



Rabid fox attacks dog in Rockfish

Second rabid animal this year, residents warned to avoid wild animals

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

A fox that attacked a dog on Rockfish Road last week has tested positive for rabies, according to Hoke County Animal Control. "A fox found on the 1700

block of Rockfish Road was tested by the state laboratory and it was confirmed to have rabies. The fox had attacked a resident's pet," Animal Control Director Scottie Luckie said in a public notice last Thursday. The resident's pet dog

was up-to-date on rabies vaccinations and got a booster shot as a precaution, Luckie said. No humans were exposed to the virus during the encounter. This is the second confirmed rabies case in Hoke County in the last

three months. In March, a 13-year-old child in South Hoke suffered a bite from a stray cat. Authorities later found the cat dead, and it tested positive for rabies. The bitten child took rabies shots and is doing okay, Luckie said. That incident

happened on the 1900 block of Archie McGougan Road near Ashford Road. Officials urged citizens to get their pets vaccinated and to be cautious around wildlife. Any bites or other injuries from wildlife or stray animals should be

reported to Animal Control. "If you have recently been bitten or scratched by any stray or known domestic animal, or wildlife such as bats, raccoons, foxes, you are encouraged to seek medical attention," Luckie (See RABIES, page 6)

Hoke High valedictorian: 'Slow down and enjoy'

By DIANE ADAME
Intern

More than 450 seniors crossed the stage at Raz Autry Stadium Friday night to claim their diplomas as Hoke County High School held its graduation ceremony.

The exercises included 458 graduates and three speakers: Adell Baldwin, principal, Rhonie Mackenzie Cooper, salutatorian and William Ray Tilley, valedictorian.

Baldwin said speaking at the ceremony was one of his biggest and personal moments. He began the speech by reflecting on the first time he met the class of 2019 in the school's gym.

"I said you guys, you have 180 days of instruction to prepare you for life," said Baldwin. "Those 180 days blew by."

The crowd roared with yeses when he asked the graduating seniors if they

were prepared. Baldwin said he knew they were prepared because on the last day of exams, about 25 students walked up to him and said, "Dr. Baldwin, you can have this ID card."

He asked the graduates, "What will your next ID card look like?" and left them with the challenge of writing their next identities.

"When you leave here today, you're starting your journey to write your own identity," said Baldwin. "So I challenge you. Don't be afraid to be a risk taker. Don't be afraid to be the change that you expect to happen in society. Don't be afraid to be who you are."

The class of 2019 also earned a combined \$27 million in scholarships, including those by the class salutatorian, Rhonie Mackenzie Cooper who earned scholarships to four universities.

"It is a great privilege and an honor (See GRADUATION, page 6)



Valedictorian William Ray Tilley speaks to graduates. He said while he was trying to win, "you all were experiencing all the enjoyment that high school has to offer." (Diane Adame photo)

Citing emergency, county pumps flooding Northwoods

'It's a DOT issue, we know that, they know that, but we've got children that have got to go to school' says Leach

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

Nanette Wright didn't expect to find two feet of water in front of her sister's house last week when she came to meet the newest member of their family.

She also didn't expect to end up wading through the flooded Northwoods Drive to help push stalled cars out of the roadway while her sister watched from the porch, holding her newborn baby.

"Last night the water was so bad, there were about 14 cars that got stuck and flooded. My brother-in-law and I, we pushed one car up out of the water, a vehicle com-

pletely stopped," Wright said. "I watched a mom and kids try and push an SUV. It was a lot. It was real sad."

Making matters worse, the Northwoods residents weren't sure where to turn for help. They were getting mixed messages, Wright said.

"The story keeps going back and forth. It's the DOT, it's the county, it's the developer, but who do you go to?" she said.

The Hoke County Board of Commissioners and Hoke County Emergency Management brought help Tuesday afternoon after Hoke County 911 was inundated with calls from people stuck in

water or unable to get to their homes in the Northwoods subdivision due to the flooded street.

Local officials called in a crew of water pump trucks from Cumberland County to drain the standing water and clean out the storm drains in the Northwoods subdivision. It was a step the county hasn't taken before to address the issue. Previously, the Hoke County Board of Commissioners asked the North Carolina Department of Transportation to clean out the drains in hopes of preventing more flooding.

However, aside from an exploratory look at the drains with a camera, (See FLOOD, page 6)



A crew pumps water from the Northwoods subdivision last week. (Catharin Shepard photo)



Wright with his wife and grandchildren. (Catharin Shepard photo)

New ag building dedicated to Wright

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

When the new Hoke County agriculture building goes up on Palmer Street in Raeford, it will bear the name of one of the county's longest-serving elected officials.

The Hoke County Board of Commissioners recognized Commissioner Robert "Bobby" Wright's many community contributions at the board meeting Monday night by dedicating the "Robert A. Wright

Hoke County Agricultural Building" to him.

Wright, 78, is a lifelong resident of Hoke County. He graduated from Hoke High before going on to study at Campbell College. He has farmed in the county for decades and in 1977 received the Outstanding Young Farmer of the Year Award from the Raeford Jaycees.

Wright joined the Hoke County Board of Commissioners in 2000 and has been reelected every four years since then. Prior to becoming

a commissioner, he served for 10 years on the Hoke County Board of Education. As a commissioner Wright also works with many other committees and groups including the county Board of Health.

Commission Chairman James Leach honored Wright with a "living eulogy," the things often said about a person at a funeral – but instead spoken when they're alive to hear it.

"I would say Robert A. Wright, Bobby as we call him, he's a fighter, (See AG BUILDING, page 4)

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