

RALEIGH -- An arrest warrant has been issued in connection with the Vortex ride incident, where five people were injured at the North Carolina State Fair. The Wake County Sheriff's Office has obtained an arrest warrant for Joshua Macaroni, the son of the owners of the Vortex ride. The owners of the ride Family Attractions in Georgia issued a statement late Wednesday: "We have just learned of these charges and Dominic and Ruby Macaroni are very concerned, of course, for their son. Still, their thoughts and prayers are with the persons injured in this terrible accident."

There are reports that Joshua Macaroni is on his way to North Carolina to face the charges. Macaroni has been charged with two counts of felony assault with a deadly weapon inflicting serious injury. He is also charged with one count of felony assault on a juvenile with a deadly weapon inflicting serious injury.

The ride operator has already been arrested in this case.

RALEIGH -- There's been lots of talk about education and teachers this week -- from "walk ins" and protests, to Governor Pat McCrory convening his first meeting of a teacher advisory committee to discuss working conditions and the future of the classroom. State Superintendent of Public Instruction June Atkinson says pay is still a major concern.

Atkinson says, "Our teachers spend 5 1/2 to 6 hours with our children every day. And if I had children in our public schools, I would want the very best person possible. And I would not want my children's teachers to have to work two and three jobs."

This year, Governor Pat McCrory has proposed pay raises for teachers and other state workers, but then said increased Medicaid costs made such raises impossible.

RALEIGH -- The North Carolina Supreme Court heard arguments in mid-October over funding for Pre-K programs, and a report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation says one-in-three children are cognitively behind upon entering kindergarten. Foundation spokesperson Laura Speer says access to early education programs is a key to solving this issue.

Speer said, "We can support and improve the quality of early-childhood programs, as well as the affordability for low-income kids. We know that having access to those early-childhood programs can be such a big gain."

According to Speer, North Carolina trails the national average when enrolling low-income children in preschool, but outpaces the rest of the country in screening for early-developmental issues.

RALEIGH -- The longest serving chairman of the North Carolina Republican Party had died.

Written by Steve Frank

Thursday, 07 November 2013 08:37

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Jack Hawke, was the campaign manager for Jim Gardner's successful Congressional campaign in 1966, and ran for congress in 1968, 1970 and 1972. He was also the campaign manager of Jim Martin's campaign for Governor in 1984 and Jim Gardner's campaign for Lieutenant Governor in 1988.

Hawke was the GOP party chair from 1987 to 1995. Hawke most recently served as the former president of The Civitas Institute, and as a senior advisor to Governor Pat McCrory.

"The North Carolina Republican Party extends our deepest condolences to Jack's family and the many friends he made throughout his life," said current Republican Party Chairman Claude Pope in a statement issued Tuesday. "Jack's tremendous devotion to North Carolina, his sheer political brilliance, and his legendary sense of humor will be sorely missed."

Pope also said Hawke was along those who should be credited for more recent Republican political successes, including the party having majorities in the both the State House, the State Senate, and the Governor's Mansion.