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If it happened, it's news to us



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RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

Wednesday, November 3, 2021

Virgil appointed sheriff Reserve deputy gets bid in packed meeting

Chief deputy was expected to be named

BY CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

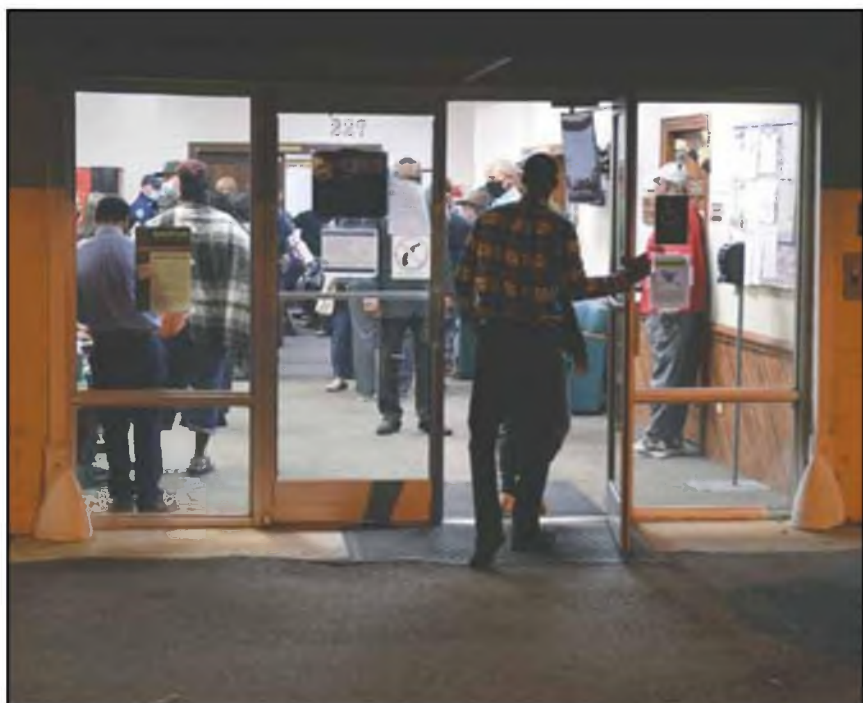
Departing from previously stated intentions, the Hoke County Board of Commissioners voted 3-2 Monday night to appoint Roderick Cornelius Virgil, not Chief Deputy David Newton to serve out the remaining 13 months of the late Sheriff Dr. Hubert Peterkin's last term.

Virgil will be sworn in to office at a special called meeting set for 11 a.m. Friday, November 5 at the Robert Wright Hoke County Agricultural Building on East Palmer

Street in Raeford.

Virgil was one of a slate of candidates put forward by the Hoke County Democratic Party for the commissioners' consideration. North Carolina Democratic Party Ninth Congressional District Chairman Jim Davis, himself a former Hoke County sheriff, and Hoke County Democratic Party Chairman Larry Readdy addressed the board in public comments at the meeting.

Davis and Readdy told the board the Democratic Party hoped the commissioners would put a Democrat in the (See *NEW SHERIFF*, page 6)



A huge crowd began gathering as the regular meeting of the Hoke Commissioners convened at the count office building. (Ken MacDonald photo)



Roderick Virgil
(Catharin Shepard photo)

'New journey for me'

BY CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

Roderick Virgil said Monday that he is excited to be sworn in to serve out the remainder of the late Sheriff Dr. Hubert Peterkin's term, and he plans to run for election to the office of Hoke County Sheriff next year.

"I'm excited, thrilled, a little nervous because this is a new journey for me. However (See *VIRGIL*, page 6)

Hundreds mourn sheriff at funeral

BY CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

Bold, courageous, reliable, a mentor, a dedicated man – that was how friends and fellow leaders described Hoke County Sheriff Dr. Hubert Peterkin at a funeral held Friday to honor his life and celebrate his legacy.

What made Peterkin so special was how he held everyone to the same standard, and the strength he drew from the people around him, his son Anto-

nio Peterkin said.

"If you were to take anything from him, understand that what made him special, that he knew that every person he ever met, he held to the same standard, no matter if he liked you or not. And the strength he drew and took from his brothers and sisters, whether family, law enforcement, government, didn't matter. He believed in every person he ever met," the sheriff's son said.

(See *FUNERAL*, page 8)



State Rep. Garland Pierce: Peterkin left "safe more inclusive" county. (Pool photo)

'Generations will owe him,' Epic Games CEO buys Blue Farm

BY CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

The founder and CEO of the Cary-based video game studio that created Fortnite recently bought more than 3,400 acres of the Blue Farm property in Hoke County for nature conservation.

Tim Sweeney of Epic Games conducted the purchase through his corporation 130 of Chatham LLC. The land buy included multiple parcels of property

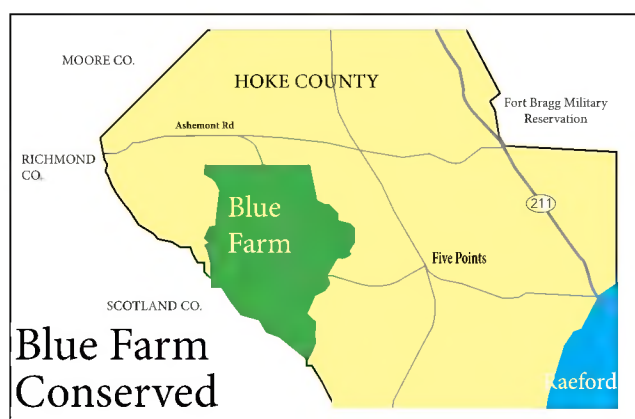
in western Hoke County totaling 3,429 acres.

The Blue Farm is one of the largest tracts of privately owned longleaf pine forest in the state, according to The Nature Conservancy of North Carolina. The habitat is home to many kinds of native Sandhills animals and plants, including endangered species like the red-cockaded woodpecker.

Over the past decade, Sweeney has become a prominent figure as a phi-

lanthropist in nature conservation in North Carolina. Today he is known as one of the largest landowners in the state. Through 130 of Chatham LLC, he has purchased tens of thousands of acres to preserve as natural land.

(See *BLUE FARM*, page 4)



Enforce two-hour downtown parking, businesses ask of City Council

BY KEN MACDONALD

A group of some 25 downtown business owners want the area's two-hour parking limit enforced and sent a petition to members of Raeford City Council and the police chief.

"We the undersigned business and property owners would like to re-emphasize the continued need for enforcement of the two (2) hour

downtown parking ordinance," the petition, obtained from a council member, read.

"If any change were to ever be considered, it should be to shorten it to one (1) hour," it continued.

"The need is and always has been to keep traffic moving along smoothly with no one staying longer than the clearly posted limit," the petition reads. "That ensures that every business benefits

equally, especially now with new business opening up and more coming soon."

The letter was discussed at City Council's regular monthly meeting Monday night.

City Manager Dennis Baxley told Council he didn't receive the letter, but saw a copy.

"Just let us deal with it at the administrative level and I'll send a letter out to everybody that signed the petition,"

he said, "and just let us try to deal with it first before we do too much."

He said downtown will soon be patrolled. "We're going to take one of our officers who volunteered to be animal control, as well as he's going to be enforcing downtown—he'll be patrolling downtown on foot."

"We'll get it monitored, and if we find there's a chronic (See *PARKING*, page 6)



The sign says it all. (Ken MacDonald photo)

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