

The News-Journal

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RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

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Incumbents take the election

Sheriff wins, commissioners move on to November, Smith wins clerk race

By Jason Beck
Staff Writer

Incumbents dominated local primaries last night, with Sheriff Hubert Peterkin the big winner in an election marked by low voter turnout.

Peterkin received more than 86 percent of the total vote over former deputy Sarah Purcell. He faces no opposition in the general election.

Incumbent county commissioners Tony Hunt, Ellen McNeill and Jean Powell all

held their own in the Democratic primary and must now face lone Republican Elda Thacker in November.

The big surprise of the night was Russell Smith, who won a three-way battle for the clerk of court seat, a position vacated by retiring clerk Vera Hollingsworth.

For Peterkin, the night was a huge success. The sheriff will go on to serve a third term in office after defeating Purcell by more than 2,500 votes. In all, Peterkin received

3,154 of the total 3,721 votes cast by Democrats.

"I want to thank the citizens of Hoke County for having the confidence in me again to be the sheriff of the county and protect them. I'm very humbled by that," Peterkin said. "Our work is not yet done. We've come a long way, but we've got a lot more we want to do. Our biggest challenge we've been prepared for is dealing with the growth. We have got to work even harder now."

Purcell, who campaigned heavily, was disappointed with the results.

"I would like to thank each and every one of the people who voted for me and how they supported me in this election," Purcell said. "Thanks for all of the support they gave me with signs and working the polls."

As for her former boss? "I have nothing to say," she said.

Peterkin on the other hand, praised his opponent.

"I want to commend my opponent Sarah Purcell for having the desire to want to be sheriff," Peterkin said. "I want to commend her for running a good race. People make a decision of who they want and there's no need for it to be controversial or ugly. I think she

ran a clean campaign."

Peterkin thanked his family, staff, supporters and campaign manager Raz Autry for all of the help they gave him.

"My staff - I've got one of the most remarkable group of men and women serving this (See ELECTION, page 8A)

Leach: make us hospital trustees

By Jason Beck
Staff Writer

Hoke officials continued to support a pair of hospital plans proposed for the county even as legal wrangling and red tape delays the construction of both.

Last night, the board of commissioners passed a resolution supporting Cape Fear Regional Health System's 2010 certificate of need proposal to build a 41-bed hospital here, a month after the board also passed a similar resolu-

tion supporting FirstHealth of the Carolinas' plan to build an 8-bed hospital only miles away.

Both healthcare providers have appealed the state's decision to approve certificates allowing the competing medical facilities to be built. A response from the state isn't expected for several months.

Last night officials from Cape Fear Valley, including Breeden Blackwell, the new director of governmental affairs (See HOSPITAL, page 5A)

New park outgrown

Parks and Rec participation outstrips forecast

By Jason Beck
Staff Writer

When county leaders dedicated a new multi-million dollar park last year, they knew the community would enjoy it - but they never knew how much.

The Hoke County Recreation Park, located on N.C. 211, is now at or above capacity, and recreation officials are struggling to find a place to host the extra crowd.

"We didn't expect the growth so soon," said recre-

ation director David Jackson. "We knew it was going to happen, but it caught us off guard."

This season, there are more than 100 new children participating in spring sports activities, which include baseball, softball and tee-ball. Jackson said games are now being held outside the new park to accommodate the new teams.

"We are playing at every park," Jackson said. "The new park, Burling- (See PARK, page 10A)



Winners: Commissioner Ellen McNeill (clockwise from top left) is happy to advance to the November election; Russell Smith talks to a crowd after winning the clerk of court race; watching the numbers come in; and Sheriff Hubert Peterkin (left) with his campaign manager Raz Autry.

This Week

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Manager recommends holding city tax rate

By Bill Lindau

The budget for the next fiscal year and the results of a development project for Robbin Heights highlighted the Raeford City Council monthly meeting Monday evening.

City Manager Mike Wood recommended an increase in three utility fees. This includes the monthly residential sanitation fee, the tipping

fee for commercial garbage collection and disposal, and water and sewer charges for in-town customers.

Council set a public hearing on the budget for Monday, May 17, in the McLeod Council Chambers, where Council holds its regular month meetings. The hearing will begin at 7 p.m.

Wood recommended the following:

• An increase from \$15 to \$18 per month in residential sanitation fees

• An increase from \$74 per ton of garbage to \$90 per ton, for the tipping fee for commercial garbage collection and disposal; and

• An increase of \$4.44 per month for water and sewer service for in-town customers.

"This budget was prepared with a property tax rate of \$0.48 per \$100 of value," Wood said in a statement,

submitted Friday to Mayor John K. McNeill III and city council members. "This of course maintains the current property rate. However, I do recommend that the sanitation fee and water and sewer rates increase."

Wood recommended the following in capital expenditures:

• The purchase of two new vehicles for the Police Department

• A backhoe for the Water and Sewer Department

• The installation of a SCADA system for the wastewater treatment plant; and

• A portable generator for well sites.

Wood said no new positions were recommended for city personnel. He added that a 3 percent cost of living adjustment is included. He also recommended an increase in the (See CITY, page 5A)

OTHER STUFF

By Ken MacDonald

It's time for another edition of We Commit Science So You Don't Have To, brought to you this week in anticipation of the coming Mosquito season. But I'm not talking about the little \$*#& critters that make life so miserable around here in the summer. I capitalized Mosquito for a reason - it's an electronic device that wards off loitering teenagers by taking advantage of a phenomenon known as presbycusis.

I know what you're thinking. Pres-

bycusis sounds like the church leaders' reaction to kids spilling Cokes on the new carpet or running through the sanctuary wrapped in toilet paper, but it actually refers to older people not hearing so well as younger ones.

It goes like this: People of good hearing can generally detect sounds in a range, measured in hertz, that spans from 20 to 20,000. Twenty is really low and can be reproduced by a pipe organ, my Polk speakers, and Fort Bragg guns when you're trying (See OTHER STUFF, page 4A)



Left: Tim Haynes of the NC Road Team No-Zone demonstrates the blind spot truck drivers have, as part of a safety lesson for SandHoke School students last week. Right: Student Marena Glasgow sees (or doesn't see) it first hand.