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RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

Wednesday, August 14, 2013

Hoke hospitals name administrators

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer



Beaty Jones

The two hospital systems operating in Hoke County recently named the administrators who will oversee the local facilities once they are completed and open to patients.

Susan Beaty will serve as administrator for

FirstHealth Moore Regional Hospital's Hoke Campus when it opens this fall, and Velvette Jones will serve as president of Hoke Healthcare at Cape Fear Valley's Health Pavilion Hoke and the hospital once it is built and opens.

Beaty, a registered nurse, currently serves as administrative director of FirstHealth Oncology Services at Moore Regional Hospital, a position

she has held since 2008. Beaty will step in as administrator for the FirstHealth Hoke hospital on September 2. The hospital will hold a grand opening celebration September 22 in conjunction with the North Carolina Turkey Festival and will open to patients on October 1.

Beaty earned an associate's degree in nursing (See HOSPITALS, page 6A)

FirstHealth hospital cited for accident

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

Two FirstHealth of the Carolinas hospitals are in danger of losing Medicare and Medicaid funding after a fire in an operating room left a patient with first and second-degree burns, according to information from the hospital system.

The North Carolina Division of Health Service Regu-

lation placed FirstHealth Moore Regional Hospital and Richmond Memorial Hospital on immediate jeopardy status following an unannounced survey of the hospital conducted August 1, a statement from FirstHealth said. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) defines immediate jeopardy as "a situation in which the

(See CITED, page 4A)

More charges filed in child rape case



Roa who was arrested earlier this month for alleged sexual abuse.

David Roa, 39, no address given, was previously arrested and charged with

Deputies seek information on shooting that injured man

The Hoke County Sheriff's Office is asking for the community's help in finding the gunman who shot and wounded a man from Hoke County.

Officers responding to a reported shooting Sunday in

second-degree rape and sexual activity by a substitute parent. He has now additionally been charged with three counts of second-degree sexual offenses and three counts of crimes against nature. Originally held under a \$1 million bond, Roa's bond amount was increased by another \$500,000. He remains in custody at the Hoke County Detention Center under an

(See CHARGES, page 4A)

the area of Oakdale Gin Road reportedly discovered Victor Puges had been shot with an unknown weapon. Puges had several injuries to his upper body, according to information from the Sheriff's Office. (See SHOOTING, page 4A)



Wanda Harris (standing at chair) and her family on Saturday. They're Hoke's newest Habitat for Humanity family. (Catharin Shepard photo)

It's moving in day for Habitat family

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

Wanda Harris and her family got a flag, a Bible and a sapling tree to plant in the yard of their new home Saturday, along with the keys to the sixth Habitat for Humanity house built in Hoke County.

A moment after Habitat for Humanity president William McDonald dropped the keys to the family's new home in Harris' hand, she wrapped her arms around him and hugged him.

It was the end of a long process of construction, a process that Harris and her family helped with every step

of the way, and one that was supported by businesses, individuals and churches throughout Hoke County.

"It was really a rewarding experience, something I had never done before," Harris said. "Coming out here and going from the ground up and helping every Saturday, it was

(See HABITAT, page 4A)

This Week

Sandy Grove Middle opens Saturday
See page 4A

Meet the new principals at 4 schools
See page 4A

Police make drug bust
See page 4A

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National Night Out



A clown captures the interest of one of hundreds of children who turned out for the annual National Night Out Saturday at the sports complex on NC 211. The Hoke Sheriff's Office and other public safety agencies hosted the event with free food, music, and a skydiving demonstration from the Blue Emu all-veteran skydiving team. The event is an anti-crime and drug abuse program held around the country. (Catharin Shepard photo)



A 2011 fatal wreck on US 401 South. (File photo)

Hoke worst in state for fatal traffic wrecks

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

An annual analysis conducted by AAA Carolinas reported that Hoke County ranked most dangerous of any North Carolina county for fatal crashes, based on crash data collected in 2012.

The AAA Carolinas agency reported that the county handled less than .4 percent

of North Carolina's total vehicle miles traveled but had 4.27 fatal crashes per 100 million vehicle miles traveled. That's nearly four times more than the state average of 1.15 fatal crashes per 100 million vehicle miles traveled, according to the agency.

