

# The News-Journal

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RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

Wednesday, September 8, 2021

## County hits 50% vaccination total Another death, 237 COVID cases reported in last week

BY CATHARIN SHEPARD  
Staff writer

Hoke County has hit the 50 percent mark for residents having received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, even as the Delta variant continues driving up the number of new cases.

About half of all people in

Hoke County so far have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, according to the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS). That means at least 27,587 residents have gotten one of the shots.

The number of people who are considered fully vaccinated is lower, at around 44 percent of the

population. A total of about 24,155 Hoke residents are considered fully vaccinated.

Even while more people in Hoke get vaccinated, the number of new confirmed cases of COVID-19 remains high in North Carolina.

Hoke County has seen 491 new cases of COVID-19 in the

past two weeks, including 237 new cases in the past seven days, according to NCDHHS. Another person in Hoke County recently died after testing positive for the virus, bringing the county's death toll for the pandemic to 63 lives lost.

The county has seen at least seven COVID-19 deaths so far in

the months of August and September, after going for a period of several months without any virus deaths at all.

The ongoing surge began in July. The number of new confirmed cases of COVID-19 fell to a low of just 10 in one week, before the current surge began. (See COVID, page 6)

## Law enforcement warns of break-ins in county

A rash of vehicle break-ins in the community caused local law enforcement to warn residents to lock their doors and not leave valuables inside cars.

"Hoke County residents – as a community, we are undergoing a hefty amount of breaking and entering of motor vehicles, as well as vehicles being stolen. Several neighborhoods in the county have been targeted, and affected greatly by the actions of thieves," Hoke County Sheriff Dr. Hubert Peterkin wrote in an alert on Facebook.

A group of three to five people are suspected to be behind the rash of vehicle break-ins, the sheriff said. They are described as slim-built men, most of them on foot but with one person driving.

The suspects have been seen go-

ing from car to car in driveways to find unlocked vehicles. The break-ins have been taking place between 2 a.m. and 5 a.m.

"Our patrol division as well as our detective division are working continuously to be proactive and reactive to these types of crimes," Peterkin wrote.

Anyone with video footage or additional information regarding these crimes is asked to please contact Det. V. Rentz at (910) 875-5111 or by email at vrentz@hokesherriff.org.

"As a reminder, please ensure your vehicles are secured and personal items such as keys, purses, wallets, firearms are not left inside of the vehicles. Please stay vigilant, and stay safe!" Peterkin wrote.

## 9/11 service is Saturday

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.

Organizers will host a ceremony September 11 that will include reading the names and information of 50 of the people who died in the attacks.

The event is set to start at 8:30 a.m. September 11 and will be held at Freedom Park in downtown Raeford, at the corner of Main Street

and East Central Avenue.

Following the ceremony, volunteers will hold a day of service to support the community.

The National Flag of Honor Across America Memorial in Hoke County is being organized by Hoke County Teen Court. It is led nationally by Global Youth Justice and funded by that agency and the Federal Agency AmeriCorps National Day of Service.

For information call (910) 987-7639.

## FirstHealth hospital wins award

FirstHealth Moore Regional Hospital – Hoke has been awarded the American Heart Association and American Stroke Association Get with the Guidelines Stroke Gold Achievement Award for its

commitment to ensuring stroke patients receive the most appropriate treatment according to nationally recognized, research-based guidelines.

(See AWARD, page 6)



Jessica Vanallen in the restaurant she's opening this week. (Catharin Shepard photo)

## New name, menu, owner for local 'Place'

BY CATHARIN SHEPARD  
Staff writer

A "Place" for hungry diners in Raeford has a new owner and is reopening with a brand-new menu and extended hours of operation.

Frank's Place, founded in 2019 by former Hoke County Coroner Frank Crumpler, is now Jess's Place – named after Jessica Vanallen, who is launching her first venture as a restaurant owner.

Vanallen grew up in Hoke County and today still lives here with her husband and daughter. She managed Sub Station II in Raeford for about 15 years, gaining hands-on experience in the restaurant industry.

When the opportunity became available for her to take over Frank's Place, Vanallen knew the

time was right.

"I love working with food, I like to cook. It's always been my dream to have my own restaurant," she said.

Vanallen was hard at work last week getting everything ready to open. She planned to have the restaurant's first day sometime this week, depending on how things go with the final preparations.

A number of changes are coming, besides the new name. Under the new ownership, the restaurant's hours are going to expand. The plan is to have Jess's Place open from 9:30 a.m.-8 p.m., making it available as a place to get dinner as well as lunch.

There will be new service options for diners, too. Vanallen wanted to make things easier for (See RESTAURANT, page 6)



A new bus stop, in front of the library.

## What's that? Bus stops are being installed around county

BY CATHARIN SHEPARD  
Staff writer

They're blue, they have seats, and they've been appearing in all sorts of places around Hoke County.

What are these new bus stop shelters, and why are they showing up?

The county is installing covered bus stops at locations such as the library, shopping centers and near the Butterball plant on East Central Avenue. The shel-

ters will have bus transportation provided by the Hoke Area Transit Service (HATS) as part of a new service.

HATS plans to launch what's called a "deviated fixed route," director Nancy Thornton said. The deviated fixed route will allow the service to continue offering door-to-door service as it always has – a feature especially helpful for senior citizens, and people with limited mobility. It will also allow the department to operate a traditional sort of bus route with

regularly scheduled stops.

There are going to be a total of 15 of the bus stops installed at places in Hoke where people commonly need to go, Thornton said.

Andrew Jacobs has been working on the project to get the stops constructed. The Hoke County Board of Commissioners approved a bus stop agreement in July.

Fourteen of the fifteen bus stop shelters have already been installed. The funding (See BUS STOPS, page 4)

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