

Happy Thanksgiving!
The News-Journal will be closed Thursday and Friday.



The News-Journal

If it happened, it's news to us

50¢

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Written threat targets 20 at middle school

Anonymous note found on floor in 8th grade class names teachers, students who will die

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Hoke School Superintendent Allen Strickland stood like a guardian in the rain at the side entrance to West Hoke Middle School early yesterday morning while a score of Hoke deputies patrolled

the campus. Their aim — to ensure students were safely escorted inside without creating a panic.

This, after several students discovered an anonymous death threat note on Friday afternoon, warning that 17 students and three teachers would be killed on November 23. By the end of the school

day yesterday — the date when the group was to be killed — no attempt had been made to carry out the death threats on those targeted, according to law enforcement and school officials.

According to school officials, nearly half of the students of the 705 enrolled at West Hoke Middle apparently did

not attend school yesterday due to the sinister contents in the threatening note. A number of parents questioned why the incident was kept quiet because they were not notified of the potential danger until Monday when a letter was sent home to them.

"It appears the note may have been

written by a student," Strickland said. "It was handwritten — not typed — by someone who misspelled some words. The note was unsigned and on plain paper.

"Only the students' first names were used and only the teachers' last names (See *THREAT*, page 5A)

Bad week at WHMS

Teacher hurt stopping fight

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

A West Hoke Middle School female teacher is recovering from injuries after being caught in the middle of a brawl between two seventh grade students that disrupted her class last Tuesday.

A small knife that was found allegedly fell from the pocket of one of the male students involved in the fray, according to other students.

West Hoke Middle Principal Sam Queen said both students have been suspended for 10 days. The incident occurred on campus during regular school hours, he added.

"We still do not know how (See *FIGHT*, page 5A)



Clockwise from above: Hoke School Superintendent Allen Strickland discusses safety issues with a middle school student. • A deputy uses a metal detector to search a student. • Hoke Sheriff's vehicles are parked in front of West Hoke Middle School while deputies protect students on campus.



This Week



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We're on the web at www.thenews-journal.com

Downtown development gets \$150,000 grant

Federal money will go toward \$1.1 million first phase of downtown reconstruction

By PAT ALLEN WILSON
Editor

Congressman Robin Hayes (R-8) announced Monday he has successfully secured \$150,000 in federal funding for Raeford downtown redevelopment.

The funding was included with the fiscal year 2005 Appropriations Conference Report, an announcement from Hayes' office stated.

The money will go toward the first of three phases of a streetscape project approved by the Raeford City Council earlier this year. The streetscape plan was present-

ed to councilmen by the Redevelopment Commission of the City of Raeford.

Mary Archie McNeill, a committee member who works at fund-raising, said, "This is such a significant gift and we are so grateful. This has made our Thanksgiving ... and our Christmas."

The three streetscape phases would encompass Main Street from Campbell to Donaldson avenues at a cost of \$2 million. The design calls for new sidewalks, new street lighting, new landscaping, benches, new traffic signals and crosswalks. The N.C. Dept. of Transportation will also re-pave Main Street, a project that was

put on hold because DOT does not want newly resurfaced streets dug up for utility lines to be relocated from overhead to underground.

The first phase is to cost \$1.1 million and will entail renovations from Harris to Edinborough avenues. Phase II would renovate Campbell to Harris at an estimated cost of \$305,500. Phase III, from Edinborough to Donaldson, is estimated to cost \$420,775.

Councilmen have committed to half a million in funding with short-term financing/line-of-credit bidding taken from local financial agencies followed by application

for long-term financing from USDA Rural Development. Some grants have already been obtained to pay for the work to include a previous federal grant obtained by Hayes about two years ago. DOT has pledged \$400,000 for four signal lights.

"The downtown improvements will make the area more pedestrian friendly and enhance the draw of Raeford for visitors and businesses," Hayes said.

Hayes said he contacted North Carolina Rep. James T. Walsh, chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on VA, HUD and Independent Agencies, to (See *GRANT*, page 8A)



Captain Gary Hammond of the Hoke Sheriff's Office hauls away a bag of fake merchandise of NFL and NBA jerseys.

Sheriff's department seizes counterfeit goods from Hardaway's Herb Garden

Sheriff acts after national investigators conduct undercover buys

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

In a crackdown on merchants selling "knock-offs" — illegal copies of designer merchandise — for high prices, Evangelist Betty Hardaway, owner of Hardaway's Herb Garden, was ordered to stop selling fake merchandise in her store. She avoided being ar-

rested on state and federal charges for criminal use of counterfeit trademarks by cooperating with officers, according to Sheriff Hubert Peterkin.

In the surprise raid conducted yesterday afternoon at Hardaway's retail store on U.S. 401, Hoke Sheriff's Office undercover detectives assisted a national team of private investigators

representing the International Anti-Counterfeiting Coalition. They confiscated \$100,000 worth of fake National Football League (NFL) football jerseys, National Basketball Association (NBA) basketball jerseys, and imitations of internationally famous Louis Vuitton designer purses. The illegal items completely (See *SEIZED*, page 5A)

National expert's ideas on subdivision planning well received by officials at presentation here

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

What do M&M's candy have in common with land use planning? "They melt in your mouth and not on your plans," according to nationally acclaimed planner, Randall Arendt, who uses the small candies on preliminary architectural plans to temporarily

represent proposed homes.

Arendt — seriously — said he uses M&M's he distributes to officials across the country at his lectures because it captures their attention in illustrating potential placement of homes in what he calls conservation subdivisions.

Arendt delivered a presentation on land use concepts to Hoke commissioners and citizens last

evening.

In divvying up land for residential subdivisions, Arendt told the board it does not cost any more to plan the same number of homes on smaller lots while conserving more woodlands or farmland in subdivision plans. He said frequently developers might even save money by (See *PLANNING*, page 8A)