

## Hoke gets audit done on time

Fewer findings cited in report, fund balance now total \$23 million or 55 percent

By CATHARIN SHEPARD  
Staff writer

Hoke County got its audit done on time and reduced the number of findings from 14 to four this year, and also increased its General Fund balance to about \$23 million, according to an auditing firm.

The \$23 million in savings is roughly 55 percent of the county's annual budget as calculated by the Local Government Commission of the North Carolina Treasurer's Office. The LGC generally requires local governments to keep at least eight percent of its annual budget in reserve as emergency funds. In the past Hoke's reserve

fund fell to about seven percent, but over the last three years the county has grown the fund by millions of dollars.

Commission Chairman James Leach described the fund balance as "historic" for Hoke County.

"Hoke County's never had a fund balance like that in all the days of my life but other folks'

life, too," he said. "We have never had a fund balance at that rate. I recall some years back it was seven percent and they almost ran us out of the county, then it went to eight. (Commissioner) Bobby (Wright), you recall those days. It's historic for Hoke County."

Representatives from the auditing firm Martin, Starnes and As-

sociates of Raleigh presented the 2018 audit report to the commissioners Monday night at the first meeting of the new year.

The county's single largest revenue is ad valorem taxes, which makes up about 56 percent of the income. Local option sales tax accounts for 21 percent of

(See *AUDIT*, page 4)



### Gentle flyers

Tony Higbee (top) from Sanford admits he and his buddy Todd Scott (above) from Raeford look like a couple of guys with lawn chairs strapped to their opposite ends as they fly above Raeford strapped into their paramotors. They were enjoying their first flight of the year last Wednesday, leaving a trail of gawking kids (and adults) from near Hoke High School to their landing point at Riverbrooke Subdivision. (Ken MacDonald photos)

## Survey asks what you want in parks and rec.

By CATHARIN SHEPARD  
Staff writer

A new survey gives Hoke County residents a chance to tell county leaders what Parks and Recreation offerings they want to see, and whether they would support a tax increase to pay for recreation development.

If enough people fill out the online survey, it could also help the county secure

grant funding to provide more offerings through the department, Hoke County Manager Letitia Edens said.

"It's important that the community does this survey. We need to have about three percent of the population do this survey, because when we do our grants, they need to have that much data when we get it back

(See *SURVEY*, page 8)

## 'They are part of us and so we have a responsibility'

Commissioners hear petition from Northwoods residents

By CATHARIN SHEPARD  
Staff writer

A petition circulated among residents of the Northwoods subdivision in East Hoke collected more than 70 signatures asking the Hoke County Board of Commissioners to help the neighborhood with its ongoing flooding problem.

Whenever there's a hard rain, water backs up into the neighborhood's streets. Some-

times it's so deep that cars can't drive through it. Even larger vehicles have difficulty, and residents with trucks report they're starting to see damage from it.

Concerned citizens presented the petition to the commissioners Monday night during the public input session, seeking support out of concerns that the flooding could present a safety

(See *NORTHWOODS*, page 8)

## OTHER STUFF

By KEN MACDONALD

I was sitting in the doctor's office waiting. Absorbed in a book, I detected in my peripheral vision, the occasional glances of an older gentleman beside me. Let's say, much older. We had been there quite some time, and he kept shifting around somewhat impatiently. Finally, he said to me loudly, almost like an accusation, "Are you reading a book?" The other 25 people in the room looked up from their diversions because of the sudden disruption.

"Yes," I answered. I showed him my phone, which

(See *OTHER STUFF*, page 8)

## 'You have to talk to them in German'

By CATHARIN SHEPARD  
Staff writer

Cash and Rocky might look a little grey around the muzzle, but for nine-year-old police dogs, that's to be expected.

The two Malinois K-9 officers received acclaim for their long law enforcement careers Monday night at the Hoke County Board of Commissioners meeting. The board voted to allow the dogs' handlers, Sgt.

(See *DOGS*, page 8)



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