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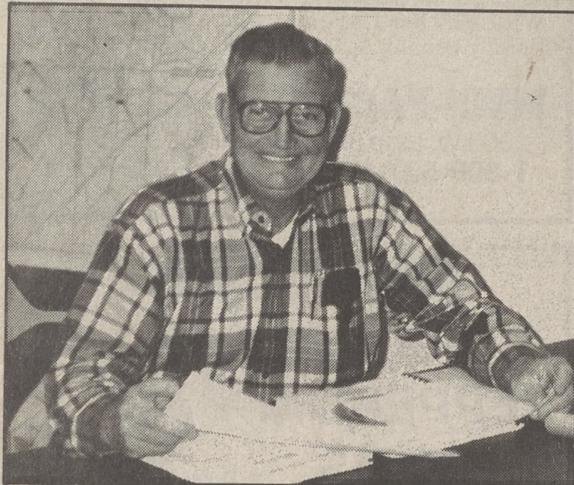
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JIM GUYTON
Studying City budget

Water, sewer rates up

Kings Mountain water and sewer customers will see a nine percent across-the-board increase on their April 1 bills for water and sewer.

For the average inside-city residential user of 7,000 gallons of water and sewer the increased cost will be \$1.53 or \$16.99 monthly.

For the 'fixed income' inside-city user of 3,000 gallons of water and sewer the increased cost will be 83 cents or \$10.06.

For industries, the increase represents a hefty hike.

Spectrum, Anvil Knitwear and Clevefont Mills are the biggest industrial users of city water and sewer. Wood said industrial officials had been warned the hike could be between five and seven percent but Council, during a two-day retreat at Cleveland Community College Friday and Saturday, moved up by three months the time Wood had originally targeted for increases.

After reviewing at length the water/sewer fund and noting that funds weren't there to make

necessary improvements and pay for any emergency repairs, the board indicated it would hike water and sewer costs effective April 1 and take action at the March 31 meeting.

Estimated revenue available for capital projects in the 1992-93 water and sewer funds totaled \$138,896.00, not enough to pay an anticipated \$300,000 for an aeration basin liner at Moss Lake if the state requires it to stop leaks and barely enough to repair two dams at Davidson Lake and the old city water lake, both state mandated repair projects.

Council decided to make up the needed revenue now by upping the percentage to nine percent.

Ward I Councilman Philip Hager and Ward II Councilman Jim Guyton, both new members of the seven-member board and attending their first council retreat, described the decision as "biting the bullet."

Ward 4 Councilman Jerry White suggested

that council could do more belt-tightening by eliminating all over time pay in every department of the city. "Let them take compensatory time off if they have to work overtime in emergencies," he said. Other council members agreed.

Looking at what the city may be facing financially in the next five years, the increase in sewer/water rates should eliminate some of the shortages and by 1996-97 that fund should allow \$724,048 for capital projects. However, council members warn that the rates could go up again by January 1, 1993 based on any increased charges by Gastonia for sewage pumped from Kings Mountain to the Crowders Creek Waste Treatment Plant.

"Our rates are among the lowest among nine municipalities in the state and are lower than neighboring Shelby and Belmont," said Hager.

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'Get Bill' to play at KMLT

The curtain will go up Thursday night at 8 p.m. at Central School Auditorium on the Kings Mountain Little Theatre's production of Joseph Robinette's "Get Bill Shakespeare Off the Stage."

The two-act, 21-scene play is directed by Joe Hullender.

Admission is \$5 for adults and \$3 for students and senior citizens.

The play will also be presented on Friday and Saturday nights at 8 p.m. and Sunday afternoon at 3 p.m.

The cast of characters includes Brenda Goins, Sha Patrick, Shannon Hullender, Teresa Lyman, Lora Goins, Forrest Conner, Roger Moss, Kim Sutherland, Jason Smith, Jason Powell, Brandy Lovelace, Karen Wade, Stacey

Grooms, John Sheehan, Emily Oates, Cathy Morgan, Jennifer Muench, Sam Williams, Wanda White, Bernard Tillman and Chuck Wilson, as Coach Summers.

Jim Champion and Jeff Grigg are in charge of lighting and Mike Ellis is stage manager. Property manager is Kim Little and Denise Hullender is prompter. Sha Patrick and Sam Williams are in charge of costumes.

The cast features a number of teenagers and first-timers on stage. The setting is a high school stage and numerous scenes takes place on the stage and in a hallway of a school.

The play is funded in part by a Grassroots grant.



REHEARSE FOR PLAY - Wanda White (standing) and Sha Patrick (seated) practice for the Kings Mountain Little Theatre's production of "Get Bill Shakespeare Off The Stage" opening tonight at Central School Auditorium.

Recreation to get funds

Kings Mountain Recreation Department will get a big piece of the budget pie for capital improvements in 1992-93 if "rough estimates" from a City Council planning session become part of the formal budget Council approves in June.

A restroom/concession building at City Stadium, repairs to Deal Street pool, and money for playground equipment, a mini park at Northwoods, tables and chairs, and a new aerobic floor and sign at the Community Center were items city council members want to be included in a budget which they described as "lean and conservative."

With \$637,497 to work with, the council trimmed and cut away at numerous requests from department heads which totaled nearly a whopping \$4 million. In the general fund, \$214,723 was earmarked for capital projects for 1992-93; \$126,953 for street improvements from the Powell Bill; \$138,896 from water and sewer; \$38,425 from electric fund; and \$118,500 from the gas fund.

