

The News-Journal

If it happened, it's news to us

50¢

No. 37 Vol. 100

RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

Wednesday, November 30, 2005

Mock disaster tests local emergency workers

Government workers, leaders learned, did well during staged tornado, FEMA says

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

When a string of simulated tornadoes devastated Hoke County in a mock disaster staged two weeks ago, Hoke and City of Raeford personnel pulled

together in the three-hour and forty-five minute exercise.

If the disaster had been authentic, it would really have covered a 24-hour period, according to Phillip Moore, FEMA expert and instructor with the U.S. Homeland Security.

"These local people are the 'doers,'" Moore said of their roles. "They shared information and communicated well with each branch of the operation."

"The non-emergency county and city employees did well in an emergency atmosphere. All of you deserved an acad-

emy award for your presentations."

In the middle of severe weather scenarios as part of simulated exercises in the Emergency Management Institute, local, state and federal officials held the weeklong course at McCain's former Sandhills Youth Center. Moore said

that by learning to minimize loss of life by rescue efforts and speed up recovery operations, everyone passed the test in the simulated disaster exercises.

"We wanted to see if there are any problem areas in Hoke if a disaster would (See **MOCK DISASTER**, page 4A)

So what did officials learn?

Local shelters are inadequate, for starters

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

It could have been real, but the disaster exercise that unfolded on November 16 and 17 at the former Sandhills Youth Center in McCain served as a test situa-

tion for Hoke and City of Raeford emergency personnel, according to Major Freddy Johnson, Hoke emergency management director.

As the event exercise began, a news media center, control (See **LESSONS**, page 3A)

Three tailed by car, shot in east Hoke

Men had argued earlier at restaurant

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

A barrage of gunfire broke the early morning quiet of a residential neighborhood on Stoney Point Road in eastern Hoke, and sent three Hoke men to the hospital — one in critical shape, according to Chief Deputy Troy McDuffie of the Hoke Sheriff's Office.

Listed in critical condition at Cape Fear Valley Medical Center is John Peterson, 24. Kenyonta Evans, 23, of 375 Stoney Point Road, and Lamont Hines, 21, are also listed in serious condition, according to McDuffie.

"We do not have any news on how the victims are doing yet," McDuffie said.

"An argument that broke out at the Waffle House in the Wal-Mart shopping center at U.S. 401 South and Gillis Hill Road in Cumberland County led to the shooting of the three friends at 375 Stoney Point Road north of Raeford today," McDuffie said. "It appears that the men did not know the suspect who began arguing with them earlier this morning at the restaurant," McDuffie said. "Two of the friends were in the process of dropping off (See **SHOOTING**, page 6A)



The wreck scene (above); Linda Harris consoles her injured son, 20-year-old Sentaiel Harris.

Bus-car wreck injures man

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

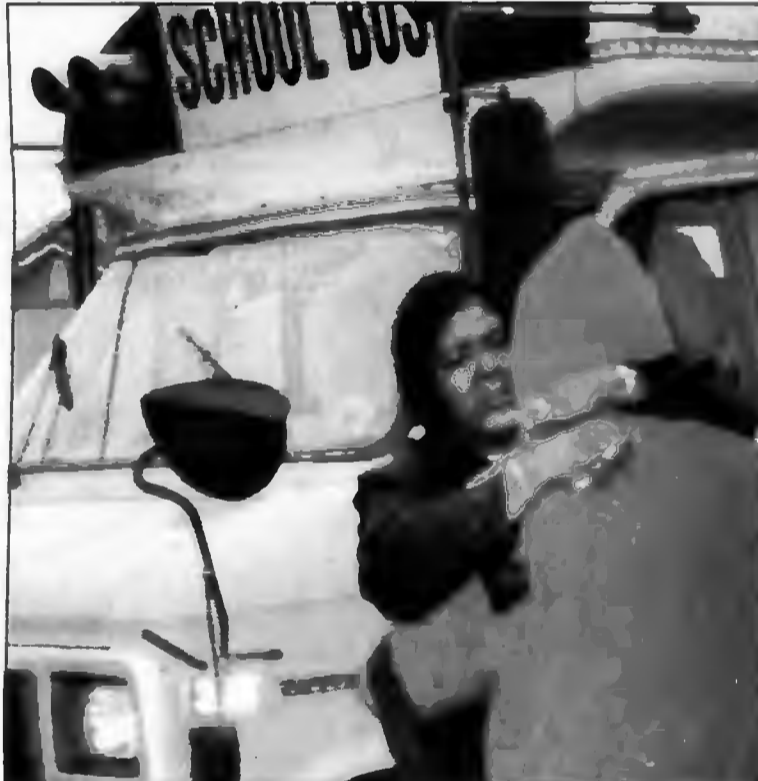
A north Raeford motorist was slightly injured after the female driver of a Four-County Community Services mini-school bus apparently attempted to turn in front of his vehicle's path on West Palmer Street yesterday.

