

# The News-Journal

\$1.00

If it happened, it's news to us



No. 17 Vol. 116

RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

Wednesday, June 23, 2021



Above: Freedom Marchers at Hoke's Juneteenth celebration; top right: art on display; bottom right: youth volunteers for the occasion. (Contributed photos)

## First federal Juneteenth draws 600 in Hoke

By CATHARIN SHEPARD  
Staff writer

Churches in Hoke County have recognized Juneteenth for many years, but this year, Mount Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church planned to put on a big celebration. As it turned out, the day came with a notable first.

Thanks to federal legislation passed just last week, Juneteenth – June 19 – is now the country's twelfth federally recognized holiday. It recognizes the day that enslaved people in the United States were emancipated. The holiday got its start in Texas, where on June 19, 1865, Union troops enforced the terms of the Emancipation Proclamation.

Churches, organizations and families have marked Juneteenth with get-togethers, events such as the youth talent show held this weekend at the Enrichment Center on Gillis Hill Road, and talks respecting the historic day. This year, many communities across the country ended up scrambling to find ways to honor the day on short notice, with the federal law recognizing Juneteenth passed just two days before the holiday.

Sisters Ellen McNeill and Mary Owens of Mount Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church didn't know that 2021 would see the holiday gain federal recognition when they started working  
(See JUNETEENTH, page 3)



## County may assume McCain water plant

By CATHARIN SHEPARD  
Staff writer

Hoke County could increase its ability to provide water service to homes and businesses in western Hoke by taking over the water plant at McCain.

The county commissioners voted Monday night to authorize county officials to draft a memorandum of agreement with the state-owned McCain water plant, with the intention of Hoke taking over running it in the near future and buying it shortly after.

The state approached the county about coming up with a plan to hand the plant over  
(See WATER PLANT, page 6)

## Raeford ReStore shuts its doors

The nonprofit Habitat for Humanity ReStore in Hoke County has shut its doors, reportedly due to a lack of donations.

The discount home improvement stores sell new and like-new items donated by supporters to help fund construction of new Habitat for Humanity homes. Habitat for Humanity of the North Carolina Sandhills opened the Hoke County ReStore in January, and closed it earlier this month after a going-out-of-business sale.

The ReStores depend on donations, and the location in Hoke County just wasn't receiving enough donations to keep its doors open, Sandhills Habitat ReStore manager Dondi Jones said. Typically it takes at least 10 donations a week for a store to remain open, and the location in Hoke County was receiving fewer than that.  
(See RESTORE, page 6)

## Merged Habitat builds first Hoke house

First to go up in 'Purcell Village' of organization-built homes

By CATHARIN SHEPARD  
Staff writer

New homeowner Karly Laffin and kids Janiah, Kierra, Naomee and Jovaun are now part of a bigger family: the Habitat for Humanity family.

Laffin and her children marked a special day Thursday as Habitat for Humanity of the North Carolina Sandhills live-streamed the dedication of their new home on Blue Springs Road.

The custom-built house was made possible through

volunteer work and donations – plus “sweat equity” of the new homeowner. It's the first house built by the combined forces of Hoke County Habitat for Humanity and the regional Sandhills branch of the nonprofit, since the local organization merged with its larger, multi-county neighbor last year.

Habitat for Humanity of the N.C. Sandhills ReStore Director Dondi Jones offered words of greeting during the ceremony.  
(See HABITAT, page 4)



Karly Laffin with three of her four children at their new home. (Catharin Shepard photo)

## Driver dies before crash into house

A driver whose vehicle ran off the road and struck an abandoned house last week apparently died behind the wheel in the moments before the collision happened, according to the North Carolina State Highway Patrol.

The single-vehicle wreck happened around 12:27 p.m. Thursday, June 17 on the 2400 block of Fulford McMillan Road, between Turnpike Road and Gordon Road.

Ivory Farmer, 70, of the 100

block of Porlock Way in Raeford, was driving a 2014 Chevrolet at the time of the accident. According to investigators, Farmer's vehicle crossed the center line into the oncoming lane of traffic, ran off the road to the left, continued across an open field and stopped when it struck an abandoned house. The vehicle was traveling at an estimated 55 miles an hour at the time of the accident.

Upon investigation,  
(See DRIVER DIES, page 6)

## State offers \$1 million in lottery for vaccinated

By CATHARIN SHEPARD  
Staff writer

North Carolina is offering people who get vaccinated against COVID-19 entry into four lottery drawings for \$1 million prizes this summer.

The “Your Shot at a Million Summer Cash and College Tuition” lottery is an incentive operated by the state of North Carolina in an effort to get more adults and youth  
(See LOTTERY, page 6)



A home on Canine Trail burns. (Contributed photo)

## Fires destroy houses

House fires in Raeford and South Hoke destroyed two houses over the last week, displacing several residents from one of the properties.

The first fire happened Tuesday night, June 15 at a home on Canine Trail, off of Palmer Street near the Hoke County Health Department. North Raeford Fire Department firefighters responded around 10:50 p.m. to the house, which was unoccupied. There were no injuries, but the house was considered  
(See FIRES, page 4)

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