Robeson also joined Hoke on the list of fatal crashes per vehicle miles traveled (See WRECKS, page 4A)



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Sandy Grove Middle grand opening is Saturday

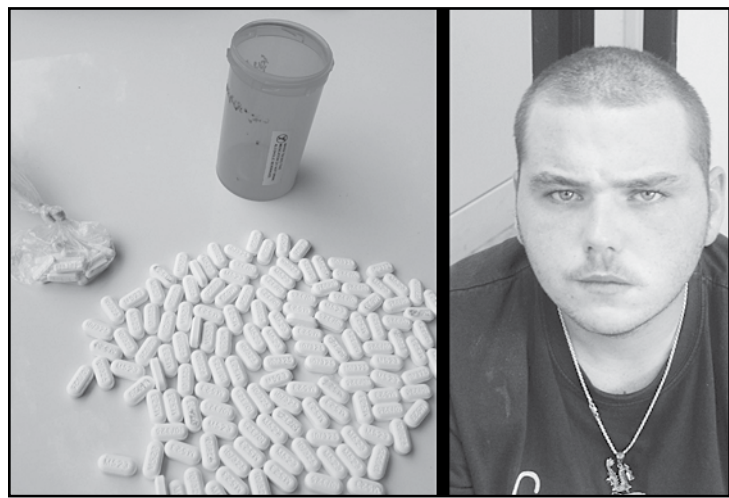
A grand opening at Sandy Grove Middle School is set for Saturday. Billed as the nation's first energy-positive, LEED Platinum designed, leased public school, the facility will ease overcrowding at East Hoke and West Hoke middle schools. The grand opening will be held from 11 a.m. until 4 p.m. Attendees will have the opportunity to tour the school and see the work completed since construction began in July 2012.

The school will be an energy-positive facility, designed to return more energy to the grid than it consumes and, officials say, will save Hoke County Schools approximately \$35 million over the next 40 years, with \$16 million in energy costs alone. The school is located at 300 Chason Road beside Sandy Grove Elementary School.

Police make drug bust

The Raeford Police Department arrested a man last week on multiple drug charges following a traffic stop that revealed narcotics in his vehicle. Officers arrested Caleb Goodwin of Raeford August 7 on charges of trafficking narcotics, possession with intent to sell or deliver Schedule II narcotics and driving while impaired, among other traffic charges, according

to a statement from the police department. Officers seized Goodwin's vehicle along with 139 dosage units of Percocet, 20 Xanax pills and \$254 in cash. Goodwin is currently on probation and has additional pending drug charges in Moore County. He was held in the Hoke County Detention Center under a \$100,000 bond.



Drugs recovered, Goodwin

Charges

(Continued from page 1A) Enforcement (ICE) detainee. Authorities arrested Roa earlier this month when a call to the sheriff's office directed them to a residence in Raeford in reference to sexual abuse in the home. "Reportedly, the investigation revealed that there has been a history of sexual abuse in the home

by the defendant," according to a statement from the sheriff's office. The investigation into potential additional crimes is ongoing, officials said. The offense reportedly occurred on July 23 and Roa was arrested July 29, according to law enforcement. The additional charges were filed August 8.

Shooting

(Continued from page 1A) He was transported to an area hospital where he was treated for non-life threatening injuries and released. Investigators believe the actual shooting took place on the 300 block of Ratley Street in Raeford. Deputies investigating the case interviewed multiple people and were able to recover evidence from the crime scene and identify

a potential suspect vehicle. Officers are searching for a burgundy SUV, possibly a Dodge Durango or Ford Expedition, which would have been seen on the 300 block of Ratley Street at the time of the shooting. The investigation is ongoing. The Sheriff's Office is asking anyone with information connected to the shooting to contact the Detective Division at 875-3614.

Wrecks

(Continued from page 1A) in 2012. Combined with Warren, Gates and Yancey counties, Hoke and Robeson accounted for 81 fatal crashes – nearly 7 percent of all fatal crashes in the state in 2012 – despite carrying only 2.4 percent of the state's vehicle miles traveled.

The use of statistics showing the number of fatal wrecks per 100 million miles traveled is a way for the Department of Transportation to compare apples to apples across counties that vary greatly in size and amount of traffic, according to Capt. D.L. Allen of the State Highway Patrol.

