

# The News-Journal

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If it happened, it's news to us



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RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

Wednesday, September 1, 2021

## 266 cases, 3 more deaths last week Schools report 52 with COVID after first week in class

By CATHARIN SHEPARD  
Staff writer

Hoke's numbers continued to rise with the county seeing a high level of virus spread, along with more hospitalizations and deaths, according to health officials.

Hoke County has seen 440 new confirmed cases of COVID-19 in

the past 14 days, including 266 new cases over the last seven days. The state's most recent count shows the county's death toll at 59 people since the start of the pandemic. There have been three more deaths in the last week, Hoke health officials reported.

The county has recently been among the highest in the region

for hospitalizations. Another five people from Hoke were sent to the hospital with COVID-19 in the last week, Health Department Director Helene Edwards said Monday.

Area hospitals have reported they are feeling the strain as more patients with COVID-19 need inpatient care to battle the virus.

Both Cape Fear Valley Health and FirstHealth of the Carolinas reported seeing high numbers of COVID-19 patients throughout the hospital systems. Both have implemented visitor restrictions and are asking people to only go to the emergency room for actual emergencies, and use non-emergency care options like primary care or

urgent care where needed.

### Schools see cases

Last week was the first week of school for Hoke County Schools students and teachers, and the first time many students had set foot inside a physical classroom since the start of the pandemic. With  
(See COVID, page 6)



### Chamber music

A crowd enjoyed the music of the Sand Band in the early evening last Thursday at a free concert sponsored by the Raeford-Hoke Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber hosted the event as an end-of-summer get-together for the community. The concert was held at the Old Armory park on East Central Avenue in Raeford.

## Students, parents call for change after viral post

### Petition seeks to change dress code

By CATHARIN SHEPARD  
Staff writer

Some students and parents at Hoke County High School voiced concerns and called for changes to the school dress code after a student's post on social media went viral.

A girl's description of allegedly being touched inappropriately by two other students in a classroom could not be verified through the Hoke County Sheriff's Office, which said there wasn't a report filed related to the incident. Due to policies meant to protect student privacy, school officials said they couldn't comment on the specific situation or discuss any disciplinary actions that might have been taken.

"Policies protecting students' privacy are in place and adhered to, thus we cannot disclose information about any disciplinary action taken pertaining to any particular student. However, we take all allegations seriously," Hoke County Schools said Tuesday in a statement. "The district's protocol is to promptly investigate any and all allegations and if needed, to report those to the appropriate authorities, launch an investigation, initiate a safety plan, and offer support to the student, while also maintaining student privacy and confidentiality."

The community's reaction to the viral post was swift with students writing a petition, and parents  
(See VIRAL POST, page 6)

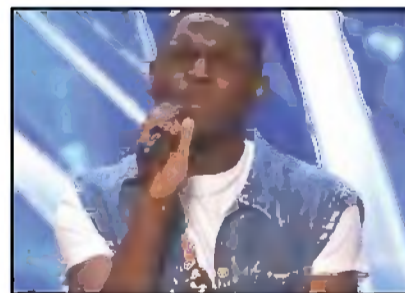
## He's in semifinals on America's Got Talent

Hoke High graduate Tavis Cunningham and musical group IaChord have advanced to the semifinals on the performance competition television show America's Got Talent.

Cunningham, who graduated with the Bucks Class of 2020, joined forces with two fellow music lovers he met while attending college at the UNC-Greensboro.

Cunningham, Christoff Hairston and Julian Kennedy make up the male vocal trio IaChord.

The three college students went from sitting at the same table in the college cafeteria, to singing together. They recorded a cover of The Clark Sisters' "Name It, Claim It" that went viral on  
(See GOT TALENT, page 3)



Cunningham, in screen capture.

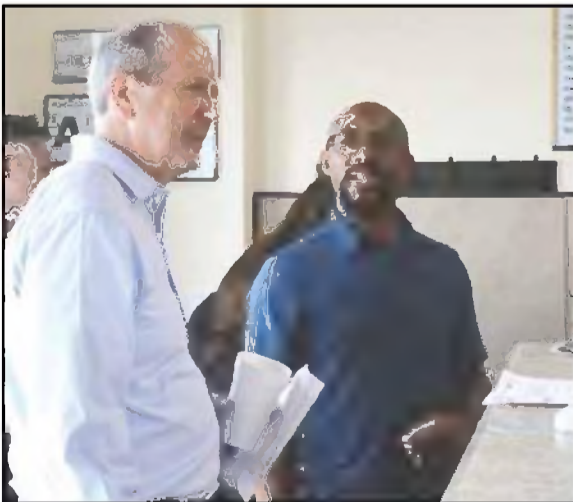
## VFW fundraiser set to help veterans

The Veterans of Foreign Wars, Ralph A. Pandure Post 10 in Hoke County will hold a fundraiser this month to raise money to help support veterans and their families.

"Our post is inviting all veterans, their families and the civilian communities in

Hoke County for a fundraising event to better serve veterans and veteran families," an announcement about the event said.

"Hoke County has one of the highest rates of soldiers with disabilities in the United States per capita. We  
(See VETERANS, page 4)



### Congressman visits

Rep. Dan Bishop, above left, who represents Hoke County as part of the Ninth Congressional District, speaks with One Stop Barber Shop business owner Michael T. Swinney during a visit to Hoke County August 19. The Congressman visited many local businesses to ask how they're doing as part of his tour through the county. His visit also included a stop in Rockfish, right, meeting with Sheriff Dr. Hubert Peterkin and Raeford Police Chief Marc Godwin to discuss public safety, and speaking at the Hoke County GOP meeting. (Catharin Shepard, contributed photos)

## County will take part in national 9/11 memorial

Hoke County will take part in a special ceremony happening nation-wide this September 11 to commemorate the victims of the terrorist attacks of 20 years ago.

The county was chosen as one of 60 communities across the country to participate in the first annual National Flag of Honor

Across America Memorials. Organizer Brandy McPherson presented the information to the Hoke County Board of Commissioners last month.

The county will host a ceremony September 11 that will include reading the names and information of 50 of the people who died  
(See MEMORIAL, page 3)

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