"I was driving across West Palmer from Highway 211 on my way around to U.S. 401 when the bus driver turned right in front of my car," motorist Sentaiel Harris, complaining of hip and head pains, said. "She could not clear my car and ran right into the front of it."

"I could not believe it."

Harris, of Herron Drive, was limping after being extricated from his smashed four-door Kia. He was transported to FirstHealth Moore Regional Hospital by FirstHealth medics. The N.C. Highway Patrol, Raeford Police Department, Raeford Fire Department, North Raeford Fire Department and other fire and rescue units responded to assist at the wreck scene. Traffic was backed up on West Palmer for more than 30 minutes after the collision. The wreck occurred in a bend in the road not far from West Hoke Middle School.

The privately owned school bus, which is operated by a non-



This Week



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Hoke grand jury indicts mobile home dealer for scams

Circle G Mobile Homes' owner, two others accused of bilking customers of more than \$134,000

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

A seizure of bank records belonging to the former Circle G Mobile Home Sales south of Raeford and an investigation of its transactions has led to the arrests of three alleged swindlers — two of Robeson County and one from Florence, South Carolina.

Hoke District Attorney Kristy M. Newton obtained 15 indictments handed down by a Hoke grand jury on Monday

in the massive mobile home scam uncovered by the DA and Hoke Sheriff's Office with assistance from the State Bureau of Investigation.

Gerald Dixon Graham Jr., ex-Circle G dealer, operated his business at 752 U.S. 401 South and formerly resided off Calloway Road. Graham and agents/co-owners Billy Emanuel and Tim Velasquez Cortez are accused of bilking customers out of more than \$134,000 between 2002 and 2003.

"Preying on unsuspecting homebuyers, Circle G co-owners victimized innocent

people who could least afford to lose their moneys," John Joseph, special investigator for the Hoke district attorney's office, said. "By never delivering the mobile homes these people purchased, Circle G hurt senior citizens and predominantly Hispanic families."

Joseph said Graham, Emanuel and Cortez are accused of defrauding 11 customers, but more existed who declined to prosecute because of public exposure. Graham received 12 indictments, Emanuel one and Cortez three with (See **INDICTMENTS**, page 4A)

Christmas home tour is Sunday

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

It is already beginning to look a lot like Christmas at the Raeford home of Homer and Ruby Tuttle, whose home is one of those premiering in the Christmas Home Tour on Sunday.

The Tuttles say they feel like they are already home for the holidays. Festive décor is displayed from the bedrooms to the baths, dining room to den and outdoor verandah, with garlands that beckon carolers and visitors alike.

"I just like sharing Christmas with people, our friends and family," Mrs. Tuttle, clad in a holiday sweater, said. "I love to collect angels. The religious symbolism of Christmas particularly means a lot to us."

(See **HOME TOUR**, page 5A)



A white Christmas is more than a dream in Ruby Tuttle's living room.

The News-Journal

News Other stuff

By KEN MACDONALD
Publisher

Had a chance to see the new Lumber River Park over the weekend — up close and personal as we walked the four miles back to it after *somebody* forgot the keys to the vehicle at the takeout spot.

My daughter brought her kayak home for the Thanksgiving break — what, your daughter doesn't keep a kayak in her dorm room? — and suggested we paddle down the Lumber. Of course, that's every dad's dream: instead of "Dad, will give me some money so I can go to the mall with my

friends and you can stay here by yourself?" she actually wanted to take a boat down a river. I looked around to see if there were any hidden cameras and tried to hide my enthusiasm. "Well, if you reecccally want to, okay, I guess we could..." I said. I knew her interest in things outdoors has more to do with a boy she met at school and less with my interest in it all these years, but nevermind, we were going down a river.

Being somewhat responsible I suggested we each take a change of clothes in a dry bag because one time when my son and I didn't — it was a winter day that time too (See **OTHER STUFF**, page 6A)