

State alleges abuse in Hoke psych facility



Canyon Hills, on the Aberdeen Highway.

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

State officials could revoke a local mental health center's license after investigators turned up multiple allegations of abuse and neglect toward child patients, according to documents from the North Carolina Division of Health Service Regulation.

The state office compiled nearly 70

pages detailing complaints alleging that some staff members of the Canyon Hills facility failed to adequately provide food for residents and allowed bullying and sexual misconduct to take place between child clients. Nurses and former Canyon Hills employees interviewed by state investigators reported that staff members cursed at and abused children, and in one case said that an employee was allowed to

work with child clients after smoking marijuana in the parking lot.

Canyon Hills treatment facility, located at 769 Aberdeen Road in Raeford, is licensed as a psychiatric residential treatment center for children and adolescents. The facility has two separate residential units. Each unit has a capacity for 12 clients, with one serving ages 6-12 and one serving ages 13-18. (See CANYON HILLS, page 8)



Thanksgiving love

Paislee Ruder, 4, was at the Hoke County Animal Shelter to help serve a full Thanksgiving meal to the dogs there, but may end up fostering this puppy "Elvis," and she seems happy about it. She, her mom, and sister joined dozens of citizens in preparing and serving the annual feast Tuesday. (Ken MacDonald photo)



Kids downtown Raeford at last year's Hometown Christmas celebration. (File photo)

Hometown Christmas returns Nov. 29

A new tradition for Hoke County will roll out the red carpet for Santa Claus and thousands of visitors to downtown Raeford next week.

The fourth annual Hometown Christmas is set for Thursday, November 29 from 5:30 – 8 p.m. on Main Street in Raeford.

The event, held for the first time in 2015, is sponsored by the Raeford-Hoke Chamber of Commerce. (See HOMETOWN CHRISTMAS, page 5)

Doesn't take a hurricane to flood this subdivision



The main road into Northwoods Estates. (contributed photo)

Northwoods Estate residents get trapped in heavy rains

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

When Heather Woodside and her family moved into the Northwoods Estates community off of U.S. 401 seven years ago, it didn't take long to notice a problem.

Whenever there was a heavy rain, the water would run into the subdivision's streets instead of draining from their properties. At first it was annoying, but in recent years the issue's gotten so bad that it's trapping people in their own neighborhood every time

there's any significant rainfall, Woodside said.

"This has been ongoing for a few years now but it's starting to get a lot worse. The water's not draining as fast as it used to," she said. "There's people in here that are essential personnel and they don't have that option to not show up to work—they have to get to work."

In the streets of the subdivision—directly across from East Hoke Middle School—water gets so deep in some places that people are tearing the bumpers off of their cars when they risk driving through it. One neighbor

of hers tore up the underside of his car one day while trying to get to work, Woodside said. The resident began documenting the problem with video and photos taken on her phone, and recently shared them in a Facebook post that drew attention from across the county.

Some people who live in Northwoods have even taken to parking their cars near the entrance to the subdivision and walking to them, although the large subdivision's main road stretches for nearly a mile. (See FLOODING, page 8)

Canvass confirms election totals

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

The election canvass last week went smoothly and didn't change the outcome of any races, Hoke County Elections Director Towanna Jackson said.

Elections officials conducted the canvass Friday, 10 days after the November 6 General Election.

"Everything went okay. We don't have any recounts," Jackson said. In North Carolina if two candidates are within one percent of each other, the candidate may request a recount.

There have not been any challenges filed or sought regarding the election results.

There was one issue, Jackson said: it

appeared that there were a few missing authorization-to-vote forms, called ATVs. ATVs are the forms printed off by a poll worker that a voter signs before receiving a ballot.

It was likely a result of poll workers making an error, and the next round of poll worker training will include more emphasis on making sure the process is fulfilled, Jackson said. The ballots were still counted as usual, she said.

Hoke County voters turned out in large numbers and a majority voted to send incumbents back into office. About 40 percent of all registered voters in Hoke County cast a ballot in the General Election. Most elected officials will be sworn in at the

(See CANVASS, page 10)

Raeford recycling pickup slowed by mechanical probs

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

The city of Raeford ran into difficulties last week when one of its recycling pickup trucks broke down while the other was in the shop.

The city sent out a notice on the text alert system Friday warning city residents of the problem.

"Due to mechanical failures,

the sanitation recycling route will not be completed today. We hope to be back on regular schedule by Monday November 19. Your patience is greatly appreciated at this time," the message said.

Employees had gotten through the majority of households Friday by the time the truck broke down, and the city's other truck was already in the

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