

# The News-Journal

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Hoke County's newspaper since 1905

No. 45 Vol. 109

RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

Wednesday, January 14, 2015

## County Manager Johnson fired Three commissioners who wanted him gone give no reason

By CATHARIN SHEPARD  
Staff writer

Without saying why, the Hoke County Board of Commissioners voted three to two Monday night to fire County Manager Tim Johnson.

"Because he's an at-will employee,"

Commissioner Tony Hunt said, when commission Vice Chairman Allen Thomas asked for an explanation.

Thomas, backed by Commissioner Bobby Wright, clashed with Hunt, Chairman James Leach and Commissioner Harry Southerland, who voted in favor of firing Johnson. The board later voted three

to two to make Human Resources Director and Assistant County Manager Letitia Edens the interim county manager, and gave her the "full power" of a manager.

About 20 people showed up to the special called meeting at the county building, where Johnson sat in his usual spot at the board table but was not allowed to

speaking. Several people in the audience tried to make comments during the meeting but were cut off and informed that public input was not allowed. The discussion became heated at times with board members interrupting one another and using rules of order to try to end the debate and push for a vote on their motions.

Last week, during a closed session, the board negotiated a "gentleman's agreement" (See **MANAGER**, page 4A)



Johnson



Wright



Thomas



Southerland



Hunt



Leach



The commissioners' meeting Monday night drew a crowd. Ken Gregory called the meeting a "friggin' kangaroo court." Andy Posey (center) said there's no trust in the county for this board. (Catharin Shepard photo)

## Lindsay Road still closed, bridge repair to close Wilson Road

By CATHARIN SHEPARD

Drivers in the South Hoke area will have to use a detour for at least several months while the North Carolina Department of Transportation replaces a 60-year-old bridge.

The NCDOT awarded a contract last week to replace the bridge on Wilson Road that crosses the Little Raft Swamp just

north of Red Springs. The bridge is in the area near Mount Elim Baptist Church.

The detour for drivers will use Covington, Goose Pond and Hodgin roads. Officials warned motorists to use caution, watch out for work crews, stay alert and obey the speed limit.

The old bridge was built in 1962 and is considered "structurally deficient," according to the

DOT. The department funded the work this year to make the route safer for drivers.

Demolition and construction could begin as soon as February 10 or as late as June 1. The work must be completed within 180 days of the start date, meaning that the bridge could be closed for up to six months.

The state awarded the \$407,100 contract for the work to Keystone

Contracting Company, Inc. of Grifton. The contract was awarded to the lowest bidder as required by state law.

More information about DOT road improvement projects is available through the NCDOT website.

### Lindsay Road still detoured

A section of Lindsay Road that washed out on Christmas Eve is

still closed, and will probably remain closed for at least a few more weeks, according to local DOT officials.

A portion of the roadway near the intersection with Adcox Road suffered structural damage on both sides of the shoulder after a heavy rain, combined with the effects of a beaver dam, caused flooding in the area.

(See **ROADS**, page 6A)

### This Week

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City workers Lacey Locklear (left) and John Daniels were fixing a litter problem beside US 401 Tuesday, but figured they'd be salting sidewalks Wednesday morning as ice was forecast for Raeford. (Ken MacDonald photo)

## Creek rises, ice man cometh

By CATHARIN SHEPARD  
Staff writer

For the first time this year, seasonal weather prompted ice warnings for Hoke County with meteorologists predicting freezing rain through Wednesday.

The National Weather Service office in Raleigh issued a winter storm watch for the

southeastern part of the Carolinas as early models showed the area might receive up to one-tenth of an inch of ice overnight Tuesday and into Wednesday morning. With low temperatures forecast in the mid-20s and highs in the mid-40s, officials warned of potentially slick and dangerous roads through at least Wednesday morning.

(See **WEATHER**, page 3A)

## Man charged with theft of air conditioners

Deputies with the Hoke County Sheriff's Office arrested a man last week on charges that he allegedly stole several air conditioners from empty homes.

Investigators arrested Kyle Lamar Saunders, 31, of the 6200 block of Lake Way Drive in Fayetteville on charges of two counts of felony larceny (See **THEFTS**, page 6A)



Saunders

## Felony fraud charges filed after traffic stop

Investigators with the Hoke County Sheriff's Office arrested a man last week for multiple alleged fraud charges.

Deputies arrested Elton Kenre Brown Jr. on seven counts of felony identity theft, seven counts of obtaining property by false pretense and two (See **FRAUD**, page 6A)



Brown



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# VIEWPOINTS

## This isn't why you were elected

It's not as if there's not enough to be done in Hoke County to keep our commissioners busy. We're still one of the fastest growing counties around and we're trying to cope with all those growing pains — overcrowded schools, law enforcement stretched thin — and with the effects of poverty — among the most pitiful retail sales numbers in the state (and that's where a county gets its most lucrative tax money), health problems like diabetes and heart disease and teen pregnancy, crimes such as break-ins and drug use, and unemployment over six percent.

So the new board of commissioners comes on line and its first act is to fire the county manager? Without cause. And

with a price tag that could hit \$400,000 if he were to sue and win. That's the equivalent of raising county taxes more than a penny. Even without a suit it won't be cheap.

What game is this? A power grab? Commissioners, this isn't why you were elected.

*"Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power."*

— Abraham Lincoln

*"The measure of a man is what he does with power."*

— Plato

## Hope commissioners can sleep well

By the reading of this article, the special meeting of the Hoke county commissioners will be over, and the fate of Tim Johnson's tenure as county manager will be determined. Three of the five county commissioners reportedly asked for his resignation. By many accounts, the motives of the three commissioners are personal and political, and not in the best interests of the county. Regardless, the taking of a man's livelihood, his ability to provide for his family, is serious business. To do so without legitimate cause is unethical. The county manager is accountable to the board of commissioners. If he committed a crime, like assaulting his wife or stealing money from clients, then he might deserve to be dismissed. Mr. Johnson committed no such crime, and, if terminated, the loss will be to the taxpayers of Hoke.

An East Hoke View  
Michael Lindsay



I often make decisions based on what is right and wrong, and how well I will sleep with the decision. Hopefully, our elected officials sleep well with their actions.

I had the privilege recently to greet a returning soldier at the Fayetteville airport, along with many other friends and family members. During her six-month deployment, she missed birthdays, graduations, and other precious life events. And while she serves proudly wherever called, her husband will agree with me that Hoke County is a better place with her in it. I was thankful for the opportunity to help welcome

her home, but the experience reminded me how much of a sacrifice the men and women in uniform make. May God bless them and their loved ones.

Still looking for a new year's resolution? Try slowing down. In the words of a country song: "This world keeps spinning faster." There are benefits to slowing down in many areas of life. A lower speed when behind the wheel can obviously save lives, money and property. It also can enrich our lives to slow down and spend quality time with the many people we interact with daily. And, as someone who has passed the mid-point of life expectancy, I hope to slow down and enjoy the time between each passing birthday.

*Michael Lindsay is a lifelong Hoke resident, and can be reached at mlindsay92@gmail.com.*

## We Get Letters

### Go to commissioners and speak truth

To the Editor:

John 14:6: Jesus said to him, "I am the truth."

"As a result (unity of faith), we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; ... speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up into Him, Christ." Ephesians 4:14-15

"I have a dream, that my little children will be judged on the content of their character, not the color of their skin." — Dr. M.L. King

The Holy Bible, written by God himself, is speaking to these Hoke Countians/Raefordites who voted recently based on the color of their skin, not the content of their character. You voted for a convicted criminal and disbarred lawyer—one a domestic abuser, one a thief, based on the color

of their skin, not the content of their character. You were "carried about" by "wind of doctrine."

