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If it happened, it's news to us



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RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

Wednesday, June 30, 2021

\$57.6 million budget passes

No tax increase, County funds more than 60 offices, programs

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

The Hoke County Board of Commissioners voted Tuesday to approve a \$57.6 million budget ordinance with no tax increase for the upcoming fiscal year 2021-2022.

The board members met Monday and Tuesday in sessions reconvened from

last week's recessed meeting to give the proposed budget and a number of county contracts a final review. The commissioners voted Tuesday to pass the ordinance, and the budget will take effect this Thursday, July 1.

The balanced county budget of \$57,625,706 is based on expected income of \$28,663,486 in property taxes, at a 75

cents per \$100 valuation rate; \$13,336,991 in sales tax revenue; \$4,739,288 in revenue from Social Services; \$2,875,314 in revenue from the Health Department; \$1,560,640 appropriated from the county's fund balance; and multiple smaller amounts from other county departments and fees.

The budget ordinance included funding for more than 60 departments and pro-

grams. The county spent the most money on funding for Hoke County Schools, \$9,870,847; the Hoke County Sheriff's Office, \$7,202,498 and jail, \$4,858,709; the Hoke County Department of Social Services, \$6,554,055; and Health Department, \$3,835,885.

Other seven-figure line items included (See *BUDGET*, page 5)

Champs



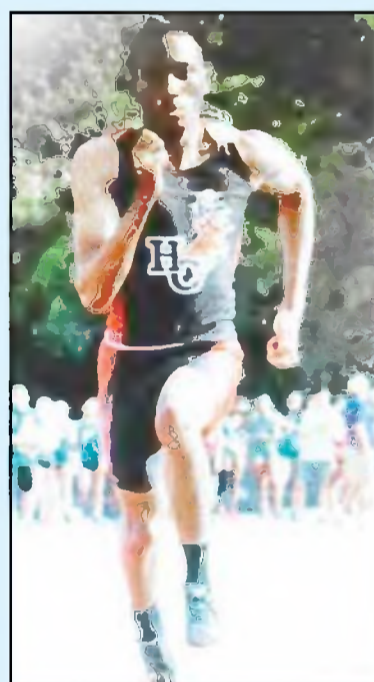
National champs

Hoke High 2021 grads Danny Pham, left, and Riley Edwards are National Champions in the National Skills USA Commercial Drone Competition. Pham also finished first, and Edwards, second, in the state competition. Mario Malabunga was their teacher.



State champ

Hoke High Senior Laila Sa became the school's first Women's State Champion in the N.C. High School Athletics Association Woman's Invitational in Wrestling. She plans to earn a degree in nursing.



State champ

Hoke High 2021 grad Jadarien Parker recently claimed the title of NCHSAA State Champion in the 200 meter race, finishing with a time of 21 seconds. (Contributed Photos)



An ambulance was sent to a convenience store on South Main Street Tuesday after a reported shooting. (Catharin Shepard photo)

Police investigate shooting report

Officers with the Raeford Police Department and emergency medical services responded Tuesday afternoon to a gas station on the edge of town in reference to a report of a person suffering from a gunshot wound.

Law enforcement and an ambulance responded to the MP Mart gas station at the (See *SHOOTING*, page 6)

COVID-19 numbers in Hoke continue to decline

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

Hoke County showed a continuing decline Monday in the number of new COVID-19 cases, with only 10 new confirmed cases of the virus over the last seven

days.

The county saw 24 new cases over the last 14 days, according to the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS). That's down from the 36 new cases reported in the two weeks prior, and down even

further from the 112 new cases that were reported during the last two weeks of May. There haven't been any additional deaths due to COVID-19 in Hoke County in the month of June reported, according to state numbers, leaving the county's coronavirus death toll at

56 people.

Hoke dropped to the second-lowest tier on the County Alert System in the most recent update last week. The county is marked in pale yellow for "moderate impact" from COVID-19, down a tier from the yellow "significant

impact" level.

The statewide alert system generally reflects a continuing downward trend in the number of new infections across the state. However, some counties are experiencing higher numbers.

(See *COVID-19*, page 8)

County to pay up to \$200,000 to company for roadside litter cleanup

Hoke County leaders recently approved a contract with a service provider that will pick up litter on some of the county's busiest highways.

Greenway Service LLC will

perform roadside litter pickup along Highway 401, Highway 211 and Highway 20 in Hoke County, according to the contract. The one-year contract will run from July 1 of this year to June 30,

2022. In monthly payments, the county will pay the company up to a maximum of \$200,000 for the work.

The contract specifies the company will provide two crews

four days a week, working eight hours a day, to provide services at the different locations as needed. Additional roadside pickups or other work will require a different quote and added to the invoice in

addition to the agreed-on payment amount, according to the contract.

Littering on the county's roads has drawn many complaints from citizens in the last few years, (See *LITTER*, page 3)

OTHER STUFF

By KEN MACDONALD

I had seen the look before—but in a puppy, one full of energy, but temporarily restrained by a leash, fastened to the chair leg at an outside restaurant table. Again, restrained, but happy and enthusiastic and hardly inconvenienced.

That day some 25 years ago, the look was on a young fellow, a bright seventh grader, named Brian Lee. His desk was placed permanently BEHIND Mrs. Frahm's, presumably to rein him in, separate him, and keep him from

(See *OTHER STUFF*, page 3)



A well-known minister and entrepreneur in the Hoke County community passed away Monday at the age of 71.

Evangelist Betty L. Hardaway was pastor of Jericho Deliverance Temple for more than 40 years, and owner of Hardaway's Herb Garden, a business she founded herself.

Known for her passion for preaching the Gospel, she appeared for many years on her own television show as a televangelist and singer-songwriter. She also sold herbal remedies and other products at her business located on U.S. 401 at the corner of Vass Road.

Hardaway was born and raised in Raeford by her parents, Sam and Mildred Willis. She and her husband Freeman Hardaway Sr. made their home in Hoke County where she created many business opportunities.

Hardaway worked her way up to becoming a businesswoman and public figure. With the support of her husband of nearly 50 years, she knew what it was like to live the American dream, her family said.

"Even though she grew up a sharecropper, she managed to become an entrepreneur and (See *EVANGELIST*, page 8)

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