

# The News-Journal

If it happened, it's news to us

75¢

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RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

Wednesday, March 7, 2012

## Timeline set for new middle school

### School system also asks for \$4.3 million from county for annual budget

By CATHARIN SHEPARD  
Staff writer

A year after enacting a three-cent property tax increase to help pay for a new middle school, the Hoke County Commissioners heard an update about the project during the first budget retreat of 2012.

The Board of Education met last week with developer Robbie Ferris

of sfl+A, the company behind the physical plans for Sandy Grove Middle School. Attorneys for the school board, commissioners and developer have been working out the details of the project development agreement for the last several months.

Under the agreement, the school system will lease the new middle school for a period of 20 years from

a shell company called FirstFloor Sandy Grove, LLC created just for the purpose of this project. When the lease ends and the debt is paid off, the school building will first be owned by Hoke County but the commission will then transfer the school to the school system's ownership.

During the lease period, the school system won't have to pay any utility bill for the building as long as the

energy use meets the guidelines for "normal use" set down in the development agreement. This is because the school's solar panels will likely generate more energy than the school can even use, and the excess will be sold to Lumbee River Electric Membership Corp. with the proceeds split between the school system and the developer. Although the corporation pays less for energy than it charges

for it, the sale of renewable energy credits each year will also likely bring in some money, officials said.

If there is an energy bill because the system doesn't produce enough energy, or if something happens to the solar panels, the developer will be responsible for paying the utility bill for the duration of the 20-year period. However, if the school (See MIDDLE SCHOOL, page 5A)

## Filing closes, many races contested

Filing for many races in the 2012 elections closed last Wednesday with some local races uncontested and other incumbents facing multiple challengers.

Here are the candidates who have filed to run for offices representing Hoke County. Incumbents have an asterisk by their name.

### Local races

•Board of Commissioners: James Leach\* (D),

Bobby Wright\* (D), Freddie McPhaul (D), Lonnie Baldwin (D), John Harry (R), Elda Thacker (R)

District Attorney: Kristy Newton\*

Register of Deeds: Onnie Dudley\*

### N.C. House of Representatives

• District 48: Garland Pierce\* (D)

(See FILING, page 4A)

## McIntyre runs again

By CATHARIN SHEPARD  
Staff writer

Mike McIntyre, a Democrat from Lumberton representing the Seventh Congressional District, announced last week he will run for another term in the United States House of Representatives.

Following redistricting

efforts, Hoke County is now part of the Seventh and Second Congressional Districts.

Voters in voting precincts Allendale, Antioch, Blue Springs, and Raeford #s 1, 2, 4, 5 will be represented in the Seventh (See MCINTYRE, page 5A)



McIntyre



Number 31 for Hoke, Darius Book, goes up for a layup in the semifinals. Book had six points in the loss. (Hal Nunn photo)

## Bucks' exciting season comes to end

By HAL NUNN  
Sports writer

The Hoke High School Bucks boys' basketball team fell to New Hanover in the semi-finals for state champion Saturday, but only days before they hung on to defeat number one-ranked

Pine Forest in the regionals. The Bucks entered the Eastern Regional tournament Thursday night against a tough Pine Forest team that was 28-1 coming into the game. With more than 4,000 people in attendance for the local match-up, tournament organizers had to turn people

away. The game started out as a low scoring battle with a halftime score of 21-21. By the end of the third period, Hoke led 38-34. In the fourth period, the Bucks started to feed Tarique Thompson in the low post and Pine Forest couldn't slow him down enough until the Bucks had a

10-point lead with about four minutes to go. Pine Forest went on a run to bring the game to within two points with about 13 seconds left. After a timeout, the Trojans got the ball in the hands of Alex Bradley, their number one scorer and three-point (See BUCKS, page 6A)

### This Week



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## Teacher connected to nugget scandal replaced with sub

By CATHARIN SHEPARD  
Staff writer

Hoke County Schools has replaced a West Hoke Elementary pre-kindergarten teacher with a substitute in connection with a school lunch issue that raised questions about state policy and federal guidelines.

In a letter dated Feb. 28 sent home to parents in one pre-kindergarten

classroom, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Bob Barnes said students in a pre-k classroom would be taught by a substitute.

"As I am sure you are aware, we recently experienced an unfortunate situation where a failure to follow district policy resulted in the substitution of a Pre-K student's lunch at West Hoke Elementary School. This letter is to inform you that Ms. Emma

Thomas will be a substitute teacher" in the classroom. The substitute would serve as a teacher in the classroom "until we can bring resolution to this issue," the letter said.

It was not clear whether the teacher had anything to do with the lunchtime incident or what if any action had been taken against the teacher. At first the school system said a state worker was to blame, but after the state division

reported it did not have a worker on-site the day of the incident, the school system clarified that a school employee was the person responsible.

Superintendent Dr. Freddie Williamson said he cannot comment on personnel matters.

Concern over the issue began earlier this month when news outlets across the country picked up on the (See NUGGETS, page 5A)

## Fire chief Lippard retires

By BILL LINDAU

Robert Conoly, as mayor pro tem, presided over a Raeford City Council meeting that lasted 10 minutes, during which council announced the retirement of Dickie Lippard as the city's fire chief and Johnny Smith from the Street Maintenance Department.

At council's regular monthly meeting Monday evening, Lippard and Smith both received plaques of recognition for their many years of service. Lippard (See COUNCIL, page 5A)



Retiring fire chief Dickie Lippard (right) accepts a fire hydrant trophy from city councilman Bobby Conoly (center), while Lippard's wife Barbara holds his certificate.

## Schools reaccredited

By CATHARIN SHEPARD  
Staff writer

Hoke County Schools earned renewal last week of its accreditation as a Quality School District from the Advanced Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement.

The Quality Assurance Review team interviewed 361 "stakeholders"—local business owners, elected School District from the Advanced Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement. (See SCHOOLS, page 4A)

(See AWARDS, page 4A)

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The newspaper competed in circulation Division B, which (See AWARDS, page 4A)

## News-Journal wins awards

The News-Journal received two awards last week from the North Carolina Press Association's 2011 News, Editorial and Photojournalism Contest.

The News-Journal won

second place in news coverage and second place in feature writing out of entries from newspapers across the state. The newspaper competed in circulation Division B, which (See AWARDS, page 4A)