

The News-Journal

If it happened, it's news to us

75¢

No. 20 Vol. 102

RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

Wednesday, August 1, 2007

Board sets salary for new DSS director

BY LENORE MORALES

The Hoke County Board of Commissioners approved a salary increase for the new Department of Social Services director.

Della Sweat will be paid \$66,542 or grade 81, step 2 of the current county pay plan and one grade above

what was initially planned.

Sweat was hired by the DSS board, and is slated to begin her new position today.

A July 9, 2007 letter to commissioners from the DSS board of directors Chairman Shirley Wright said that Sweat had indicated that she

would be giving up some benefits provided by her previous employer to accept the position.

It said that Sweat was the board's choice from a "small pool of qualified candidates" and that she "did not wish to accept the position for the initial hiring amount set out in

the pay plan."

The letter also said that the DSS board felt that providing the higher salary was "necessary and in the best interests of Hoke County."

The board took the action at its regularly scheduled meeting in the board's assembly room in the Pratt

Building July 23.

The meeting was recessed until Thursday, August 2 at 5 p.m. in the commissioners' room to allow for the treatment of an unusually long list of agenda items, said Linda Revels, Clerk to the Board.

(See DSS DIRECTOR, page 8A)



Jasmine, Ven, Kai and Rashanna Davis - fighting back against cancer.

Father plans bike trek across nation for child

BY BILL LINDAU
Freelance Writer

Kai Davis looks like a healthy child. He's smiling, playful and full of energy. Only the shaved head and the device on his chest are giveaways.

Kai, 4, is a very sick child.

When he was two and one-half years old, Kai was diagnosed with neuroblastoma, a form of cancer that affects only infants and toddlers, said his father and mother, Ven and Rashanna Davis of Raeford.

Kai is doing much better now, with the necessary treatment, but he is not out of the proverbial woods yet. Ven wants him to get better, and he does not want other children to go through the same thing as his own son, so Ven, an avid bicyclist, and several friends are planning a cross-country bike ride to raise funds for treatment of pediatric cancer, and also raise awareness of such afflictions. He also hopes to have a production

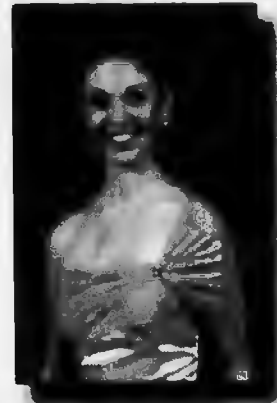
company make a documentary film about pediatric cancer.

Kai has found himself blessed with a lot of support. WRAL TV-5 aired a story about his case, and will follow the Hope Ride 2007. Kai's case inspired Congressional candidate Larry Kissell to post a blog. There is currently a bill in the U.S. House of Representatives called the Conquer Childhood Act of 2007. H.R. 1553 would "advance medical research and treatment into pediatric cancers, ensure patents and families have access to the current treatments and information regarding pediatric cancers, established a national childhood cancer database and promote public awareness of pediatric cancers. The bi-partisan bill had 117 sponsors as of July 24.

Ven Davis said in a statement that Kai was diagnosed with Stage IV cancer (neuroblastoma) on March 10, 2005. He was pronounced in remission in October 2006.

(See BIKE TREK, page 5A)

This Week



Haskins wins at state 4-H Congress page 5A

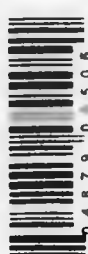
SandHoke students get free laptops page 8A

Hillcrest Fire Dept. to get \$108k grant page 8A

Index

Calendar 2B
Classifieds 5B
Class Reunions 1B
Court 5A
Deaths 4A
Editorials 2A
Legals 3-4B
Sports 6A
Worship 2B

We're on the web at
www.thenews-journal.com
Read by 4,000 each week



Public will get to use land set aside for nature

Hoke project may become showcase for nation

BY LENORE L. MORALES

Hoke County is about to become the site of a showcase for the country with the opening of a community forest as early as the first part of 2008, according to officials who are working together to bring the plan to fruition.

"To our knowledge this is the first community forest in the entire South," said Mickey Sager of the North Carolina Conservation Fund's Resourceful Communities program.

The project is planned for a 532-acre tract that encompasses land on both sides of Vass Road near the edge of Fort Bragg. It is bordered by Rockfish Creek and a number of privately

owned land parcels, said county Parks and Recreation Director David Jackson.

The community forest will serve to provide an added buffer for Fort Bragg even as it benefits Hoke County through harvesting of trees and pine straw, public recreation and environmental education opportunities.

Most of the forest land, currently owned by the Conservation Fund, will be deeded over to Hoke County probably within the next two to three months, Sager said. She indicated she will meet with county officials this week to work on the details of the transaction.

(See FOREST, page 7A)



Hoke County Parks and Recreation Director David Jackson looks over part of the planned Hoke Community Forest.

Woods takes helm at Senior Services department

BY LENORE L. MORALES

Monday was moving day for Don M. Woods.

That was his first day on the job as Hoke County's new director of Senior Services.

Besides boxes full of papers, Woods brings to the post experience in working with people, a history of academic excellence and a nearly complete bachelor's degree in social work. He is set to

graduate from the University of North Carolina in December.

Woods previously served as the program coordinator for Manna Day Reporting, a grant-funded at-risk youth program based at Rockfish Church for four years.

At Senior Services, he said, he will oversee four full-time and four part-time employees.

Senior Services serves as a liaison between senior citizens and the agencies which offer them

assistance.

The department also offers its own services, including Meals on Wheels, block grant-funded housing assistance and a nutrition program that serves hot meals every weekday at Raeford's old National Guard Armory and at Sandy Grove United Methodist Church.

Woods said he recently wrote a grant to provide at-risk youth services through his (See WOODS, page 5A)



Don M. Woods

The News-Journal

BY KEN MACDONALD
Publisher

Monday night we said goodbye to Vicki Summers, our main reporter at *The News-Journal* for the last eight years.

The preacher at her memorial service asked us to think back to the stories involving Vicki, and I immediately flashed back to a time several years ago when I was sitting in my office and heard a small explosion.

Actually, it was more of a sound like a .22

Other stuff

rifle being fired, but I heard nothing after that - no screams - so I returned to my work.

A few minutes later, there was another explosion. This time, I went to investigate. As I walked slowly toward the front office, a third bang rang out, and it seemed to come from Vicki's office.

"Vicki," I said, as I entered the room. "what's that bang I keep hearing?"

"You know," she said, "I noticed that noise, but I don't have any idea where it's..." (See OTHER STUFF, page 8A)

Cops stop chop shop

The Hoke Sheriff's Office arrested four men, and broke up a auto theft and chop shop operation in the process.

Phillip Wayne Lee, 19, of 510 Davis Bridge Road, Parkton, Burton Larue McBryde, 18, of 358 La Sandy Road, Raeford, Stanley Lynn Kinnison II, 20, of 1398 Crawford Wright Road, Raeford, and Sean Bradley McCarthy, 18, of 204 Rockfish Road, Raeford, were charged with

a variety of felonies.

All were charged with two counts of larceny of a motor vehicle, two counts of possession of a stolen motor vehicle and one count of conspiracy, all felony charges.

Lee was jailed under a \$20,000 secured bond.

McBryde was released after posting an \$8,000 secured bond.

Kinnison was still in cus (See CHOP SHOP, page 7A)