

The News-Journal

If it happened, it's news to us

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Fueling the Future



Richard Howard, program technician with the North Carolina Solar Center, helps East Hoke Middle students Patrick Flowers (wearing goggles) and Lynwood Monroe attach wires to a model of a fuel cell car under the Students Fueling the Future program. EHMS is one of 10 North Carolina schools receiving grants to participate in the program. An article on the program will be included in an upcoming issue of The News-Journal.

Consultants say build new jail

Overcrowding, inadequate conditions will only worsen as population grows

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

A preliminary report on the Hoke County Detention Center recently released reveals deficiencies and overcrowded conditions. The study cited conditions where inmates, who do not have a bed assigned, must some times temporarily sleep on tables or on the floor.

The list details inadequate medical conditions, problems in the kitchen, insufficient property and records storage, a lack of a recreational and exercise area for inmates, and a lack of security for visitors who come to the facility.

By 2030, the inmate population in the Hoke County Detention Center will more than quadruple from 71 to an estimated 313 per month. In a further increase, the projected population of Hoke residents will more than double from 33,646 to 75,179 in the next 26 years, according to the jail study conducted by Mosely, Wilkins & Wood architects.

The Hoke jail committee was presented these statistics in a summary report by the architectural consulting firm last Tuesday. The next phase will include a study of three potential sites for building a new jail, or recommendations for expanding the existing facility. Committee members will decide on the three locations at their February meeting.

Nelda Leon and Dan Mace, consultants with the Charlotte-based firm, were instrumental in designing a new jail in Sampson County. They were contracted two months ago by the Hoke board of commissioners to prepare a feasibility study on whether to expand or build a new facility. This, after the state regulating agency and an inmates' rights organization threatened to close down the Hoke jail's 40-bed annex, or file a lawsuit.

Commissioners agreed to the \$20,000 study because of overcrowding, possible understaffing of jailers, and alleged inferior security equipment currently in the facility. Their approval of a study preceded a jailbreak of four inmates accused of kidnapping and breaking and entering charges. The inmates were later recaptured.

On learning of the stark statistics, Hoke Sheriff Hubert Peterkin said it is not a question of "if the county should build a jail," but "when." County Manager Mike Wood says the county cannot afford to build an \$8.5 million jail that would house 250 beds, as recommended by Mosely's consulting firm, unless supplemental funding is secured.

Peterkin and Wood commended Raz Aury, chairman of the jail committee. They expressed confidence also in Commissioners Jean Powell and Bill Cameron, and all other volunteers on

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This Week



CPR gives man a second chance
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Scaggs murder case revived
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Arson suspected in home fire
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Hoke's top stories are on the web; send us stories, subscribe
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School board eyes career academy at high school

Approach starts with 9th grade, combines educational, career paths in 'school within a school'

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

The Hoke Board of Education is considering a concept of career academies within Hoke County High School, transforming it into a "talent development" high school.

By combining the right balance of "nagging and nurturing," students will excel,

according to Betsy Bailey, coordinator for the new initiative.

"We have to decide which pathway we want to put into the academies," Bailey told the Hoke Board of Education. "It will be a school within a school."

The "super-restructuring" project is being sponsored by Johns Hopkins University's Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed At Risk,

under a Comprehensive School Reform grant. A Ninth Grade Success Academy will be established that is expected to eventually reduce the high school dropout rate in Hoke, according to Hoke Assistant School Superintendent Tim Farley. "We have a high dropout rate," Farley reminded the board.

Bailey and Farley presented a brief program to the Hoke Board of Education

last week, encouraging its support for the reform designed to improve Hoke High. A twilight academy will also be proposed to assist students who are not successful in day-to-day curriculums in the school system as a positive intervention program.

"We are embarking on a path to restructure the classrooms," Bailey said. "I

(See ACADEMY, page 4A)



Above: Hoke dignitaries and guests gather at the 17th annual Martin Luther King Jr. Banquet/Celebration on Monday evening. The event was held at the Cape Fear Conference "B" Headquarters with more than 200 people attending. Left: Lynette Barber of Raleigh performs an inspirational song.

SBI steps up Southerland criminal probe

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

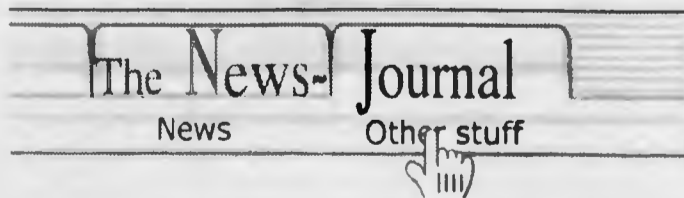
The N.C. State Bureau of Investigation has accelerated its criminal inquiry in connection with irregularities allegedly committed by Raeford attorney Harry Southerland.

"We have already started to proceed with our investigation against Mr. Southerland," SBI Supervisor/Agent Jerry Weaver, said on Friday. "Now it is on the horizon. I cannot comment on the evidence we are basing our information on, but our inquiry is very active right now."

A former part-time, foreclosure attorney for Hoke County for more than two years, Southerland has denied any allegations of impropriety. He did not comment about the SBI inquiry continuing forward.

In December, Weaver announced that his state law enforcement agency was deferring its probe on Southerland until after the N.C. State Bar completed its separate investigation. The NCSB is holding a civil trial against Southerland on February 20, requesting that Southerland be disbarred. The proceeding will be conducted by a disciplinary

(See PROBE, page 8A)



By KEN MACDONALD
General Manager

confess to various misdeeds:

Everyone knows one of the nicest things about the holidays is the opportunity to sit around as a family and recount stories.

Now that the holidays are over, and I've had some time to do some reflecting on those moments and on a couple of stories from others, I'd like to pass on for younger families my suggested Family Statute of Limitations - the time that should pass before it's safe for children to

Using homemade (is there any other kind?) potato guns to fire spuds - and other debris - into the neighbors' yards. 3 years

Making homemade torches from hairspray, WD40, perfume, gasoline (add 10 years), and thereby losing hair from the head, eyebrows, arms, or for that matter, anywhere. 2 years
(See OTHER STUFF, page 5A)

Committee of 100 up and running

By PAT ALLEN WILSON
Editor

The Committee of 100 adopted by-laws and established a five-member nominating committee to select a board of directors at its first meeting last Wednesday night.

The Committee of 100 is being reactivated by the Raeford Hoke Economic Development Commission as a county-wide, privately-funded, nonprofit corporation with the goal to expand eco-

(See COMMITTEE OF 100, page 6A)