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RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

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State gives unofficial approval to mega site County hangs hopes for industrial recruitment on 2nd largest site in state

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

N.C. Department of Commerce officials on Tuesday gave unofficial certification to Hoke County's new industrial mega site, the second largest in N.C.

A summit for official certification was held on the the Hoke County Regional Industrial Park, located on Highway 20 in southeastern Hoke.

Commission Chairman Bobby Wright, a strong supporter of the site, commended state officials in a congratulatory letter, which was included in the presentation, for the state's partnering in the project.

"This endeavor represents a giant victory for Hoke County, providing the quality product that is necessary for successfully attracting jobs in the ultra-

competitive world of industrial recruitment," Wright wrote. "Many thanks for your department's role in the successful completion of this project."

Don Porter, Hoke's Economic Developer said he thinks the mega site will attract industrial firms, providing hundreds

of new jobs for Hoke citizens.

"This is a great day for Hoke County — a historic day," Porter said. "I have no qualms we have benefited from the progress made by establishing this mega site."

(See MEGA SITE, page 4A)

MMG closes after 2 months Maker of military equipment dissolves partnership, lawsuit filed

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
AND
PAT ALLEN WILSON

A new company, created by the owners of SunPath Products of Florida and the owners of Paraclete Armor in St. Pauls, is no longer in business. Military Manufacturing Group's partnership ended after less than two months and the MMG operation on Doc Brown Road was closed down less than three weeks ago.

Don Porter, Hoke's economic developer, said, "I understand

SunPath has recently requested a long-term lease to use the old Unifi building in Raeford as its headquarters to continue manufacturing harnesses and containers for parachutes."

"I do not believe SunPath's partners plan to return to their factory in Florida."

Tim D'Annunzio, who owns Paraclete Armor with his wife, Colleen, has filed a civil lawsuit in connection with SunPath, alleging the firm committed fraud. SunPath's partners, Pat and Derek Thomas, could not be reached for comment.

"We are still waiting for a conclusion of this. We are trying to settle out of court," D'Annunzio said this morning. "As soon as there is a conclusion, we will take steps to reopen the facility. All the equipment is still there."

D'Annunzio is the owner of
(See MMG, page 6A)



Peggy Anderson of the N.C. Department of Commerce examines the Hoke mega site map with (from left) Hoke Economic Developer Don Porter, Commissioner Bill Cameron and John Gray of the Wooten Company.

Bill to permit Stoneybrook betting advances

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Fans of the Stoneybrook Steeplechase may be one step closer to saying "win, place or show" in time for the 54th running in April.

The state senate's commerce committee yesterday endorsed a bill that would permit betting on horse races, but in effect only on one day — the day of Stoneybrook. After a

review yesterday, it decided to place it on the agenda for a vote by all state senators in the near future, according to Hoke Commission Vice Chairman Charles V. Daniels, who was present at the hearing.

The committee action came in spite of a blitz of anti-gambling signatures obtained by Hoke residents Barbara Pond and Rebecca O'Berry. The two women and Sherry Thomas spoke before the committee against the bill, numbered S9.

Also, a representative of North Carolina Family Policy Council questioned the constitutionality of S9.

Co-sponsored by Senator David Weinstein, Hoke's legislator, the plan is for the bill to be presented to the Senate and the House in order for the one-day wagering at Stoneybrook to be considered this year. Weinstein said in seeking bipartisan support from fellow legislators that he hopes to improve economic opportunities for

Hoke.

The delegation of supporters at the senate hearing yesterday from Hoke included Daniels, Commission Chairman Bobby Wright, County Manager Mike Wood, and Roger Secrist, chairman of the Carolina Horse Park Foundation. Pond and O'Berry say they have collected 500 signatures on a petition of folks who are against gambling in Hoke.

(See BETTING, page 3B)

State legislators gather here, talk about education, lottery

By PAT ALLEN WILSON
Editor

State Representatives Garland Pierce and Doug Yongue, along with an aide of U.S. Representative Robin Hayes, were treated to a Legislative Appreciation Breakfast Saturday, an annual event

presented by the Raeford-Hoke Chamber of Commerce.

Pierce and Yongue spoke of goings-on in Raleigh and Gary Mitchell, district director for Hayes, addressed doings in Washington. Hoke officials also took the opportunity to report on local activities.

Yongue, who chairs the Education Appropriations Committee, had good

news for Hoke. He said the Leandro vs. the state lawsuit won by Hoke and other low-wealth counties had "finally got folks' attention." He said the Legislative body is going to try to fund the directives of Judge Howard Manning, who ruled on Leandro, under a \$9 million budget.

Pierce, who is sitting in on his first Legislative session since his election last year, said business-friendly bills are being

filed. "They are really trying to make sure businesses can operate. I am excited about that," he said. "It is frightening and sad when store after store is lost."

Pierce said he had learned of the importance of working together and wanted to see a regional approach to benefit all the counties he represents.

Mitchell said economic and national se-
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This Week



Ed Duke turns
junk into art
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SBI Special Agent Janie Pinkston talks to Representative Garland Pierce about the law enforcement retirement bill.

West Hoke drug bust nets \$10,000 in marijuana

VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

It all started with a knock at the door. When the occupant of the home at 191 Army Road peered out the door he did not need to ask who was there, according to a spokesman from the Hoke drug task force.

A team of Hoke sheriff's narcotics officers were waiting outside the home at 5 p.m. yesterday along with K-9 Aaron and his handler Deputy J. Laviner. The drug unit asked permission to
(See DRUG BUST, page 6A)



Sgt. T. Grady (left) and Bruce Carpenter, forensics technician, peer at 28 pounds of seized marijuana found in western Hoke County yesterday.