

The News-Journal

75¢

If it happened it's news to us



No. 45 Vol. 114

RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

Wednesday, January 8, 2020

\$2 million transit hub funded Center for Hoke buses gets grant, will be built near animal shelter

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

The Federal Transit Administration has awarded Hoke County over \$2 million in grant funding to build a new transport facility for Hoke Area Transit Service (HATS).

The project has been in the works for a long time. The depart-

ment started seeking the grant funding over five years ago, each time upping the requested amount to account for rising construction costs, HATS Director Nancy Thornton said.

"The feasibility study was done five years ago. We've been working on getting grants for five years. We applied for three grants every year," Thornton said. "We

were awarded that in November."

The full grant amount is \$2,088,000. The grant requires a 20 percent matching contribution from the county. The county's contribution will be in the form of providing the land where the transit center will be located, county officials said. The center is set to go on C.C. Steele Road near Hoke County Animal Control.

The proposed transit hub will serve as a main station for the HATS service, and offer a place where the county can park and maintain its HATS vehicles. The department is currently housed with another county office and has nowhere to grow, officials previously said.

"Do you have an idea when we might receive that so we can start

getting ready to build your building?" Commission Vice Chairman Harry Southerland asked.

Thornton scheduled a conference call Wednesday with the state procurement department to discuss the funding disbursement, she said. There is a new federal liaison involved, so there could be a slight delay in getting the funds (See *TRANSIT*, page 3)



Looked hopeful

Hoke High and Scotland County were tied at the half Friday, but Hoke High ultimately lost to Scotland 66-59. Above, the Bucks' #5 Luis Meletiche maneuvers his way around a Scotland player. Story, page 7. (Photo by Ed Clemente)

Southerland talks about decision for Congress run

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

Hoke County native and incumbent Commissioner Harry Southerland is one of five candidates seeking election to the newly redrawn North Carolina Ninth Congressional District.

Running for a federal office has been a dream of his for decades, the commissioner said. Now six years into serving on the county board, he felt the time was right, and filed to run with a goal of working across political party lines to get things done.

"I think we're at a point now in our country where our country is really divided. It's Republicans, Demo-

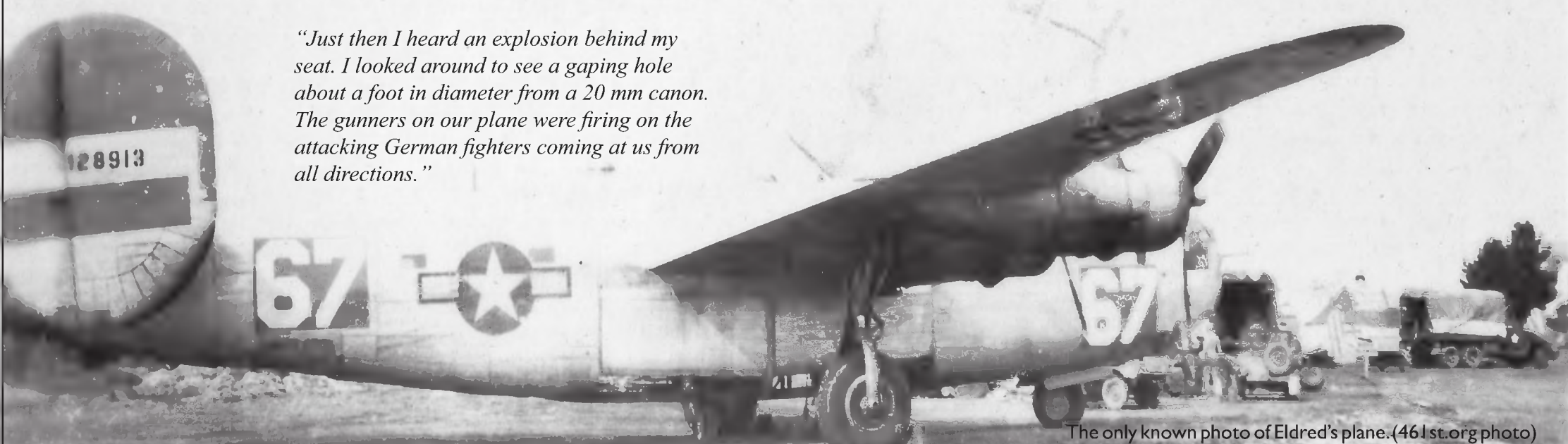


Southerland, at commission meeting. (Ken MacDonald photo)

crats, we can't get anything done...it shouldn't be that way, we have to learn to work together," Southerland said Monday. "We may not agree on the outcome but we're going to meet and be respectful of one another."

As a commissioner he strives to "represent the whole body" of Hoke County, and if elected, would strive to do the same (See *CONGRESS*, page 3)

"Just then I heard an explosion behind my seat. I looked around to see a gaping hole about a foot in diameter from a 20 mm canon. The gunners on our plane were firing on the attacking German fighters coming at us from all directions."



The only known photo of Eldred's plane. (461st.org photo)

Hope for Timberland brothers isn't enough to keep them safe Eldred and Lawrence Helton left Hoke County to become pilots together during WW II

By KEN MACDONALD

Put yourself in her shoes. You'd already lost one daughter, and now your husband has died and left you

in a small West Virginia coal mining town with three children, ages eight, 10 and 11. You move to rural Hoke County, and try to make a go of it, living with family, going back and forth

across the state to a job as a dorm mother at a small college. After eight years, with the children now in their teens, your two boys, roughly 18 and 19, are called up—within a week of

each other—to serve their country in the raging Second World War.

It can't have been easy for Mary Ann Tapp Helton. Reading between (See *BROTHERS*, page 2)



Mary Helton



Support Local Journalism • Support Our Community