

The Sanford Herald

To Inform, Challenge and Celebrate

Thursday, September 20, 2007

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INSIDE TODAY



Jackets tennis

See how Lee County fared against Panther Creek

SPORTS, Page 1B

Chatham a busy place

Herald News Editor Kevin Degon proclaims Chatham County the place to be for family events in October in his weekly column.



Page 4A



Pitt goes Western

Talented actor becomes outlaw Jesse James in upcoming film.

Page 2C

Paper Pulpit

Family was one of God's best ideas, says Faith & Values columnist D.E. Parkerson



Page 1C

Around our state

- Lumbees make bid for recognition
- Illegal immigrant found guilty of murder in fatal crash

Page 5,7A

Deaths

SANFORD: Clarence Richard Harrell, 86; Henry Judd, 77; Carleen Peterson, 77

BUIES CREEK: Alice Edgerton, 81

WASHINGTON: Addie Burgess, 94

Weather

High: 80

Low: 65



More Weather, Page 4B

Index

Abby, Graham, Bridge, Sudoku..... 4C
 Classifieds 1-4D
 Comics, Crosswords..... 5C
 Community calendar..... 2C
 Horoscope..... 4C
 Obituaries..... 5A
 Opinion 4A
 Scoreboard..... 3B



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THOUSANDS SHOP ON WAL-MART'S FIRST DAY

A rocking start



BROOKE WOLFE/ The Sanford Herald

Benjamin Wood, 17, takes advantage of free play time on "Guitar Hero 2" Wednesday afternoon as friend John Murchison looks on during the grand opening of the new Wal-Mart in Sanford. Also pictured, Joshua Kennedy, 5, watches Wood's skills as his mother Terri Kennedy shops for picture frames.

Shoppers impressed with size, selection of new Supercenter

By JONATHAN OWENS
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SANFORD — Sanford resident John Wyatt came to the grand opening of Sanford's Wal-Mart Supercenter on N.C. 87 Wednesday not to buy anything, but to simply to get an early look at the store.

He left with a fresh haircut. "I didn't expect this," he said while sitting in Margaret Sealey's chair in SmartStyle Family Hair Salon at 9 a.m., just an hour after the ribbon was cut to officially open the store. "But I was needing a haircut anyway, and I saw that they were having a special, so I figured 'why not?'"

Inside

Local students introduced to the marketing world at Wednesday's grand opening

Page 2A

So it goes for Sanford's Wal-Martians now that the 198,000-square-foot retail behemoth has opened in the Shoppes at Sanford, located near Sanford's N.C. 87 and U.S. 421 split.

Shoppers began filing through the store's aisles promptly at 8 a.m. Wednesday, just after a ceremony marking the opening featured Sanford dignitaries and Wal-Mart associates.

Along with more general merchandise space than the previous Sanford Wal-Mart had, the new store contains with a full-service supermarket, Subway sandwich shop, bank, nail salon, hair salon, vision center and money transfer center.

The Sanford store was one of several opening in the South Wednesday, and by

See Shoppers, Page 6A

Local grocery store owners remain confident their customers will stay

By CHELSEA KELLNER
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SANFORD — The Wal-Mart Supercenter's opening will bring low-priced lobster to the masses, along with other food from baked goods to fresh produce.

To local grocery store owners, however, it's not about the exotic seafood — it's about the service.

"It's very difficult trying to compete against one of the largest corporations in the world, but we have a very, very loyal following," said Sanford Piggly Wiggly owner Greg Adams. "I'll just take good care of my customers like I always have so that I don't lose any business to the new store."

Some are even looking forward to the

Does size matter?

Square footage of Wal-Mart's grocery section and its local competitors:

- Wal-Mart: 60,000 square feet
- Lowe's: 42,000
- Piggly Wiggly: 38,000
- O'Connell's: 7,000

opening.

"I think that things will be positively impacted by the Wal-Mart," said O'Connell's Supermarket owner Mike Stone. "When you can get the most people into a concentrated area, it produces a lot of new business, which is what we need."

According to the Wal-Mart Web site,

See Owners, Page 6A



BROOKE WOLFE/ The Sanford Herald

The parking lot was packed Wednesday afternoon during the grand opening of the new Wal-Mart in Sanford.

Wilkinson gets local franchise rights to Chevy, Buick

By JONATHAN OWENS
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SANFORD — A lot of new cars have been rolling off a local dealership's lot this week in Sanford, and it has nothing to do with a fall sale.

Wilkinson Cadillac-Pontiac-GMC finalized a deal with Tom Eschbach, owner of Central Chevrolet, for franchising rights to the Chevrolet and Buick brands in Sanford, along with some equipment from Central Chevrolet's service department.

Cars and trucks from Central began moving across town from Central to Wilkinson

Sunday

The Herald will have much more on this story and what it means to the local auto sales industry in Sunday's Business section.

Monday night. The purchase gives Wilkinson sole franchising rights to five General Motors brands, making it the largest dealer in town.

"We're really excited about it," Doug Wilkinson said of the deal. "Central Chevrolet has served its customers well over the years. We hope to maintain our precious

customers and wrap Central's up with care with what we do here."

Eschbach, who has owned Central Chevrolet since 1987, said both his age and health concerns led to the decision to sell the rights to the brands. Although he is healthy now after a battle with cancer, he said he "felt like the time was right."

"I felt like Wilkinson was the right fit," he said. "I knew they would take care of my customers. I felt like I owed them that."

He said it is likely that Fred Anderson Toyota, his neighbors on N.C. 87, will purchase the property to expand its Sanford dealership.