

# The News-Journal

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## Ethanol plant shuts down, lays off staff



The Tyton Biofuels ethanol plant in Dundarrach.

By CATHARIN SHEPARD  
Staff writer

The Tyton Biofuels ethanol plant in Dundarrach went idle last week due to financial difficulties caused by fluctuations in the energy market, according to company officials.

Tyton Biofuels, a branch of a larger energy corporation based in Danville, Virginia, bought the plant about 18 months ago and announced intentions to invest millions into the local economy and create

dozens of jobs. The company was working with Cross Creek Seed to develop a special kind of tobacco that could be used as a feedstock to produce biofuels but in the meantime began using corn as a feedstock.

However, as was the case with its predecessor Clean Burn Fuels, high corn prices and other factors apparently forced the company to cease production.

"Unfortunately, anticipated shifts in the global commodity markets have dealt us a severe blow with respect to the economics

of operating our plant profitably," according to general manager Richard Brehm in a letter given to laid-off employees. "The high cost to buy and transport corn and the low prices for ethanol are key elements in this commodity shift. Because of this, we lose more money operating the plant than we do in placing it in an idle state. In neither circumstance do we make a profit."

The plant was shut down for over four years after Clean Burn Fuels went bankrupt, and the new owners invested  
(See ETHANOL, page 4)

## Raeford 'billionaire' pleads to counterfeiting

By CATHARIN SHEPARD  
Staff writer

A man from Raeford who called himself "Billionaire" online pleaded guilty in federal court last week to charges that he was part of an international counterfeiting operation.

Robert T. Dent, 30, of Raeford pleaded guilty to charges of transferring counterfeit currency and conspiracy. The case, USA v. Dent, is being handled in United States District Court in the Western District of Pennsylvania.

The United States Attorney charged that, from December 2013 until November 2014, Dent participated in an operation that made counterfeit \$20, \$50 and \$100 bills in Uganda and then advertised them for sale on Dark Web marketplaces. Another American living in Uganda allegedly created the fake bills and then worked with Dent and others in the United States to ship the bills into the country. The counterfeiting ring shipped over \$1.4 million in fake U.S. currency, according to prosecutors.

Dent allegedly worked as a re-shipper, receiving bills from Uganda and then treating them to make them look more authentic before sending them off to other members of the  
(See BULLIONAIRE, page 4)

## Couple wins \$890,000

Although no one in Hoke County hit the \$1.4 billion Powerball jackpot last week, one couple cashed in big time on a different game of chance.

John Dooley and his wife Tanja Phillips, both of Raeford, won \$890,583 in the Cash 5 jackpot last week.

The couple bought the winning ticket for the January 12 drawing at the Alco station on Rockfish Road in Hoke County. After required state and federal tax withholdings, they took home \$616,729. The couple claimed their prize within 12 hours of the drawing.

Their win marks the third time in three months that tickets bought in Hoke County stores have won big. A newlywed couple won \$750,000 in the Jumbo Bucks game in November, and a construction supervisor from Laurel, Mississippi won a \$150,000 prize in a scratch-off game in  
(See WINNERS, page 6)

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American Foreign Legion Post 20 member Freddie McPhaul shows some of the toy cars being donated. (Ken MacDonald photo)

## Man donates 5,000 toy cars for kids

By CATHARIN SHEPARD  
Staff writer

A local man recently donated his collection of more than 5,000 toy cars – some of them very valuable – to the American Foreign Legion to help local children.

U.S. Army soldier Edward J.

Sullivan and his father, John Norman, started collecting miniature cars about 20 years ago. It quickly became a family affair with the two spending weekends searching through stores and flea markets, and Sullivan's mother, Caroline, driving long distances to find a particular car for the collection.

Then Sullivan grew up and joined the military, and recently decided he wanted the cars that he and his father enjoyed collecting to bring joy to others.

"Now they're going back to the community to help," Norman said. Sullivan donated about 5,000  
(See TOY CARS, page 10)

## Sheriff's office faces wrongful death lawsuit

By CATHARIN SHEPARD  
Staff writer

The family of a man shot and killed by a Hoke County Sheriff's Office deputy in 2014 has filed a wrongful death lawsuit against the office and Sheriff Hubert Peterkin, according to court documents.

The suit, filed in Hoke County court last week, alleges that the fatal shooting of 33-year-old Sandy McCall by Sgt. Samuel Morant of the sheriff's office was wrong.

McCall was shot around 1 a.m. May 31, 2014, while walking in the Scurlock community in the area of Rockfish Road and Highway 401 Business. Morant was reportedly investigating a call about a suspicious person in the area. In an unknown series of events described as an "altercation," Morant fatally shot McCall.

The North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation has been looking into the shooting since it happened, but has not released any findings in the case or information about why

Morant used deadly force. McCall was a black man, and both Morant and Peterkin, who is named in the lawsuit, are black men.

Attorney Allen Rogers of Fayetteville is representing McCall's father, Marvin McCall, in the case. Rogers and the McCall family were part of a rally last July held in downtown Raeford that expressed concern over the shooting.

"The (district attorney) has access to the investigation, the police have access to the investigation, but the

family does not, and there's something wrong with that picture," Rogers said.

The family still doesn't know why Morant made the decision to shoot McCall, Rogers said. McCall was shot in the groin and bled to death while handcuffed, his father said.

Peterkin declined to comment on the lawsuit because it is still pending in court. "Because this is pending litigation, no matter how groundless it is, we do not comment on such pending litigation," he said.



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