"The 100 million miles traveled is a ratio that lets you say, all things being equal, how many people are dying," he said.

Rural counties like Hoke often have larger spaces of road that are not as closely watched by law enforcement officials, due to the sheer size of the area that officers have to routinely patrol. It can entice more drivers to speed, and that is often a big factor in wrecks, especially the more serious or fatal wrecks, Allen said.

"They tend to operate at higher speeds or maybe some more risky behaviors, and that factors into it," he said.

The state's Highway Patrol is also currently not working with a full complement of troopers. Some troopers from Moore County currently provide coverage in Hoke County.

"We are short throughout the state right now—we're trying to rectify that," Allen said.

Additionally, drivers can help reduce the numbers by obeying the speed limit, not texting while driving and following other traffic laws.

"We're encouraging people to obey the law, be out and be safe, to reduce those numbers," Allen said.

Cumberland County and Robeson County ranked third and fourth, respectively, as the deadliest counties with the highest total number of fatal crashes. Cumberland County reported 50 fatal crashes in 2012 while Robeson County had 47 fatal crashes. Mecklenburg had the highest number of fatal crashes at 69.

The analysis looked at sev-

eral different statistics for the rankings. For the third straight year, Pitt, New Hanover, Person and Watauga counties topped the list of most dangerous counties for collisions. Pitt County has ranked as the most dangerous county in the state for the past five years, averaging 306.7 crashes per 100 million vehicle miles traveled. That average was 50 percent higher than the state average of 204.7 crashes per 100 million vehicle miles traveled.

New Hanover County averages 286.8 crashes per 100 million vehicle miles traveled, Person County averages 266.6 and Watauga County averages 259.3.

"AAA Carolinas bases its annual ranking of the most dangerous counties on the likelihood of a certain type of crash – fatal, injurious, motorcycle, tractor-trailer, total – based on vehicle miles traveled," according to a press statement.

AAA Carolinas' annual Dangerous Counties analysis, inaugurated in 1995, is one of several ways to look at North Carolina traffic crash data and

done to remind motorists of the need for safe and defensive driving, especially in counties with above-average traffic crashes, injuries and deaths, according to David Parsons, president and chief executive officer of AAA Carolinas.

"Consistently high rankings for being one of the most dangerous counties in the state should be a wake-up call for better traffic enforcement or road design," Parsons said.

"The total number of traffic fatalities in North Carolina increased 4 percent from 1,217 in 2011 to 1,270 in 2012. This number had been dropping steadily over the past few years (1,452 in 2008, 1,344 in 2009, 1,328 in 2010, 1,217 in 2011) before increasing in 2012," according to AAA Carolinas.

AAA Carolinas, an affiliate of the American Automobile Association, is a not-for-profit organization that serves more than 1.8 million members and the public with travel, automobile and insurance services while being an advocate for the safety and security of all travelers.

Cited

(Continued from page 1A) provider's noncompliance with one or more requirements of participation has caused, or is likely to cause, serious injury, harm, impairment or death to a resident."

The incident, which happened in June of this year, occurred while a patient was undergoing what hospital officials described as an "emergency life-saving procedure" in an operating room at FirstHealth Moore Regional Hospital. Vapor from a sterilizing fluid ignited and caused a "brief flash fire" that was immediately put out, officials said. The patient sustained "small first and second-degree burns to the neck and shoulders but no lasting injuries," the hospital announced in a press statement.

The patient was later discharged, according to Dr. John Krahnert, chief medical officer for FirstHealth of the Carolinas.

"After a thorough investigation, we have determined that the operating room staff responded to the incident appropriately and then successfully continued with the original emergency procedure," Krahnert said in a statement.

The hospital system was placed on immediate jeopardy status because Moore Regional operating room staff "failed to follow established safety prevention policies and procedures," according to FirstHealth public relations director Gretchen Kelly. Immediately after the incident, hospital operating room staff changed the operating room preparation procedures for emergency cases, she said. Additionally, the FirstHealth officials called the hospital's Joint Commission Resource Liaison on the day of the incident "to consult on our corrective action plan and appropriate reporting procedures."

After the initial notification, the hospital system began putting the new policies and procedures into a corrective action plan that is being submitted to CMS this week, Kelly said.

