



# Happy New Year

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## Kings Mountain Herald

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# Council still looking for FY audit

## Phone bills still concern councilman Guyton

The city manager has released additional information on the use of cellular phones by city department heads at request of Ward 2 Commissioner Jim Guyton.

Guyton requested information on the use of the city-owned phones during the regular October council meeting and recently received copies of the bills covering a five-month period but excluding the July bill. Guyton had also requested bills for the 1993 year.

This week City Manager Nance sent copies of the July bill which covered 43 pages to Guyton and each member of Council. But in a memorandum, Nance said that it was very time consuming to copy the phone bills. He said it required one hour to xerox the bills.

"If some of the phone users had not misused the phones it would most likely have been an eight or nine page bill instead of 43 pages and that would have taken a city employee about 15

minutes instead of an hour," said Guyton.

Guyton has maintained that city policy intends the phones be used by department heads who work in the field.

City Council voted recently to give the manager the authority to assign the phones. After the controversy developed, Nance said he has talked to department heads and may decide to pull the plugs on the phones.

See Bills, 7-A

The city's audit for 1993-94 is back from the N. C. Local Commission in Raleigh and in the office of City Auditor Darrell Keller.

City Manager Chuck Nance said, however, that Keller and his family spent Christmas in the Holy Land and the auditor is out of his office until December 29.

"As soon as I receive the audit I will get it to each member of City Council for their review at a special meeting in early January," said Nance.

Nance said he realizes that Council members are anxious to receive the audit of the previous

fiscal year's budget.

Councilwoman Norma Bridges recalled that in previous years the audits were in the hands of Council by October or November.

"We still do not have the audit for 1993-94 and I think the reason is because we can not get the right balance," says Commissioner Jim Guyton.

But Nance disagreed, saying that the hold-up was because the Local Government Commission made some corrections.

He says he has personally received no letter of recommendations or correspondence from

the state treasurer's office which has had the audit since November 17. The treasury office sent a copy of an invoice unofficially approving the contents of the audit to the city on December 8.

Bridges said the invoice gave approval for the city to pay the auditor for his services.

"I didn't know that was a regular policy," she said.

City officials have been anxious to receive a copy of the audit so questions regarding the city's financial condition can be cleared up.

See Audit, 7-A

## KM prepares for new year

Kings Mountain area citizens are getting ready to welcome bright New Year 1995.

Private parties will be held on Saturday.

A New Year's Eve dance is not scheduled at American Legion Post 155.

For many, New Year's Day Sunday will be worship services in church, a day of televised football with a full diet of major bowl games and parades.

Food fare on New Year's Day for many will include the traditional hog jowl and black-eyed peas, designed, folklore has it, to bring good fortune throughout the new year. Local grocers were stocking their shelves this week with the traditional foods, readying for weekend shoppers.

Monday will be a holiday for city offices, the post office, financial institutions and the schools.

Public Works Supt. Karl Moss said that garbage collection will resume on regular schedules next Thursday.

Moss said that the sanitation crew will pick up Monday's route on Tuesday and Tuesday's regular route on Wednesday.

The normal schedule for pickup is Monday and Thursday and Tuesday and Friday.

Moss said that citizens wishing fast service on removal of their Christmas trees should put them on the curb in front of their homes.

Moss said that citizens have been very cooperative.

Industrial plants closed the full week of Christmas resume operating schedules on Tuesday.

## Bloodmobile coming in KM December 29

The Red Cross bloodmobile will return to Kings Mountain for a holiday visit December 29.

Donors will be processed from 1:30-6 p.m. at Grace United Methodist Church fellowship hall.

Blood needs are critical at the holiday season when traditionally more wrecks occur and people need life-saving blood.



Laborers with the Gaston Correctional Center, above, clear sewer right-of-ways for the City of Kings Mountain on Phifer Road. The city is participating in a one-year model inmate labor contract with the state waiving administrative costs and the city providing only transportation and \$1 a day for each worker for a 40-hour week.

