

The News-Journal

If it happened, it's news to us

75¢

No. 43 Vol. 100

RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

Wednesday, January 11, 2006

Schools to lease 'mobiles' to address growth

Modulars too ugly, with military-related growth on horizon there's no time to build

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Hoke's Board of Education unanimously approved the leasing of at least 20 additional mobile classrooms for next school year to alleviate overcrowding in schools.

Col. Al Aycock, garrison commander of Fort Bragg, was also present at the board's meeting last evening, listening to concerns about the influx of military children.

According to Hoke School Superintendent Allen Strickland, the need to lease 36 more mobile huts would not be

"out of the realm" of possibilities. The school system is currently leasing 18 huts at \$175 each per month. However, Hendrix said he could not guarantee that rate might not increase to \$300 to \$425 each because of the demand across the state for extra classroom capacity.

"For the last three years, Hoke schools

have been growing at the rate of 500 students per year," said Strickland, who is anticipating the trend will continue. "We need to provide additional classrooms with troops moving to Fort Bragg and the influx of students coming to our area.

"We are growing by leaps and bounds. We were just allotted another third grade

teacher at Rockfish Hoke Elementary after Christmas.

"Twelve students enrolled one day and six (students) another."

Describing "dire" conditions, Strickland told the board there are currently 15 roving teachers without classrooms (See *SCHOOLS*, page 6A)

Many face paring of childcare help

Subsidies being cut Jan. 15

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Almost 25 percent of Hoke children in daycare will lose a Department of Social Services subsidy January 15. Some daycare providers are worried that many of Hoke's children in low-income families are in danger of becoming "latch key" children without adult supervision. State cutbacks in 2004-05 and demand across the state for childcare subsidies doubling since 2002 has forced counties such as Hoke to rein in spending.

"We are trying to keep up the faith," Gwen Locklear, executive director and owner of Rockfish Childcare Development and Hawkeye Children's Development Center, said. "I am praying that those parents who have lost

their subsidies for childcare for their kids will find a way through God's help to take care of their young ones.

"Some are seeking alternatives such as help from relatives, but it is very difficult, especially with single-parent families."

Locklear said she has seen a significant number of families—a total of 18 children—forced to drop out of her programs. She said the impact would also be drastically felt among Hoke's childcare centers that she says are trying to stay in business to provide quality daycare for children.

"Parents are very upset," Locklear said. "We have had so many layoffs since 2002 in Hoke County where people are being re-trained for jobs and going back to college.

"These are the parents that will suffer and their children will suffer because of the state not providing adequate funding for childcare."

Barbara Brooks, director of Hoke DSS, said that translates into 193 children from infants to 12 year-olds who are no longer eligible for childcare or after school services. Unlike Medicaid, childcare programs are not an (See *CHILDCARE*, page 4A)



Congressman Robin Hayes points to progress downtown last Wednesday as he joins a tour of streetscape work. Hayes presented a \$200,000 check for phase two of the project. An array of streetscape photographs and goals for the coming year will be featured in next week's News-Journal.

This Week



Midshipman aims for boxing title
page 6A

Ordinance outlines cemetery conduct
page 7A

Yepez being extradicted
page 7A

New year: new scams
page 5A

Raeford weight lifter wins the gold
page 6A

Index

Births	2B
Business/Farm	7A
Calendar	3B
Classifieds	5B
Deaths	8A
Editorials	2A
Engagements	2B
Legals	3-4B
Public Record	3A
Religion	4B
School menus	6B
Socials	2B
Sports	6A
Weddings	2B

We're on the web at
www.thenews-journal.com
Read by 3,000 each week

McLeod back on Raeford City Council to replace Blue

By PAT ALLEN WILSON
Editor

Raeford City Council unanimously selected James B. "Benny" McLeod to return to the council seat he vacated in November.

After serving 34 years as a councilman, McLeod chose not to

seek reelection this fall. Julian H. "Buddy" Blue ran unopposed for McLeod's seat, but died shortly before he was to take office in early November.

The council's decision, made without discussion Monday night, was not without opposition; Kathryn McPhatter spoke in public forum shortly after the

vote was held.

Stating that she was not a Raeford resident but a Hoke resident of 71 years, McPhatter asked and received permission from Mayor John K. McNeill III to address the council.

McPhatter said it "would have been nice" if the public forum had been on the agenda before a

vote was taken. "Don't you think there are other people who could have served?" she asked. "Do you think there is no African American qualified to serve on the council?"

McNeill pointed out McLeod's experience. "We felt like he was our best choice," he said.

But McPhatter persisted, say-

ing the vote was "not quite fair" to the citizens. "Didn't (McLeod) resign?" she asked. "All of a sudden he's ready to come back on the board?"

McPhatter said the council made a mockery out of both African Americans and Caucasians. "The city council belongs (See *MCLEOD*, page 6A)

Proposed agriculture center may go back to the drawing board

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

As the Hoke board of commissioners cultivates ideas for the pro-

posed Hoke County Agriculture Office Building, the size and cost of the structure are also growing, according to Commissioner Bill Cameron.

Because the structure is currently in the preliminary design phase, the Local Government Commission in Raleigh must still approve the multi-million dollar agriculture complex prior to construction.

Commissioners hope to attract more exhibitions to Hoke and enhance the area with a farmer's market that would be constructed on the site.

"The last time it was at \$4.5 million, and now we are up to \$6

million," Cameron, a farmer and livestock grower, said. "I think we need to hold off on plans until we talk to the Local Government Commission in February."

Fayetteville architect Gordon (See *AG CENTER*, page 5A)



Keith Owen, a technician with ES&S, demonstrates a voting machine attachment that allows handicapped people to vote. Watching are elections officials Whiteford Jones (L-R), Caroline Shook, Joan Baker, and Jim Wade. Flossie Henderson tries it out.

Sustainable Sandhills wants citizens to embrace vision of economic growth, care for environment

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Hoke County leaders are urged to join a new initiative, Sustainable Sandhills, to preserve the environment of the Sandhills region and to perpetuate economic growth in the home of the long leaf pine forests.

Jon Parsons, executive director of Sustainable Sandhills, will discuss plans for the new non-profit

organization at a special outreach meeting his organization is hosting on January 18 in Raeford.

By attracting key community leaders, Parsons hopes to recruit members into Sustainable Sandhills who will promote constructing more energy-efficient homes and commercial buildings, ensure air quality in the region, practice new solid waste management, and improve mass transit.

Funded by a major grant of

\$260,000 from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Sustainable Sandhills is composed of volunteers from Fort Bragg, the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the state Department of Commerce, environmentalists and business leaders.

Counties participating in the program to protect the Sandhills region include Hoke, (See *SANDHILLS*, page 8A)