"Our corrective action plan includes ongoing training and monitoring throughout the health system. We are confident the CMS will approve our plan of correction and the immediate jeopardy status will be lifted following the CMS's full survey," she said.

There are three potential outcomes after a hospital is placed on immediate jeopardy status. CMS can approve the hospital's corrective plan and lift the immediate jeopardy status, suggest additional recommendations the system must add to the corrective plan of action and then lift the immediate jeopardy status, or the CMS could revoke the hospital system's conditions of participa-

tion and Moore Regional and Richmond Memorial would lose Medicare and Medicaid funding.

CMS will notify the hospital system about its status in writing, Kelly said. At this time the immediate jeopardy status will not affect hospital services or Medicare or Medicaid beneficiaries, she said.

FirstHealth Chief Executive Officer David Kilarski said the hospital is committed to "putting all the necessary policies and procedures in place to ensure every patient's safety and provide the highest level of care."

"Our highest priority is for the safety of our patients and staff, and we are working diligently to adopt and implement the recommendations noted in the survey," he said.

FirstHealth plans to open its Hoke County hospital this fall and begin accepting patients on October 1.

Habitat

(Continued from page 1A) really, really hard doing that, but now the reward has paid off. We thank the Lord for everybody."

Before the house was built, Harris and her children lived in a rented home in McDougald Downs. The new property will give them more space, organizers said. Even better, it's something Harris can pass on to her children, she said.

"Knowing that it will be a place that my children can have, that they'll have a place to stay, because I don't have any sisters or brothers. So my children, they have a stable place they can call home," Harris said.

The county's Habitat for Humanity organization selected Harris's family from among a number of applicants as the one to receive the house. The family was required to put in at least 250 hours of "sweat equity" on the construction site,

physically helping build the house when teams of volunteers showed up every weekend to pound nails and raise boards.

The process did have a few bumps in the road on the way to getting the Harrises in their new home, McDonald said. When the churches' volunteers arrived to work on the construction, sometimes they would be left standing around with nothing to do.

"We ran into a lot of problems when we first started with delivery of materials. We'd stand out here at 8 a.m. with nothing to work with," McDonald said.

But the community stepped up and helped to get it all done, he said.

"This house was built strictly on donations and free labor," McDonald said. "... We have a lot of individuals who support us with \$10 a month or even \$10 every other month, it helps us."

Habitat for Humanity builds houses with donated labor and sells them to deserving families with a no-interest mortgage that covers only the cost of the building materials. As Harris pays off the mortgage on the home, that same money will go toward helping the next family complete their own Habitat house.

Habitat for Humanity is always looking for dedicated volunteers to help make the next homecoming possible for another family, McDonald said.

After the dedication ceremony, the family gathered around their new kitchen table to share their first breakfast in their home. McDonald's donated refreshments for the dedication.

Action for Christ Ministries Pastor Harley Johnson offered the greeting and invocation and presentation of the Bible. L.S. Brock, executive board member

for Habitat, helped the family plant the sapling tree in their new yard. Brenda Lawyor, vice regent of the Alfred Moore Chapter of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, presented the family with a flag for the home. Delia McNeill of Raeford Presbyterian Church announced that the church will be assisting the family with some of its needs during the year.

The Habitat for Humanity executive board includes McDonald, Brock, Will Johnson, Dawn Johnson, Daphne Dudley, Kermit Wood, Travis Sutherland and Susan Quick. Nearly 40 organizations including area businesses, local governments and churches offered their support to the house build and dedication.



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SPORTS



Hoke County Parks & Rec holds soccer camp

The Hoke County Parks and Recreation Department held their second annual youth soccer camp last week at the complex on Highway 211. Last year, the Methodist University girls' soccer coach held the camp and, this year, Colin McDavid, the new soccer coach at Hoke High, held the camp. Approximately 44 kids, ages 6 to 14, took part in the camp.



Coach Antonio Covington (left) talks with junior Antonio Peterkin (right) about some of the situations that came up during the scrimmage last Saturday at Hoke High. Peterkin is the son of Hoke County Sheriff Hubert Peterkin and attends SandHoke Early College High School. This year, athletes who attend SandHoke are allowed to play sports with the Bucks and still manage their classes at SandHoke.