These two commissioners have joined with another black commissioner to form an unholy triumvirate to control Hoke County, beginning with deceitful scheming, trickery, and craftiness to eliminate the white county manager. My hunch is they will replace him with a black person whom they can control. These three will carry out their schemes successfully because they are the majority vs. Mr. Wright and Mr. Thomas. I also wonder when their trickery will ascend onto Mr. Thomas, a black male. I voted for Mr. Thomas based on the content of his character, not the color of his skin. I pray he will stand firm to show his character and vote what is best for those of us who trusted him with our vote. Shame on Mr. Hunt, Leach, and South-

erland for the evil they think they are getting away with by ruining Hoke County and a man who has been the most successful county manager for Hoke County, whose only fault seems to be the color of his skin: white.

Citizens, watch how the business of Hoke County is being determined by three men you elected—you take responsibility for your vote and how your vote has affected all of our lives. Go to these men. Speak "truth in love" to them. Hold them accountable as God holds them to account. The wicked plots against the righteous and gnashes at him with his teeth. The Lord laughs at him, for he sees (their) day is coming. Pray for Hoke County citizens and the United States of America. Speak peace.

Ann Catharin Brown  
Raeford

## Police officers diligent in responding

To the Editor:

We live on East Elwood Avenue in Raeford. Recently, on two separate occasions we called the Raeford Police Department. On the first occasion, it was about a suspicious car that was traveling very slowly up and down our

road about four or five times. (We thought maybe they were looking for houses without someone being home.) The second time was in November, I believe, when we heard a gunshot; the neighbors heard it also. On both occasions, the police came within two-three

minutes of calling. That is service beyond compare! Due to their prompt and diligent efforts, we feel very safe in Raeford. Thank you to all our police officers! You're doing a wonderful job!

The Lewis family  
Raeford



## Optimistic about the state's energy future

My brain has been stretched by the end-of-year seminars needed to renew my engineering license. It feels good! I previously wrote about the coal ash dilemma exposed by the Haw River spill last February. I attended another seminar at N.C. State that focused on North Carolina's overall energy picture, including coal ash. This seminar sparked some real dialogue between experts and engineers who had in-depth knowledge of the subject. I left the seminar feeling better about potential environmental damage and future cleanup requirements. It may be possible that much of the ash can be left where it is, utilizing better safeguards while avoiding the expenditure of billions of dollars, which consumers will pay, to move it to other storage facilities. I would suggest that everyone keep an open mind on the subject and allow the technical experts to present the facts as they are discovered.

For years, I have felt that one of our top priorities should be energy independence. Our dependence on foreign oil has led to never ending crises in the Middle East. Only if we divorce ourselves from this energy need can we deal with that region on moral grounds, choosing to engage or disengage as the situation requires. Thankfully, we are just about there, largely due to increased gas production from fracking.

Fracking has become vitally important but is controversial. While permits for fracking in North Carolina are just becoming available, this technology has been in use for decades in other areas. The gas produced from these methods is largely responsible for what looks to be a bright energy future for



Frog Holler Philosopher  
Ron Huff

the U.S. Our energy imports have been cut in half in recent years and we are now exporting significant amounts. In North Carolina, the prediction of huge shale gas deposits has been reduced to the point that the most recent estimates predict only enough gas to provide energy for North Carolina for five years. Perhaps more importantly, the abundance of gas that is being produced from massive deposits in Pennsylvania dwarf known North Carolina deposits and are already in production with many years of supply readily available.

The fracking process for each well requires millions of gallons of water which is mixed with fracking chemicals, pumped into the ground and back out to be disposed of. In Pennsylvania, the wastewater is injected back into the ground far below ground water levels, a cheap method of disposal. In North Carolina, the shale gas is much closer to the ground water levels, making injection riskier. This water can be treated using conventional techniques in conventional facilities, but the economics of transporting, treating and discharging this water will drive the price of the gas up. The alternative is to allow the wastewater to be stored in ponds. With the threat of contamination from animal waste lagoons and coal ash storage ponds, I hope North Carolina will use extreme caution before allowing this to happen.

We are transitioning to the use of natural gas over coal to

generate electricity because the greenhouse gas emissions are roughly half and there is no ash generated. We need more gas. There is a large gas pipeline in the planning stages to bring enough gas from Pennsylvania to allow more electrical generation while providing relatively clean affordable energy for prospective industry. This is controversial as the underground pipeline will cross the property of many landowners. This issue must be addressed. If built, the economic benefit will be huge for North Carolina.

We discussed renewable energy: solar, wind and biomass, all of which work in North Carolina. Our state has massive potential for burning biomass, which includes animal waste, to generate power. While we all would like solar power, which harms nothing, the problem is supply versus demand. While we demand power at all times, a solar field only generates power when the sun shines, making it inadequate. Wind is similar. This means that we have to fuel burning power plants anyway, in case these don't produce. The answer is the development of batteries that can store massive amounts of energy for periods when demand exceeds supply. This will take time.

Nuclear power provides roughly a third of our energy in North Carolina. With proper safeguards, this is a great source of energy. Unfortunately, nuclear power plants have become too expensive to build when other fuels are available.

I believe our increasing energy independence will be a driver for the nation's economy for many years to come.

More later.

## Numbers show influencers of legislature

By CHRIS FITZSIMON  
N.C. Policy Watch

0—number of days until the 2015 session convenes (N.C. General Assembly)

3—number of fundraisers scheduled by House Speaker designee Tim Moore the day before the session convenes ("Fundraisers return to Raleigh along with legislative session," WRAL-TV, January 11, 2015)

300,000—approximate amount in dollars that Rep. Moore received in campaign contributions from PACs - final campaign reports for the 2014 election are due January 31 ("Tim Moore set to jump from small town to big stage of N.C. House speaker," Charlotte Observer, January 10, 2015)

448—number of special interests that have a lobbyist registered with the Secretary of State to represent them in the 2015 legislative session as of January 11 (N.C. Secretary of State)

410—number of lobbyists registered with the Secretary of State's office for the 2015 General Assembly session as of January 11 (Ibid)

9—number of local governments with registered lobbyists for the 2015 session as of January 11 (Ibid)

14—number of lobbyists registered with the Secretary of State's office on behalf of local governments in North Carolina (Ibid)

31—number of states where special interests with lobbyists

registered for the 2015 General Assembly are located (Ibid)

8—number of registered lobbyists for Duke Energy (Ibid)

15—number of lobbyists registered for Wells Fargo Bank, the most lobbyists registered by any one principal interest (Ibid)

17—number of clients for which former House Speaker Harold Brubaker is registered to lobby the 2015 General Assembly session (Ibid)

21—the number of clients for which Dana Simpson of Smith, Anderson, Blount, Dorsett, Mitchell & Jernigan LLP, a former staff member for House Speaker Harold Brubaker, is registered to represent in the 2015 session, the most of any lobbyist as of January 11 (Ibid)

## The News-Journal

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# Obituaries



**Robert A. Grant**

**Robert A. Grant**

Robert A. "Bobby" Grant, 72, of Fayetteville died Saturday, January 10, 2015 in his home after a battle with cancer.

He was an avid fan of Dale Earnhardt Jr., NASCAR and the Carolina Panthers. He was a dedicated employee of Bryan Honda for 31 years.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Amos and Irene Grant.

He is survived by his sister, Wanda Davis; and a host of cousins and friends.

The funeral was held at 2 p.m. Tuesday, January 13 in Jernigan-Warren Funeral Home chapel in Fayetteville, with the Rev. Judson Dunlap officiating. Burial was in Lafayette Memorial Park.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Sandy Grove United Methodist Church, 6800 Arabia Road, Lumber Bridge, NC 28357.

**Stephen J. Costin**

Stephen Joseph "Joe" Costin, 53, of the Sunset Harbor Community of Bolivia died Thursday, January 8, 2015 at New Hanover Regional Medical Center.

He was born in Frankfurt, Germany on December 16, 1961 and was the son of Doris Davis Costin of Aynor, South Carolina and the late Halbert R. Costin. He was preceded in death by a sister, Mary Costin. He was a carpenter. He will always be remembered for wit and great sense of humor.

