

The News-Journal

If it happened, it's news to us

75¢

No. 01 Vol. 101

RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

Wednesday, March 22, 2006

County agrees to build elementary school

Funding issues prompt postponement of decision to build middle school

BY VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

With an "acute" need predicted for new elementary and middle schools in Hoke County, the Hoke board of commissioners unanimously gave the "green light" to a

future elementary school.

In the interim, Hoke's Board of Education has imposed enrollment caps for next year at Upchurch Elementary and East Hoke Middle schools to ease overcrowding anticipated from an influx of 600 to 800 new students in the school

districts.

Acting on the school board's request to begin architectural assessments on a design for a "priority" elementary school, Hoke commissioners will use money in the school capital reserve fund. However, they postponed a decision on building a

new middle school.

The proposed elementary school would be located on Philippi Church Road acreage that was donated by Hoke farmer James Hendrix last month. It would accommodate 600 students with a core design to accommodate up to 700 students.

Fayetteville architect Robbie Ferris would design the school project, which would take nine months for the design phase.

"We just do not have the money to do both right now, but the need is there," commission chairman (See *NEW SCHOOLS*, page 4A)

Board opts to buy land for megasite

Price would go up April 1

BY VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Hoke's board of commissioners unanimously agreed Monday evening to accelerate its economic plan, exercising a purchase option on the Z.V. Pate property in Dundarrach.

Intended for developing the Hoke County Regional Industrial Park, 650 acres will be purchased by the county for \$6,000 per acre.

Hoke's mega site is the only park in North Carolina that is certified as suitable by the N.C. Department of Commerce for multiple industrial development. The site also features dual rail capability from the north and to the west by the Aberdeen & Rockfish Railroad.

The \$3.9 million immediate land acquisition saves the county more than \$1 million dollars. As of April 1, the price of the tract containing almost 1,500 acres would increase to \$8,000 per acre if

the board did not buy the land now, according to Commission Chairman Bobby Wright. The remainder of the tract may be purchased at a later date if other industries express an interest, but the acreage would be purchased at the higher price.

"This enables our county to move forward with having the Clean Burn Fuels ethanol-producing plant establish in Hoke County," Wright said. "It will help us provide 100 (See *BUYS LAND*, page 3A)



Top (left to right): Raz Autry, retired Hoke school superintendent, commissioners Bill Cameron and Charles V. Daniels, L.E.'s daughter, Gloria McLaughlin, commission vice chairwoman Jean Powell, commissioner James A. Leach and commissioner chairman Bobby Wright. Right: Autry presents Gloria McLaughlin with a plaque. Above: L.E. McLaughlin in 2001.

Old armory named for L.E. McLaughlin

Former commission chairman remembered as servant to people

BY VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Five years after the death of one of Hoke County's greatest statesmen, former Hoke Commission Chairman Lawrence Elwell McLaughlin Jr. was honored by Hoke's board of commissioners, peers and family in the renaming of the North Carolina National Guard Armory last Thursday.

"I have a problem identifying race," the 78-year-old McLaughlin said prior to his death on February 16, 2001. "I think of people as people."

"Do not ever forget: We were elected to serve all people."

"We should always remember that"

McLaughlin's wife of 57 years, Esther McLaughlin, passed away shortly after his death.

Hoke commission chairman Bobby Wright welcomed guests to the "very special" occasion to honor McLaughlin.

"He was a fine fellow, and he did a whole lot for Hoke County," Wright said. "I cannot think of a fellow who was more deserving to have a building named after him."

"My only regret is that he passed away before he could train me in county government." (See *MCLAUGHLIN*, page 5A)

Hollingsworth resigns from school board after indictment

BY VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Hoke Board of Education vice chairman William Hollingsworth II submitted his resignation to the school board on Friday. The board unanimously accepted it during a closed session held Friday night.

Hollingsworth resigned after a federal grand jury in Greensboro handed down criminal indictments against him on February 1. A Raeford accountant, Hollingsworth was indicted on allegations he deliberately filed false Internal Revenue Service income tax returns for nine clients.

The school board's consensus,

according to chairman Russell C. Smith, was to tentatively offer the appointment to replace Hollingsworth to retired Hoke educator, Irish Pickett.

"We did agree to accept the resignation of Mr. Hollingsworth," Smith said on Monday. "It is very unfortunate because we appreciate his years of service."

"He was a good board member, and we are sorry this problem transpired. Our sentiments were that we wish him well in the future."

Smith said it appears that the board is in support of appointing Pickett, a former school board candidate in the 2002 race, to follow Hollingsworth. (See *HOLLINGSWORTH*, page 3A)

This Week



Native Americans visit NCSSM page 1B

Community forum is March 23 page 3A

School dropout rates go down page 1B

The men who would be sheriff speak page 6,7A

Index

Calendar.....4B
Classifieds.....7,8B
Deaths.....5,8A
Editorials.....2A
Engagements.....3B
Legals.....4-6B
Religion.....2B
Schools.....1B
Socials.....3B
Sports.....4A

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

The News-Journal

News Other stuff

BY KEN MACDONALD
Publisher

When your children get older there are fewer ways to keep them in line. Now that ours are both over 20, we're down to a single method: the threat of embarrassment. John Candy taught me this trick in *Uncle Buck* when his teenage niece refused to accept a ride home from school with him: "Stand me

up today," he told her, "and tomorrow, I'll drive you to school in my pajamas and walk you to your first class."

Neither of my children need such a capital punishment at the moment, but as a parent, it seems like a good idea to remind them periodically that I am capable, and yea, even willing to step up to the plate should the need arise.

So this weekend when we were in Cullowhee visiting my daughter, I saw

an opportunity - and took it.

My wife, my poor daughter, and I were strolling the campus of Western Carolina, particularly the older area, which is perched on the steep edge of a mountain. It's quite pretty. Anyway, we suddenly heard through the trees, a student scream with delight, and turned to see a male, approximately three years from frontal lobe development, riding a Cullowhee visiting my daughter, I saw



Wearing o' the green Rockfish Hoke fourth grader Jared Locklear's wear reflects a wee bit o' the Irish.