

# The News-Journal

**Hoke County**  
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75¢

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RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

Wednesday, January 31, 2007

## Schools' ABCs scores disappointing

### Math scores took big dip, five of seven schools now on state priority list

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

Hoke County schools' scores decreased slightly in reading, and dipped significantly in the new math section of the ABCs proficiency test.

The End of Grade scores for 2005-06 ranked significantly below the state average.

Of further concern, five out of seven Hoke elementary schools have been placed on priority status because of lower proficiency. This puts schools on an academic watch list to be scrutinized by the state Department of Public Instruction.

The results came after Gov. Mike Easley released the state's ABC benchmark results

for elementary and middle schools today. Dr. Lora Hodges, new Hoke assistant school superintendent of curriculum and instruction, said a snapshot of the state report cards would be sent to parents the week of February 12.

The scores were delayed from October because of a revised math test added last year of a more "rigorous" nature, according

to Hodges.

"We are embracing the challenges," Hodges said. "We are struggling to get there. Schools statewide scored lower this year because of the math test being re-normed to be more difficult.

"Our focus is on teachers teaching a (See ABCs SCORES, page 4A)



Left: Dignitaries break ground; Right: John Cooper, Sheriff Peterkin.

## Jail addition dedicated, construction work begins

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer  
"Let's dig," Hoke commissioner Jean Powell said with

a flourish on Monday at the groundbreaking ceremony for the Hoke County Detention Center.

Powell extended thanks to federal and state officials joining Hoke leaders in breaking ground for the \$7.7 million facility. With approximately 50 dignitaries attending, Powell

and 13 guests symbolically flung the first shovels of dirt at the jail construction site across from the Hoke Sheriff's Office.

"Welcome to Hoke County," Hoke commission chairman James A. Leach said to out-of-town guests. "The Lord has blessed us in this

cold weather because we are celebrating a great occasion to start a new jail facility on this ground where we stand.

"This is for our citizens. We stand tall with Hoke County and the City of Raeford, working together to make this jail facility possible."

Hoke's jail expansion proj-

ect is designed to raise the bar for public safety and quality of life for inmates returning to society, John Cooper, state director of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's rural development, told officials.

Cooper, keynote speaker, reminded guests that the jail expansion is being con-

structed because it is "the law." Inmates must be housed in a secure facility that meets safety standards, he added.

A half-block of East Edinborough Avenue was permanently closed behind the Hoke Courthouse to thoroughfare traffic prior to the (See JAIL, page 6A)

### This Week



Life coach works with EHMS girls page 7A

\$50,000 embezzlement was 'Polk' not 'Hoke' page 8A

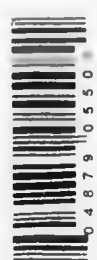
Museum sets new hours page 8A

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## Efforts underway to save Raeford DMV office

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

Hoke County will soon be without a N.C. Department of Motor Vehicles office unless local efforts to save it are successful.

County residents and many

people from surrounding counties, who work in Hoke, will have to travel elsewhere to conduct business.

Operated for at least 43 years by Raeford resident Frances Jones, the N.C. State License Plate Agency

is scheduled to be closed on March 1.

With the announcement that Jones, contractor-agent of the local DMV agency, is retiring, also comes other concerns. Jones's office manager, Jennifer Brock, and a second

employee recently hired face losing their jobs.

"It would also put people in a real bind not to be able to use a DMV agency here in Raeford," Brock said. "We are a thriving business. Just between November 2005 and

October 2006 we completed 60,000 transactions for customers.

"We particularly have a lot of people that travel here from Robeson and Scotland counties to use (See DMV, page 6A)

## Hoke soldier killed in Iraq had tried to save his men



By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

A Hoke County soldier from the 82nd Airborne Division last week was one of the group's first casualties since its recent deployment to Iraq.

A Rockfish resident and native of McClure, Pennsylvania, Sgt. 1st Keith A. Callahan died after a roadside bomb exploded south of Baghdad while he was on patrol. Callahan, according to a spokesman from the 82nd Airborne,

sacrificed his life to save his men. The Hoke hero was serving his fourth tour in Iraq. He had returned from his third deployment in December 2005 only to be shipped out again in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Callahan joined the U.S. Army in 1996. Attached to the 2nd Brigade combat team, he was a platoon sergeant with the 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment.

A decorated soldier, Cal-

lahan was protecting some of his platoon members at a road intersection at the time the terrorist's bomb detonated, according to the Department of Defense. He already was a recipient of the Purple Heart, the Bronze Star medal, the Army Commendation Medal, the Army Achievement Medal with one oak cluster, the Army Good Conduct Medal and other notable commendations.

Also a sports lover, Cal-

lahan was popularly known as "Bam-bam" in the boxing ring. Callahan won numerous boxing titles while at Fort Bragg.

"Keith Callahan's death is a tragic loss to our task force, and our thoughts and prayers go to SFC Callahan's family," Lt. Col. Ross E. Davidson of the 82nd Airborne Division said. "At the time of his death, his sole concern was for the welfare of his men," he said. (See SOLDIER, page 4A)

## MP dies in motorcycle wreck during weekend memorial event

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

A Fort Bragg military policeman lost his life on a Hoke rural road northeast of Raeford on Saturday afternoon after losing control of his motorcycle.

An experienced rider, Jeff G. "Tinker" Barfield was a retired patrol sergeant from the Hope Mills Police Depart-

ment and had ties to Raeford.

Barfield formerly worked with Hoke chief deputy Gary Hammond for several years when they served as officers with the Hope Mills Police Department. Beginning his law enforcement career at the Fayetteville Police Department in 1988, Barfield was also a former colleague of (See WRECK, page 4A)

### The News-Journal

News Other stuff

By KIEN MACDONALD  
Publisher

is more like it, I thought.

"Did you go down one of the big slides?" an excited yute asked as we stood dripping a mixture of two parts chlorine and one part water onto the clay tile floor Saturday. "Heck yeah," I said proudly, a little like Barney Fife when asked if he'd captured a dangerous criminal - head cocked, tongue pushing the cheek out.

"Wasn't it awesome?" she asked. Terrifying

We were at an indoor water park the size of Raeford. You can surf in it, ride a "lazy" river where people shoot at you with water cannons, take your pick of three hot-water pools - where if you're young all you see is half-naked chicks, but if you're old wonder what sort of organisms might survive the chlorine - and yes, you shoot yourself through giant water-filled tubes that give you an idea of what it's like to be the fruit in a potato gun.

(See OTHER STUFF, page 8A)