

# ★ 1988 Review

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## UTILITY PROBLEMS

Wood discovered that Kings Mountain's electrical and sewer services were in dire straits. Electric stations were in bad need of repair, and utility poles in many areas of town were actually leaning.

The Pilot Creek Wastewater facility near Buffalo Creek was not adequately handling the load of sewage coming into its system and the city was placed under a state moratorium preventing it from accepting any new customers until problems were corrected. The city spent thousands of dollars over a period of several months to correct the problem and it wasn't until late in the year that the city was able to begin accepting additional customers.

The Pilot Creek problems were partly responsible for what was another big story in Kings Mountain in '88.

## CROWDER'S CREEK

Before the new administration took office and Wood came on board, Kings Mountain, Gastonia, Bessemer City and Gaston County appeared to be moving full speed ahead toward construction of a regional wastewater facility on Crowder's Creek in southeast Gaston County. The four towns were expected to receive about \$13.2 million in EPA grants to fund one-half of the facility and the four governments were supposed to provide the other funds.

Since the beginning stages of the proposed plan, Kings Mountain's share was said to be about \$3.5 million. However, with the Pilot Creek problems, Kings Mountain felt it could not afford to spend that much on Crowder's Creek because it was under state order to bring Pilot Creek into compliance with state laws. After several months of negotiations, the agencies agreed that Kings Mountain would provide \$500,000 and Gastonia would take up the slack.

At that point in time, it appeared the agencies would miss the deadline for applying for EPA grants, but due to some political maneuvering, the deadline was extended and the grants finally approved.

## MOSS DAM LEAKS

In the meantime, Kings Mountain learned during a routine state inspection that a concrete slab on the Moss Lake dam was leaking and steps had to be taken to correct that problem. The city had to lower the lake level by six feet to be able to seal the leak. The cost of repairing it, temporarily, was \$100,000 but the city expects to spend about \$1 million on long-range repairs.

All the Pilot Creek, Crowder's Creek and Moss Lake problems led the city council to call, after several months discussions with consultants, for a \$9.2 million referendum to fund all the projects. That vote is scheduled for February 7, 1989.

## SCHOOLS

The city wasn't the only one discovering problems in 1988. Kings Mountain District Schools spent about \$100,000 removing asbestos from classrooms only to find out that, under new federal guidelines, much more asbestos will have to be removed in the future.

The school system also officially re-organized, with the board declaring a K-5 elementary, 6-8 middle school and 9-12 high school concept. All of that, of course, will take place when funds become available to build new schools and expand existing facilities.

The board endorsed a proposed

county-wide bond referendum which would provide approximately \$10 million for Kings Mountain schools. Passage of the referendum, which is expected to be called soon, would allow Kings Mountain to build new classrooms now rather than "paying as you go." Either way, the funds will be provided through the state's half-cent sales taxes.

The school system also began looking at the racial balance of elementary schools and will probably make some decision to lower the percentage of minority students at East School early in '89.

## REPUBLICAN SWEEPS

Another big story in Kings Mountain, as well as North Carolina, was the big sweep by Republicans in the November general elections. Kings Mountain went with the nation in electing George Bush president and incumbent Republican governor Jim Martin also carried the traditional Democratic Kings Mountain. Local voters also helped elect North Carolina's first Republican Lieutenant Governor (Jim Gardner) since Reconstruction.

Locally, Republicans also scored a first. Charlie Harry, a Grover native, became the first Republican elected to the Cleveland County Board of Commissioners. John Weatherly of Kings Mountain became the first Republican elected to the House from this district.

Kings Mountain's Joyce Cashion, who was the first woman to serve on the County Board of Commissioners, was defeated in the primary.

## WEATHER

The conditions of city government and the controls of local and state government weren't the only things that changed in 1988. The weather was a big newsmaker.

The year began with a big, 12-inch snowfall on January 7 which brought Kings Mountain to a standstill for several days. No major damages were reported, but citizens were inconvenienced and had to stay inside and watch soap operas whether they wanted to or not.

