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App will let parents, kids track buses

No longer a need to wait in the rain or cold because the school bus is late

Hoke County families will soon be able to use a mobile app and website to track their student's school bus in real time to make morning and afternoon commutes safer and easier, and to sign up to receive text messages about school closures.

"Here Comes the Bus" is an easy-to-use website and app that lets parents see the location of their child's school bus on a smartphone, tablet or computer.

"This way, parents will know when the bus is near, so they can send their child out at just the right

time," school system public relations director Jodie Bryant said in a statement.

The app uses global positioning system (GPS) technology to locate and track the school buses. It is powered by software from Synovia Solutions, which Hoke County

Schools has been utilizing for the past two years.

"Our top priority is ensuring that our students are transported to and from school safely," school transportation director Tom Paris said. "We are constantly looking for innovative tools to improve

how we serve students and communicate with parents. We are very excited to offer parents the ability to check on the location of their child's bus in real time."

The Here Comes the Bus app will allow parents to customize a (See *BUS APP*, page 9)

Watch this video, run a shelter—'that happened'

County assesses hurricane response

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

Strained Red Cross resources in the aftermath of Hurricane Matthew led to confusion over the temporary shelter at West Hoke Middle School, and county agencies are working to make sure it doesn't happen again.

When Hurricane Matthew hit last fall, the severity

of the storm and the extent of the damage from flooding caught many off-guard, Hoke County Sheriff's Office Emergency Management Director Freddy Johnson said.

"This system completely overwhelmed North Carolina, including us," he said. "...Our state was emphasizing the coastal counties, but (See *HURRICANE*, page 10)

Democratic Party member didn't break law, state says

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

The North Carolina State Board of Elections released more details last week on the now-concluded investigation into an alleged case of voter fraud in Hoke County that ended without any criminal charges filed.

Similar complaints filed last fall by Hoke County residents Hal Nunn and

Cliff Overby stated that a representative with the local Democratic Party visited nursing homes and improperly signed up elderly residents to receive absentee ballots for the November 2016 election. The State Board of Elections investigated the situation and last week announced that it had closed the investigation and will not seek charges in (See *ELECTION*, page 9)



Charleen Wilson accesses the Hoke Library in person, but soon she'll be able to read books online. (Ken MacDonald photo)

Kids can access online library for free

Children in Hoke County and across the state will now have free access to over 3,700 eBooks, audiobooks, videos and Read-Alongs through a new eBook consortium.

The North Carolina Public Library Directors Association (NC-PLDA), together with OverDrive and the state of North Carolina, has created a new digital resource sharing service for kids pre-K through

4th grade, the N.C. Kids Digital Library. The items are now available to younger readers on OverDrive's free digital reading platform through 85 regional, county and municipal libraries in North Carolina, including the Hoke County Public Library.

These materials are instantly available for every child, at home and everywhere, with their library card, according to a press release.

The N.C. Kids Digital Library was launched in January 2017. Here's how it works:

- A beginning collection of 3029 eBooks, 689 audiobooks and 37 streaming videos on a custom website, <https://nckids.overdrive.com/> or through the OverDrive app.

- 300 titles are available with simultaneous access, available anytime (See *LIBRARY ONLINE*, page 6)

This Week

Hudson gets Long Leaf Pine Award
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Sheriff's office again offering citizen academy

The Hoke County Sheriff's Office is once again holding a citizen academy for Hoke County residents who want to learn more about how local law enforcement operates.

The academy is accepting applications for participants with the applications available at the sher-

iff's office on East Central Avenue.

The academy will start Thursday, April 6 with sessions held every Thursday night from 6-8 p.m. for nine weeks.

"Applicants of the 'Sheriff's Citizen Academy' will be informed in numerous functions of the Sheriff's Office, by state certified Criminal

Justice instructors and staff," organizers said.

Some of the subjects included in the academy are crime prevention, administrative services, patrol duties, CSI/evidence, juvenile process, subject control/use of force, traffic stops, domestic violence, drugs, gangs, investigations, Taser,

K9, and jail operations.

Applicants must be either a Hoke resident or a Hoke County employee, at least 21 years old and have a clear criminal record. The academy is offered free of charge to qualified applicants.

For more information, call Sgt. Michael Acello at 309-1056.

No charges in bicycle accident

A 34-year-old woman was taken to the hospital after she was hit by a car while riding her bicycle this weekend, according to the North Carolina Highway Patrol.

Jeanette Assan, of the 300 block of Berwick Drive, was riding her bicycle on Lindsay Road Sunday night when a car struck her, knocking her (See *BICYCLIST*, page 9)



Saying goodbye

Hoke High seniors in the school's JROTC program told lower class cadets to stick with the program and learn from it Friday at the annual military ball. Some 150 couples attended the event, held at the L.E. McLaughlin Senior Room. (Ken MacDonald photo)



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