

# The News-Journal

Hoke County's newspaper since 1905

75¢

No. 47 Vol. 108

RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

Wednesday, January 29, 2014

## New tax valuations to reach public soon 10% overall property value increase expected, board told

BY CATHARIN SHEPARD  
Staff writer

The Hoke County property tax revaluation is almost complete, Tax Assessor Jennie Gibson told commissioners last week during a brief regularly scheduled meeting. "Where are we as far as being

totally completed?" Commissioner Tony Hunt asked. "We're 99 percent. I hope to send the data to the printers hopefully by next week and the notices go out the first week in February," Gibson said.

"Overall, we're probably going to net some increases in the

values?" Board Chairman James Leach asked.

"Yes sir, we are," Gibson said.

There are some places in the county that went down in value, some went up, and many also stayed the same.

"I'd say overall about 10 percent (increase), close to 10 (percent) on

the average," Gibson said.

The changes will take effect when the new fiscal year starts and tax bills will go out in July. Gibson and the commissioners also discussed setting up workshops for the tax revaluation.

Tax collections for the month of December was over \$1.3 million,

and the county's collection rate is up by two percent over the same time period last year, according to county tax collector Daphne Dudley. The county also collected over \$800,000 in prior year taxes.

In other business, the board granted a fee refund for the (See BOARD, page 6A)



DOT employees Simon Jacobs, Kory Hannibal and Travis Fikes prepare for the storm Tuesday by gassing up snow plows and loading salt and sand. (Catharin Shepard photos)

### Hoke stares down barrel of snowstorm

BY CATHARIN SHEPARD  
Staff writer

The bread and milk started flying off store shelves Monday as meteorological projections moved Hoke deeper into the snow zone for the first big winter storm the county has seen in several years.

Different forecast models predicted anywhere from three to six inches of snow in the northwest section of Hoke to three to eight inches of snow, or even more, in the eastern (See STORM, page 4A)

### Beloved coach dies unexpectedly

BY CATHARIN SHEPARD  
Staff writer



Kim Ray

A Hoke High teacher and coach from Red Springs died last week two days after suffering an apparent seizure on campus.

Kim Ray, a coach and exceptional children's teacher at the high school, was in an administrative office Thursday when she began suffering a medical episode, Principal Roger Edwards said.

Assistant Principal Stephanie Burney was with Ray at the time and called for help from 911 and the school's on-site emergency first responders. A first-aid-trained coach, an on-campus nurse and sheriff's office student resource officer Corp. Steve Lynn all went to Ray's aid, Edwards said. Hoke emergency communications records showed that dispatchers sent an ambulance to the scene at 11:53 a.m. and EMTs arrived at the high school at 12:14 p.m.

An ambulance took Ray to an intensive care unit at an area hospital where she underwent medical treatment. Edwards received an email about 1:30 a.m. Saturday telling him that Ray passed away in the hospital.

Ray coached a number of sports, including track, volleyball and basketball. She worked primarily with junior varsity teams. She was versatile and well liked among students, Athletic Director Gary Brigman said.

"She was a very talented coach," he said.

Ray coached Brigman's daughter at one point.

"Some of the things I remember about her are she was always a good natured person, (See COACH, page 5A)

### This Week

Hear  
The News-Journal  
read on the radio

Page 4A

- Calendar .....2B
- Classifieds .....4B
- Deaths .....3A
- Editorials .....2A
- Legals .....3B
- Sports .....5A
- Worship .....2B

Subscribe online!  
www.thenews-journal.com

## State orders faster processing of food stamps

BY CATHARIN SHEPARD  
Staff writer

The state Department of Health and Human Services last week issued a deadline for county social services departments to tackle a backlog

of food stamp applications, or risk the entire system losing nearly \$90 million in federal administrative funding.

Across the state, food stamp application processing is currently not meeting United States Department of Agriculture requirements,

DHHS division director Wayne Black said in a letter sent out January 24 to all county social services directors.

"Over the past several months, we have been discussing the critical need to improve the (See FOOD STAMPS, page 6A)

### OTHER STUFF

KEN MACDONALD

I was out for a walk Saturday in gale force winds. I looked like one of those Weather Channel guys reporting from a hurricane, with my jacket sleeves flapping, and at times, my cheeks too, making silly noises like I do with the grandbaby on Skype. Except that I could barely hear the racket because the wind was so loud.

Because of this, and the fact that the wind chill was surely a negative number, I pretty much had the place to myself... until I noticed a woman walking a dog.

When she got near, her dog alerted, she stopped and called through the wind, but I couldn't hear her. So I got closer. The dog strained against his leash.

"Are you dog friendly?" she yelled.

(See OTHER STUFF, page 4A)

### Student arrested for stolen gun

BY CATHARIN SHEPARD  
Staff writer

Deputies with the Hoke County Sheriff's Office arrested a Hoke High student last week after finding a stolen gun in his possession, and additionally charged him with having the weapon on school property, according to reports.

Last Tuesday, officers arrested William Lawrence Bethea Jr., 17, (See GUN, page 6A)

### McKnight named Sandhills director

Twana McKnight has been appointed director of the Sandhills Hoke Center in Raeford. Dr. John Dempsey, president, made the announcement. "The opportunities at Sandhills Hoke Center are growing and we are excited that Twana will be leading that growth," he said.

A native of Brooklyn, New York, McKnight moved to North Carolina in 1997 to accept a position with the managed care organization (See SANDHILLS, page 6A)



McKnight



04879105505