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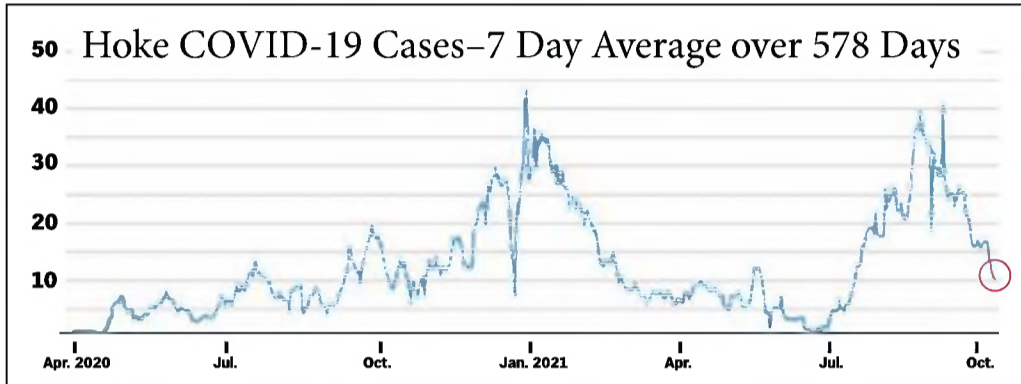


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RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

Wednesday, October 20, 2021

COVID continues decline here Still, 2 died last week, boosters on the way



By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

After a late summer surge in the number of cases, local levels of COVID-19 transmission appear to be tapering off – but two more people in Hoke have died after contracting the virus.

The deaths were reported in the past week, bringing the toll for Hoke County to 79 lives lost during the pandemic. The North Carolina

Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) reported the deaths.

Hoke has seen 121 new confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the past two weeks, including 47 cases in the last seven days. Only six new cases were recorded on Monday.

Hoke County Schools reported just 16 cases among students and staff last week. For the week ending Friday, October 15, 14 students and two staff members reportedly tested (See COVID, page 4)



Main Street was packed as the Fall Festival returned from a COVID-imposed absence. (Ken MacDonald photo)

Crowd returns for Fall Festival Downtown was rockin'

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

Lemonade poured, guitars twanged and children with plastic inflatable dinosaurs chased each other up and down Main Street to the background hum of portable generators, as the North Carolina Fall Festival made its long-awaited comeback.

Thousands of people turned out Saturday in the biggest community event Hoke County has seen since the pandemic forced shutdowns and cancellations in

2020.

While the crowd may have been a little less than in some prior years, the street was packed, lines were long at the popular food trucks and vendors did a brisk business in everything from cheerfully painted wooden signs to jars of honey.

Festival director Liz McNeill, also the Raeford-Hoke Chamber of Commerce director, said that things went well on the big day.

"It seems that everything went really well on our end. (See FESTIVAL, page 6)



The Guy Unger Band entertains from the stage near the Chamber of Commerce. (Catharin Shepard photo)



A child sees the festival from a wagon. (Ken MacDonald photo)

Board moves on HATS building, adds water slide to Leach facility

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

The Hoke County Board of Commissioners voted Monday night to approve sending out a request for proposals to build a long-planned new facility for the Hoke Area Transit Service (HATS).

The project has been in the works for a number of years, and will move forward once companies interested in designing the facility respond to the county's request for proposals, known as an RFP. The project doesn't have an exact dollar amount attached to it yet – that will come when poten-

tial designers send in their proposals, board members discussed Monday night.

The facility is set to go forward as a "design-build" project, meaning the same company will work with sub-contractors to complete both the architectural plans, and the actual construction of the

structure.

Currently the HATS main office is housed alongside the county's Department of Social Services in a building on South Magnolia Street.

The board members will have an opportunity to review the proposals and meet with potential

developers once the RFPs come back.

Water slide in the works

A water slide has been added to the plans for the family swimming pool at the James A. Leach Aquatic and Recreation Center, (See WATER SLIDE, page 6)

Goblins head to the streets here Oct. 31, costume contest extended

Halloween this year is set for Sunday, October 31, and trick-or-treaters will be out and about in Raeford and Hoke County in the evening hours.

The city and county local

governments of Raeford and Hoke don't have any rules governing trick-or-treat times. The Raeford Police Department suggested the hours of 6-8 p.m. on Halloween for trick-or-treating in the city.

Law enforcement offered tips for staying safe and keeping children safe while they dress up and go door to door.

Houses handing out candy should leave a porch light on and

make sure there aren't any obstacles trick-or-treaters could trip over, law enforcement safety tips suggested. Also make sure any lit candles in jack-o-lanterns can't brush against children's costumes

on porches or walkways.

Drivers should watch for children darting out from between parked cars, or walking on roadways, medians and curbs. Exit (See HALLOWEEN, page 4)

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