

The News-Journal

If it happened, it's news to us

50¢

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Deputies disciplined after pepper spray attack

One fired, one suspended, one resigned after allegations inmate was intentionally sprayed

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

A Hoke sheriff's deputy was fired, another was suspended, and one resigned following an incident in which an inmate was allegedly sprayed with pepper spray unnecessarily.

Monica Jeranek, the mother of a teen inmate in custody at the Hoke County Jail, filed a complaint with the Hoke Sheriff's Office on February 9 and with the Hoke District Attorney's Office, according to Chief Deputy Troy McDuffie.

"My son complained of burning in his eyes and his chest, but I hope he is okay now," Jeranek said. "I am not considering filing criminal charges myself at this time because I am satisfied with how Sheriff Peterkin handled the situation."

"I am satisfied also with the investigation, and I feel like they did what they should have to discipline the deputies." According to Jeranek, she recognized

excessive force had been used on her son after he told her what occurred because she has family members in law enforcement.

"Deputies are supposed to be trained and not go off half-cocked," Jeranek said. "I did not want this to happen to another inmate in the jail, and that is

why I complained."

McDuffie said the pepper spray used — similar to mace — was more deadly (See DEPUTIES, page 8A)

\$62,000 water grant at stake

By PAT WILSON
Editor

City councilmen were told Monday night that the city will lose \$62,000 in grant money if it doesn't move ahead with the second phase of a water improvement project.

A 12-inch water line on Highway 20 to Oakdale Gin Road and on to Highway 401 Business is near completion and a new water tank is beginning to go up; all are Phase I projects. However, the laying of a 12-inch water line along the Palmer Street Extension, a part of (See WATER GRANT, page 9A)



Valentine's Day warm-up

Bobby Graham, left, and Tamara Matthews warm up for the inaugural Raeford-Hoke 5K Love Run which was held this past Saturday in downtown Raeford. For complete story, see page 7A.

This Week



Duke Endowment supports UMC day care
page 1B

Lumber Bridge, UNCP make music together
page 4A

Teens want tobacco taboo on campuses
page 3A

Index

Births 3B
Business/Farm 8A
Calendar 2B
Classifieds 6-7B
Deaths 10A
Editorials 2A
Legals 4-5B
Public Record 10A
Religion 5A
Schools 5A
Socials 3B
Sports 6-7A

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

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County to hire planner to cope with growth

Board also seeks city's help to reach new Palmer Street health complex with water, sewer

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

A professional planner will be hired by the Hoke board of commissioners because of immediate challenges with facility needs around the county, and because of increased residential and commercial growth, according to Commissioner Bill Cameron.

"We needed one," Cameron said. "It should have happened (before), but it has not happened."

The board unanimously voted to ap-

prove advertising the planner's position, directing County Manager Mike Wood and Jean Wade, human resources director, to begin the process. Criteria for hiring a planner will be discussed in depth at a one-day retreat that will be held on March 11 at Camp Rockfish.

"I think the way the county is growing and has grown that we could put in more zoning fees down the road," Cameron said. "Schools are an issue, and we need to be prepared as far as long range planning."

"If we do not, we are going to be in the

doghouse. We are talking schools, a jail and millions of dollars. Who will suffer? The overall county, itself," he said.

"Someone has to say 'whoa.' If we do not lay the groundwork, we will be in trouble 15 years from now."

Commission Vice Chairman Charles V. Daniels commended Cameron for his candid approach to planning and the other commissioners' teamwork to solve growth problems.

"Glad to see Bill is on board," Daniels said of the junior commissioner most recently elected along with Commissioner

Jean Powell.

Until after the retreat is concluded, candidates for the new planning position will not be interviewed, according to the board.

"It will take a while to get a professional planner," Wood said. "It is complicated."

Linda Revels, current Hoke planner and clerk to the board of commissioners, expressed confidence in the board's decision to hire a certified planner. Developers such as Joe Riddle of Riddle Property (See PLANNER, page 9A)

Hoke DSS proposes house arrest for deadbeat parents

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Hoke's most wanted deadbeat parents may soon be placed on house arrest.

An idea to monitor deadbeat parents with electronic surveillance until they pay their delinquent child support bills is gaining popularity, according to Bob Mercer, director of Hoke's Department of Social Services.

If approved by Mercer, Hoke could be distinguished as the first county in the Cape Fear region to establish a house arrest policy for parents behind or refusing to pay child support. Mercer said Hoke would follow the lead of Wake and New Hanover counties as the third county to stiffen collection methods to include house arrest. Unlike many counties that enforce nonpayment of child support with criminal penalties, Hoke currently regu-

lates it on a civil basis, he said.

Hoke statistics currently indicate there are 1,475 cases of parents in arrears on child support who are in contempt of local court orders. One of the worst offenders owes \$80,000 in child support. DSS is unable to locate many of the offenders because they have left the county, according to Mercer.

"There will probably be less parents skipping out on child support obligations

if the system is established in Hoke," Mercer said. "I am thinking about doing it during the next budget year beginning in July."

"We are in the process of talking to judges and local law enforcement about piloting this project to see what it will accomplish. This is a new market for us," he said.

According to Mercer, putting individuals (See HOUSE ARREST, page 4A)



By KEN MACDONALD
General Manager

Word from the Board of Education is that we need to build two — maybe three — new schools. Not surprising when you're in one of the fastest growing counties in the state.

I doubt that anyone would dispute a new middle school and elementary school are needed. Some of our elementary schools and both of our middle schools are approaching the size of an average

high school in N.C. — 994 students.

The two middle schools — West, at 780 students; and East, at 843 — are certainly blowing past the state average of 680 students for middle schools.

But I think it's time to consider a new high school as well.

Not just because its enrollment at 1,450 students exceeds the state average by roughly 50 percent, but because, just like the middle schools, it's too darned big.

Okay, you say, how about Southview (See OTHER STUFF, page 8A)



Black Military History

World War II veteran Clyde Thomas Sr. holds a photo of himself when he served in the military. Vietnam veterans John Scott, left, and Richard Ferguson, check out the Vietnam war display. The exhibit on black military history was presented by Raeford VFW Post 7930.