Just Putting Around

Bayonet at Puppy Creek

The Bayonet member/guest tournament will be held this Saturday and Sunday beginning at 11 a.m. The N.C. Turkey Festival golf tournament is tentatively set for September 21 and 22. For more information on either of these tournaments, call 904-1500.

Upland Trace

Huse Lowery shot a 70 during the Thursday group last week at Upland Trace. The Saturday 9 a.m. group winners were Huse Lowery, Lee Harless and Bill Baxley. The Saturday 9:30 a.m. group winners were Les Sandy, Richard Hoffman and Keith Jack-

son. The Sunday morning group winners were Tom Batchelor, Greg Wyrick, Al Smith and Lee Harless. The Sunday afternoon group winners were Jeff Lunsford, Rodney Thompson and Jerry Johnson. For more information about Upland Trace Golf Course, call 875-3524.

Raeford Racing Round-Up

The racing action was wide open last weekend as all three local tracks were open and the big dawgs took to the road course in Watkins Glen, New York. Local Lumber Bridge resident Matt Canady got the first win of his career at Fayetteville Motor Speedway in the Open Wheeled Modified division. Mat held off hard charger Chris Parker for the win. Robert Knowles took home his ninth win of the season at Rockfish and Willie Milliken rattled off another win at Dublin Motor Speedway.

This weekend Rockfish will be closed and will be back in action August 24. Fayetteville Motor Speedway will host the Carolina Clash series with a \$4,000 to win race sponsored by David Hales' insurance. Dublin Motor Speedway will be off this weekend and will re-open August 24 for a regular night of racing.

In NASCAR, Kyle Busch held off Brad Keselowski in the last two turns to win at Watkins Glen. NASCAR returns to the high banks of Michigan International Speedway this weekend for the Pure Michigan 400.

"The Rock" of Hoke-Rockfish Motor Speedway Legends
1st Robert Knowles 9th win

2nd Bryan Wright (Rockfish)
3rd Chad Autry (Rockfish)

Micro Sprints
1st Matt Carr 3rd win
2nd Jody McCall
3rd Gary Jacobsen

Pro Go Karts
1st Luke McPherson 6th win
2nd Logan McPherson
3rd Dan Hogan (Rockfish)

Mini Go Karts
1st Timothy Hogan 3rd win (Rockfish)
2nd Zach Kober
3rd Ethan Blanks (Parkton)

Fayetteville Motor Speedway Late Model
1st Timmy Blackwell
2nd Chris Blackwell
3rd Cody Shaw

Open Wheeled Modified
1st Matt Canady (Lumber Bridge)
2nd Chris Parker
3rd David Taylor

Super Street
1st Jerry Johnson
2nd Buddy Isles
3rd Brad Hamn

U-car
1st Brandon Jacobs
2nd Mike Farrior
3rd Jon Roach

Dublin Motor Speedway Late Model
1st Willie Milliken
2nd Damon Kotke
3rd Daulton Wilson

Open Wheeled Modified
1st Greg Brown
2nd Mack Cox
3rd Daniel Parker

Super Street
1st Benji Thompson
2nd Randy Guyton
3rd Jamie Barnes

Pure Stock
1st Martin Sweat
2nd Eric Bently
3rd Nathan Pate

Stock 4 Cylinder
1st Jimmy Ray
2nd Gibson Murray
3rd Kevin Weatherford

U-car
1st Marty Dean
2nd Mark Dean
3rd Ronnie Yarborough



Hoke County High School Bucks football team played their first scrimmage game last Saturday vs. Pine Forest and Douglas Byrd. In the backfield for the Bucks was Antonio Peterkin at quarterback with Jacob Rushing and Laquest Peterkin at running back and fullback. Geoffrey Thompson was out of town during the weekend scrimmage but is expected to play some at quarterback. The Bucks are returning only seven starters this season on both sides of the ball.



Senior returning wide receiver/tailback Brandon McRae hopes to see more of this in the upcoming season. Once he was out in the open, no one could catch him. The Bucks scrimmage at Jack Britt tomorrow night vs. Terry Sanford in the Cumberland/Robeson Jamboree. The first game of the season is next Friday, August 23 at Wilmington Ashley.

