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RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

Wednesday, July 28, 2021

Commission hears courthouse plans 5 companies in the running to build new facility, admin project

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

Hoke's new courthouse needs a "wow" factor, but also has to be built to stand for generations – just as its predecessor has done for the last century, county commissioners discussed Monday.

"We want people to say 'wow,'" Chairman Harry Southerland said of the project.

The commissioners took another step this week toward building a new county courthouse and administrative building. The board saw

presentations from five companies interested in working with the county on the combined project for the two buildings. Seven companies responded to the request for qualifications sent out earlier this year, and commissioners narrowed the field to five options for closer consideration.

Board members questioned representatives from each of the companies on a variety of topics. Commissioners sought details on issues such as how much the companies' latest projects have cost to build per square foot,

and how they proposed to include locally-owned and minority-owned companies in the subcontracting process.

Barnhill Contracting, Bordeaux Construction, HH Architecture, Samet Corporation and Metcon representatives offered answers and overviews of what their companies can bring to the project. Commissioners will have the opportunity to consider the options and could vote at a future meeting to select one of the companies for the job.

The board voted earlier this year to have

the project handled as "design-build," with one partnership team responsible for both the architectural designs and the actual construction process. Multiple contractors working under one umbrella could bring the new buildings to life.

Designing the future

As part of the presentations, some of the companies offered a very preliminary look at options for the new courthouse and administrative building. (See *COURTHOUSE*, page 6)



Ears In The Breeze

Henry the dog drew plenty of attention last week as he cruised with Charlie Adams from the Post Office to enjoy the sights of downtown Raeford. He had a leash on for safety. At left, Henry gets a better look at the camera turned on him. At right, he enjoys the ride. (Photos by Ken MacDonald)

School board to decide on masks for fall semester

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

The Hoke County Board of Education will meet Thursday to decide whether children attending Hoke County Schools will be required to wear masks in the classroom this fall.

The board is expected to also discuss other COVID-19 safety measures for the upcoming semester.

Most Hoke students will start back to class August 23, and based on current plans are expected to return to in-person instruction five days a week.

Last school year when students first returned to classrooms for in-person learning, Gov. Roy Cooper issued a mandate ordering all children to wear masks. Last week the governor announced he will leave

the decision about masks up to local school systems for the fall semester.

"The most important work our state will do next month is getting all our school children back into the classrooms safely for in-person learning," Cooper said in a statement. "That's the best way for them to learn, and we want their school days to be as close to normal as possible, especially after a year of

disruption."

The state updated its Strong-SchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit to align with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and American Academy of Pediatrics guidance. The toolkit "urges that everything possible be done to keep students in schools and emphasizes continued masking." For students and teachers in grades 9-12, the guidance recommends anyone unvaccinated wear a mask indoors.

The Hoke County Board of Education will hold the special called meeting Thursday, July 29 at 6:30 p.m. in the Hoke High media

center located at 319 North Bethel Road. The meeting will also be live-streamed and can be watched during or after at the Hoke County Schools YouTube channel.

The meeting is for "the purpose of discussing updated COVID-19 protocols for the return to school and to take action on personnel," according to the meeting notice.

The school system had already created a plan for the 2021-2022 school year, available to view on its website, but the Board of Education members could decide to make changes to it during the meeting. (See *MASKS*, page 5)

Fire departments hold drive

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

The Walmart parking lot was scorching hot in the summer sun, but as a digital thermometer showed, it was far hotter inside a locked vehicle.

Outside, it was 98.3 degrees Fahrenheit. Inside the truck on display, the heat crept up to 112 degrees. But even on a 70-degree day, cars can heat up enough to give a child heat stroke.

The Safe Kids display, meant to educate families about the dangers of leaving children in cars, was just one of several potentially life-saving. (See *FIRE DEPARTMENTS*, page 6)



Travis Bunce teaches a lesson in hands-only CPR. (Catharin Shepard photo)

Man charged with stabbing woman

Raeford Police have arrested a man wanted for allegedly stabbing a woman after she broke off their relationship, according to authorities.

Officers responded around 2:11 a.m. Sunday, July 11 to a call of someone being stabbed in the vicinity of the 1000 block of East Central Avenue. On arriving at the scene they learned a woman, Debbie Harris, had been stabbed several times. Witnesses to the stabbing took her to a nearby hospital.

Law enforcement learned through

the investigation that Harris had recently broken off a relationship with Ladarious Dion Hill, 28, of the 100 block of Malinda Drive in Raeford.

"It was learned that Ladarious Hill confronted Debbie Harris about the relationship early that morning when Ladarious Hill became angry and attacked Debbie Harris stabbing her several times and trying to drag her away from the scene," a press release from the Raeford Police Department said.

(See *STABBING*, page 5)

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