

The News-Journal

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75¢

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RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

Wednesday, May 23, 2007

Video alleges animal abuse at turkey plant

Animal rights group says it filmed inside plant undercover, company responds

BY VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

A video exposé being aired nationally accuses some employees at House of Raeford with handling turkeys in an inhumane manner. The video released by an animal rights organization, Mercy for Animals, has been picked up by TV stations

and is online at YouTube. It shows alleged workers punching turkeys as they pass on a slaughter line, reaching inside birds to retrieve eggs, and deliberately letting trucks run over some birds.

The organization alleges the inhumane practices were ignored by House of Raeford management.

House of Raeford denounced the

accusation in an online statement, indicating isolated incidents were filmed. House of Raeford executives said the video is not indicative of normal processing methods used at the local plant.

In an immediate reaction to the allegations of animal mistreatment, Denny's national restaurant chain, owning more than 500 restaurants,

suspended its supplier relationship with House of Raeford on Monday. Denny's executives said it would no longer purchase products from House of Raeford, pending further investigation of the allegations.

"Denny's has long advocated humane animal handling practices among our suppliers," Debbie At-

(See VIDEO, page 6A)



Video: alleged worker punched bird.



This little guy from the Hoke County Parks and Recreation Tigers Coach Pitch team gave every ounce of energy he had trying to hit that ball. The recreation leagues are winding down and the regular season will be complete after the first week of June.

Utility company worker raped

Woman attacked near Raeford

BY VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

A female utility employee was raped Monday morning less than one-half mile from Raeford's city limits.

A repeat sexual offender on probation, living in a previously abandoned house in Silver City, allegedly dragged the victim inside where authorities say he beat and raped her before fleeing on foot. She is recovering from injuries sustained during the sexual assault.

"She was in real bad shape," one law enforcement officer, who asked to not be identified, said. "She suffered a lot of physical trauma."

Grady Cunningham, 42 and homeless, had been staying inside the dilapidated house for several weeks, according to neighbors. Known as a street person, Cunningham is charged with first-degree forcible rape and first-degree kidnapping. He is being detained in Hoke Jail on a \$50,000 secured bond.

With a history of sexual crimes, Cunningham was released on probation in August after being convicted of sexual battery. His other offenses include burglary, forgery and possession of drugs.

(See RAPE, page 5A)



Cunningham

This Week

'Hoot' Gibson remembered
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Memorial Day celebration is Monday, 11 a.m.
Hoke Courthouse

Test knowledge of area
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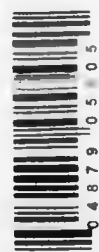
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Man killed as he walked beside US 401

BY VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer



Willie Davis

The family of a Queenmore grandfather killed by a hit and run motorist last Wednesday night is pleading for help in identifying the driver.

The Raeford Police Department is investigating the death of 81-year-old Willie Davis, who was hit as he walked along US 401 between Green Street and the State Credit Union on Fulton Street.

The family is also demanding to know why it took the county's ambulance service so long to arrive at the scene.

"It was way longer than fifteen minutes because I had already been called by someone and rushed to his side where he was laying in the road," granddaughter April Bethea, who collapsed crying at the scene, said. "I was there before the ambulance, and it took me about ten minutes to get there.

"Another person who worked for the Hoke school system had also stopped, checking his vital signs."

"The coroner came and pronounced him dead. I think it was instant."

Bethea said they covered him with a white sheet. She said he was left lying in the rain while the accident site was investigated because police had to collect any evidence.

Davis was in his pajamas

when he was struck around 10:15 to 10:30 p.m. on May 16. An eyewitness, according to Bethea, described the fleeing vehicle as a blue-colored Sport Utility Vehicle with a headlight destroyed by the impact. The vehicle was traveling north toward Cumberland County at the time of impact.

However, Raeford Police chief Kevin Locklear said other witnesses have described the SUV as red or

(See KILLED, page 4A)

Riddle acquires Wayside property for \$2 million

BY VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

A pivotal piece of commercial property between Raeford and the Fayetteville boundary line may become the next anchor site for major retailers to move into Hoke County.

Fayetteville commercial

developer Joseph "Joe" P. Riddle III has acquired the 30-acre tract of land from Hoke native Willa McFadyen Lindsay. Situated at the intersection of Wayside Road and U.S. 401, the property has been on and off the market during the last seven years.

ReMax realtors in Fayetteville most recently listed

the property for sale. In the past, Hampton Development Corporation had considered an option on the property to build a WalMart, a deal that eventually fell through.

According to the Hoke register of deeds office, the deed transfer between Lindsay and Riddle was filed on May 3. Owner of Riddle Commercial

Properties, Riddle purchased the tract where soybeans were once cultivated in fields for \$2 million.

Riddle said he is counting on the "power" property to attract major retailers. He has posted a sign advertising space is available for retailers. Riddle said he does not have any immediate plans for

specific tenants.

"I am hopeful to get some retailers so Hoke County will not lose out to Gillis Hill Road," Riddle said of the site of the closest WalMart to Raeford located in Cumberland County. "I hope to get some business for Hoke County so I am trying to

(See RIDDLE, page 4A)

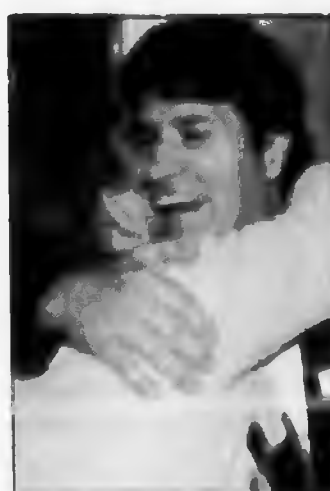
Chamber of Commerce names Santangelo Citizen of the Year

BY VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

It was a full house and a night of high spirits for the 60th annual Raeford-Hoke Chamber of Commerce Banquet held last evening at West Hoke Middle School. Established movers and shakers shared the limelight with newcomers graduating from Leadership Hoke.

Chamber first vice president Judy Pittman officiated to recognize Chamber president Dr. Tony Santangelo as the "Citizen of the Year." Chamber board of direc-

(See CHAMBER, page 5A)



Tony Santangelo - named Citizen of the Year - gets a hug from Judy Pittman.

Raeford soldier charged as accessory to murder

BY VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Hoke County High's campus is back to normal after fears of retaliation proved groundless in a vague link that may have existed with the murder of a Fayetteville youth earlier this month.

However, a Raeford man is now wanted in connection

with the murder of Fayetteville teen Jourdan Phillips, according to Jamie Smith, public affairs officer at The Fayetteville Police Department.

Hoke County High principal Steve Hagen said last week it was purely rumor and conjecture, but they took the threat seriously just in case the

(See SOLDIER, page 4A)