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RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

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Community forest now open, sort of

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

What may be the first community forest in the southeastern United States is now open to the public, Hoke County Manager Tim Johnson said.

The Hoke Community Forest, a collaboration between the county Parks and Recreation department and the Conservation Fund, is still closed off with gates but it's now okay to park on the roadside and go walking on the trails, Johnson said. The forest features more than

500 acres of relatively untouched wilderness that will remain undeveloped and open to the public year-round.

Mikki Sager, vice president and resourceful communities program director for the Conservation Fund, said the fund and the county

have been working closely to prepare the area for public use.

"We have been working with the county to complete some trail improvements and signage, hiking trails, environment education, all kinds of things," she said.

Rockfish Creek runs through

part of the forest and the county has worked to clear out brush in several areas to make spaces along the creek suitable for launching canoes and kayaks. The creek is not very wide or deep in some areas of the forest but does have
(See FOREST, page 3A)



DJ Boykins (right) and his friend Shaniqua Blue thought it perfectly sane to spend two nights on a sidewalk to nab a pair of shoes. (Ken MacDonald photo)

Collector shoes bring out happy campers

Would you sleep on a sidewalk for two nights for a pair of sneakers?

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

The wait was until 8 a.m. Saturday, but the line of chairs set up in front of Hibbett Sporting Goods in Raeford had been there since 1

p.m. Thursday.

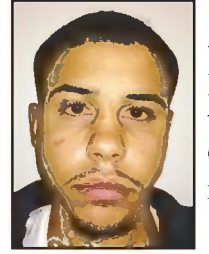
Eighteen people braved the cold overnight Thursday, and sat in place all day Friday and Friday night, to have a chance to buy a limited edition pair of Nike Air Jordan XI Gamma Blue shoes that

had already sold out everywhere else in North Carolina and in most other places across the country. The line of people, mostly college students home on Christmas break, bundled up in blankets to have a chance to buy the special

shoes.

DJ Boykins was first in line, along with friend Shaniqua Blue. Boykins, a student at Fayetteville Community College, and Blue, a student at Bladen Community
(See SNEAKERS, page 4A)

Kidnapping charges filed



Locklear

he allegedly kidnapped and beat his girlfriend.

Officers arrested Bradley Wayne Locklear, 16, of the 600 block of Cope Road in Red Springs on charges of felony second-degree kidnapping, common law robbery, assault by strangulation and misdemeanor assault with a deadly weapon in the presence of a minor, assault inflicting serious injury, child abuse and assault by pointing a gun. He was held without bond due

(See KIDNAPPING, page 3A)

Fake bell ringer charged



King

according to the Raeford Police Department.

Officers arrested Annie Francis King, 51, of the 400 block of Cumberland Avenue in Raeford on a charge of obtaining property by false pretense.

Police said that King was dressed in a Salvation Army apron and was ringing a bell, walking down Main Street in Raeford around 3:45 p.m. last Thursday. She had a box
(See RINGER, page 3A)

Grinch steals decorations

At least one person in Hoke County wasn't feeling the spirit of the season.

Several people in the county have reported having outdoor decorations stolen from their property in the last week. One family reported missing several outdoor extension cords and possibly other items from their large outdoor display on the 2700 block of South Duffie Road. The reporting person asked not to be named, but said the situation was made worse because his wife suffers from multiple sclerosis and the light display was something that brought her joy.

Anyone with information about the theft is asked to contact the Hoke County Sheriff's Office at 875-5111.

Homeless advocate Beatty dies



Martha Beatty

The founder of the Hoke County Coalition Against Homelessness died last week at the age of 58.

Martha Beatty, who worked for many years in service to the community, passed away in her office on Dickson Street Friday afternoon after suffering an apparent seizure.

Beatty founded the Coalition Against Homelessness and dedicated her time to helping those in need. As director of the coalition, she worked to improve the lives of homeless individuals and families in Hoke County. She worked to create the annual homelessness awareness expo,

which held its fifth annual meeting earlier this year.

In her work for the homeless, Beatty often sought to collect toiletries and food to give to people in need. She worked with homeless individuals to help them improve their living situations, and at
(See BEATTY, page 4A)



Christmas cheer

Hoke Sheriff Hubert Peterkin (left), and Raeford Police officers (above) provided some cheer for young citizens last week. Police, who gave toys to some 40 children, got some help from Citizen Police Academy members and Called Into Action.

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