Survivors in addition to his mother include his wife, Ruth Costin; his daughter, Destiny Graves of the home; granddaughter, Emma Grace Graves; three brothers, Ray Costin of Aynor, South Carolina, Mike Costin of

Winnabow, and Robert Costin of St. Petersburg, Florida; and a sister, Wanda Costin-Morales of Mary Esther, Florida.

A memorial service was held at 2 p.m. Saturday, January 10 in Coble Ward-Smith Funeral Service chapel, Supply.

Online condolences are accepted at [www.coblewardsmith-supply.com](http://www.coblewardsmith-supply.com).

**Sheryl R. Nelson**

Sheryl R. Nelson of Fayetteville died Sunday, January 11, 2015.

She was preceded in death by her parents, William Donald and Lenore Ann Runge.

She is survived by her husband of 40 years, the Rev. Michael Nelson of Fayetteville; a daughter, Heather N. Porter and husband Chip of Fayetteville; two sons, Kyle Nelson and wife Elizabeth of Fayetteville, and Cameron Nelson and wife Helena of Carteret County; a sister, Linell R. Clark and husband Thomas of Hampstead; grandchildren, Ean Gaskins, Caleb Nelson, Emma Nelson, Jacob Nelson, and Skyler Nelson; and step-grandchildren, Michael Porter and Patrick Dudley.

Visitation will be held from 11 a.m. to noon Thursday, January 15 at Sandy Grove United Methodist Church, 6800 Arabia Road, Lumber Bridge.

A memorial service will be held at noon Thursday, January 15 at Sandy Grove United Methodist Church.

Online condolences may be made at [www.crumplerfuneral-home.com](http://www.crumplerfuneral-home.com).

**Rebecca Clayton**

Rebecca Ford Jones Clayton, 94, born on September 12, 1920, passed away January 8, 2015. Born in Raleigh, she resided in Bunn.

She was a beloved wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother and a blessing and joy for all that knew her. She loved people, traveling and art.

She was preceded in death by William Vance Jones, father of JoAnn Jones Meade and Jackie Jones Davis, and by Roy Everette Clayton; sister, Dorothy Ford Thomas; and brother, Russell S. Ford.

She is survived by daugh-



**Rebecca Clayton**

ters, JoAnn Jones Meade and husband Aubrey, and Jackie Jones Davis and husband Vance; grandchildren, Aubrey L. Meade Jr. (Lily), Elizabeth Meade Sanne (Steve), Bryan Keith Davis, William Kevin Davis (Lisa) and Kimberly Dawn Matthews; and great-grandchildren, Shane Michael Sanne, Joshua Robert Sanne (Jamie), Krysten A. Ellis, Kaylen D. Ellis, Justin L. Ellis and William E. Davis.

The funeral was held at 3 p.m. Sunday, January 11 at Brown-Wynne Funeral Home in Raleigh. Private family interment was at the Historic Oakwood Cemetery.

Condolences may be sent to the family at [www.BrownWynne.com](http://www.BrownWynne.com).

**Cynthia J. Anderson**

Cynthia J. Anderson, 62, of Raeford died Thursday evening, January 8, 2015 in FirstHealth Hospice House.

Survivors include her husband, Andy Anderson of the home; son, Jerry Hair and wife Nicole of Coral Springs, Florida; daughter, Susan Williams and husband Daryl of Hope Mills; two stepdaughters, Annette Marie Griffith and Angel Michelle Keathley, both of San Antonio, Texas; stepson, Alton M. Anderson Jr. of Maryland; five grandchildren, Aaron, Daryl, Cameron, Ashton and Cheyanne; five step-grandchildren, Amanda, Matthew, Emily, Isaiah and Elijah; and two sisters, Cheryl Diane Hyz and Mary Lou Patrick, both of Fayetteville.

The funeral was held at 3 p.m. Sunday, January 11 in Jernigan-Warren Funeral Home chapel with the Rev. Tim Gore presiding. Burial was in Cross Creek Cemetery No. 3.

great-grandchildren.

She is survived by her husband, Richard Keller; two daughters, Debbie Norton and husband Don, and Dwanda Dalton and husband Vernon; a son, Daniel Keller and wife Donna; a son-in-law, Glen Jurek; 10 grandchildren; and 17 great-grandchildren.

A memorial service will be held at a later date in Texas.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the charity of your choice.

Online condolences may be made at [www.crumplerfuneral-home.com](http://www.crumplerfuneral-home.com).



**Gladys M. Dunn**

**Gladys M. Dunn**

Gladys Marlene Dunn of Raeford died Friday, January 9, 2015 in FirstHealth Moore Regional Hospital at the age of 88.

She was born on October 27, 1926 in Richmond County to the late Jason Dunn and Nannie Brewer Dunn. She was preceded in death by her sons, George Edward Long and Jimmy Long. She was a member of the Evangelical Methodist Church in Raeford. She loved her church and church family. She enjoyed her Evangelical Methodist Church ladies' class meeting. But most importantly, she loved her Lord and is now reunited in heaven with her children and loved ones gone before her.

Survivors include a son, Jerry Long and wife Kathy of Raeford; two daughters, Nancy Lupo and husband Bill of Lumber Bridge, and Patricia Beasley and husband Bucky of Lumber Bridge; a daughter-in-law, Jean Long of Raeford; 14 grandchildren; 28 great-grandchildren; and a great-great-granddaughter.

The funeral was held at 2 p.m. Monday, January 12 in Crumpler Funeral Home chapel with Pastor Billy Joe Brady and Pastor Roger Burns officiating.

Burial was in the Raeford Cemetery.

Online condolences may be made at [www.crumplerfuneral-home.com](http://www.crumplerfuneral-home.com).

**Kenneth A. Saunders**

Kenneth A. Saunders, 63, of Supply, formerly of Hoke County, died Sunday, January 4, 2015 at the Hospice Foundation.

He was preceded in death by his father, Albert E. Saunders and mother, Dorothy Saunders.

He is survived by his wife, Bessie Jane; a son, Ken Morgan of Oak Island; a stepson, Kid Earl Caison of Southport; brothers, Gene Saunders of Holden Beach and Larry Saunders (Carla) of Ripley, West Virginia; sisters, Rhonda S. Hodge of Raeford and Patricia Byrd (Kenneth) of Southport; five grandchildren; and several nieces and nephews.

A memorial service was held at 2 p.m. Saturday, January 10 at Supply Baptist Church.

Memorials may be made to SECU Hospice Foundation, 955 Mercy Lane SE, Bolivia, NC 28422.



**Lorraine B. Keller**

**Lorraine B. Keller**

Lorraine B. Carter Keller of Raeford went to her heavenly home on January 9, 2015.

She was preceded in death by her daughter Donna Jurek.

She was born August 16, 1935 in Rolla, North Dakota. She attended Minot Teachers College. She married Richard Keller on October 22, 1956. Over the next 58 years, she was a loving wife, and devoted to her children, grandchildren and

# Frontstretch Fest comes to Stoneybrook

BY CATHARIN SHEPARD  
Staff writer

It might be known as North Carolina's biggest outdoor cocktail party, but this year Stoneybrook Steeplechase organizers hope race fans will be drinking fine bourbon and craft beers — maybe with a cigar on the side.

The first annual Frontstretch Fest will bring some of the country's best-known whisky and beer companies, along with several local breweries, to the Carolina Horse Park infield during the 64th running of the Stoneybrook Steeplechase. The festival, a separate entity that has partnered with the horse park, is one way that organizers hope to draw in bigger crowds than ever for the day at the races.

Frontstretch Fest will have "quality bourbon, craft beer and artisanal food" for people who want to attend, according to Brian Bauer, agency director of Rockhouse Partners, the company that founded Frontstretch Fest.

"We see an opportunity to create something truly unique," he said. "Horse racing, quality bourbon, craft beer and artisanal food all have a natural home in our region, and we're thrilled to present an exceptional combination of these experiences for fans."

