

Confirming Commissioners

By Mary Dunn

Where is the courthouse, I've never been there? This was my first reaction after getting off the phone with Mr. Bill Pate, a county commissioner of Wayne County. Mr. Pate serves on the Executive Board, Veterans Advisor Board, Chairman of Department of Social Service, and WCDA. He is about to finish up his first term, and is hoping to run in the elections in the upcoming year. I have never been to the court house and I didn't even know what a county commissioner was until I was given this opportunity through 4-H. On Tuesday, July 14 I met with Mr. Pate to discuss some new things that were going on in Wayne county. After a brief introduction we got down to business, the first question I asked Mr. Pate was what are the duties of a county commissioner? He explained that they mainly help with the county budget which can include raising or lowering taxes. They also help with planning for buildings that are going to be owned by the county. For instance, they have just now opened a new jail in the county because our old one was getting to full.

The biggest thing we talked about and his biggest project in office has been a new cooperative extension office, or as we the people of Wayne County call it, the farm office for our county. The present farm office is getting on up in age and the location is not as safe anymore. Also the roof leaks, and there is not enough storage space. I was excited to get some of the inside news about the new cooperative extension office. Mr. Pate explained that the original spot was going to be near Cherry Hospital, but on closer inspection the spot proved wrong because there was bad soil and the land would have to be bought. The land over by Wayne Community College was a better fit because the land was given by the city of Goldsboro. After the architect drew out everything the estimated cost was eighteen thousand dollars. Mr. Pate has been working on this project for about three years and he has certainly done his best by going and researching what the people really want. In fact, a survey went out and ninety three percent agreed. In the project there is help coming from private investigators, USDA, and possibly Connect NC.

I attended the County Commissioners August 4th, it began at eight in the morning with a briefing and at eight fifteen they adjourned. At the briefing they went over the agenda for the actual commissioners meeting. After the briefing was closed there was a break before the actual meeting at nine. At the meeting, I got to see the commissioners agree on some important topics that would affect the county. It was really neat to see the votes first hand in the meeting instead of seeing them in the paper.

I'm glad to have worked on this project because I have learned about the county commissioners and how important they are to the county. I have to admit that I was a little intimidated by this project, but I was showed nothing but kindness at the commissioners meeting. Overall, this has been a neat experience so far. I can't wait to see what the meeting will be like at the end of the month.