

The News-Journal

If it happened, it's news to us

50¢

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RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

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Voter signup breaks record

Large surge experienced in Rockfish, Puppy Creek

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Hoke County's board of elections staff is still counting new voter registrations after a massive turnout during the past three weeks from Rockfish and Puppy Creek precincts.

Voter registration transactions have soared to 2,000 since the primary election, including changes in addresses or party affiliations. The information is still being validated, according to Caroline Shook, Hoke's board of elections director.

Shook said that in Puppy Creek about 500 more people registered to vote, and approximately 200 more registered in the Rockfish precinct. Puppy Creek took the lead in the county with a total of 4,329 voters, followed by Rockfish with 2,481. Close behind Rockfish, Raeford No. 3 precinct contains 2,163 voters, reflecting a steady growth.

As of Monday, 20,368 people were registered to vote in Hoke, Shook added.

"Our voter registration has been record-breaking in those precincts, and we are up about 1,200 in new registered voters across the county since the primary," Shook said. "It is the heaviest pre-election registration that I have ever seen, and there will be more

added once we have finished entering the information into our computer.

"I am not surprised, however, because there is a great deal of interest in the presidential race," she said.

"We also have many military families residing in Hoke who have registered to vote — particularly in eastern Hoke. Actually, we have experienced an increase in other precincts, too."

Shook said last Friday on the final day for registration that she received 322 registrations transactions.

"Most of them were from people who came into the office because we only had about 50 requests mailed in to us," Shook said. "Just in the last week, we had 800 registrations."

Shook said the responses might have been "huge" from the Rockfish and Puppy Creek voting precincts because of the escalating population. Shook and elections clerk Sally Markham — swamped by the response — have been checking all the voter registrations almost nightly until 10 o'clock.

"As far as the political party affiliations are concerned, the Republicans have seen the highest increase in voter registrations, which was almost 400," Shook said. "There has also been an increase of almost 300 people who

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Two children from Rockfish Childcare Development Center learn how to wear firemen's gear at Rockfish Volunteer Fire Department. See story and more photos on page 9A.

Teachers petition

'Make Sandy Grove school of choice'

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

In a sequel to a protest over the transition to a traditional calendar for Hoke schools next year, Sandy Grove Elementary teachers presented a petition to the Hoke Board of Education last night. They requested the board allow Sandy Grove to revert to a year-round school calendar, according to Carolyn Pulley, a fifth grade teacher at the elementary school located in the Arabia area.

The school board decided that all Hoke schools will convert to a traditional school calendar for the 2005-06 school year.

"We had 37 teachers sign the petition who were against the traditional calendar, requesting that we become a school of choice," Pulley said. "Of those teachers, 28 indicated that they would seek other employment instead of teaching at Sandy Grove on a traditional calendar."

"We also sent a survey out to parents, and the majority of the responses were in favor of returning to the year-round calendar that we observed before."

This, after faculty from several Hoke schools filled the school

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This Week



Developers keep pace in East Hoke
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9th Grade Academy off to good start
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Dog wash to be good, clean fun
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People wait in line for flu shots at a clinic at Barbee Pharmacy Friday morning.

They came from miles and waited in line

Response to flu vaccine shortage overwhelms local pharmacy

By PAT ALLEN WILSON
Editor

Pharmacist Sprite Barbee described the administration of close to 320 flu shots at his drug store last Friday as "a fishes and loaves occurrence." Clearly, those who were able to receive their vaccines were among the blessed because the flu vaccine is scarcer than hen's teeth this year.

It was Barbee Hometown Pharmacy Mart's fourth year to hold a clinic to administer flu and pneumonia vaccines. Barbee arranges the clinic annually through a drug sales co-op, NC Mutual of Durham. NC Mutual contracts with a company called Maxim Health to manage clinics in those drug stores that want to provide them.

"Our obligation is to supply a site and

(See FLU SHOT, page 7A)

Sandhills Community College to expand here

Construction on \$1.5 million building for Raeford campus to begin next summer

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Sandhills Community College Hoke Center is planning to build a \$1.5 million expansion, mirroring the design of the current academic facility located on U.S. 401 Business.

With the addition of a second building comprising six classrooms, the student enrollment is expected to double to 500, according to college officials.

"Hoke County is going to continue to grow, and this will be a real addition to the community," Dr. John Dempsey, president of Sandhills Community College, headquartered in Southern Pines, said. "We are proud to be there. Hoke will be an increasingly important part of Sandhills Community College's mission in the future."

"We are responding to what the Hoke community needs and wants — a continuation of the things we do such as literacy work, cosmetology and criminal justice."

A ground breaking on the second phase of the college, which will be funded by state bond money approved in 1999, is planned for the summer of 2005. Dempsey said architectural plans, already in the works, will include a classroom designed to teach prospective employees who would be hired for new or existing businesses.

"We are working closely with Hoke's economic developer Don Porter to advance the cause to recruit businesses to Hoke County," Dempsey said. "We wanted to create a classroom in a space that is flexible enough to meet

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Other stuff

By KEN MACDONALD
General Manager

In one of the latest "Zits" comic strip, a female teenager asks to borrow for a friend, the cell phone of our 15-year old hero, Jeremy. "Is hers broken?" he asks. More of a technical glitch was the reply. "Her plan gives her unlimited minutes, but she used them up."

See? I told you our house is bugged. The strip's authors, Jerry Scott and Jim Borgman, have been listening in again.

When our daughter was about to go off to college in August, I began researching cell phone plans. Oh, I knew it was going to be tough. I'd need unlimited non dial-up internet access for the research, a Cray supercomputer for computations of rates, and probably astrological charts and the Farmer's Almanac, but by golly, this time I was going to win. After all, I am determined, reasonably intelligent, and some say I remind them of Harrison Ford.

Okay, well I was determined.

(See OTHER STUFF, page 4A)



Conference tournament players

These Hoke High tennis players went to the conference tournament in Laurinburg last night. Holly Manning (right) and Tiara Bennett (left) advanced to the regionals. Other players shown with coach Nelson James are Allison Hoffman (left to right), Jasmine Poinsett, Candice Clark, and Megan Stone.