

The News-Journal

If it happened, it's news to us

75¢

No. 22 Vol. 101

RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

Wednesday, August 16, 2006

Community forest could be first in state Conservation project would provide development buffer, recreation on creek

BY VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Bream and catfish are biting along Rockfish Creek, bordering an unprecedented Hoke County conservation project proposed less than two miles northwest of Raeford.

If successful, the venture would

establish the first "community forest" in the state and help restore the habitat of the vanishing long leaf pines, according to Mikki Sager, North Carolina representative for The Conservation Fund, a nonprofit organization.

"Our organization is spearhead-

ing this project, but the county is embracing the conservation concept on its own," Sager said. "It is a big step forward in our relationship because the county is also seeking to protect water quality in the region.

"Hoke County leaders are to be commended. They have been just

great to work with on this project."

Sager said the community forest's vision is an environmental plan already popularly implemented in many third world counties where natural habitats are shrinking while poverty increases. Community forests are designed to bal-

ance economic "viability" returns, paralleling conservation of natural resources, she said.

As current owner of the 572-acre tract north of Rockfish Creek on both sides of Vass Road, the CF group hopes to deed all of this undeveloped (See FOREST, page 8A)

Hoke High academies fail in report

Expert says this year promises to be better

BY VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

A somewhat scathing report was delivered by Dr. Ken Jenkins, a professor at Appalachian State University, to the Hoke Board of Education recently concerning the Small Learning Communities grant project at Hoke County High.

A training effort connected to the Ninth Grade Career Academy and the talent development high schools, the project is designed to train teachers to teach in small learning environments. His presentation reflected a "drop-off" in students' academics this past year as well as a drop-off in teachers requiring student "accountability."

He told the school board (See ACADEMIES, page 4A)

This Week



SandHoke students begin new program
page 4A

County buys industrial site
page 5A

City raises permit rates
page 3A

Affordable housing project underway
page 7A

Index

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

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



Movin' on up

Jean Whitaker's third grade class was just one of 12 classrooms that opened up Friday in the new section recently completed at Sandy Grove Elementary School. Teachers slated to go in the new rooms were in temporary classrooms and huts until the much anticipated opening. Students and staff are happy to be in a room that has its own heating and air unit. "Before it was like living out of a box," said a teacher.

Two commissioners dissent on sheriff staff changes

BY VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Two Hoke commissioners, Charles V. Daniels and Bill Cameron, rejected a request from Sheriff Hubert Peterkin on Monday evening to upgrade a deputy-officer, Capt. Brenda McQueen, to fill a vacancy as his administrative assistant. The reorganization also enables adding a fourth office clerk in the front office, according to Peterkin.

County policy requires reclassification requests be presented to the board even if the department head is

an elected official. Peterkin also requested job upgrades for two other officers, Maj. Freddy Johnson and Capt. Jackie Brewington, chief jailer.

"I am doing this the legal way — the right way," Peterkin said. "I am simply asking for money in my budget to be reallocated."

The board subsequently approved Peterkin's request in a 3-2 vote, with commission chairman Bobby Wright, Jean Powell and James A. Leach in favor of the recommendations. Though he opposed Peterkin's requests, Dan-

iels said he did "appreciate" Peterkin going through the proper channels to ask for the board's approval.

Peterkin said McQueen would fulfill administrative responsibilities in a more efficient, organized manner, but she would still have arresting powers as a deputy. Peterkin repeated to the board that he was only requesting moneys already appropriated to be redistributed — not an increase in his budget.

"I am grateful to the commissioners for approving this reclassification

and the three step increases," Peterkin said. "This sends a good message to our citizens that we are looking out for their best interests."

Daniels objected primarily because he said the savings in salary of \$8,049 after downgrading the former administrative clerk position would be split up between McQueen, Johnson and Brewington. He insisted the money should be shared by the three "lower-paid" clerks currently working in the front office.

(See COMMISSIONERS, page 5A)

Hoke native heads state press association

BY PAT ALLEN WILSON
Editor

Former Hoke Schools Superintendent Raz Autry remembers Deuce Niven as a Hoke High student with "a mind of his own."

"I knew he would be a good newspaper man," Autry added.

Niven, editor of the *Tabor-Loris Tribune*, was recently elected president of the North Carolina Press Association during the organization's 133rd annual convention held in Wrightsville Beach.

"I am proud of him. He made Hoke County proud," Autry said of Niven, remembering "a very fine young

man, and a good scholar who had a good personality and related to people real well."

A 1976 Hoke High graduate, Niven, now 48, studied at Sandhills Community College and Pembroke State University. At the time he worked for WSHB radio station and was the Hoke County correspondent for the *Fayetteville Times* while he was still a teenager. He continues to "string" for the *Fayetteville Observer* from Tabor City, where he currently resides. (See NIVEN, page 8A)



Niven

The News-Journal

News Other stuff

BY KEN MACDONALD
Publisher

I guess Western Carolina University isn't high enough. I hadn't been able to figure why my daughter wanted to switch to Appalachian State until this weekend when our family went to help her move in.

"Wait until you see her apartment," I'd been told. "You won't believe how wonderful the location is."

By "wonderful" if you mean "high," I do now agree.

I had loaded up my poor four-cylinder truck to the point that all I needed was a rocking chair and Granny to ar-

rive Beverly Hillbillies-style, and then attached an eight-foot trailer — because girls apparently need more than just a sleeping bag and coffee pot when they move into their first apartment — and set out with my fingers crossed as I wondered whether a 12-year old truck so burdened would make it past Aberdeen.

We took two vehicles — my son and I in the truck so we could happily listen to *This American Life* without a lot of lip, and the females in the daughter's car. In Greensboro I defied a detour and used my GPS gadget to navigate the male team to our first pit stop (See OTHER STUFF, page 3A)