The January snow which was still on the ground over a week later was the only measurable snowfall of the year, though. But area farmers and backyard gardeners would love to have seen some wet stuff during the hot, dry months of July, August and September. The area was hit by a drought for the third year of the past four, and whether it was caused by the "Greenhouse Effect" or other reasons, people suffered. Pastures and hayfields dried up in the intense heat. About the only people who benefitted from the weather were well-diggers who got a lot of new business.

A May hailstorm dropped hail almost as big as golf balls and did over a million dollars of damage to roofs in the Kings Mountain area. Insurance companies predicted there were some 3,000 roofs damaged and insurance claims are still being processed.

## BUILDING PROJECTS

As the year came to a close, Kings Mountain began seeing the fruits of a lot of labor as new and expanded public facilities came to reality.

Officials of Mauney Memorial Library showcased their \$300,000 expansion project which included a huge auditorium named in honor of long-time Kings Mountain school librarian, Josephine Weir. Grady Howard and Bill Davis headed a public fund drive which raised the money. Grants from the state and

county also paid for part of the cost.

The year 1988 also saw the beginning--and near completion--of the construction of the indoor swimming pool at Kings Mountain High School. The facility is almost finished and is expected to be put in operation in mid-January.

Dr. Scott Mayse headed the public fund drive which made the facility possible. The idea began several years ago with some KMHS students and was picked up on by the Kiwanis Club. The Kings Mountain Indoor Pool Foundation was organized to spearhead the project.

The Indoor Pool Foundation is still soliciting funds to help meet obligations and funds may continue to be raised in the future to help the school system operate the facility.

With the state's moratorium on new water and sewer customers lifted, the city began to attract new businesses late in the year. Several companies--including Wix and Silver Express--announced that they would locate in Kings Mountain, and existing industries like Phillips and DuPont Optical announced expansion projects, giving citizens the feelings that things will be good in 1989.

Some of the other top stories of 1988 follow:

## JANUARY

Dewitt Hambricht, direct descendant of Battle of Kings Mountain hero Col. Frederick Hambricht, died at the age of 93.

Priscilla Mauney, who ran third in the November election, was appointed to the Kings Mountain District Schools Board of Education to replace Kyle Smith, who resigned after being elected Mayor of Kings Mountain.

Mark Crawford, 17, a Kings Mountain High senior, was injured while sledding on an intertube on "The Hill" near the intersection of Downing Drive and Wales Road.

The City Board denied a satellite annexation petition from Jim Testa, owner of the Kings Mountain Truck Plaza on I-85 and Dixon School Road.

Paul Jackson, former pressman for the Kings Mountain Herald, died at the age of 67.

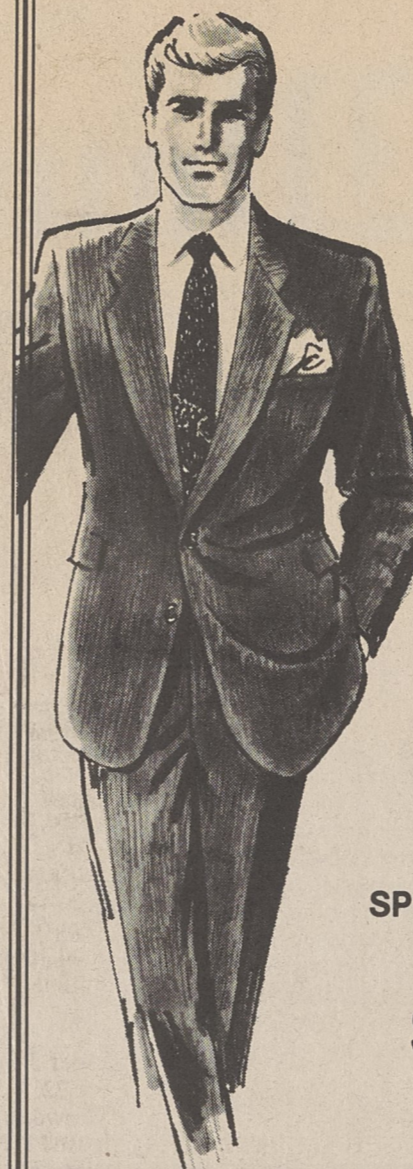
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# PLONKS

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## BLANTON CHRYSLER-PLYMOUTH

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