

Your guide to the holidays
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THE CHRONICLE

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THE CHRONICLE

Volume 44, Number 14

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C.

THURSDAY, December 7, 2017

School Report Cards website updated

BY TEVIN STINSON
THE CHRONICLE

Earlier this week, N.C. Superintendent of Public Education Mark Johnson unveiled the state's redesigned School Report Cards website.

While speaking to local principals and administrators at the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools Board of Education building on Tuesday, Dec. 5, Johnson said, the updates to the website will help tell the story of schools across the state and highlight growth.

"We need to better highlight growth because that means we're on the right track. So with that we are launching the brand new website for North Carolina's School Report Cards," said Johnson, who was a member



Johnson

of the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools Board of Education until he began his job as state superintendent in January.

The School Report Cards website initially launched in 2001 and hasn't had any major upgrades since. The purpose of the website is to provide parents and others interested in public schools across the state with information about school,

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Photo by Tevin Stinson

Local principals and administrators were able to see a presentation of the new State School Report Card website at the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools Board of Education Building on Bethania Station Road.

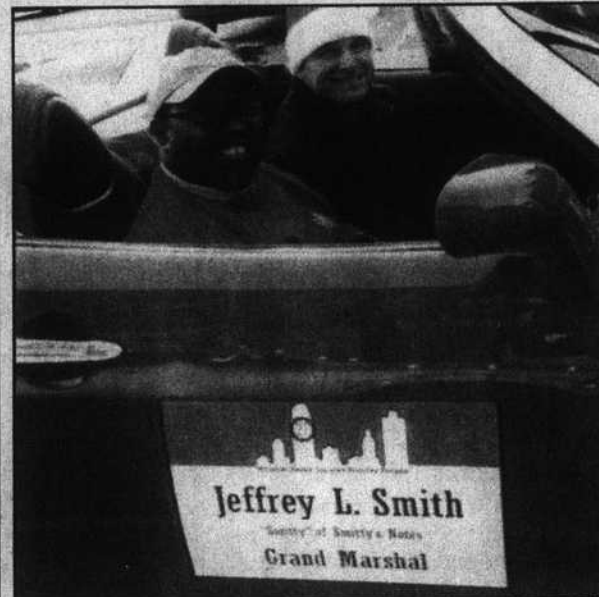
Smitty's Notes celebrates 20 years

BY TEVIN STINSON
THE CHRONICLE

While The Chronicle prides itself on being the city's "oldest and most respected community newspaper," when the people of Winston-Salem want to know about social events and what's going on in the area, many rely on another hometown publication and news source: Smitty's Notes.

Since 1997, Smitty's Notes, a website and monthly newsletter that prides itself on providing information on local events, and a community calendar, has served the people of Winston-Salem.

What started out as a simple email to friends with a list of happenings in the city, on what seemed to be a dull



Submitted photo

Jeffrey Smith, founder of Smitty's Notes, served as grand marshal during the 27th Annual Jaycees Holiday Parade on Saturday, Dec. 2.

Friday night, has grown to become one of the most powerful information sources in Forsyth County.

"We were just trying to find out what to do for the weekend, so we would email each other," said city native Jeffrey Smith, founder of Smitty's Notes. "Email was still fairly new at the time, so I did that for a couple of months, then I realized that my emails were being passed around to other people outside the group and it kind of just grew from there."

Today, Smitty's Notes has more than 16,000 subscribers, a lot more than the 12 who initially received Smith's emails. Smith said the newsletter has served the

See Smitty on A8



Photos by Tevin Stinson

Members of the Winston-Salem State University Choir perform during the Holiday Concert on Sunday, Dec. 3.

WSSU heralds holiday season with concert

BY TEVIN STINSON
THE CHRONICLE

The Singing Rams of Winston-Salem State University (WSSU) kicked off the Holiday Season in style last weekend when the Department of Music hosted its annual holiday concert on Sunday evening, Dec. 3.

Current students, faculty, staff and alumni filled the bottom half of the K.R. Williams Auditorium to lend an ear to the soulful sounds of Schola Cantorum, the famous Burke Singers, Singing Divas, and of course, the Winston-Salem State University Choir. Several alumni also returned to campus to show their singing talents, including featured soloist Ja'Kenya Gartrell.

Gartrell, a native of New Jersey, is a 2013 graduate of WSSU. During her time spent at "Ol State U.," Gartrell was a featured soloist in the WSSU Choir and was chosen as one of the Burke Singers. Additionally, Gartrell was selected to represent WSSU in the 105 HBCU Voices of

See Concert on A8



Winston-Salem State University's Burke Singers perform during the annual Holiday Concert on Sunday, Dec. 3. The event was held inside the K.R. Williams Auditorium.

County approves funds for Enclave expansion

BY TODD LUCK
THE CHRONICLE

Forsyth County commissioners approved accepting money to help expand affordable housing during its Thursday, Nov. 30, meeting.

Forsyth County and the City of Winston-Salem originally received a \$2,625,000 Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) grant

from the N.C. Commerce Department's Community Division in 2009. The funds had a variety of uses during the housing foreclosure crisis, including helping Miller Valentine and the North Carolina Housing Foundation transform a foreclosed, incomplete condo development on the corner of Bethania Station Road and Shattalon Drive into 68 units of affordable housing known as The Enclave.

"The project has been very successful," said Housing & Community Development Director Dan Kornelis.

Last week, commissioners unanimously voted to accept about \$2 million in remaining NSP from the state to help with The Enclave II. The second phase will let the developers put 96 units of affordable housing in four apartment buildings that'll be

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