

It was all about time cards Unsealed search warrants show limit of SBI probe

BY CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

Investigation probe that began in 2017 into suspected time card fraud in Hoke County. Last week, Superior Court Judge Mary Ann Tally signed a motion to unseal the search warrants and allowed The News-Journal access to the records.

When it first began, the now-concluded SBI probe focused only on suspected time card fraud allegedly committed by two county employees, according to search warrant documents.

SBI Special Agent Adrian Z. Williams wasn't sure at the time whether other county employees might have been involved, the documents show,



Commissioners plan a response to the SBI investigation in February, 2017. (File photo)

but the original search warrant application did not name any other individuals or suggest any other type of suspected

criminal activity.

The SBI raided Hoke County government offices (See **WARRANTS**, page 4)



The SBI returned in August, 2017—to the L.E. McLaughlin Building. (File photo)

No tax hike for Hoke taxpayers in draft budget

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for local schools and services.

County Manager Letitia Edens provided the proposed budget to commissioners, and this week commissioners are meeting in workshops to hear specific requests from department heads. The board will hold a public hear-

ing at 7 p.m. Monday, June 17 in the commissioners' meeting room at the Pratt Building to take public comments on the proposed budget. By state law the county must pass a balanced budget before the start of the new fiscal year July 1. The proposed budget of

\$54,128,198 is an increase of about \$3.7 million, up from last year's \$50.4 million budget. There is no change to the county property tax rate of 75 cents per \$100 valuation. There are also no changes to the water, sewer, or solid waste fees.

The county's enterprise fund budgets include \$7,895,475 for public utilities and \$2,899,503, for solid waste.

The budget includes special appropriations of \$500,000 to administrative project funds for (See **BUDGET**, page 5)



Quick reflexes

Hoke County 14U baseball player, Little, #12, shows off his quick reflexes as he ducks to miss getting hit by the wild pitch. Little would end up scoring a run after stealing third base. (Photo by Ed Clemente)

Motorcycle wreck kills teen, hurts sister



Purcell

A 17-year-old from Hoke County was killed and his sister was seriously injured in a motorcycle accident last week on U.S. 401.

Dennis DeQuan Purcell, 17, of Raeford died following the crash last Tuesday near the Shell station at the corner of U.S. 401 and Scull Road. Vernita Purcell, Purcell's older sister, was seriously injured in the accident. As of Monday she was reportedly in good condition at UNC Chapel Hill Hospital.

The accident happened around 8:23 p.m. June 4. (See **ACCIDENT**, page 5)

Teacher accused of letting students fight

A Hoke County teacher resigned from his job and is facing criminal charges after letting two students fight in his classroom, according to authorities.

Deputies arrested De'Shawn Thomas Macon, 35, of the 100 block of Peatmoss Drive in Fayetteville on misdemeanor charges including two counts of child abuse, two counts of contributing to the delinquency of a minor and one count of disorderly conduct.

Macon, a sixth grade English language arts teacher (See **TEACHER**, page 4)



Macon

Man convicted of shooting

A Hoke County jury last week convicted Allen Maurice Morrison, 33, of the 300 block of Hillcrest Drive of multiple charges from 2017.

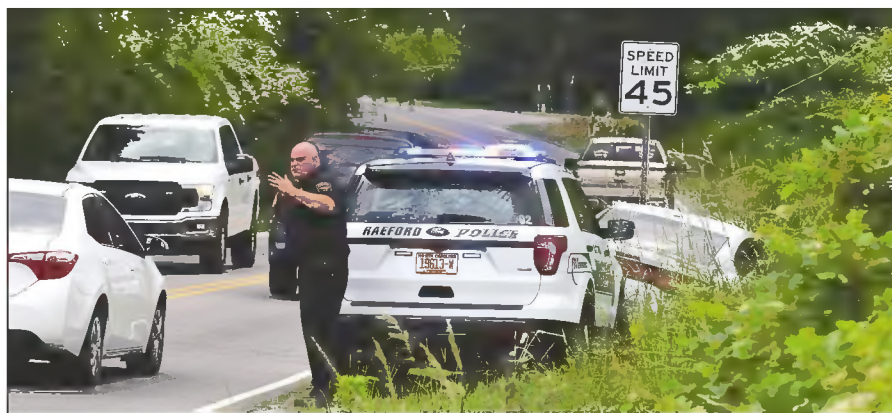
The jury found Morrison guilty of seven counts of discharging a weapon into an occupied vehicle while in operation, three counts of assault with a deadly weapon and one count of possession of a firearm by a felon.

Morrison was accused of firing shots into a vehicle (See **CONVICTED**, page 8)

OTHER STUFF

BY KEN MACDONALD

Not long ago my son and I were moving a very heavy table from a thrift shop while trying to dodge other furniture and tables of knick-knacks along the path to the door. "Desk!" he exclaimed to warn me as I backed toward the door. "Wingback chair!" We were already trying not to laugh — for some odd reason a natural tendency when you're carrying 300 pounds. "Cornucopia!" he exclaimed, almost causing (See **OTHER STUFF**, page 5)



Chase and wreck

A 15-year-old boy is accused of leading Raeford police on a brief car chase in a stolen vehicle. The incident around 9 a.m. Monday ended in a wreck on U.S. 401 Business. Charges include theft from a motor vehicle, larceny of a motor vehicle and speeding to elude authorities. (Ken MacDonald photo)



STORMS



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