

# The News-Journal

If it happened, it's news to us

50¢

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RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

Wednesday, January 14, 2004

## Parachute factory, shopping center planned

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

More industrial and commercial businesses will soon be calling Hoke County home.

A major body armor equipment com-

pany located in St. Pauls is planning to open the first parachute factory in Hoke County next to P.K. Air Park on Doc Brown Road.

In another business development, a small business center is being designed next to the multi-million dollar Hoke

Landing on Club Pond Road where the new Food Lion grocery store will be opening.

Paraclete Armor and Equipment, owned by Tim D'Annunzio, will manufacture parachute components and rigging to fill contracts for private and

military orders, according to Gene Thacker, who with his wife, Billie, owns Raeford's airport and Raeford Aviation.

The new factory will be named Paraclete Aero. D'Annunzio, a former U.S. Army Golden Knight parachutist,

uses the airport drop zone frequently to skydive. A Raeford resident, D'Annunzio also employs his sons, John and Joey, in the family-owned business. Joey, a member of the 82nd Airborne Division, is currently stationed in Iraq. (See **FACTORY**, page 4A)



Everything's all white

Left: Calloway Road was picturesque at noontime on Friday. Below: Twins Mandi (left) and Candi Garner huddle in ponchos waiting for a ride home after classes end early at West Hoke Middle School. See story and more photos on page 7A.



### This Week



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Hoke's top stories  
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## Feud over rezoned lot in Rockfish going to court

### Neighbor says commissioners ignored opposition and improperly spot-zoned land

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

A dispute between Rockfish property owners over the rezoning of a lot from RA-20 to highway commercial will likely end up in a Hoke County courtroom.

An appeal of the recent Hoke board of county commissioners' rezoning action was filed on January 2 in the Hoke Superior Court division. Rockfish resident William E. Kelchner, Jr. lodged the complaint.

Kelchner, who owns a home near the controversial lot, opposed the rezoning application at a county commission meeting last month. However, the board unanimously approved the request of Rockfish property owner Clyde Shepley, who said he wanted to place a neighborhood business on the one-acre tract he owns. In spite of substantial opposition, the majority of the board indicated the rezoning would help advance the economy of Hoke without affecting property values. They unanimously approved Shepley's request to change the lot's use.

Kelchner named all the commissioners, and also Shepley, in his petition to the

court. The board and Shepley will be required to respond to the civil summons.

The cleared land is located at the corner of Myra and Rockfish roads near Davis Bridge. It is across the street from Stone-wall Subdivision, containing a number of homes that directly flank Rockfish Road.

In his complaint to the court, Kelchner is seeking for the board to reverse its decision. He alleged in his complaint that the rezoning consisted of "illegal spot zoning." There are no commercial properties located within a half-mile radius of Shepley's property, he added.

"Respondents (commissioners) had very little discussion of the issues at the hearing, therefore, making it appear the rezoning was a 'done deal,' Kelchner wrote in his petition to the court. "Respondents ignored substantial and overwhelming testimony from the surrounding residential owners that the application for rezoning be denied.

"The respondents (commissioners) exceeded their powers as the rezoning was not for the purpose of promoting the health, safety, morals or the general welfare (of citizens)."

(See **LAWSUIT**, page 8A)



Rockfish resident Clyde Shepley examines a one-acre tract he owns that was rezoned from RA-20 to highway commercial.

## County, city collaborate on 21<sup>st</sup> Century projects

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
AND  
PAT ALLEN WILSON

Following the City of Raeford's lead, the Hoke board of commissioners has also voted to support four key development projects to enhance living and economic conditions in the county.

These objectives will serve as a blueprint for the Hoke County 21st Century Community initiatives, according to Hoke Economic Developer Don Porter.

Essential for transforming dreams into designated improvements, these projects may be altered during the process or (See **PROJECTS**, page 8A)



"Can you hear me now?" Hoke Economic Developer Don Porter mimics the popular Verizon commercial as he discusses positive growth with Raz Autry, former Hoke Schools superintendent.

## Teachers assistants accused of sexual misconduct

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

Two male teacher assistants working at Hoke County High are no longer employed by the Hoke public school system after being accused of sexual misconduct. A male student filed a complaint with a

School Resource Officer approximately one month ago against the two faculty members, according to the Hoke Sheriff's Office.

SRO deputies are certified and assigned to Hoke High under the direct command of Sheriff Hubert Peterkin. They also have (See **MISCONDUCT**, page 8A)

### The News-Journal

News Other stuff

By KEN MACDONALD  
General Manager

I've often heard it's hard to find a good Plummer. But I know of a few. Judging from a newspaper clipping given to me, one is Dr. William Plummer, a native of Hoke County. A veterinarian for more than 50 years in Wayne County, Plummer was honored in December with an endowed scholarship in his name at N.C. State University. The company for whom he worked for 12 years following his retirement from private practice - Goldsboro Milling - funded the scholar-

ship with \$17,000 to aid future vets, mainly in eastern N.C.

Plummer is related to most of the other mostly good Plummers in Hoke County. He was a fighter pilot in World War II, is a graduate of Auburn University and was twice named Distinguished Veterinarian of the Year. He was also president of the state association of veterinarians. ❖

Ellen Currie stopped by the office Monday and delivered a photo of Ken and Betsy Ann McNeill's grandchildren, Sara and Kenneth (← nice name) Cato of (See **OTHER STUFF**, page 4A)