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\$20,000 reward offered in shooting death of teen



Hoke District Attorney Kristy Newton offers chance for community to speak up. With her, Hoke Sheriff Hubert Peterkin. (Catharin Shepard photo)

'This is a 16-year-old child we're talking about'

BY CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

Hoke County Sheriff Hubert Peterkin announced Tuesday a \$20,000 reward offered for information leading to an arrest and conviction in the shooting death of 16-year-old DeAndre "Papa" Ricketts.

Ricketts, a student at Hoke County High School,

was shot and killed October 13, 2013 at a birthday party on Bethel Road. Investigators have been working the case for over a year but have not been able to make any arrests because many of the people who were at the party that night keep changing their stories or won't talk to officers, Peterkin said.

"Some of the challenges we've had doing

interviews, we've had some of the persons we've interviewed to go back and change their stories. Some won't come back and do other interviews, to come back and do further interviews to corroborate some of the information that we may have found. We feel like we really want to reach out to the community so we get some more effort," he said.

The sheriff's office is putting up a \$20,000 reward, taken from drug forfeiture funds, in hopes that the money will encourage people with information about Ricketts' death to come forward.

"We have conducted over 125 interviews in this case. We have followed some really good leads, but for some reason I feel like (See REWARD, page 4A)



The scene where a child suffered third degree burns.

Child burned in grease fire

A young boy was badly burned Monday in a grease fire that started on a stove in a Hoke County home, according to authorities.

Firefighters were called to a mobile home on the 400 block of Heather Lane, just off of Hillcrest Drive. The call came in around 4 p.m., reporting that there was a fire with two people injured.

Resident Sarah Talindo was cooking on the stove when she walked away from a hot pan to tend to her children, according to Maj. Freddy Johnson of the Hoke County Sheriff's Office Emergency Management Division. A neighbor's seven-year-old child, whose name was not released, grabbed the (See FIRE, page 3A)

Fireman arrested for theft from station

Officers with the Hoke County Sheriff's Office arrested a volunteer firefighter last week for allegedly stealing a generator from the Stonewall Fire Department.

Investigators arrested Michael Andrew Miller Jr., 28, of the 700 block of East Donaldson Avenue in Raeford on one count of felony larceny and one count of felony obtaining property by false pretense. He was held under a \$20,000 secured bond.

Authorities were reportedly able to recover the generator and return it, according to the sheriff's office.



Thousands of lights, Santa come to park

The Hoke County Recreation Complex will turn into a light-filled winter wonderland next week as the county's Parks and Recreation Department presents "Christmas in the Park."

The event will feature thousands of Christmas lights, people in costume, a visit from Santa, Christmas carols from local church choirs and more.

Christmas in the Park will have an official grand opening with the county (See PARK, page 6A)

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Friends kick in to help cancer victim with bills

BY CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

Friends of Raeford native Ray Burrow and his family are raising a little Thanksgiving and Christmas cheer to help support him in a battle against cancer.

"This, to me, is what Thanksgiving is," friend and local businessman Andy Bullock said.

Bullock, who owns and operates Low Country Pork Skins and Rinds, is one of several people raising money for Burrow's medical expenses. Burrow graduated from Hoke High in 1993 and is a friend to many people in the community, Bullock said.

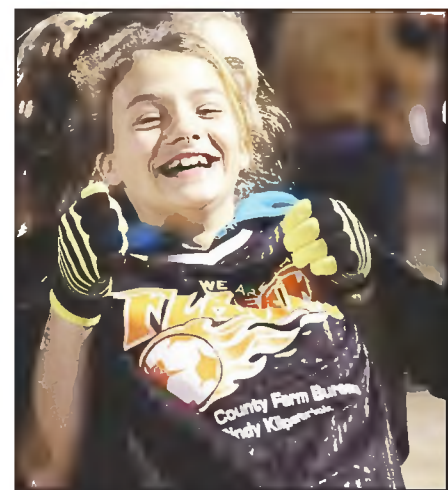
Burrow started experiencing some health problems that sent him to the emergency room on Halloween night, where he was diagnosed with cancer. A biopsy confirmed the malignancy, and Burrow is undergoing an aggressive treatment of radiation and chemotherapy, Bullock said.

Burrow, employed at Unilever, has been unable to work for the last several weeks.

That's why friends and local businesses are supporting fundraising efforts for him.

Plumbing Repair, Inc. and Low Country Pork Skins and Rinds are both holding special sales to benefit Burrow as he battles the disease, and Raeford Hardware will hold a raffle.

All profits Plumbing Repair, Inc. makes on Wednesday, December 10 will go to help Burrow. (See BURROW, page 3A)



Sports scenes
Above, Brooke Callahan is lifted by friend Emily Smith after her team won the Parks & Rec soccer championship for 11- and 12-year-olds. Also above, #40 Autry Grading leaves the ground at Rockfish Speedway. At right, #32 driver Brad Foosse flipped in warm-ups. (Racing photos by Hal Nunn; soccer contributed)

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