

The News-Journal

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RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

Wednesday, August 25, 2004

County ponders building treatment plant

Century of growth prompts Hoke and Raeford officials to seek new capacity

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Hit with a nearly \$200,000 sewer bill from the city, Hoke County is exploring the construction of its own wastewater treatment plant.

Since its creation in 1911, Hoke has

had no treatment plant, but a population increase of 46 percent during the last century, more capacity needs for sewer in the city, and almost 100 percent of development in the county completed by installing septic tanks have County Manager Mike Wood and Raeford interim city manager Helen Huffman seeking

solutions to mutual sewer needs.

Wood submitted a request to the N.C. Division of Natural Resources to request "speculative limits" for a proposed wastewater treatment facility for Hoke County on August 5.

"If we use someone else's capacity, we have to pay for it," Wood said yesterday.

"We would control our own destiny rather than other entities controlling it if we support our own sewage treatment facility."

Preceding Wood's request, Huffman also sent a request to the state on July 26 inquiring if permission might be granted for Raeford to expand its existing waste-

water treatment plant.

Wood and Huffman said they are merely asking the state for separate opinions on the likelihood of either project being approved.

These requests coincided closely with Huffman sending a bill to Hoke County (See TREATMENT, page 10A)



Cool jammin'

Youngsters cool off in the Jammin' for Jesus event held Saturday at the Field of Dreams on Turnpike Road in western Hoke. Saturday's event, sponsored by Manna of Life, also featured entertainment, drug education and food.

Health center groundbreaking set for tomorrow

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Imagine a new health facility with room to accommodate the needs of all county residents, ample parking, and more staff to provide medical and health services for years to come. That is the concept behind the construction of the upcoming 19,000 square-foot Hoke County Health Center — a dream that is shaping into a reality, according to Cynthia Oxendine, interim Hoke health director.

More than 100 local and state leaders are expected to attend the groundbreaking ceremony tomorrow at 3 p.m. for the new health building at the East Palmer Street site.

Congressman Robin Hayes, representing the 8th Congressional district of North Carolina, will be traveling from Washington, D.C. for the event as a special guest.

"I am very pleased that we were successful in obtaining this funding (See HEALTH CENTER, page 7A)

This Week



Young equestrians compete

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Crowley feted on 90th birthday

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County attorney marks 11 years

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Bucks win opener

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

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Board applies for loan to expand jail, rethinks timetable

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Hoke commissioners unanimously authorized Commission Chairman Bobby Wright to sign resolutions on Monday morning, applying for a \$7 million loan to fund the expansion for the Hoke County Detention Center.

During the public hearing, only one citizen showed up to hear about the jail expansion. However, no one spoke in opposition or

in favor of proceeding with the project. The larger jail facility will include 152 new beds, and keep the current annex that provides beds for 41 inmates.

The board secured a 40-year loan at a fixed interest rate of 4.75 percent from the U.S. Department of Agricultural Rural Development. Irma McPherson, an executive with USDA, told the board it would need to use interim financing for construction until the project is completed.

"That does not alleviate the responsibility of the Rural Development to fund this project," McPherson said. "At the end of your project, the Rural Development pays out everything."

County Manager Mike Wood told McPherson the current timetable requires 52 months to complete the project, which included demolition of the old jail, but preserving the current Hoke jail annex. The USDA will notify the board within 15 to 20 days if

they have been approved for the jail project.

"It is with great pleasure that I present Irma McPherson who is here with the paperwork that will obligate us for the funds for the jail," Hoke grant writer Linda Teal said. "I think it is a great accomplishment for the board and for this county."

Teal told the board that the state funds were running out rapidly for the "pot" of funds, but the national USDA still had funds,

which could be allocated.

"Our national people are talking to make decisions on what they will not fund," McPherson said. "There seems to be ample money to fund this project, however."

"If we were to have waited until next year, the chances are this would not have happened out of this pot," she said.

