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Seed company eyes ethanol tobacco

Local operation gets \$100k loan from county to expand greenhouses

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

Local business Cross Creek Seed, Inc. could work with the Tyton Biosciences ethanol plant in Dundarrach to produce a special type of tobacco that can be used to make biofuel.

The Hoke County Board of Commissioners granted the seed company

a \$120,000 interest-free loan from the county's Revolving Loan Fund. The board approved the request at its Monday night meeting. The money will be used to expand the current greenhouse transplant production, including work that could be used to provide tobacco transplants for the ethanol plant.

The expansion will include provid-

ing jobs for more than 30 new temporary employees at the company and additional funding besides the county money, according to the Cross Creek Seed proposal.

Cross Creek Seed is a Raeford-based business that primarily sells tobacco seed both domestically and internationally, and over the years

(See TOBACCO, page 4A)



Cross Creek Seed from the air in June. (Ken MacDonald photo)



Cup stacking

Sandy Grove Elementary students participated in what Guinness World Records terms the "World's Largest Sport Stacking Event" during their PE class with Jill Rogitz. Sport stackers from all over the world stacked up and down various pyramids in prescribed patterns as fast as they could for about 30 minutes. This year, the goal is to have 600,000 stackers smash last year's record of 555,932 stackers. Speed Stacks continues to gain popularity around the world. (Contributed photo)

Strother house burns

Internet fail first indication

A fire that started under a deck last week destroyed the home of local land surveyor and former board of education member Leland Strother and his wife Judy Strother.

No one was injured in the fire, which happened the evening of November 15 at the family's home on Strother Road in the Ashley Heights area of Hoke County.

The fire apparently got started from grease that dripped down under the deck and later ignited, Strother said.

"As best we can tell, it was like the drippings from my grill had gotten up under the deck and smoldered for about an hour and ignited some flammable material from there," he said.

The Strothers were at home when the fire started. They first realized something was wrong when their internet connection failed.

Then the television connection went out. Then Strother

(See FIRE, page 3A)

Commission bucks state law to help woman

Wright: 'Sometimes I disagree with the fellows that write those laws up there.'

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

The Hoke County Board of Commissioners voted Monday to allow a property tax valuation exception for a woman whose house burned down, even though the state statute instructed otherwise.

The board voted to require

property owner Carol Jones to pay one-twelfth of the assessed taxes owed on a home that burned down after just a month.

"My house was a total loss. I was actually asking if you guys would consider at a fair and decent approach of a true assessment, out of really true compassion, to consider you take the 12 months and divide

it by one month because my house was there for 30 days, and divide that by one month to consider that for an assessment for 30 days instead of 365 days," Jones said Monday when she addressed the commissioners.

That amounts to about \$500 instead of the over \$6,000 taxes assessed by the county, she said.

County Attorney Grady Hunt said the statute said the appraisal is as of January 1 of each year. Under the law, if a house was appraised January 1, 2007 and the house burned down on January 2, 2008, for example, Hunt reported, the property could not be reappraised until 2009.

(See HOUSE TAXES, page 3A)

This Week

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Officials seek \$1 million to build transportation hub

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

The Hoke Area Transit Service (HATS) is seeking over \$1 million in funding from grant programs to build a public transportation center for the county.

The Hoke County Board

of Commissioners held a public hearing Monday for the HATS application for grant funding from the Community Transportation Program (CTP). The board voted unanimously to approve the application.

The funding for the CTP comes from federal and

state sources and is administered through the North Carolina Department of Transportation. The purpose of the funding is to provide grant money for local agencies providing rural public transportation.

The service is seeking over \$1 million in funding

to build the transportation hub, HATS Director Nancy Thornton said. The total grant amount is \$1,289,300 with a 10 percent local share of \$128,930 that would be provided by the county. The request also included a separate grant proposal seeking \$196,151

for administrative use with a 10 percent local share of \$29,423 to come from the county.

The matching contribution of \$158,353 is available through the county's General Fund, according to the proposal.

(See HUB, page 4A)

OTHER STUFF

By KEN MACDONALD

Here in the flatlands, we don't have mountains for climbing or oceans for drowning—I mean swimming—so we have to create artificial terrors for our children to help them face their fears, and, in the case of boys, show off for the girls.

So it is at the camp where we journey twice each year, there has arisen a mighty monstrous

structure some 50 feet in the air to beckon to kids, "Come on sissy, quit your whining, what are you, a baby? Climb up here. You chicken? Bwak bwak bwak bwak!"

The recreation industry calls them zip lines and they print brochures to make them alluring, but what they don't show you is the initial 50-foot climb—I'm estimating here, and acknowledge that because

(See STUFF, page 4A)

Local Girl Scouts make top 12 of 1,500 troops



Maddy Keehfus (front, left to right), Angelina Musson, Abby Keehfus, Erin Godwin, Lauren Hoskins, Katie Hoskins. Back row—troop co-leader CJ Jusson; troop co-leader Patti Hoskins; Coastal Pines CEO Lisa Jones; troop co-leader Audrey Keehfus; Coastal Pines COO Cindy Kelley-Deaton.

North Carolina Coastal Pines designated Girl Scout Troop #124 of Hoke County as one of 12 "Daisy's Dozen Elite Troops" for its 2013-2014 membership year.

Troop members were presented with their awards at an afternoon ceremony on Sunday, November 2 at Camp Mary Atkinson in Selma. The girls were treated to a luncheon and exclusive access to the camp for a variety of

(See SCOUTS, page 4A)



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