



The News-Journal

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50¢

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RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

Wednesday, May 25, 2005

West Hoke car wreck claims three lives

Raleigh driver charged with deaths of his daughter and two Hoke women



Betty Blevins

BY VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer



Ruby Crouch



Norah Morris

West Hoke church-mates Betty Blevins and Ruby Strother Crouch died on their way home from worship service at Ashley Heights Baptist Church in a two-car collision that also took the life of a six-year-old girl.

Raleigh motorist Arthur Morris III failed to heed a stop sign at Calloway and Reservation roads after his family attended an equestrian event at the Carolina Horse Park at Five Points, according to N.C. Highway Patrol Trooper F.K. Crumpler. He said Morris' oncoming vehicle "blocked the path" of Blevins' vehicle traveling on Reservation where she had the right-of-way. A passenger in the back seat of Morris' Mercedes station wagon, daughter Norah Elizabeth Morris, was killed instantly.

Morris has been charged with three counts of misdemeanor death by motor vehicle and with a stop sign violation. Crumpler indicated that speed did not appear to be a factor in the wreck. The estimated speed of both vehicles was (See FATALITIES, page 6A)



Top: The front half of a Mercedes station wagon lies mangled beside Calloway Road 200 feet from its rear section (left), which veered into a field. At right, the pickup truck in which Betty Blevins and Ruby Crouch were riding.

This Week



Polocrosse featured in West Hoke page 1B

Man arrested for rape of minor page 7A

Community Foundation makes awards page 3A

Vietnam veterans thanked page 3A

Index

- Business/Farm 5A
- Calendar 4B
- Classifieds 7-8B
- Deaths 8A
- Editorials 2A
- Legals 5-6B
- Religion 2B
- Socials 3B
- Sports 4A

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Citizens, leaders ask that road not be delayed

Palmer Street extension would aid industrial development, protect new downtown scape

By PAT WILSON
Editor

While citizens of surrounding areas asked the state Dept. of Transportation for new road and highway projects for their communities at a hearing held in Raeford last week, Hoke representatives begged that the Palmer Street Extension project not be delayed.

Construction of the \$4.3 mil-

lion project, which would funnel traffic from Raeford's Main Street, was scheduled to begin in 2006 but has been delayed by DOT until 2008. The nine-mile project would extend East Palmer to Highway 20, taking traffic off Raeford's Main Street. Serving as a truck bypass, expansion of Palmer would eliminate downtown as a short cut for motorists traveling to Interstate-95 via Highway 20.

Representing Hoke County and Raeford, Dr. Bob Nelson appealed to the transportation committee to hear road project requests regarding Divisions 6 and 8.

"I urge that this proposal to delay the Palmer Street Extension be eliminated from the 2006-2012 Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) and that the schedule for construction of this project be returned to the timetable which

we in Hoke County have relied on for several years," Nelson said.

Engineers say the delay is not due to finances but because additional design flaws have to be ironed out.

One complication, they say, is that an overpass across the Aberdeen and Rockfish Railroad and some wetlands area will have to be constructed.

Commissioner Bill Cameron, representing Hoke, and Buddy

Blue, representing Hoke County Republicans, also spoke against the delay.

"We've been after (the project) for 55 years," Blue said. "When it gets put off, it's nothing new but we are disappointed."

After the hearing, which was held in Raeford's Civic Center on Thursday, G.R. Kindley, vice chair of DOT, spoke privately with Nelson and Cam- (See PALMER ST., page 3A)

Commissioners look at ambulance response time

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Hoke commissioners are still in a quandary over how to improve the response time for FirstHealth EMS ambulances.

At a recent meeting, board members indicated they think FirstHealth likely needs to consider staffing more am-

bulances in Hoke. Discussion came after a false bomb threat at Hoke County High occurred in April. The bomb incident tied up an EMS ambulance while a man who was experiencing cardiac distress, was kept waiting. Only after a Moore County EMS ambulance was passing through Hoke on its return trip to Moore Regional Hospital took the call was there a response to the

9-1-1 call.

County Attorney Neil Yarborough cautioned the board it might need to consider the lack of alternatives before demanding changes to its contract with FirstHealth.

Commissioner Bill Cameron retorted that other ambulances services existed with which the county could contract if a satisfactory agreement is not reached on

current ambulance coverage to citizens.

The board initiated a contract with FirstHealth EMS in October 2001, agreeing to pay \$215,000 annually to receive medical services and ambulances for emergencies. The existing contract's level of service is costing the county \$365,000 for this year, and that (See AMBULANCES, page 4A)

The News-Journal

News

Other stuff

By Ken MacDonald
Publisher

Snap \snap\ vi. 1. to break suddenly with a sharp sound 2. to give way suddenly under strain 3. to express disbelief syn whoa!, yougottabekidding, dude!, yikes

The expression "Oh snap!" appears in several online teen slang dictionaries, but I have heard the phrase only among middle-schoolers, and few at that. It is similar to, "whoa," or, if drawn out

a bit more, "wooooooowooooow," the words of choice 10 or 12 years ago. For example, In 1993 we were in St. Louis on a youth group mission trip to tear down houses that had been flooded by the Mississippi River. After the first day's work, we all headed to the YMCA for showers. One of the teenagers was really really anxious about having to undress and shower in the company of us older folks and was really really relieved when we arrived to find separate changing rooms for youth and adults. But as we (See OTHER STUFF, page 3A)

Police being schooled to look for trends in children's deaths

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Raeford Police Department is the beneficiary of a new, mobile outreach program sponsored by the N.C. Medical Examiner's Office and the N.C. Justice Academy at Salemburg. The goal is to raise awareness of child deaths and to recognize trends in these fatalities, according to Raeford Police Chief Kevin Locklear.

State medical examiner Lisa Mayhew hosted the two-day seminar in child

death investigation techniques. Her classes included discussions on homicide, sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), child suicide, child abuse and neglect, medico-legal investigations, and crime scene investigations. Participating in the course were 25 social workers, firemen, medics, and law officers from the Raeford Police Department, the Hoke Sheriff's Office, and Moore, Scotland, Robeson, and Cumberland counties.

A report from The N.C. Child Ad- (See CHILDREN, page 6A)