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Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Hoke closes schools for march

Joins other systems across state in allowing teachers to go to Raleigh

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

The Hoke County Board of Education joined nearly 40 school systems across the state last week in declaring an optional teacher workday Wednesday, May 16 to allow teachers the chance to

attend an organized march in Raleigh.

Hoke County Schools Superintendent Dr. Freddie Williamson announced the optional teacher workday in an email to school principals and other officials Friday morning.

"After speaking with school

board members last night, we all agree that it is important for our teachers to know that we support them if they choose to attend the March for Students and Rally for Respect Advocacy Day on Wednesday, May 16 in Raleigh," Williamson said in the email.

"Please share with your teach-

ers that May 16 will become an optional teacher workday. This will allow any teacher choosing to attend to be able to do so without having a \$50 deduction for a sub. Also, this will allow any teacher assistant who desires to attend the rally the opportunity to do so using an annual leave day."

Hoke students will not have to make up the day, the superintendent said. There are still 1.5 days of built-in extra instructional time to use before the end of the school year in June as needed. Hoke County Schools Director of Public Relations Jodie Bryant sent (See *SCHOOLS CLOSE*, page 10)



SandHoke Graduation

SandHoke Early College High School graduated a class of 71 students Friday in a 6 p.m. ceremony. The commencement exercises were held at Sandy Grove Middle School. (Jodie Bryant photos)

4 companies pitch for parks & rec., agriculture buildings

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

Four companies made their bids Monday to the Hoke County Board of Commissioners with each seeking to be selected as the designer and builder of a new county parks and recreation center and agriculture center.

The board members met to hear presentations from Metcon of Pembroke, Construction Systems Inc. of Fayetteville, Bobbitt Design and Build of Raleigh and Clancy and Theys Construction Company of Raleigh. Each of the four companies responded to a request for qualifications, or RFQ, earlier this year showing interest in working

with the county to bring the projects to life.

The projects are "design build," meaning that the same company would handle everything from creating the architectural plans to putting the finishing touches on the construction to get the facilities ready for the public to use.

Commissioners questioned the compa-

nies about their past experience in getting projects approved by the Local Government Commission and their ability to recruit local subcontractors to do the construction work. Some board members also asked about the companies' familiarity with "creative financing" that could include a mix of funding sources.

Each company affirmed they can do all three, and additionally discussed what tools the developer would use to communicate with county officials during the design and build process to keep the project on budget and schedule.

Each of the four companies shared an overview of some of their previous projects and gave the board members a chance to see what sort of approach each company might take in the development and construction process.

Metcon has a long history working with Hoke County local government and the school system. The company built Sandy (See *BUILDINGS*, page 10)



Clancy & Theys showed Commissioners samples of their work similar to buildings proposed by the county. At left, Marsh Creek Community Center in Raleigh. At right, the Triangle Aquatic Center in Cary.

Mental health crisis training planned for law enforcement

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

Local law enforcement agencies and other community partners are preparing for a weeklong training session that will help officers learn how to help citizens with mental health issues who are suffering a

crisis.

Representatives from the Hoke County Sheriff's Office and Raeford Police Department are joining Sandhills Community College, Cape Fear Valley and FirstHealth hospitals, Hoke County EMS, local fire departments and others in creating the Hoke

County Crisis Intervention Team Partnership. The partnership is focused on preparing law enforcement officers for their interactions with people with mental illnesses or other mental or behavioral differences.

This isn't the first time that Hoke law enforcement has partici-

pated in similar training, according to Lt. R. Downing Jr. of the Hoke County Sheriff's Office. Downing is working with Sheriff Hubert Peterkin on coordinating the training, and has been through the training himself. The program first started in Moore County in 2007, the deputy said.

"It was originally designed to teach law enforcement how to deal with people with various mental health issues suffering a crisis," Downing said. "It's learning how to talk to people that have these issues and trying to get them the help that they need instead of" (See *MENTAL HEALTH*, page 8)

OTHER STUFF

By KEN MACDONALD

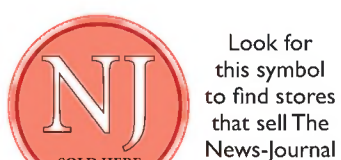
Our speaker was making the point that nobody these days carries enough pocket change to purchase a newspaper from a coin-operated box. "At every newspaper conference I go to—like this one—I ask this question, and I'm asking it of you, do you have enough money to buy a newspaper from a box?" One smart-aleck said, "Do you mean change in our pockets, or total net worth?" The joking at the Eastern North Carolina Press Association is a way of coping with the challenges newspapers face today.

The latest: a tariff on newsprint by the Trump (See *OTHER STUFF*, page 8)



Top teacher, principal

Amelia Simpson, above left, is Hoke County's Teacher of the Year. She teaches at SandHoke Early College High School, and is shown with Principal Colleen Pegram. The district's Principal of the Year is Hoke High Principal Roger Edwards. (Jodie Bryant photos)



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