP hearing.

City Manager Mike McNeill made written requests for specific projects after Kindley met with a Raeford/Hoke County joint land use study committee in July. The Raeford/Hoke committee was formed to represent interests here following a study plan compiled by a Fort Bragg land use advisory commission that would limit development of 20,000 prime acres in Hoke in order to protect a one-mile corridor around the post. Compensations for the loss of development possibilities and tax revenues were asked by Raeford and Hoke officials in the form of road improvements and other projects.

McNeill's written requests were forwarded to Kindley in August, but McNeill said he did not receive a copy of a reply from Kindley until late November. Kindley's letter was dated September 15.

In his letter, McNeill listed as the committee's concerns the proposed route of Highway 13; improvements to Highway 20; the Palmer Street Extension project in Raeford; rights to pine straw harvesting on the 2,500 acre Calloway Tract, now owned by the Nature Conservancy but bought by DOT; and the development of a

five-acre state park on the Calloway Tract.

The Highway 13 loop is designed to miss Hoke on the Cumberland County side, and Kindley said the Cumberland County path was chosen because it was "least damaging" environmentally.

DOT explained in an August 26 memo to Bill Rosser, division engineer for Division 8, the reason behind the selection of a "superior route" of Highway 13 through Cumberland County. "The costs categories used in evaluating each of the 13 alternatives were based on impacts to the human (residents and businesses) and the natural (wetlands and streams) environments. All of the alternatives that pass through Hoke County had higher number of impacts to residents, businesses, right-of-way required, potential hazardous material sites, wetlands and streams. These impacts resulted in higher costs for wetland and stream mitigation and right-of-way," Kindley wrote McNeill. "I can assure you the selected alternative was not an arbitrary decision, but one that reviewed transportation needs against environmental, social and other impacts in order to come up with the 'least damaging' corridor."

Regarding improvements to High-

way 20 (St. Pauls Road), Kindley wrote that if local government groups in Hoke are interested in multi-laning the highway, they should submit this request through the Lumber River RPO as a county priority at the next TIP hearing.

Regarding the state park request, Kindley wrote that it is his understanding that the Nature Conservancy is committed to set aside a five-acre parcel along NC 211 for a public park. Hoke officials have been asked to participate in the design of the park, he said, and DOT is preparing an estimate for a roadway across railroad tracks to provide access to the park site.

That roadway can be built in the "next several months," Kindley wrote in September.

About the prospect of Hoke retaining pine straw harvest rights, Kindley wrote the use of low intensity fires as a management tool to develop an ecosystem for the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker will prevent the raking of pine straw. The straw is the primary fuel source for the fires, he wrote.

Kindley also wrote the Palmer Street Extension from NC 211 to NC 211 is on schedule as a "moving ahead" project for 2005.

Nelson, Blue speak

At the TIP hearing held November 19, Nelson said, "We in Hoke County failed to involve ourselves in planning as early as we should and as vigorously as we should." Nelson added, "This failure shows up on your map. There is an empty space on the map... That's Hoke County. That's my home." There is, Nelson said, indicating the Palmer Street Extension project on the DOT map, "one tiny area of red—in the planning stage. That's it." Blue echoed Nelson's comments and requests and added that the Palmer Street Extension had been "in the planning for 53 years and should have been built some time ago."

Blue also requested the widening of Highway 211 West to Aberdeen. "There is no safe place to park or pass. Something needs to get done before somebody gets killed."

A representative of the City of Aberdeen also endorsed improvements to Highway 211 between that city and Raeford. Additionally, a Lumber River RPO recommended the project.

The draft for the 2006-2012 updated TIP will be presented to the 19-member state Board of Transportation for review next year.

Mullet Roast caps economic prosperity

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

In Raeford and Hoke County, the mullet is more than the king of fish. The popular fish is featured as the symbol of economic prosperity at the Annual Mullet Roast. Business leaders and public officials predicted a positive forecast for local economic and commercial growth at the feast of grilled mullet.

"Raeford is a wonderful place to live," Rick Sandy, master of ceremonies, said.

Celebrating 21 years of the traditional gathering, the evening dinner attracted 200 guests. Gene Shelnett, a board member of the Raeford-Hoke Chamber of commerce, welcomed dignitaries and recognized them for contributions to the community.