It seemed like a natural decision to combine the festival's offerings with Stoneybrook Steeplechase, and it was Bauer's company that reached out to the horse park with the idea of bringing the festival to North Carolina. It also plans to hold a Frontstretch Fest in Nashville, Tennessee.

"Based off of our locations, we wanted to create something that would definitely serve the horse racing fans and also the fans of the bourbon and beer and food set. We developed the concept to act as a complement to existing festivals," Bauer said.

Besides alcoholic drinks from makers such as Jack Daniels, Southern Pines Brewing Co. and Mash House Brewing Company, the event will also offer VIP tickets that will grant access to exclusive tastings, catering, private brewing and distillery classes as well as private restrooms.

Since the steeplechase moved to the horse park in 2001, attendance has been between 7,000 and 10,000 guests each year, Carolina Horse Park Director Maureen Grippa said. Bringing Frontstretch Fest to race day is a way to drive that number up by providing more offerings for guests.

"We're hoping to have the minimum attendance at

10,000," Grippa said.

Race day is family-friendly and will remain a day with activities for the young and the young at heart, she said. The hat contest, children's stick horse races and all the other classic Stoneybrook Steeplechase events will go on as they always have.

"There is a very mixed audience that comes to the park on race day. We'll have families, we'll have friends from college, people who love horses, people who want to enter the hat contest," Grippa said.

It's also a day for adults who enjoy food and drink to have a good time with friends in the infield. The steeplechase is a "rite of spring" for many people, with typically beautiful spring weather bringing out crowds who are tired of winter. It helps people escape cabin fever, the director said.

"When you come to a steeplechase, a lot of people will come to tailgate, and they bring their food and beverages, and it's recognized as a day of partying as well as the races," Grippa said.

It will also give local breweries the chance to show off their products to an audience of thousands, hopefully giving the local economy a boost too, she said.

The 64th annual Stoneybrook Steeplechase will be at Carolina Horse Park in Raeford on Saturday, April 4 from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. General admission tickets for the steeplechase are \$25, while tailgate spots are also available.

Guests who only want to attend the steeplechase can buy just a general admission ticket, but people who want to attend Frontstretch Fest must buy both a Stoneybrook ticket and a separate ticket just for the festival. General admission packages for both are available for \$49 if purchased before February 1 or for \$59 after February 1. VIP packages for both events are \$99 until February 1 or \$190 after February 1.

By joining with Rockhouse Partners, the parent company of Frontstretch Fest, steeplechase organizers are able to offer online ticket purchasing for the first time ever. Tickets can be purchased through <http://www.carolinahorsepark.com/> and <http://frontstretchfest.com/>.

Rockhouse Partners is a technology-based marketing agency that has worked with entertainment properties such as NASCAR and Formula 1 tracks, Churchill Downs, the X Games, Minnesota State Fair, Ryman Auditorium, Summer Camp Music Festival, Nashville Predators, Jam Productions and Music City Bowl.

## Weather

(Continued from page 1A)

Hoke County Schools announced Tuesday afternoon that there would be a two-hour delay for all students and staff on Wednesday. The Board of Education additionally canceled its scheduled meeting and rescheduled it for Friday at 9:30 a.m.

Power outages due to sleet accumulating on power lines were a concern, the weather service said. The most ice accumulation was expected along the Interstate 95 corridor.

Due to the rain predicted for Tuesday, the state's Department of Transportation decided not to brine the roads ahead of the potentially icy night. The rain

would just wash it away, NCDOT Engineer Charles Vick said.

"We're not planning to put any brine out during a rain event or before a rain event," he said.

Vick, who works with the NCDOT office in Hoke County, said that the county's DOT workers are on call and keeping a close eye on the situation. Workers planned to take a look at bridges, overpasses and other ice-sensitive areas and apply salt from salt-spreading trucks if necessary. The local branch has plenty of salt and brine in stock for this winter storm and any more freezing rain or snow that might come this way over the next weeks and months, Vick said.

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# Manager

(Continued from page 1A)

ment" with Johnson and promised to "honor his contract to the fullest" if he resigned, according to Hunt. Comments by Thomas suggested that the vice chairman felt the manager was being "forced out" and that Johnson may sue the county. Southerland said that the board did not use the word "forced" in the discussions. Johnson was not facing any disciplinary action, Thomas later said.

Johnson did not resign, and Thomas said the issue holding up Johnson's resignation was whether the county would continue to pay Johnson's health insurance until he turned 65. That was not a stipulation in the manager's contract, Thomas said, but emphasized it was his understanding - and Johnson's - that the board discussed the matter in 2010.

"Our county manager was under the impression that he would be paid health insurance until he turns the age of 65, where he'll be eligible for Medicare," Thomas said.

The insurance would cost about \$565 a month, or about \$33,900 over a period of five years, and would come from local tax dollars along with other county employees' health insurance payments, according to information presented at the meeting.

Hunt, who was on the board in 2010, said the commission never discussed paying Johnson's health insurance until he was 65 should he leave his job.

Thomas asked the board to amend the manager's contract to include five years of health insurance payments, whether Johnson resigned or the commission fired him. The vice chairman's comments suggested the possibility that a "compromise" of five years instead of the full 10 it would take for Johnson to turn 65 might convince Johnson to resign and avoid the possibility of a lawsuit.

"My motion is to amend his contract to allow him to resign and also add the five years of health insurance," Thomas said. Wright seconded the motion.

However, Hunt said he did not understand where the health insurance issue came from, as it did not come up in the last meeting when the board discussed Johnson's job.

"I'm confused because you made the statement that this is what's been holding us up. I didn't know that we were being held up. I thought that we left here last Monday night with a gentleman's agreement on what was going to take place, that we would honor the contract. Now that's what I heard here on this board. I guess my question I'm getting to is, when did health benefits come into play? Because y'all haven't met since last Monday night, so this is the first time I'm hearing this. What is this about health benefits?" Hunt said.

Thomas said that he had discussed the matter with Johnson outside of a meeting.

"When we left here after closed session, we had a gentleman's agreement where if you were going to force him out, if you were going to force him out -" Thomas said.

"We never used the word force," Southerland said.

"I understand, but the gentleman's agreement was that if he had to go, we would honor -"

"His contract," Hunt said.

"Honor him the same leaving as if he were terminated," Thomas said.

In 2010, he said, the board discussed the matter of Johnson's benefits should he be terminated. However, there was confusion about whether that matter was actually discussed or whether the board made a decision about it at that time.

"I've been talking to Mr. Johnson. There is some discrepancy - I wasn't on the board then - there's some discrepancy as to whether it was said and agreed to," Thomas said.

Thomas alluded to the possibility that Johnson might sue the county if he did not receive the health insurance benefits, and the vice chairman also alluded to another lawsuit brought against the county by a former department head.

"To avoid our county from going through any further litigation, Mr. Johnson said he is agreeable to five years and not the full 10 years he's been fighting for," Thomas said.

Southerland asked to see the minutes of the meeting where the discussion of Johnson's health insurance allegedly took place, but Thomas said he did not have the minutes as he was not on the board at that time. Southerland asked Wright, then the county attorney and the board at large if anyone had a recollection of the meeting.

"I don't even know what minutes you're talking about," Hunt said.

"We've had a week to get something together," Thomas said.

"I didn't know we were getting anything together though, Allen. The gentleman's agreement was that he would resign and we would honor his contract to the fullest," Hunt said.

"That wasn't reported to the newspaper, was it?" Southerland said.

"Exactly, it wasn't, but I'm going to tell it now because everything else was told," Hunt said.

There was never any discussion in the meeting about Johnson's health insurance, Hunt said.

"There has not been any discussion about health insurance for Tim since he's been here," he said. "I served on the board, Allen."

"I'm talking about since last week. If you haven't been privy to that information, I apologize," Thomas said.

"Well, I haven't been privy to that information," Hunt said. "I wish y'all would quit having meetings without me, then."

"Nobody's having meetings without you," Thomas said.

"Well, then I wish y'all would quit talking and not including me," Hunt said. "I mean, I got elected like everybody else."

