

The News-Journal

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School system gets clean audit report

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

An annual audit submitted to Hoke County's Board of Education for 2005-06 received unanimous approval recently, according to Hoke finance officer Andrew Callihan.

"The audit was turned in on time," Callihan said. "We are on a wave of sound accountability."

"No reportable findings were found in our audit, and there were no material weaknesses reported," he said.

"Compliance was also shown in our federal government funds so we are in good shape."

Callihan said the school board was granted an "unqualified" opinion on the outcome of the audit.

"It is one of the highest rankings

for an audit," Callihan said.

Auditors Petway, Mills & Pearson in Zebulon began the audit process in June after winning the contract for a second year. School board members had admonished them last year because the audit was submitted late.

However, Callihan, who attributed the lateness to fixed assets being straightened out in 2004-05, said this year went much smoother.

"We fine-tuned our process so our financial books were in much better (See *SCHOOL AUDIT*, page 4A)



Basketball season

The season's off to a slow start for the Hoke High Bucks, but it ain't over yet. Story, page 5A.

Left: Termaine Roberts drives to the basket on an E.E. Smith defender in the first game of the season a week ago in Fayetteville. Center: Antwan McGregor takes it to the basket on a E.E. Smith defender last night in the Fighting Bucks home opener against the Bulls. Above: 3 year old Jania Hodges enjoys the excitement of watching the Bucks play inside MacDonald Gymnasium.

This Week



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The Creek held summer fun page 1B

Lawson named to Extension board page 3A

Man charged with molesting daughter page 6A

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Persistent AIDS rumor besets Hoke High

Officials say there's no way blood drive statistics could implicate students

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

A widespread rumor at Hoke County High School that 40 to 89 percent of students tested positive for HIV in a recent blood drive is likely an urban myth.

This remains the opinion

of key local educators and is apparently confirmed by local statistics.

The rumors apparently began after Cape Fear Valley Health System, located in Fayetteville, held a blood drive at Hoke High. The rumors sent a panic among some

parents and students, and also incensed several ministers who mentioned them from their church pulpits.

One of the leading methods for the virus to be transmitted is by sexual contact. Thus, concern for youth health and safety is displayed in Hoke,

where state statistics reflect that 13 people have died locally of AIDS between 1999-2003.

Yet schools officials such as Dr. Freddie Williamson, Hoke school superintendent, and Steve Hagen, Hoke High principal, have emphatically

dismissed the rumor as untrue.

In fact, Hagen says, the American Red Cross is holding a blood drive at Hoke High today, recruiting teen donors to give blood.

"Why would people be (See *AIDS*, page 7A)

Educators: district accreditation likely

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Hoke school officials anticipate that for the first time the local school district will be accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, and the Counsel on Accreditation and School Improvement.

The certification sought by Hoke educators has been individually received by Hoke County High School in the

past. However, the pending approval would also bestow the distinction on Turlington Alternative School and Sandhills Hoke Early College, which is in its infancy, as well as all middle and elementary schools.

"We have been recommended for the accreditation," an enthused Dr. Lora Hodges, assistant Hoke school superintendent of curriculum, said. (See *ACCREDIT*, page 7A)

McDuffie asks to keep job as Red Springs police chief

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Red Springs Manager Billy Joe Farmer said he is still undecided as to whether Red Springs chief of police Troy McDuffie will remain in his position. McDuffie tendered his resignation after five months on the job to run for sheriff in Hoke County. A write-in sheriff candidate

in the November 7 race, McDuffie was defeated after his opponent, Hoke sheriff Hubert Peterkin, won in a sweeping victory for a second term.

"It will ultimately be my decision," Farmer said. "It is really a judgment call on my part."

"I have taken an informal (See *MCDUFFIE*, page 3A)



Tirzah Grace Ingram, 3, on Aladdin, and Rachel Thomas on Call Me Judge ride at the Flaming Fall horse show. Story on page 4A.

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News Other stuff

By KEN MACDONALD
Publisher

The Riddle family Thanksgiving celebration went on the road to Reidsville this year, leaving behind Riddle-land (Ritalin) where there was dysfunction, for the grandson's house, where it is celebrated.

"Is that ZZ Top on the stereo?" I asked as I walked in the house on arrival and was handed a beer.

It was.

"The game's on the TV, I'll give you a tour of the house and later on we'll play Taboo," said Jeremy, my nephew, who was dressed in shorts, a polo shirt and a ballcap. I looked around to see if I had stepped into a frat party.

"Taboo?" I asked. "Is that a good idea?"

Introducing a board game like Taboo to the Riddle Thanksgiving, it seemed to me, was a little like hooking up some (See *OTHER STUFF*, page 7A)