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Schools keep teacher jobs, cut bonuses

Board of Education seeks \$4.3 million from county, up \$40,000

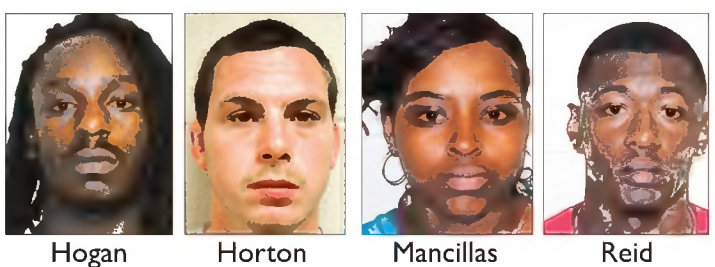
By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

Hoke County Schools likely won't cut teacher positions or teacher assistant positions this year despite losing federal Education money and some low wealth funding for the upcoming fiscal year, school finance

officer Wannaa Chavis said. The school system last month requested a \$4.3 million current expense budget from the Hoke County Commissioners. That represents about a \$40,000 increase over last year's local funding, based on the schools' prediction of adding about 200 students in the 2012-13 school year. The school sys-

tem and county government have a standing funding agreement based on a certain amount per student. The current funding rate per student is \$529, Chavis said. The Hoke County Board of Commissioners completed its second budget workshop of the year last month without plan-

ning a property tax increase for the upcoming fiscal year. Hoke County Schools Superintendent Dr. Freddie Williamson addressed the board members and other county officials to request a \$4,346,264 current expense and \$833,700 capital outlay budget for the (See *SCHOOL BUDGET*, page 5A)



4 arrested after home invasion

A Hoke County woman used her computer to ask a friend in New York to call for help after robbers broke into her home, held her at gunpoint, ransacked her house and left her tied up and buried under furniture while they stole items including her telephones and truck. Authorities arrested four people this week on charges including kidnapping, armed

robbery and breaking and entering in connection with the home invasion that happened June 5 in the 5000 block of Philippi Church Road. On Monday investigators arrested Jabesh Clarence Corvin Reid, 20, and Jesse James Horton, 22, both of the 3100 block of Paddlefish Drive in Fayetteville, and Jamilla Mancillas, 18, and (See *ROBBERY*, page 5A)

Former Scotland officer accused of setting fires here

A former Scotland County law enforcement officer was arrested last month and charged with intentionally setting fires in Hoke, Robeson and Richmond counties. Joe Thomas Peele Jr., 41, of Hamlet was charged May 23 with a total of 26 felony counts of intentionally setting fire to woodlands with inten-

tions to do damage and 26 felony counts of malicious use of incendiary devices to set eight of the fires. (See *FIRES*, page 6A)



Patricia McDougald, Child Nutrition manager at McLauchlin Elementary School, prepares for another day of young visitors. Tuesday her staff served more than 100 students even though school is out. (Ken MacDonald photo)

Schools feed kids this summer

Breakfast, lunch served to hundreds who might go hungry

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

School is out for the summer, but school-age children up to 18 years of age can still get a nutritious meal every day, free of charge to them, at local sites paid for through the United States Department of Agriculture's summer feeding program.

For the first time, Hawk Eye Elementary, J.W. McLauchlin Elementary and Scurlock Elementary this year joined the USDA program offering a free breakfast and free lunch for children and teens up to 18 years old during the summer months. Hoke County Schools Child Nutrition Director Deborah Carpenter said some of the school system's cafeteria staff will work in the cafeterias over the summer to (See *MEALS*, page 5A)

This Week

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Commissioners support McCain development

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

A letter sent to a Southern Pines company in April shows the Hoke County Board of Commissioners supports the idea of using the McCain hospital property, currently standing empty, as a healthcare facility that could bring tax revenue to Hoke. The county commissioners discussed the matter during a closed economic development session and

directed County Attorney William Fields to draft a letter of support. Although the discussion took place in closed session for attorney-client privilege, the board voted in open session to direct Fields to send the letter and the letter itself is considered public record under state law. The letter addressed to Robert R. Stafford, president of Stafford Land Company, Inc. of Southern Pines, thanked Stafford and Sheila Murphy for making a presentation to the commissioners at the April 16

meeting concerning "the possible utilization of McCain Correctional Hospital as a multifaceted healthcare facility." "Hoke County is in dire need of more healthcare options, especially for the elderly. The Hoke County Commissioners also agree with your opinion that if something productive is not done with this property soon, it will quickly fall into a state of disrepair and become a detriment to both Hoke County and the State of North Carolina,"

the letter said. The commission supports the company's efforts "toward utilizing this facility in a productive manner that would bring much needed jobs to our area as well as placing this property on the county tax rolls," the letter said. The letter was signed by Fields and asked Stafford to keep County Manager Tim Johnson and Hoke Economic Development Director Don Porter up to date with his (See *MCCAIN*, page 6A)

Wagon train rolls from camp into town this week

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer



The wagon train comes through town in 2010.

Road will start filling in with wagons, buggies and horses Wednesday as some early birds take an early summer vacation to enjoy the peace and quiet of the outdoors. "A lot of people come in to set up and enjoy the peaceful countryside," wagon train leader Frankie Wilson said. Friday morning around 10 a.m., the group will swing up in their saddles for the ride to Raeford. The group of about 15 to 20 wagons, buggies and carts and about 75-100 horseback riders will hit Main Street sometime around 11 a.m. for the parade, Wilson said. After getting back to camp, the riders will have music and cooking out over grills. (See *WAGON TRAIN*, page 6A)

School's out, the days are long and warm. Father's Day is this Sunday and another herald of summertime is about to trot into town. The Hoke County Wagon Train will make its annual trip through downtown Raeford this Friday, with a weekend of games, music and sleeping under the stars planned for Friday and Saturday night. This year marks the 49th anniversary of the Hoke County Wagon Train, started nearly half a century ago as an educational and fun way to keep old traditions alive. The fields on Margaret Wilson's farm off of Reservation