"I talked to the chairman, he understands," Thomas said. "One on one, I know where he stands on it. I was with commissioner Southerland in Winston-Salem for three days, I know where he stands."

Hunt again said that the board had never discussed paying Johnson's health insurance.

"What this county voted on for health insurance for employees ... is that this county voted a few years ago that any employee that served for 30 years with Hoke County, that they would pay a portion of their health insurance until they turned 65, but they had to serve the whole 30 years with Hoke County, Allen. That's the discussion that was talked about several years ago. Now, there's never been that discussion with Tim. He has a contract, the contract - we're willing to honor the contract tonight and everything that the contract has in it," Hunt said.

But paying Johnson's health insurance - "You're talking about doing that for 60 months?" Hunt asked.

Thomas again alluded to the possibility that if the county did not, Johnson might sue over it.

"We've had a recent lawsuit with a director, how much did we spend on that lawsuit that we actually won? ... I'm hearing a \$200,000 figure," Thomas said.

"I have no idea," County Attorney

Grady Hunt said.

"I wasn't on the board then, you are the ones liable for it, so what I'm saying is we can do this compromise, allow him to resign, end this meeting and go home and watch basketball," Thomas said.

Southerland asked where the money to pay Johnson's health insurance would come from. It would come from "the same place" as the other county employees' insurance, Thomas said.

"The citizens?" Southerland asked, and Thomas confirmed.

"That's where the \$400,000 would come from if we had to fight him in a lawsuit," he said.

"But if you win the lawsuit, the attorneys' fees are reimbursed," Southerland said.

The vice chairman then called for a question to end the discussion so the board would vote on his motion to amend Johnson's contract to include the five years of health insurance payments.

Leach said that he was not willing to use taxpayer money to pay Johnson's health insurance when senior citizens in the county have trouble buying food and medicine and struggle to pay their taxes.

"I'm certainly willing to honor the contract but I am not willing to take taxpayer dollars from some of our seniors who have a hard time feeding themselves, buying medicine and struggling to pay their taxes, coming up here struggling to try to make ends meet to pay their taxes, and some of them have a hard time paying their taxes. It's taxpayer dollars, and you're asking us to put into a contract something that's not in a contract?" he said.

Thomas interjected that he had called for a question to take a vote.

"No, no, no, Allen. You have to understand, you're asking this board to take taxpayer dollars, seniors who can't half meet their needs to buy medicine and feed themselves, and you're asking this board to take those dollars and put into a contract, Allen, that's not in a contract," Leach said.

Thomas again called for a question to end the debate and vote on his motion. The board then voted three to two against the question, with Southerland, Hunt and Leach voting not to end the discussion yet.

"I can't understand why you want to give taxpayer dollars away and folks not able to buy their food, buy medicine, and they're struggling to pay their taxes," Leach then said in further comments. "But yet, we as a board, I'm not saying you, the board is willing to give those dollars away that we don't have instead of helping our citizens. I can see you talking about us saving money, reduce the budget and reduce taxes - that makes sense. If we've got money built up, a lot of money to throw away, let's decrease taxes and give our seniors a better tax rate. I understand giving back to our seniors. I don't understand you want to take hard-earned taxpayers' dollars and ask us, this board, this county, to pay insurance for the next five or 10, or life, years."

Thomas said it would be five years, not 10 years or life, and argued that it would be cheaper than paying for a lawsuit if Johnson sued over the matter.

"It was very clear also that we're looking at a lawsuit. I understand your speech about helping seniors who are paying their money, but at the same time, we're looking at which one will benefit us the most in the long run - fighting a lawsuit or settling this thing as gentlemen," the vice chairman said.

Hunt asked the county attorney whether, in his legal opinion, the county would fulfill its obligation

to Johnson as long as it honors his contract.

"Do we have the contract that we have, if we are in agreement to honor the contract to its fullest that's in it, do we have a good contract and with that and honoring that contract, will we have fulfilled our obligation on that contract?" Hunt asked.

"In my opinion, you would," county attorney Hunt said.

As part of that contract, the county agreed to pay Johnson a six-month severance of \$64,395.24, according to Assistant County Manager Letitia Edens, who also serves as human resources director. However, Johnson said that figure was not equal to six months of his pay, which is about \$139,000. The severance pay should be closer to \$69,000, he said.

With five years of life insurance benefits, that amount would increase to over \$100,000, not taking into account additional pay for unused vacation time that the board already agreed to pay Johnson as per his contract.

Leach again stated his concern for the strain on seniors in regards to the matter of paying for five years of Johnson's health insurance.

"I think we've got seniors that need food, seniors that need heat, and we have seniors that have a hard time paying their taxes. That's my stance," the chairman said.

When Leach called for the vote, Thomas said he wanted to allow the county manager to explain his position on the health insurance issue, as Johnson was at the meeting in 2010 where the discussion allegedly took place. When Thomas did not restate his motion as requested, Leach then asked county Clerk Linda Revels to read Thomas's motion. After doing so, the board members voted three to two against amending Johnson's contract to include the five years of health insurance payments.

Hunt then made a motion to fire Johnson.

"I make a motion tonight that we terminate the county manager's employment with Hoke County and that we honor the contract that we have with him to the fullest of the contract, what is in the contract," he said.

Thomas called for discussion at that time.

"Why are you terminating the county manager?" he asked.

"Because he's an at-will employee," Hunt said.

"Okay, just wanted to know from the commissioners because we are going to pay \$70,000 to this man, a paycheck for the next six months, plus his vacation time. We're pushing \$100,000 we're going to give him in the next six months and I'd just like to know why," Thomas said.

"And you're going to add another \$40,000 or \$50,000 to that," Southerland said.

"No. If it were up to me, we wouldn't be paying him a dime over what we're paying him to do his job. So all I'm asking is if we're going to cut this check for \$80,000, whatever it is, why is it? That's all I'm asking," Thomas said.

Hunt then called for a question to end the debate and vote on his motion to fire Johnson. Southerland seconded the question and Hunt, Southerland and Leach voted to end the discussion while Thomas and Wright voted to continue it.

Southerland seconded the motion to fire Johnson, and the board then voted three to two in favor of terminating the county manager, with Thomas and Wright voting against firing him. Southerland then made a motion to move Edens into the position of interim county manager.

"I want to throw on the floor that we go ahead and look at allowing Ms. Edens be the interim county manager, effective immediately, with full power," he said.

Hunt seconded the motion, which passed three to two, with Wright and Thomas voting against it.

The commissioners adjourned the meeting.

Southerland, as he left the commissioners' room, said to a News-Journal reporter, "What you just heard was truth. What you had last week was a lie."

He left the room without responding to a request for further comment.

Several Hoke citizens stayed afterward discussing the issue and sharing their opinions about it.

"There's a very strong undercurrent that the assistant county manager is the one that three of the commissioners wanted in that position, and they basically just voted her in office," Andy Posey said.

Posey said he had seen a lot of discussion about the matter on social media.

"There's no trust by a lot of the citizens in Hoke County about this board," he said. "There's no explanation given for (Johnson's) termination."

Ken Gregory, who said he is the treasurer of the Hoke County GOP, criticized the board's actions.

"This was a friggin' kangaroo court," he said. "... I'm trying to find out exactly what's going on.

There's smoke and mirrors and hands running this whole thing, and from what I've heard through people talking, it's like (Johnson) wouldn't roll over and play dead for them. There's too much politics running between politics and getting stuff done in this county, and everything ain't upfront."

Gary Adkins said this was the first time he had attended a board meeting.

"When you can fire a man for no reason, something ain't right," he said.

Wright, who served on the board the entire time Johnson was county manager, said he felt Johnson had served the county well.

"I think he did us a good job, I sure do," Wright said. "I think he's a very honest man and he does the best he can on all subjects and I don't think he compromises himself or his opinion of anything just to make people happy."

Asked how he felt about getting a new county manager at the start of the budget season, Wright said he's not pleased with the timing.

