

The News-Journal

If it happened, it's news to us

75¢

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RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

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Ethanol plant funding nearly complete

A&R Railroad ready to beef up tracks, possibly take over Laurinburg & Southern

BY VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

The co-owner of Clean Burn Fuels of Cary says the company should have an alliance in place in a

few weeks to provide the remainder of funding needed to start work on an ethanol plant here.

Jack Carlisle says an investment alliance should be secured by the middle of April for the last \$5 mil-

lion needed to proceed. He said the cost to build the ethanol-producing plant at the Hoke County Regional Industrial Park has been raised from \$85 million to over \$100 million.

Ed Lewis, president of the A&R

Railroad, said his company is behind the ethanol enterprise 100 percent. A&R will provide the spur for rail service to the future Hoke plant.

"We are very close to closing on our subscription agreements with

private investors," Carlisle said. "A big announcement will be forthcoming.

"During this period of time, we have already let out our contracts," (See ETHANOL, page 5A)



Mary Lee Chalaire shares a moment in Moore Regional Hospital with husband Gene Chalaire and grandbaby, Charlotte Parker.

"The Chalaire's have helped so many people ... they never talk about the good they spread to others in need." – Bessie Lerner, friend

Friends pitch in to help stricken Raeford florist

BY VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Valentine's Day at Calico Corner Florists was hectic, with volunteers and longtime staff designing and delivering floral arrangements around the county.

But Gene Chalaire, supervising the preparations, was missing his irreplaceable co-partner and wife of 39 years, Mary Lee Chalaire.

For 29 years, the Chalaire couple have designed and delivered flowers for every occasion to the Hoke community and surrounding counties. Mary Lee is now fighting for survival in FirstHealth Moore Regional Hospital as a victim of lung and brain cancer.

Since January when she was first diagnosed with the disease, she has

been in and out of the hospital with two major setbacks. In spite of seizures, she is determined to improve and kick the cancer, according to friend Bessie Lerner.

Lerner, a Raeford resident and professional seamstress, has also volunteered at Calico Corner's for busy holidays. She is now taking up the slack temporarily for Mary Lee along with other friends.

"The Chalaire's have helped so many people," Lerner said. "Many times people have not been able to afford flowers for a relative's funeral and Gene and Mary Lee have discreetly seen that flowers were available.

"They never talk about the good they spread to others in need."

(See FLORIST, page 8A)

This Week



Teacher gets state-level VFW award page 6A

Boys' track team sweeps meet page 7A

Two convicted in sex cases page 7A

Breaking story: Sheriff's Office breaks up major ID ring page 5A

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Woman angered after school had her arrested

BY VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer



Beckel with daughter Makenna

After a Hoke school social worker filed an arrest warrant against her, a North Raeford volunteer firefighter and mother of a West Hoke Elementary pupil permanently withdrew her daughter from school on Monday.

Jennifer Beckel said she took the extreme action after being erroneously arrested on a criminal charge. She said

the Hoke school officials mistakenly alleged her daughter incurred too many unexcused absences.

Beckel said she also conferred in person yesterday with state education officials in Raleigh. She complained of the conduct of at least three Hoke school employees.

"An apology would not be good enough after being arrested falsely," Beckel said yesterday. "I have never heard of anybody being charged with

this offense.

"I had documents to prove that the school was wrong in what it did to me. Most of my daughter's absences were excused," she said.

"I was never counseled by the school or notified in writing of any problem with my daughter's attendance."

The wife of a U.S. Army Golden Knight skydiver, Beckel said the only (See MOM ARRESTED, page 5A)

Wall like along border of Mexico planned for Hoke

BY NOAH S. VERDAD
News Journal Intern

Taking a cue from the federal government, Hoke County leaders have come up with a solution to possible annexation of Hoke residents by the city of Fayetteville: a Mexican border-like wall.

"It sounds silly, I suppose," said Abril Tonto, an engineer for the county and architect of the plan. "But we've found a loophole in the law that says if the county

is fenced off with a border wall, it's not eligibilized for annexation by another municipality."

The wall will bring the added benefit of keeping out undesirable aspects of Fayetteville as well, said Tonto, such as drugs, heavy traffic, and possibly Wal-mart.

But the wall is not without its critics. "Unless you post guards at roadway breaks in the wall, what's the point?"

says Engañado Le, a Rockfish resident whose backyard will be bisected by the wall. "Fayetteville people can still get into Hoke County.

"And what next? Are we going to have to use passports to go to a movie in Fayetteville?"

"I left Texas because of this mentality and here we go again."

And then there's the expense. Though (See BORDER WALL, page 7A)



Border wall similar to Hoke's.

Removal of last downtown street light causes huge sinkhole

"We had just pulled the last bolt on the last street light when the whole street opened up," said power company line-man Lotz Watts.

"It was like those street

lights were holding up the pavement."

As Watts looked on the ground on Main Street collapsed into at least a 30 foot hole Tuesday afternoon.

No one was injured, but a Hummer owned by April Furste disappeared into the hole while she was having lunch at the Chatterbox Café.

(See SINKHOLE, page 5A)



BY KEN MACDONALD
Publisher

The girl on the other end of the line had asked how late her school could provide us with its newspaper files and still have the paper printed by Wednesday. It was Monday morning, and her window was closing even as we chatted on the phone, but I didn't have the heart to tell her that.

She told me she had worked on the paper all afternoon and evening Sunday, and for some unknown reason (unknown to her – it

was apparent to me her problem was she was using a PC instead of a Mac) she lost all of her work – there was nothing saved on her hard drive.

When I told her if she could email me the files sometime Monday night that I would try to rearrange our printing schedule to accommodate her, I heard her voice begin to break. That still wasn't enough time.

Through her tears she told me her school was about to start spring break, the paper was (See OTHER STUFF, page 8A)



Workers block off a giant sinkhole on Main Street.