

The News-Journal

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Hoke High's ABCs scores drop 9 points

Educators remain confident staff changes in place will fix school in 3 years

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

When it comes to meeting challenges in improving ABCs test scores, the state's accountability program that measures academic progress in students, Hoke County High is below the acceptable line required for proficiency levels.

With the report recently released for 2005-06 by Gov. Mike Easley, results show a significant slump in students' performance scores on End of Course tests at Hoke High. Scores for grades kindergarten through 8 in reading and math End of Grade tests will be delayed until November because of a glitch that occurred with

the firm that tabulates the test scores, according to Dr. Lora Hodges, assistant Hoke school superintendent of curriculum and instruction. A newer form of testing for math has also caused the delay in knowing the results from students not yet entering high school.

Only 44 percent of Hoke High

students scored at level three or four, which is the benchmark targeted by the state to show student proficiency. Already on the watch list of high schools in academic peril by Easley, Hoke High may now be in danger of sanctions because it has not passed the hurdle of at least 59.9 percent of students scoring above level two

on ABCs testing. The noticeable decline compares to 53.2 percent in 2004-05. In 2003-04, Hoke High students increased scores slightly to 53.5 percent, but that trend reversed during the past two years.

"This means a nine percent drop in test scores this past year," Hodges (See ABCs, page 7A)

Sheriff mum on accusations

Former employee says emails prove Peterkin's abuse of office

Just politics, defenders say

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
AND
PAT ALLEN WILSON

Hoke Sheriff Hubert Peterkin, running for reelection in November, has offered no further comment this week on allegations by a former employee that he directed her to work on his campaign on county time.

Peterkin flatly denied the validity of a criminal complaint filed against him on September 28 by ex-employee Lissa Jones, formerly his administrative assistant for two years.

Last week Jones produced

an email she says she sent to Peterkin regarding a phony ballot — later used for campaign literature — she says he directed her to create.

Jones, now working on the campaign committee to elect Red Springs police chief Troy McDuffie as a write-in candidate for sheriff, resigned in July. Jones and Hoke commissioner Bill Cameron, an incumbent who was defeated in the Democratic primary race for a second term, indicated they are continuing to pursue allegations of misconduct against Peterkin.

At a press conference held by Jones and Cameron last Thursday, they insisted their reasons for exposing their complaint are based on "ethics" and "what is right," and not politically motivated.

They claim Peterkin misused county employees, equipment and supplies for campaigning in the May Democratic Primary. Jones alleged she personally produced a fake sample ballot at home at Peterkin's direction in March and was paid by the county while she did the work. She alleges she later made at least 3,500 copies at the Hoke Sheriff's Office while also on county time.

Jones and Cameron have not dropped their grievance despite Hoke district attorney (See PETERKIN, page 4A)



Hillcrest volunteer firemen fold a flag covering McCormick's casket before lifting the casket to the top of a firetruck for the funeral procession.

500 mourn firefighter

McCormick honored for 'unselfish' service

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

More than 500 mourners and fellow firefighters from Hillcrest Volunteer Fire Department rejoined at the "unselfish" service Hillcrest Assistant Fire Chief James "Pete" McCormick Sr. gave

to the community.

A 20-year veteran fireman, McCormick died at the University of North Carolina Hospitals at Chapel Hill last Thursday. A vehicle driven by a N.C. Probation and Parole officer struck him (See FIREMAN, page 7A)



Laurie Smith (right), goddaughter of McCormick is consoled by Bernette Watkins.

Annexation debate persists, community is split

By PAT ALLEN WILSON
Editor

The city says its planned annexation of the College Drive/Palmer Street area complies with state laws, is

sound urban planning and offers services needed by the residents there. They also say some residents will save money if they are annexed.

Some residents of the area targeted for annexation are

saying, however, they can't afford it, that the city is misleading them, and they don't want what the city has to offer. There are also complaints the involuntary annexation is unconstitutional.

Others are saying plans to annex 131 residences on 133 acres has caused a rift in the community.

The opposition to annexation has been fueled by the fact that the county just raised

taxes, and the city raised water rates. Some say the recent revaluation by the county has their homes overvalued.

Some residents were critical of annexation plans (See DEBATE, page 8A)



Mums the word at Hedgpeth Farms and Greenhouses on Highway 211 west as customer Mildred Revels admires chrysanthemums and pansies with owner Steve Hedgpeth.

'Operation Safe Child' seeks location of Hoke sex offenders

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Do you know if your neighbor may be a sex offender or if one may reside next to your children's school or park?

State law says people have the right to know the names, addresses and crimes committed by sex offenders — against adults or children — in their county and across the nation.

The Hoke Sheriff's Office is conducting a massive search titled "Operation Child Safe."

Hoke deputies and detectives will be verifying if registered sex offenders in Hoke County are still at their designated home addresses, according to Hoke Sheriff Hubert Peterkin.

"We have an obligation to our kids to not have them be targeted in our community by sex offenders," Peterkin said. "Some people commit these brutal crimes of molestation or taking indecent liberties, but they live and work among us. (See OFFENDERS, page 6A)

This Week



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