"I'm not happy with the timing of it, but you always have to work with the hand that's dealt to you," he said.

The county commissioners are scheduled for a three-day retreat from January 26-28 to meet with department heads and school system leaders prior to planning the 2015-16 fiscal year budget.



**Nursing assistants**  
The latest graduates of the Monday/Wednesday Sandhills Community College Nursing Assistant program in Hoke County and their instructors are Shelley Louya, instructor (left to right); Shakeia Durant; Christina Harvey; Vanessa Bello; Ashley Penfield; Ashley Green; Jessica Barkley; and Amanda Steed, Instructor.



The latest graduates of the Tuesday/Thursday Sandhills Community College Nursing Assistant program in Hoke County and their instructors are Jo Tomicic, who is holding a picture of Ronnie Venable; Lupe Jimenez; Sue Locklear; Juanita Evans; Suzanne Fehlhaber, who is holding a picture of Kristin Schulz; and Shelley Louya, instructor. Not pictured is Harlena Kershaw.

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# SPORTS



Steven Warren wrestles his opponent Zach Skipper in the early rounds of Hoke's win over Scotland County. Steven beat his opponent by fall at 113 lbs.



Harley Ellis uses a Side Headlock and eventually turns over 285 lb Scotland wrestler Juan Sanchez. Harley won his match by fall in :45 seconds at 285 lbs.



Hoke High Head Wrestling Coach Vernon Walworth got his 100th in the program last week when the Bucks defeated Scotland County 60-12. Coach Walworth came to Hoke in 2006 to take over a wrestling program that had been good in the past, but had fallen on tough times. The Bucks regularly compete across the state and are always in the top half of the Southeastern Conference.

## Bucks get 100th win for Coach

BY HAL NUNN  
Sports writer

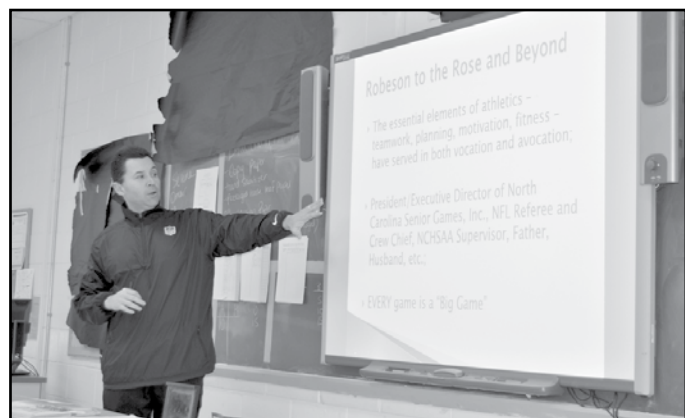
The Hoke County Bucks wrestling team defeated Scotland County last week 60-12 in their match at Hoke High. The win was the 100th win for Head Coach Vernon Walworth who

has been at Hoke High for nine years. The Bucks jumped out to a lead with Steven Warren getting the win over Zach Skipper from Scotland County by fall at 3:01 at 113 lbs. Then Bailey Cooper kept the wining going with a 4-2 decision over Zitemus Henderson at 126 lbs. Mike Ramos defeated

Dakota McLean in a decision at 138 lbs. Devonte McClean defeated Quaterio Southerland in a fall at 160 lbs. Patricio Cifuentes defeated Travis Harrington by Fall at 195 lbs and Harley Ellis defeated Juan Sanchez by Fall at 285 lbs. The win by the Bucks puts their record at 9-16 getting

right in the middle of conference play. This past weekend the Bucks went 2-3 at the Holly Springs Hawk Duals beating Rolesville and Garner Magnet but losing to Northern Nash, Leesville and Providence Grove. The Bucks will head to St. Pauls this weekend for an individual tournament.

### NFL referee speaks to officiating class



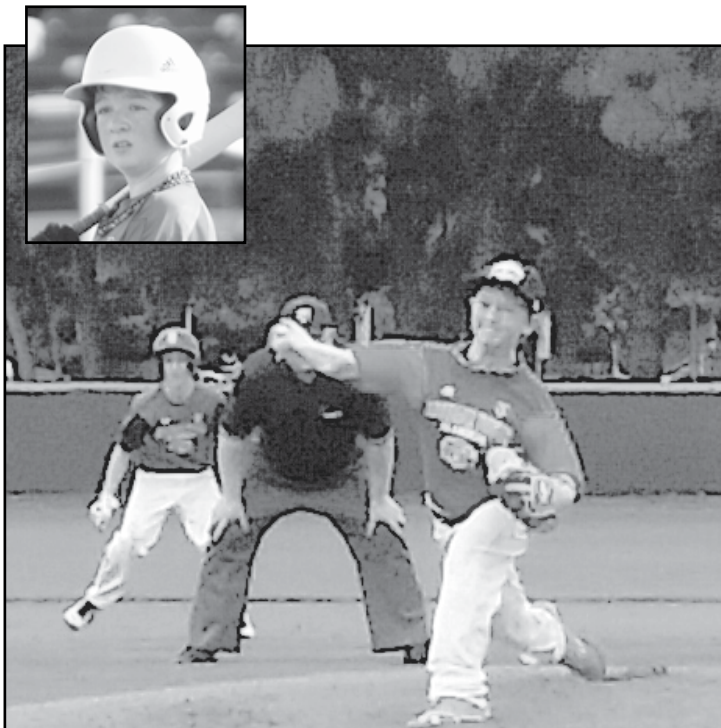
Brad Allen, a native of Robeson County and now NFL "White Hat" referee, spoke to a Sports Officiating Class last week at Hoke High. The title of his presentation was "From Robeson County to the Rose Bowl and Beyond." Brad is the first referee to go from college football to a "white hat" lead referee in the NFL in 62 years. He is a former lead referee for the ACC and is currently the regional Supervisor of Officials for the NCHSAA. He started officiating in Robeson County in 1992 at Magnolia Little League in the Saddletree community.



NFL official and former ACC official Brad Allen showed the class his rings from all the big games he officiated: 1-2005 ACC Staff, 2-2007 Motor City Bowl, 3-2009 International Bowl, 4-2010 ACC Championship, 5-2011 Army/Navy Game, 6-2012 New Mexico Bowl, 7-2012 Rose Bowl and his final college game-2014 Sugar Bowl.



**Walker competes in national tournament**  
Dakota Walker, a Hoke County 12-year-old, was selected to play in the Baseball Youth All-American Winter Games in Vero Beach, Florida at Historic Dodgertown USA. He was selected with 400 other kids from 36 states to play in the tournament. Dakota is a pitcher and infielder who is in the 7th grade at East Hoke Middle. He plays for FireAntz Baseball in Fayetteville and Hoke County All-Stars. He is the son of Tiffany Walker of Raeford.



**Miller competes in national tournament**  
Liam Miller, a Hoke County 12-year-old, was selected to play in the Baseball Youth All-American Winter Games in Vero Beach, Florida at Historic Dodgertown USA. He was selected with 400 other kids from 36 states to play in the tournament. Liam is a pitcher and infielder who is in the 7th grade at Sandy Grove Middle. He plays for St. Pauls Norman Showcase Academy and Hoke County All-Stars. He is the son of Mark and Jennifer Miller of Raeford.

## Fighting Bucks Sports Schedule

**January 14**  
Middle School Wrestling at East Hoke 4:15 p.m.  
Middle School Wrestling at Sandy Grove 4:15 p.m.

**January 15**  
Middle School Basketball at Sandy Grove 4:15 p.m.

**January 16**  
Girls JV Basketball Home vs. Lumberton 5 p.m.  
Girls V Basketball at Lumberton 6 p.m.  
Boys JV Basketball Home vs. Lumberton 6:30 p.m.  
Boys V Basketball at Lumberton

7:30 p.m.  
Boys Wrestling at St. Pauls High 9 a.m.  
Bulldog Invitational  
**January 19**  
Boys V Basketball MLK Classic at Union Pines  
**January 20**  
Girls JV Basketball at Scotland 5 p.m.  
Girls V Basketball Home vs. Scotland 6 p.m.  
Boys JV Basketball at Scotland 6:30 p.m.  
Boys V Basketball Home vs. Scotland 7:30 p.m.