"We have a great crowd here tonight," Shelnett said. "Cooking of the mullet is not an exact science. It usually takes between 30 to 45 minutes to prepare. I lost 60 pounds in the last few months because I have been on a mullet diet."

"I would like to take this opportunity to recognize some of our guests."

Keynote guests included N.C. Senator Tony Rand; N.C. Representative Doug Yongue; and Gary E. Mitchell, constituent liaison for Congressman Robin Hayes.

"It is always a pleasure to come to Raeford and to this event," Rand said. "I am very delighted to have the opportunity to be here tonight."

Yongue expressed appreciation for being invited in what is a time when community leaders of commerce and industry have an opportunity to reveal their firm's progress during the past year.

"There are two things that draw me over here," Yongue, a resident of Scotland County, said. "I eat mullet, and the second thing is these great people here in Hoke County."

"You have some great leaders and they deserve to be recognized."

Mitchell, on behalf of Hayes, said the congressman is concentrating his efforts right now on national security and economic security for the citizens of North Carolina and the nation.

Shelnett paid homage to dedi-

cated advocate of the Mullet Roast—the late Raeford mayor Bob Gentry. The evening of hospitality and fellowship was dedicated "in loving memory" to Gentry for his many years of service to the community. Sponsored by the Raeford-Hoke Chamber of Commerce, Lumber River Electric Membership Corporation served as the gold patron to fund the roast.

The Rev. Ian Rankine of Antioch Presbyterian Church also remembered Gentry in his invocation.

"We truly give thanks and remembrance for the life of Bob Gentry and for what he did for so many of us here tonight," Rankine said. "This is a time of laughter and fellowship so we might grow closer together."

Shelnett introduced John Jordan of Fidelity Bank as the new Raeford mayor pro tempore. Jordan recognized all the city staff, city councilmen, Steve Connell, head of the Downtown Revitalization Committee, and Don Porter, executive director of the Raeford-Hoke Economic Development Commission.

"Without Bob (Gentry) here, we know he would want us to carry forward," Jordan said.

Connell told the group his organization is moving forward with projects that include obtaining more USDA grants through the help of Hayes. He said in the near future they also hope to complete the transferring of utility cables underground.

Porter commended Hoke for being declared part of the 21st Century Community initiative, sharing the honor with only 34 other counties.

"One of the primary reasons we were selected was because we are doing a lot to help ourselves," Porter said. "This is an opportunity to improve our infrastructure."

Porter revealed Hoke had recently been the second competitor in line in the nation to attract a Department of Defense project to Hoke, but lost out to California. He commended everyone, including the city council and commissioners—for their efforts.

County Manager Mike Wood said a lot of great things are happening in Hoke.

"The board of commissioners are doing a tremendous job," he said.

Hoke Commission Chairman Bobby Wright announced that the

county has just received a grant for \$250,000 to install additional water lines for new customers in the county. He thanked Hayes for being instrumental in assisting with obtaining the grant.

Commission Vice Chairman Charles V. Daniels said he is pleased the board is looking for long-term results and not just fixing things with a "band-aid" temporarily.

District Attorney Kristy Newton, prosecutor for Hoke and Scotland counties, commended her staff. She said a busy year had included her sending her first murderer to death row and the recent completion of the county embezzlement trial where she obtained a conviction.

Sheriff Hubert Peterkin gave all the credit for the Sheriff's Office success to his deputies and the efforts of the Hoke commissioners.

"Today marks one year since we came into office," Peterkin said. "I enjoy serving Hoke County. We have made over 1,800 arrests this year, over 16 drug busts, and recouped \$167,000 of past due fees from the state that the Hoke County Jail was entitled to receive."

Hoke School Superintendent Allen Strickland praised the improvements in Hoke schools.

"We had a great year," Strickland said. "Ten out of eleven schools met high growth with the ABCs accountability plan," Strickland said. "Also, 75.3 percent of our youngsters are performing at mastery level of 3 or 4 or higher."

"We had four schools of distinction and the rest were named schools of progress."

Marvin Johnson, owner of House of Raeford, informed guests his firm had experienced a "right decent" year.

