

The News-Journal

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75¢

No. 11 Vol. 102

RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

Wednesday, May 30, 2007

County plans to hold line on tax rate

Board to reorganize some departments, adjust staffing, review school budget

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

In an effort to stave off a tax increase for the coming year, the Hoke board of commissioners knocked the budget

down to \$30.2 million after shaving off another \$400,000 last evening.

County Manager Mike Wood said things are looking positive. He said the board does not foresee a tax increase

for next year, as was the fear of some board members earlier.

"The board is now adamant there will be no tax increase for Hoke citizens," Wood said. "We only need

to reduce about another one-hundred-thousand dollars off the budget to be where we need to be.

"We anticipate one more budget session will be required before a public hearing

is held to approve the final budget."

Commissioners appeared cooperative and in high spirits. At one point, Hoke commission vice chairman Tony Hunt said in a conservative

manner: "We are not putting in; we are taking out."

Wood quipped: "This is a take-out session. I have made some cuts that would take off the four cent tax."

(See BUDGET, page 4A)



Students, parents and teachers gaze skyward to view the U.S. Army's 82nd Airborne Division All American Freefall Team landing at Rockfish Hoke Elementary; a class spells out "Memorial Day."



Kids ring Memorial Day in

General Horst makes appearance at school

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Men and women in military uniform who sacrificed their lives to preserve liberty and the American way of life were honored by millions on Memorial Day from sea to shining sea.

In Hoke County, the commemoration began early on Thursday morning as Rockfish Hoke Elementary students hosted the second annual military appreciation day. A special visit was enjoyed from U.S. Army Brigadier General Karl R. Horst, deputy-commanding general of the XVIII Airborne Corps and Fort Bragg. Putting children at ease, Horst toured the school's campus, and

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Teen arrested in murder of Fayetteville man

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Hoke County Schools administrators expressed dismay yesterday that one of their students may be implicated in the murder conspiracy of Fayetteville teen Jourdan Phillips. The 18-year-old was shot in a drive-by chase on May 6 on Morganton Road in Fayetteville.

A student at Hoke County High, 17-year-old Keonte

Devon Purcell was arrested off campus last Thursday on homicide allegations. Purcell had continued to attend school at Hoke High for more than two weeks since Phillips was slain.

A junior, Purcell is charged with first-degree murder, conspiracy to commit first-degree murder, discharging a weapon into an occupied property and first-degree attempted murder.

"We love our students, and



Purcell

shocked of the news that a student was arrested.

"Of course, innocent until proven guilty," he said.

"We did not have any idea a student was involved in a

murder investigation until we read of his arrest."

According to Hagen, Purcell had no previous issues on campus with any sort of school violence.

"Keonte Purcell was in my office last week with our school superintendent, Dr. Freddie Williamson," Hagen said. "He was trying to validate some of the days he might not have been in school. I guess he was being questioned by the police."

"We counseled him on making the right choices with his life and to think before he acts."

Hagen said he did not know of a particular policy that covered whether Purcell would be allowed to return to school if he was released on bond.

"I am pretty sure he could not come back to school, but that decision would have to be addressed by Dr. William-

(See MURDER, page 6A)

Hoke centennial plans set in motion



MacDonald

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

An enthused Hoke board of commissioners unanimously appointed retired Hoke educator Lauchlin "Locke" MacDonald as chairman of the

upcoming 2011 Hoke County Centennial celebration.

With the blessings of the board, MacDonald will select from four to five additional volunteers to organize the county's marking of its one-hundredth birthday. MacDonald foresees hundreds of participants in the final research and festivity phases of the centennial.

"I don't need a minute," MacDonald said in good humor to the board. "I need four years."

"I want to remind you in a little less than four years will be the centennial of Hoke County."

MacDonald urged the board's participation, promising it would become a significant event without re

(See 100 YEARS, page 5A)



Bystanders watch firemen extinguish a blaze on South Main Street Saturday afternoon. The vacant house was at the entrance to the old Raeford Lumber Yard.