"This last year we had more funds because of security issues (See JAIL, page 7A)

Parks and Rec meeting held to hear parents ends in chaos

Suspended coach defended by most, but board took no action to recommend his reinstatement

By PAT ALLEN WILSON
Editor

More than 20 parents attended a special meeting called by the Hoke County Parks and Recreation advisory board to speak out for the man they want to coach their children during this fall's soccer season. The meeting dissolved into chaos, however, and it is still unclear if Charles Crowder, who has coached children's sports in Hoke County for more than 30 years, will be coaching this fall.

The irony is that Crowder had

not officially been suspended and had also not signed up to coach soccer this season. He was not at Monday night's meeting, called to give parents a chance to speak to the board.

Parents said they had no problems with a two-game suspension Crowder was given by Parks & Rec interim director Holly Lauder for unsportsmanlike conduct during the Little League baseball season. However, Lauder's reprimand was overridden by County Manager Mike Wood.

Some two months later, the

Parks & Rec board voted to suspend Crowder from coaching soccer, something the board — as an advisory body — is not authorized to do.

"There ain't a coach out there who hasn't broken that code of conduct." — Parent

Said Willie McCaskill Jr., a member of the advisory board who did not vote to suspend Crowder from coaching soccer, "Some sort of action should have been taken but proper procedure

wasn't followed."

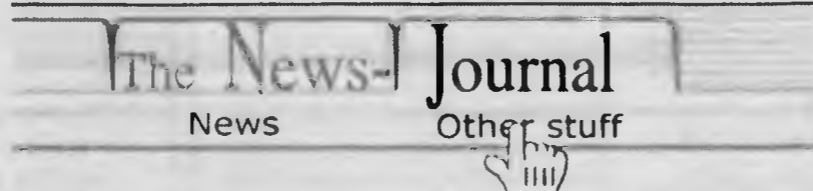
McCaskill also said it doesn't help that no permanent director has been hired since the former director resigned seven months

ago. Lauder applied for the position but a Cumberland County man was hired, and he declined to take the job after learning Hoke County residency was required. Parents who spoke at the meet-

ing said the children would suffer the loss of Crowder as a coach who encourages children. "Every parent has personal examples of good conduct and good things he has done with their children," said one. "Charles Crowder doesn't care about winning. He cared about children playing and made a team where children helped each other."

"Issues need to be addressed but don't take him away from the children," said another.

Parents asked for a reading (See PARKS & REC, page 10A)



By KEN MACDONALD
General Manager

When I was in the seventh grade, I figured learning to play the guitar would attract chicks.

I was wrong.

That same year, I tried squishing a pack of ketchup into a girl's hair to get her attention. That worked, but I realized getting her attention was not the right objective.

Since those days I have observed

as other boys, and later men, made similar gaffes.

There was the time, for example, that Don Foster sent his wife, Pam, on a scavenger hunt to find her birthday present. One of the stops was Hooter's, where, in order to get the next clue, she had to request an employment application.

Then there was the time when I lived in Asheville that my boss saw one of those commercials: "It slices, it dices..." and bought the

thing for his wife for Christmas. On Christmas Eve, just before midnight, as they sat together watching TV, the commercial came on, and she looked at him and said, "If you ever buy me one of those things, I'll kill you while you sleep." He had to call around to find someone to open a store so he could mend his ways before she found out.

And just this week, Bobby McNeill nominated his wife, Betsy, (See OTHER STUFF, page 8A)

New year brings changes in school administration

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Personnel changes in Hoke's school district have brought a cast of 10 new educators assigned to six of the 11 county public schools for 2004-05, according to Hoke School Superintendent Allen Strickland.

"I feel good that we have a great administrative team, and

we are growing future leaders in our schools by promoting some teachers to administrative positions," Strickland said. "We have some new folks, and they are ours — promoted from within."

"We are trying to instruct and focus on these people. We are in good shape because all are participating on a monthly basis in leadership develop- (See SCHOOLS, page 8A)