

# The News-Journal

If it happened, it's news to us

50¢

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RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

Wednesday, January 28, 2004

## Double ice storms bring Hoke to frozen halt

Roads treacherous, schools close for three days, businesses run on skeleton crews if at all

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

Some Hoke motorists inched along in their vehicles on Monday and Tuesday in the grooved paths formed on primary roads already partially cleared by the N.C. Department of Transportation. Others stayed at home rather than venture out in the ice storm that swept through Hoke on Sunday.

After crippling snow and sleet gripped the central North Carolina and Sandhills regions over the weekend, rural roads in Hoke remained "close to impassable" without any thaw in sight, according to Roy Pittman, county maintenance supervisor for the DOT.

Temperatures plummeted from 64 degrees on Saturday to a low of 21 on Sunday. Today the major arteries appear to be relatively clear, except patches of black ice remain as well as ice on shoulders of the highways.

Most workers stayed home from their jobs, many businesses closed, and Hoke students were not required to attend school, preventing many potential accidents.

Pittman said no roads were closed in Hoke. However, Interstate-95 North in Johnston County was closed down because of disabled tractor-trailers and several collisions.

"We have fought a tough battle," Pittman said yesterday. "By dark, the primary roads should be in pretty good shape."

"We are still concerned because there are some roads like just one sheet of ice in the country. The ice has just bonded solid."

"In my more than 30 years of working for the DOT, I have never seen our rural roads in such dangerous shape," he said.

"This is an extreme, extreme situation. If folks do not really need to stay on the highways, they need to stay at home."

DOT crews on Sunday began salting down major roads. (See **ICE STORM**, page 3A)



Aubrey Mayhew pushes her friend Jordan Oliphant along Elwood Avenue Monday. The girls, both 14, found the quarter-inch layer of ice on the road perfect for sledding, if not for walking.

### This Week



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## City reins in operation of treatment plant

Fines House of Raeford \$8,000 and places plant under supervision of public works director

By PAI ALLEN WILSON  
Editor

City Council members are keeping a close eye on operations at the city's wastewater treatment plant, specifically concerning discharge from the House of Raeford turkey processing plant.

In most recent developments, the city levied a fine of \$8,000 against the House of Raeford for failing to install a required monitor and \$100 for violations of a discharge permit. The plant has appealed the \$8,000 fine, according to City Attorney William Fields.

House of Raeford discharges 800,000 gallons of sewage daily and uses one million gallons of city water each day.

At a special meeting called last Thursday at 2 p.m., a closed session was held, citing pending litigation against House of Raeford as well as personnel and attorney-client privilege.

Councilmen met in closed session for approximately a half hour and returned to open session to vote unanimously to place the sewage plant operation in the hands of the public works director. No action was taken regarding the city vs. House of Raeford matter or the attorney-client privilege, Mayor Pro Tem John Jordan said.

PWC Director Mike Lucas will report on the sewage operation to Interim City Manager Betty Smith, who was assistant city manager until the resignation on January 5 of Mike McNeill, who had been city manager for seven years.

The city's wastewater treatment plant is operated by Hydro Management, which came under fire from Commissioner Wayne Mills at the January 5 meeting. Mills questioned unpaid bills, wells that (See **TREATMENT PLANT**, page 7A)

## State: plant improves compliance

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

In spite of repeated violations levied against the City of Raeford for industrial wastewater treatment violations in 2003, the sewer plant has made significant strides toward improving its compliance, according to Paul Rawls, director of the water quality division for the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

"There have been a number of violations they have been working on during the last year," Rawls said. "They have been working not only with the waste treatment plant, but local industries."

According to Rawls, Raeford has moved toward almost "total compliance." He said Mike McNeill, former city manager who resigned two weeks ago, was

always "extremely communicative" in responding to any questions from his agency. He said the outside contractor, Hydro Management Services hired by Raeford, has also worked closely with him.

Rawls, researched the total amount of fines Raeford paid during the past two years. To his knowledge, Raeford officials have "paid up" all of its penalties that were assessed. Nine penalties were levied between August 2002-2003. The five penalties charged to Raeford in 2002 totaled \$14,766. Four other fines totaled approximately \$17,000 in 2003. Since August 2003, Rawls has issued other notices of violations to Raeford officials.

In February, 2000 when Hydro Management Services entered into a contract (See **COMPLIANCE**, page 7A)

## Wagram minister eyes 48th House District



Garland Pierce

By PAI ALLEN WILSON  
Editor

A minister from Wagram who worked in Hoke County for many years has announced he will run for the 48th House District seat held by Donald A. Bonner. The Rev. Garland Pierce, pastor of Bright Hopewell Missionary Baptist Church and president of the Scotland County Branch of the NAACP, says he wants to make a difference.

Parts of Hoke are in the 48th District, which also includes Scotland and Robeson.

Bonner has publicly stated he will not seek election for the 2005-2006 legislative term, citing health problems he and (See **PIERCE**, page 6A)

## The News-Journal

News Other stuff

By KEN MACDONALD  
General Manager

Because of an error last week, most of this column vanished into computer-land. This terribly upset regular readers, who jammed up our phone system when they both called at the same time to see what happened. So I'm going to start over. [U, hum] Like I was saying, 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 confess to various misdeeds:

Using homemade (is there any other kind?) potato guns to fire spuds - and other debris - into the neighbors' yards. 3 years (See **OTHER STUFF (Really?)**, page 7A)



Frigid frosting

A trio of tobacco barns make a lonely but lovely picture just outside of Raeford.