## Bucks sweep Trojans and Raiders

BY HAL NUNN  
Sports writer

The Hoke County High School Bucks boys' and girls' basketball teams got into full conference mode last week with their first win in the conference over Richmond County Friday night.

Earlier last week, both teams defeated Pine Forest at Hoke High. The Lady Bucks used every player in the game and every player but one scored in their 52-20 destruction of Pine Forest. "We got almost everyone back from injury last week and it helped," Coach Tiffany Parks said. The Lady Bucks held Pine Forest to single digits in each quarter with a 13-point scoring effort from JeTeria Wells and 12 points from Jazlynn McNeill.

In the boys' game against Pine Forest, the game was the rebound game from when these two teams met in November and eight players were suspended. Cooler heads prevailed this time and Hoke used a 24-6 first period to cushion a Trojan comeback and won pulling away 59-49.

Last Friday night, both teams opened the Southeastern Conference

portion of the schedule and came out victorious against Richmond County. In the girls' game, the Lady Bucks intensity forced 24 turnovers by Richmond; however, the girls didn't capitalize on those turnovers early on. "We rushed our transition game too much and did not convert those turnovers into points," Coach Parks said. "Richmond came back strong and Mikayla King helped carry us in the third period with her defense." JeTeria Wells led the scoring again with 13 points. "Our girls played with a lot of fouls and that hurt us for a bit," Parks said. The Lady Bucks are 6-8 overall and 1-0 in SEC.

In the boys' game, it was back and forth all night long and was a very physical game but the Bucks came out on top 71-68. "We shot pretty good from beyond the arch and from the free throw line," Coach Quame Patterson said. Wesley Baldwin hit some key free throws down the stretch to help secure the win. John Maynor led the way for the Bucks with 21 points followed by Wesley Baldwin with 18 and Dominique Love with 11. Nine players scored for the Bucks. They are now 7-6 overall and 1-0 in SEC.

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## District Court

Recent cases heard in Hoke County District Criminal Court:

Jan. 8

- Judge Michael A. Stone presiding
- Ricky Rafael Albino, 31, 4865 Deans Bride Road, Blythe, Ga., improper equipment—speedometer, \$25 fine and court costs
- Aaron Michael Carter, 26, 2374 Roverchase Plaza, Fayetteville, improper equipment—speedometer, \$50 fine and court costs
- Ashley Loraine Cooper, 22, 2612 Bobwhite Circle, Wingate, speeding 64 miles per hour in a 55-mph zone, \$25 fine and court costs; failure to comply with operator's license restrictions, voluntary dismissal
- Marilyn Gray, 41, 231 Tiffany Court, Fayetteville, driving while license revoked (not revoked for driving while intoxicated), five days suspended, 12 months unsupervised probation, \$50 fine

- and court costs
- Latoya Renee Grace, 25, 152 Heron Drive, Raeford, failure to wear seat belt by driver, \$25.50 fine and court costs; operating a motor vehicle with no insurance, voluntary dismissal
- Betty Jo Michelle Inman, 24, 3036 Piney Mountain Drive, Hope Mills, speeding 64 miles per hour in a 55-mph zone, \$15 fine and court costs
- Donald L. Jackson, 52, 1076 Danbury Road, Fayetteville, driving while license revoked (not revoked for driving while impaired), 10 days suspended, 12 months probation, \$50 fine and court costs, probation to be transferred to Cumberland County, defendant may be transferred to unsupervised probation upon full payment of all moneys and upon full compliance with terms of supervised probation
- Deonandra Maurice Jones, 37, 514 Inverary Drive, Raeford, improper equipment—speedometer, \$30 fine and court costs

- Jerry Jones, 62, 1948 Andrews Road, Red Springs, driving while license revoked (not revoked for driving while impaired), prayer for judgment, court costs
- Deborah Mack, 44, 411 Pine St., Darlington, S.C., improper equipment—speedometer, \$25 fine and court costs
- Keanna Sherese McGee, 30, 234 Ridgeview Drive, Raeford, speeding 70 miles per hour in a 55-mph zone, prayer for judgment, court costs
- Tony Ezon Lewis McNeill Jr., 24, 423 Ted Brown Road, Cameron, improper equipment—speedometer, \$15 fine and court costs
- Decourtney Nicole Oliver, 24, 7410 Felix Court, Fayetteville, improper equipment—speedometer, \$15 fine and court costs
- Joel Hall Parnell, 50, 438 N. Fayetteville St., Parkton, failure to wear seat belt by driver, \$25.50 fine and court costs; no operator's license, voluntary dismissal
- Erika Monet Russell, 26,

- 609 Midway Road, Aberdeen, speeding 72 miles per hour in a 55-mph zone, \$25 fine and court costs
- Matthew Allen Stewart, 23, 6712 Tennis Drive, Stedman, improper equipment—speedometer, \$80 fine and court costs; reckless driving to endanger, voluntary dismissal
- Larry Tamicho, 37, 1308 N. Pine St., Lumberton, driving while license revoked (revoked for impaired driving), prayer for judgment, court costs; failure to maintain lane control, voluntary dismissal
- Kalif Reynard Tillery, 21, 816 Southwest Blvd., Clinton, improper equipment—speedometer, \$15 fine and court costs
- Mimi T. White, 31, 7807 Estrada Ave., Hardin, Ky., improper equipment—speedometer, \$75 fine and court costs
- Joshua Robert Winburn, 37, 155 Snipe Court, Raeford, failure to wear seat belt by driver, \$25.50 fine and court costs.

## Real Estate Transfers

Recent transfers of real property recorded with the Hoke County Register of Deeds, by date recorded:

Dec. 19

- Lot 89 Eagles Ridge, Phase 1, from Howard Builders LLC of Leland to Bryanna Michele and Steven James Walker of Raeford
- 10.2 acres in Quewhiffle township, from Ella Mae Strickland of Aberdeen to Elizabeth Ann Strickland of Aberdeen
- Lot 39 Woodland Section 4, from Cecilia and Jose Cervantes of Raeford to Elias Cervantes of Maroni, Utah
- Eight lots in Ozella Bridges subdivision, from Halen Barnes of Raeford to Geisla P. and Cedric W. Barnes of Winston-Salem
- Lot 24 Timber Ridge, from Lindsey M. and Jeremy M. Jenkins of Raeford to Jeremy M. Jenkins of Raeford
- Lot 52 Trappers Run, from

the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to Blakelee Makaylan and Michel Wayne Noles of Spring Lake

- 2.5 acres in Raeford, from Christian Batten and Jon Mark McDuffie to Amanda Grae and Jessica Wayne Hupp of Raeford

Dec. 22

- In lieu of foreclosure, Lot 181 Riverbrook Section 1, Part 2, from Tiara M. and Bryant J. Kensey of Raeford to Bank of America, N.A., of Fort Worth, Texas
- Lot 181 Riverbrook Section 1, Part 2, from Bank of America, N.A., of Fort Worth, Texas to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs of Decatur, Ga.
- Lot 38 McDougald Downs Section 4, from Ashlee and Travis Labrum of Salt Lake City, Utah to James R. Quick of Bunnlevel
- Lot 97 Bridgeport Section 1, from Crystal Gail and Eric Jason Duggins to Oliver Bristol of Raeford
- Two tracts by metes and

bounds on Harris Ave., from Lena Scott, executrix of the Estate of Rudolph Carroll Hendrix, and Jonathan Dunn, heir, to Monic and Robert Russell of Raeford

- Lot 17 Tarheel Pines, from Jennifer Lynn and James Robert Adam Gentry of Chesterfield, Va. to Journey and Christopher D. Neitzel of Raeford

Dec. 23

- 34 acres around N.C. 211, from Joe B. Harrison, Marie B. and Phillip M. Rouse, Patsy Lavonne Bray and Timothy Hawkes and Sallie Bray and Dale Bartlett, all of Raeford, to Carol Ann Guyton and Justin B. Hawkes of Raeford
- Lot 166 Bridgeport Section 2, from Brian Steven Kalani Caiburg of Snead's Ferry to Kevin Shoun of Raeford
- 2.98 acres in the McLauchlin township, from Margaret Thagard of Dunn to Margaret E. and Daniel L. Burge of Raeford

## 'Robin Sage' exercise begins this month

Special Forces candidates will participate in the Robin Sage training exercise this month, held within 15 North Carolina counties as the final test of their Special Forces Qualification Course training.

