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50¢

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School Board leaves two schools year-round

Sandy Grove, South Hoke become schools of choice, rest remain traditional

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

A united Hoke School Board cast aside concerns over operating transportation and maintaining schools year round last evening. It voted unanimously to heed

two proposals from Sandy Grove and South Hoke elementary schools to retain year-round calendars for the 2005-06 school year.

Hoke School Superintendent Allen Strickland recommended the board approve the two proposals. He thanked

both schools for their efforts.

"We have been involved in the study of our calendar for some time," Strickland said. "The board has had an opportunity to review the programs, and I think we have satisfied any questions."

School board newcomers Hank

Richards and Rosa McAllister McRae led the motion to approve year-round calendars for the two schools. Both had championed the right for the community to express their viewpoints by sending out surveys.

This, after a controversy arose last

year prior to Richards and McAllister McRae joining the board. The school board, with the exception of former board member Leland Strother, initially voted to convert all Hoke schools from a year-round calendar to a traditional calendar.

(See *SCHOOL BOARD*, page 8A)

House of Raeford gets USDA's okay to reopen

Company's plan to prevent contamination approved

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

After being shut down several days by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, the House of Raeford Farms, one of the world's largest suppliers of poultry products, has still not resumed operating its processing plant on East Central Avenue today.

House of Raeford officials were reportedly waiting for federal inspectors to arrive so the poultry plant could reopen, but as of today the plant was still not running. Approximately 700 employees have been temporarily out of work since April 2.

The USDA authorized the plant to reopen on Monday after accepting a corrective action plan from House of Raeford on Saturday and dropping a suspension that prevented the plant from operating. This was a result of prior major concerns



An employee enters the House of Raeford plant yesterday.

by USDA officials over the potential of bacteria contamination and unsanitary employee hygiene (See *HOUSE OF RAEFORD*, page 3A)



Letika Leggett gets her T-shirt signed by Jasmine Lomack (front) and Diona Austin.

West Hoke Middle cheerleaders return from Florida national champs

By PAT ALLEN WILSON
Editor

The West Hoke Middle School Rah Rah Cheerleaders cried after their performance at the Cheer Sport National Beach Blast Cheer and Dance competition in Jacksonville, Florida this past weekend; they thought they had come up short.

But the 17 young women had turned in a winning

performance and returned to Raeford with the first place winners trophy.

"They surprised themselves bigtime," says Coach Devona McPhatter.

"Before the competition, they were practicing and weren't hitting any of their stunts. They were frustrated," says Coach Michelle Young.

"We had a talk and told them how (See *CHEERLEADERS*, page 7A)



Shown from left are Dorine Newton, son James Newton, Jackie Hargrove-Rushing of Child Care Connections, and Jean Squier of Smart Start at Children's Day activities on Thursday. N.C. Highway Patrol and Raeford police officers inspected infant carriers and seats for safety.

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High school bomb threat sparks debate over ambulances

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Hoke commissioners are seeking solutions to ensure adequate FirstHealth EMS ambulances and medics are available for emergency calls on a 24-7 basis without requesting out-of-county assistance. A medic allegedly advised Hoke 911 Communications on Friday she could not respond to a medical emergency assistance request because she was at Hoke High on standby for a bomb threat.

Although the bomb threat turned out to be false, the call caused Hoke's public safety and medical resources to be tied up. A medical call that might have been life-threatening to a citizen had to be diverted, according to Commission Vice Chairman Charles V. Daniels.

Hoke 911 Communications Director Jimmy Stewart said a 911 telecommunicator specifically requested the FirstHealth paramedic stationed temporarily at Hoke High on a medic truck to

respond to a claim of chest pains by a man who recently had open-heart surgery.

The medic responded that Cumberland County EMS should be contacted.

At least two ambulances are usually available to transport patients for emergency calls. However, they were out of the county on other calls.

"We had no choice but to ask the medic truck to respond because there was no one else," Stewart said. "Then a FirstHealth critical care ambulance based in Pinehurst happened to be returning from a call in Lumberton passing through our county on their way back to Moore County.

"They heard our request to the medic truck at Hoke High, and said they would take the call when she could not."

Daniels, who serves as the commissioner's liaison on the Hoke 911 Communications Board, commended 911 for handling the situation appropriately. (See *AMBULANCE*, page 7A)

Officials hopeful caller will be found

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

A bomb threat at Hoke County High School turned out to be a hoax. Authorities are following some solid leads to find the person responsible for making the threat on Friday, according to Hoke School Superintendent Allen Strickland.

This local bomb scare followed another false bomb threat at Cape Fear High School in Cumberland County on Friday.

Strickland said the person actually left a message on the taped voice mail of Hoke High Principal Mark Smith. He said the person also used numerous curse words and "expletives" while conveying the threat.

"Mr. Smith called me as soon as they got the bomb threat," Strickland said. "What was scary about it was that the person who left the message had no way to know how long it would be before Mr. Smith would hear

(See *THREAT*, page 7A)