Although it will be June before the budget comes from City Manager George Wood before council for approval, they did their homework Friday and Saturday in the second annual retreat/planning session which Wood initiated last year.

See Recreation, Page 5-A

Pay hike included in budget

The 160-plus city employees will see a one percent cost-of-living increase in their paychecks on July 1.

Eligible employees will also get an additional 2 1/2 percent merit increase on their anniversary date.

City Council at a landmark, second annual work session Friday and Saturday recommended the increase, saying that employees were passed over last year due to the recession.

City Manager George Wood said he doubted neighboring municipalities will raise employee pay this year. Kings Mountain was the only area municipality which did not raise wages last year, he said.

"In a down economy you have to weigh what others are getting who work in the area for other industry," he said.

Salaries in the anticipated budget will account for \$3,278,866 of what will probably be a \$17.5 million budget, up from last year, if figures totaled at the weekend planning meeting are an indication.

See Pay Hike, Page 3-A

Mine ordered to correct problems

J. M. Huber mining officials have been ordered by the state to correct deficiencies at the site of Huber Mine 1 in Grover by April 3 or face fines for violation following complaint filed by the Rev. Kenneth Curry, Grover minister who took his charges of potential safety hazards to U. S. Senator Terry Sanford.

Curry, 29, grandson of the owner of the former Huber land, said his confidence in elected officials is restored.

Jerry Cook, of Mooresville, regional engineer in the Land Quality Section of the N. C. Department of Environment, Health and Natural Resources, wrote Paul W. Traylor, of J. M. Huber Corporation, under date of March 3, 1992, that an inspection of the mine was conducted on February 21 as a follow up to a news story aired on Channel 36, a Charlotte station, concerning safety hazards at the Huber Mine.

Cook said several deficiencies were noted during the inspection,

calling attention to high walls in the pit that exceed the height that is acceptable without safety protection; an open pit easily accessible from State Road 2238 and lack of visual screening to block the mine and spoil areas from public view; lower elevations of the pit covered with water which could become stagnant and obnoxious this summer; soil stockpiles and waste piles eroding due to the absence of ground cover; and large tailings pond/sediment basin does not have

a perforated riser pipe on the inlet of the conduit pipe through the dam.

The Mining Act of 1971 also requires, said Cook, that reclamation activities be completed within two years after completion or termination on each segment of the mined area. If active mining is not resumed on the site by September 1992, all affected areas must be reclaimed. Cook suggested that summer months are not suitable for

See Mine, Page 5-A

KINGS MOUNTAIN PEOPLE

Gardening is always on Fred Owens' mind

By ELIZABETH STEWART
of The Herald Staff

'Tis the season when seed catalogs turn many a gardener's thoughts to Spring.

Popular backyard gardener Fred Owens has been thinking spring all winter, getting an early start on plans for his mini farmer's market he will open the last of April on East King Street with his spring tomato crop.

Although there are no vegetables in his yard this month, there are bales of pine needles which Fred and son John brought from Camden, S.C. to offer to local gardeners for mulching of beds of azaleas and other blossoms. Some farmers also spread pine needles on their vegetable gardens. With that possibility in mind, the Owens team bought 10,000 bales of pine needles from an 80 acre farm.

The senior Owens got in the truck farming business about eight years ago when phlebitis in his legs put him on a walking stick. Because he had worked vegetable gardens all his life, he knew the de-

mand for fresh, good-eating vegetables and started offering a few tomatoes, green beans, squash, cucumbers and Irish potatoes from make-shift vegetable bins on his front lawn. Word of mouth spread and soon his little business was a required stop for busy traffic on King Street. Shoppers look for signs in front of his house and stop to buy a variety of vegetables six months of the year.

Born on Persimmons Creek in Cleveland County, Owens started farming at an early age on the Owens homeplace built in 1914 on York Road. For 60 of his 82 years Owens has lived on King Street in a modest home where he and his wife, Martha Crawford Owens, reared six daughters and one son.

"Back when we were raising our children times were hard and I worked two jobs in the mill," said Owens, a former employee of the quill room and weave shop at the old Dilling Mill and a former employee of Minette Mill. For 10 1/2

See Owens, Page 2-A



Fred Owens, left, and his son John may be turning Kings Mountain into the pine straw capital of the South. They recently purchased 10,000 bales which Fred sells at his home on East King Street. The straw is ideal for protecting plants from the cold weather and choking out weeds in the spring.

Schools consider budget

In its March meeting, the Kings Mountain District Board of Education looked over the proposed requested budget from the county, which is being readied to be submitted to the Board of County Commissioners.

The budget has a nine percent increase in current expenses and a 6.6 percent increase in capital outlay.

Under capital outlay requests, the budget calls for \$25,000 in computers to continue to expand the Computer Assisted Learning Program begun at East Elementary School this year, according to Supt. Dr. Bob McRae.

A \$20,000 item for a computer network at the high school will be for linking administrative and staff computers to better monitor students, McRae said.

Forty-five thousand dollars total is set aside for contingency and renovations, which McRae said encompass "items we can't foresee," such as heating and air conditioning break downs.

And there is a \$5,000 line for as-

See School, Page 5-A