Between January 23 and February 6, students will participate in this exercise before graduating the course and moving on to their first assignments in the Army's Special Forces community. Robin Sage is a two-week culmination exercise. The exercise's notional country

of Pineland encompasses Alamance, Anson, Cabarrus, Chatham, Davidson, Guilford, Hoke, Montgomery, Moore, Randolph, Richmond, Rowan, Scotland, Stanly and Union counties. Throughout the exercise, Special Forces candidates and Robin Sage role-players not only conduct training missions such as controlled assaults and key-leader engagements but also live, eat and sleep in these civilian areas. All Robin Sage movements and events have been coordinated with

public safety officials throughout and within the towns and counties hosting the training. Residents may hear blank gunfire and see occasional flares. Controls are in place to ensure there is no risk to persons or property. Residents with concerns should contact local law enforcement officials, who will immediately contact exercise control officials. With the help of civilian authorities and local citizens, Robin Sage has been conducted since 1974.

## Roads

(Continued from page 1A)

NCDOT Engineer Charles Vick previously said that the time it takes to fix the problem would depend on how severe the damage turned out to be once engineers took a closer look at the road. "It depends if there's any damage to the pipe. They would need to repair or replace the pipe," Vick said last month.

Beaver dams can sometimes cause flooding problems on

roads, but this was the first time a beaver dam had caused an issue on Lindsay Road in that area, the engineer said.

As of Tuesday, after the county received additional rainfall, Rockfish Creek was reportedly at the highest stage it had been since July of 2013 during an unusually wet summer. The creek topped six feet at its intersection with U.S. Highway 401, putting it just below low-level flood stage.

## Fraud

(Continued from page 1A)

counts of felony financial card forgery, according to the sheriff's office. He was held under a \$50,000 secured bond.

Authorities accused Brown of committing identity theft and fraud against Scott Fuhs, and getting fraudulent loans from USAA. He allegedly had fraudulent debit cards sent to him so he could

access Fuhs's bank account and take money.

Brown was arrested January 5 after deputies conducted a vehicle stop for a traffic violation and a records check revealed multiple outstanding felony warrants. The alleged fraud activity reportedly took place between October 29 and November 14 of 2014.

## Thefts

(Continued from page 1A)

and one count of conspiracy to commit larceny. He was held under a \$5,000 secured bond.

Authorities reportedly spotted a suspicious vehicle driving through the Westgate neighborhood on May 15, 2014. While deputies attempted to catch up to the vehicle, the driver made evasive turns to avoid being stopped. Deputies located the vehicle parked on the 200 block of Sedgefield Drive in Raeford.

Inside the vehicle, officers found two residential air con-

ditioning units with the wires and plumbing cut, along with a pair of wire cutters. They also reportedly located a wallet and cell phone with a driver's license for Saunders, according to the Sheriff's Office.

After conducting an investigation, authorities arrested Saunders on January 5.

The air conditioning units were reportedly stolen from unoccupied new-built homes owned by Caviness and Cates and H&H Homes.

## Police Blotter

Raeford Police reported the following recent incidents:

January 6

Larceny, breaking and entering, 900 block of North Jackson Street, victim Melinda McKoy  
Injury to real property, breaking and entering, larceny, 300 block of St. Pauls Road, victim Erica Hamilton

January 7

Larceny, breaking and entering, 100 block of Oakwood Avenue, victim Carter Law PLLC

January 8

Damage to property, 1100 block of Bethune Avenue, victim Sheila Marie Allen  
Larceny, 400 block of Aberdeen Road, victim Wilco Hess

January 9

Speeding, carrying a concealed weapon, possession of drug paraphernalia, possession of marijuana half an ounce and a half ounces, Teal Drive at Fayetteville Road, victim State of North Carolina. Police charged Anwar Tyrone Kevin McGirt, 25, of the 700 block of West Main Street in Bennettsville.

January 11

Larceny, 200 block of Reaves Street, victim Hoke County Schools  
Assault with a deadly weapon, assault on a child under 12, assault on a female, 400 block of Palmer Green Apartments, victims Sherri Renee Vallery, Kayden Williams and Rachel Michelle Carter. Police charged Clifford Jerome Williams Jr., 24, of the 400 block of Palmer Green Apartments in Raeford.

## Marriage Licenses

Recent marriage licenses obtained from the Hoke County Register of Deeds, by date license granted, followed by date of wedding or civil ceremony. Marriages performed in Hoke County unless otherwise noted:

Dec. 11

Jennifer Lynn Talser of Raeford and Dylan O'Dell Evers of Spokane, Wash. Married Dec. 31

Dec. 30

Jeston Lloyd Perryman and Jessica Marie Hunt, both of Raeford. Married Jan. 4 in Cumberland County.

Send us school news to [thenews-journal.com/school](http://thenews-journal.com/school)

## Hoke Education Series



## Is His/Her Snoring Keeping You Awake?

Tuesday, January 20, 2015  
6:00 p.m.

Matthew Grafenberg, M.D., with FirstHealth ENT, Head & Neck in Hoke, will discuss snoring and when it is time to be concerned and seek a physician's advice on it.

The Hoke Education Series is free and open to the public. For more information or to register, call (800) 213-3284.

### FirstHealth Moore Regional Hospital-Hoke Campus

6408 Fayetteville (Raeford) Road  
Raeford, NC 28376

**FirstHealth**  
MOORE REGIONAL HOSPITAL

HOKE CAMPUS

[www.firsthealth.org](http://www.firsthealth.org)



# NOTICE!

## ALL HOKE COUNTY RESIDENTS

# PROPERTY TAX LISTING

HOKE COUNTY HAS A PERMANENT LISTING SYSTEM FOR REAL PROPERTY. If you own only Real Property and registered Motor Vehicles you do not have to list your property in January. Your Real Property Value will be carried forward by the Tax Office. You only have to provide the Tax Office with information regarding any changes to your real property. This includes but not limited to: additions, remodeling, demolition, storage buildings, decks, etc.

Licensed motor vehicles are now taxed by the new Tax and Tag program at the time of registration or renewal. Military personnel should provide an LES to the Tax Office to exempt their vehicles from taxes after receiving the renewal notice.

## THE FOLLOWING PERSONAL PROPERTY MUST BE LISTED:

### Mobile Homes

All Single-wides  
Double-wides if not listed as real estate

### Equipment

Business, Commercial, Industrial, Farm Equipment

### Other

Boats (not to include trailers)  
Aircraft  
Non-Licensed Motor Vehicles  
Semi-Trailers or Trailers registered on a multi-year basis

**Applications For:** Property Tax Exemptions (Churches, charitable organizations, etc.), and Present Use Value are due in the Tax Assessors office no later than January 31, 2015. Tax relief applications for Elderly, Permanently Disabled, or Veterans Disability are accepted until June 1, 2015. Please contact the Tax Assessor's office for more information concerning these tax relief programs.

Listings are subject to a **10% late penalty** after January 31.

**Hoke County Tax Office • 227 N. Main St., Raeford, NC**

### HOURS:

8:00 am - 5:00 pm Monday - Friday, January 2 - February 2, 2015

**Telephone 910-875-8751 • Toll Free 1-800-597-8751**