Sports Briefs

Hoke County graduate Earl Wolff played in his first pre-season NFL football game last Friday night when the Philadelphia Eagles took on the New England Patriots. Wolff had two solo tackles and one assisted tackle for a combined three tackles. Wolff played most of the third quarter and some of the fourth. The Eagles lost 31-22.

The Hoke County High School Lady Bucks' golf team will hold tryouts on Tuesday, August 20 at Bayonet at Puppy Creek at 4:30 p.m. All Hoke County schools' female students that are in the 9th - 12th grade and have a valid physical may attend tryouts. For more information, contact Coach Buddie Currie at Hoke High or call the school at 875-2156.

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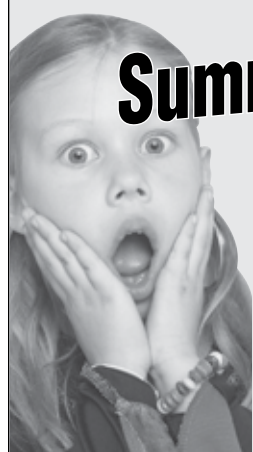
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Sports News To Report?
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Rep. Garland Pierce speaks.

Ex-offenders find advice, connections at town meeting

BY CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

Robeson County native Dennis Gaddy successfully completed higher education and went on to work in business – but then, he said, he broke the law and ended up incarcerated.

"I made some very poor choices and ended up spending five-and-a-half years in the North Carolina Department of Corrections," he said.

After his release, Gaddy changed his focus to helping people that also made poor choices and served time in prison. Today, through his work as executive director of the nonprofit Community Success Initiative, Gaddy is able to offer mentorship opportunities and more for ex-offenders through a variety of partnerships.

"I knew that people will hear you differently when they know you share their same experience," he said.

Gaddy was one of the speakers Friday night at the town hall meeting at the old Armory in Raeford who reached out to people who had been convicted of a crime and now seek to obtain employment and move forward with their lives.

Hope for Hoke, a local com-

munity nonprofit outreach founded by Lynn Baum, organized and conducted the town hall meeting. Hope for Hoke also conducted a job fair for ex-offenders earlier this month attended by about 75 job seekers and is additionally planning another event for October. Baum also runs an annual blanket drive to support people who are homeless.

Gaddy and other speakers addressed a small group of ex-offenders and their families about programs that exist to help people who were incarcerated reintegrate into society.

Rep. Garland Pierce also spoke at the event, encouraging individuals with convictions to speak out about their issues and discuss the challenges they face with elected officials. Pierce was one of the state legislators who in 2008 commissioned a study on the reentry process to see what kind of concerns exist for ex-offenders.

"It really allowed us to really see some of the things that men and women have to deal with when they come back home to society," Pierce said.

A lot of times their family members didn't want to have anything to do with them once the offender was released from prison, he added.

"You find yourself really out there on your own, and that's what we have seen over the years studying reentry," he said.

Baum encouraged people who were previously incarcerated to not be afraid to reach out and utilize services that are in place for those who are trying to work toward something better.

"Think positive. There's a lot of help there that you don't know," she said.

Having a positive attitude and sticking out even the hard times can lead to better things, Baum told the group.

"If you want to do better, you've got to do what it takes. If you're tired of struggling like I was, growing up homeless most of my life, and never feeling sorry for myself because sorry never put a dime in my pocket, you can do whatever you put your mind to do," she said.

Hope for Hoke will hold its next event, a free life conflict workshop and festival called "Make It This Time!" October 19, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at New Beginningz Praise and Worship center located at 318 Harris Avenue in Raeford. Refreshments will be served. For more information, contact Hope for Hoke at 691-4142.

Hospitals

(Continued from page 1A)

from Clinton Community College in New York, a bachelor's degree in nursing from SUNY College of Technology and a master's degree from Walden University in Minnesota. She previously worked with Duke University Medical Center as head nurse/clinic manager for the bone marrow transplant program and later as nurse clinician and administrative supervisor for the department of medicine, hematology/oncology associates. She has also worked at Scotland Memorial Hospital and Richmond Memorial Hospital.

Jones will be responsible for overseeing Health Pavilion Hoke, which opened earlier this year, as well as the 41-bed Cape Fear Valley Hoke hospital once it is built and opens.