"One more thing," Johnson said to everyone. "Eat more turkey. Unilever Home Care keeps us smelling good, and I will feed you."

Calvin House, plant manager of Burlington Industries Inc. said it had been a difficult year, but since WL Ross & Co. purchased the firm they had emerged from Chapter 11 bankruptcy. He said most changes had occurred on a corporate level, and it was business as usual in Raeford without any major changes.

"I want to thank all of you for your support during the past year," House said.

Lumber River EMC officials told the group they had a "pretty good" year, connecting 500 new customers. They continue to partner with the Carolina Horse Park in western Hoke and also with the law enforcement torch run for the Special Olympics.

"We provide \$40,000 to \$50,000 in financial contributions to this county," Walter White, vice presi-

(See ROAST, page 7A)

OBITUARIES

More obituaries may be found on page 4A.

Helen S. Ragsdale

Asheboro — Helen Styers Ragsdale, 85, died Wednesday, November 26, 2003 at Clapp's Convalescent Nursing Home after a two-year illness. She was the mother of Raeford residents Gordon Ragsdale Jr. (wife Julianne) and Phillip Ragsdale (wife Jane).

Mrs. Ragsdale is a graduate of Asheboro High School, working as a buyer and bookkeeper at Hudson Belk's after graduation. She taught a Sunday school class at Chapel United Methodist Church at an early age, and continued to teach until her father and mother became disabled. She served as the superintendent of the Sunday school, sang with the choir, and was a charter member and president of the

Women's Society. Her contributions to church suppers helped earn them a reputation in the community as "outstanding."

When World War II began, she and her husband, Delbert Gordon Ragsdale Sr., moved to Suffolk, Virginia, where he worked in the shipyard and she became a nurse's aide at a nearby hospital. She worked there until the birth of her first son, returning to Asheboro when her husband became a member of the U.S. Navy. After the war ended, her second son was born.

Mrs. Ragsdale began catering from her kitchen, specializing in wedding cakes. She also provided boxed lunches for tailgating at nearby football games. At her home there was always a table of food for guests.

Mr. Ragsdale, to whom she was married for 63 years, survives her. In

addition to her sons and their wives, she is also survived by two granddaughters, Elizabeth R. Braswell and husband Keith of Southern Pines, and Susan Styers Ragsdale of Raleigh; one great-granddaughter, Katherine Hayes Braswell; one brother, Walter A. Styers Jr. of Charlotte Hall, Maryland; and one sister, Elmira Cooper, and her husband, Bernard, of Bradenton, Florida.

A funeral service to celebrate Mrs. Ragsdale's life was held at Brower's Chapel UMC Sunday. Burial followed in the church cemetery.

Memorials may be made to Brower's Chapel UMC in care of the Rev. Jeffrey Syphole, 1668 Plantation Circle, Asheboro, NC 27203; or any charitable organization of your choice.

Pugh Funeral Home of Asheboro served the family.

Mary R. Locklear

Mrs. Mary Rose Locklear, 59, of 1171 Antern Lane, Raeford died Tuesday, December 2, 2003 in her home. Arrangements will be announced by Heritage Funeral Home of Red Springs.

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CHIROPRACTIC OUTLOOK
Dr. Tony Santangelo, Chiropractic Physician

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Perhaps you have put in a long day at work and your head is beginning to ache. Or maybe you forgot to eat lunch and are starting to feel lightheaded. You better listen to these alarms. No one wants a full-blown headache.

Unfortunately, some people regularly get headaches. Chiropractic treatment may be the answer. A 2001 report by researchers at the Duke University Evidence-Based Practice Center in Durham, North Carolina, found that spinal manipulation resulted in almost immediate improvement for headaches that originate in the neck. They also saw significantly fewer side effects and longer-lasting relief of tension-type headaches than when taking a commonly prescribed medication.

Cervical spinal manipulation was associated with improvement in outcomes in two trials involving patients with neck pain and headaches. Manipulation appeared to result in immediate improvement in severity when used to treat episodes of cervicogenic headaches. If you suffer from frequent headaches, make an appointment with a local Doctor of Chiropractic. Why have pain needlessly?

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