

# The News-Journal

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RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

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## Facilities a priority for schools in 2017

BY CATHARIN SHEPARD  
Staff writer

Last year saw some "tremendous successes" for local students and teachers, while facility needs will continue to be the biggest issue for the school system in

the coming year, Hoke County Schools officials reported.

"2016 was a great year for Hoke County Schools. We experienced some tremendous successes that validated the outstanding work our teachers and students are doing in our classrooms," Hoke

County Schools Superintendent Dr. Freddie Williamson said. "As we move forward, a primary area of focus remains on the growth of Hoke County and our resultant facility needs."

There were several major developments in 2016 in the options

Hoke County students have in the classroom. Beginning in August, all students from kindergarten to high school received either an iPad or a laptop free of charge to their family as part of a program called "Hoke County Schools Amplify."

The devices are leased to the students throughout the school year and teachers have worked to incorporate the devices into their lessons. Initially, only high school students were allowed to sign out the devices and take them home, (See *SCHOOLS*, page 4)



### Failed to slow

One person was taken to the hospital Monday afternoon in one of the first wrecks of 2017 on Highway 401 in Hoke County. A pickup truck driven by Karla Edwards of Hope Mills slowed near the intersection of 401 and Johnson Mill Road for an ambulance with lights and siren on, and driver Elizabeth Lewis of Spring Lake failed to stop in time and ran into the back of Edwards' truck, according to a report from the North Carolina Highway Patrol. Lewis was charged with failure to reduce speed. (Ken MacDonald photo)

## Smoke shop raid ends in arrest



The Blazing Vape store on south Main.

Investigators with the Hoke County Sheriff's Office seized video poker machines and drug paraphernalia at a local smoke shop last week, arrested one man and are seeking another on various related charges.

The Hoke County Sheriff's Office Special Operations Unit executed a search warrant December 29 at the Blazing Vape & Smoke Shop located at 228 South Main Street in Raeford.

"An investigation was opened after complaints were received about drug paraphernalia and video poker machines being operated at the location," according to a press release from the sheriff's office.

(See *SMOKE SHOP*, page 8)

## Man awaiting trial in fatal wreck dies

A man charged with allegedly causing a wreck that killed three people in Hoke County two years ago has died while waiting for the case to go to court.

Matthew Allen English, 33, died December 23 at his home on Sugar Pine Lane in Pinehurst.

English was accused



The accident in 2015.

of causing an accident on August 17, 2015 that killed former Robeson County Commissioner Tommy Wellington, 84; his wife, Joyce Wellington, 69; and his son, Jamie Wellington, 55. Joyce Wellington's sister, 55-year-old Gail Prescott, was in the car with the family and survived the

crash after receiving emergency care at FirstHealth Moore Regional Hospital.

English was not seriously injured in the wreck, which happened about five miles outside of Raeford near the intersection of Highway 211 and Poole Road. English reportedly drove (See *ENGLISH*, page 4)

## Spilled hot tea sends child to burn unit

A one-year-old child suffered serious burns last week in an accident involving spilled hot tea, according to Hoke County authorities.

A child named Jayden was accidentally burned by the hot liquid December 27 at a home on Stubby Oaks Road, and suffered serious injuries to his face and upper body, officials reported. The boy was taken to Moore Regional Hospital and then transported to UNC Chapel Hill Hospitals where he underwent skin graft surgery.

A fundraiser page set up for the family on GoFundMe reported that the child was suffering from difficulty breathing due to a swollen throat and that doctors were keeping him on oxygen.

Jayden's mother, Diana Reynoso, (See *BURN*, page 4)

## Man killed in wreck on Christmas Eve

A man from Red Springs died last month in a one-vehicle car accident in Hoke County, according to the North Carolina Highway Patrol.

Authorities said that Zinford Chavis Jr., 31, of the 3700 block of Old Maxton Road in Red Springs was killed Christmas Eve when his car ran off the road.

Chavis was driving west on Blue Springs Road about four miles south of (See *FATALITY*, page 8)



From the organization's Facebook page.

## Helicopter pilot vets to take part in parade at inauguration

Several local veterans will take part in the 58th Presidential Inaugural Parade on January 20 as part of the North Carolina Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association.

The association plans to trailer six Vietnam-era helicopters to Washington, D.C. for the inauguration, according to John Leandro, a member of the NCVHPA. A group of 40 pilots who served in Vietnam will be seated within the helicopters.

The NCVHPA has worked for over 25 (See *HELICOPTERS*, page 8)



### New Year resolution

Don Earl Bullard says he plans to catch plenty more fish like these in 2017 to give to elderly people. He caught these in 45 minutes using bass minnows last week at his pond off N.C. 211 (Ken MacDonald photo)

### This Week

Commission meeting rescheduled  
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