Jones served as vice president of Bryn Mawr Hospital in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, where she was responsible for hospital space planning, revenue cycle enhancement, patient transport, materials management, patient registration and community health, among

others. She was also responsible for Mainline Health System's bariatric and comprehensive wound care service lines.

Before working at Bryn Mawr Hospital, Jones spent six years working for the Huntersville Medical Center in Huntersville, previously known as the Presbyterian Hospital Huntersville. She served as chief operating officer from 2008-11 and

as senior director of professional and support services from 2005-08.

Jones earned a bachelor's degree in allied health with a concentration in respiratory therapy from Tennessee State University in 1992 and earned a master's degree in business administration from Webster University in Missouri in 2000. She is a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives.



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Erica Fortenberry



Jennifer Damin



Laurie Ashley



Michelle Creamer

Four county schools get new principals

BY CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

Four Hoke County Public Schools will welcome new principals this month as students and teachers prepare to start back for the 2013-14 school year.

Families will have the chance to meet their new principals at open houses scheduled for each school. Parents and students can meet Laurie Ashley, principal of McLauchlin Elementary, on August 22 from 3-6 p.m.; Michelle Creamer, principal of East Hoke Middle, on August 21; Jennifer Damin, principal of Scurlock Elementary, on August 22 from 5-7 p.m.; and Erica Fortenberry, principal of the new Sandy Grove Middle, on August 21 from 4-7 p.m.

Laurie Ashley of McLauchlin Elementary School attended Pfeiffer College and Appalachian State University, where she studied voice performance and was the National Association of Teachers of Singing regional winner her senior year. She earned a bachelor's degree in music education from the University of North Carolina at Pembroke and later earned a master's degree in school administration as part of the N.C. Principal's Fellows Program at Fayetteville State University. She taught at Rosenswald Elementary in Fairmont for nine years and was a Sallie Mae National First-Year Teacher of the Year, and later became a Master Orff Teacher. Ashley taught for six years at Fort Bragg schools before becoming an assistant principal

in Cumberland County. Ashley is married to Rae Ashley, who is the director of cardio-pulmonary rehab and vascular health at Cape Fear Valley Health Systems. They have three children, Tripp, 18, Luke, 17 and Claire, 15. Their family is active in Boy Scouts, USA Climbing Competitions and Fayetteville Area Volleyball Association. They are members of Manna Church in Fayetteville.

Michelle Creamer of East Hoke Middle holds master's degrees in education and school administration. She has more than 18 years of teaching experience and taught in Germany as well as Robeson, Cumberland and Hoke counties. She came to Hoke in 2008 and taught at Sandy Grove Elementary before becoming assistant principal at Upchurch Elementary.

Creamer's goals for East Hoke Middle are to "continue the excellent academic growth that has been seen here year after year, to reach all students at East Hoke, providing a quality education that will prepare students to be college and career ready and to have the best teachers and staff at East Hoke Middle School that will be instrumental in students' lives, not only in the school but in the school community." Creamer said she and her husband, who serves in the military, have been married for 18 years. They have two children, Tyler, 16 and Kayleigh, 12.

Jennifer Damin of Scurlock Elementary holds a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Lebanon Valley College in


Annnville, Pennsylvania and a master's degree in educational leadership from Phoenix University. She has taught kindergarten, fourth grade and fifth grade, middle school language arts and also worked as an instruction coach for three years. She has lived in the Scurlock area for six years and has served as an assistant principal there for the last two years.

Damin's hopes and goals for leading Scurlock include having every child read proficiently, creating a culture of life-long learning, creating safe, respectful and responsible citizens, preparing every child to be literate, digital learners who will be "college and career ready." Damin's husband serves in the military and they have children.


Erica Fortenberry of Sandy Grove Middle School earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Southern Mississippi in 1997, a master's degree in education from Fayetteville State University in May 2003 and a master's degree in school administration from Fayetteville State University in May 2006. She served as an assistant principal intern at Hoke High School from 2005-06 and then worked as an assistant principal at East Hoke Middle School from 2006-07. She was named principal of East Hoke Middle in 2007 and served there until the end of the 2012-13 school year. She was named Principal of the Year for Hoke County Schools in 2012.

Hoke County students start back on Monday, August 26.

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