## Inmates from Gaston prison help KM right-of-way project

Eight inmates with the Gaston Correctional Institute were busy clearing right-of-ways for city sewer lines on Phifer Road at the high school Tuesday.

Inmate labor is new to this area and the City of Kings Mountain is the first municipality in the Southern Piedmont to contract for inmate labor, according to Allen Long, program administrator of the Dallas facility.

"We must clear right-of-ways from Cansler Street to Crocker Road and this is a big project that we are delighted to have the extra labor," said Karl Moss, the city's Superintendent of Public Works.

Moss and Mayor Scott Neisler are coordinating the project with the Gaston Correctional Institute. The city signed a year's contract and will be billed for \$1 per day per person for the work, also agreeing to transport the eight-member work force from Dallas to Kings Mountain at 7 a.m. Monday through Friday for a 40-hour per week shift.

Joe Hamrick of the city staff is supervisor. All members of the city public works staff completed special training to work inmates be-

fore the program started December 1. Each city supervisor carries a card as a designated agent of the Division of Prisons.

The inmates on Tuesday's crew all volunteered for the job.

"We like to work and today is a beautiful day to be clearing land," said one of the young inmates.

Allen said that with increased crime the public is demanding that more inmates work and the program makes them highly visible to the public.

"This is a program that we hope more cities like Kings Mountain will join," he said.

Allen said that he is meeting with the Town of High Shoals on January 10 to present the program to city leaders for consideration.

The inmate labor program has been in existence in North Carolina for some time but mostly in Eastern North Carolina with exception of one or two towns in Western North Carolina.

City Manager Chuck Nance commended Moss and Neisler for their leadership of the new venture and said it was a collaborative effort that would pay off for Kings Mountain.

"We've got a long list for the workers to do and it will really help us out," said Nance.

## KM and Shelby hospitals to discuss possible merger

The future of Kings Mountain Hospital could be decided at two meetings next week.

J. C. Bridges, chairman of the hospital's board of trustees, said the trustees are meeting Wednesday, Jan 5, to hear recommendations from a consultant for solving problems of the doctor-short, financially strapped institution and again on January 9 with members of the Cleveland Memorial Hospital board of trustees to talk possible merger.

Bridges confirmed a possible merger with Cleveland Memorial or another institution could be on the table for consideration in the near future.

Consultant Alex Scott of Growth Activation of Atlanta, Ga. is meeting with the local board at 5:15 p.m. next Wednesday. One of his proposals, in all likelihood, according to Bridges, could initiate preliminary talks of a merger with another hospital. The closest county hospital is 13 miles away in Shelby.

Scott's report will describe the available forms of merger, discuss criteria for acceptable partners and list health care networks that fit the criteria, said Bridges.

Jim Rose, chairman of the Cleveland Memorial Hospital board of trustees, contacted Bridges several weeks ago about the January 9 meeting with his board.

Rose and Bridges said that the two boards have a common goal - to deliver better health care to the Cleveland County community.

"Rose called the meeting and we have agreed to meet with him as soon as he sets the time and place," said Bridges.

"We may talk about merger and it may never come to the table," he said.

Bridges said the consulting firm is looking at the hospital's current financial situation, its record of overall service to the community and its concern at lack of doctor referral patients to the hospital.

"Kings Mountain Hospital has made progress this year during its association with Carolinas Medical Center as has Cleveland Memorial," said Bridges.

Bridges said the Kings Mountain Hospital's current bills are not up to date but that arrangements to pay the bills are ongoing.

"We do have a big debt service but so does neighboring Cleveland Memorial, which is also affiliated with Carolinas Medical," said Bridges.

Bridges said the local hospital's one-year contract with the Charlotte hospital will expire in April.

That's only four months away but Bridges said that the association with the Charlotte hospital has been beneficial to Kings Mountain.

"They've helped us hire two new doctors who will be coming from Canada, one in July and one in August, and Carolinas Medical is helping us stay afloat despite the shortage of doctors."

Bridges said that the illness of Dr. Joe Lee, popular Kings Mountain medical doctor, may necessitate the hospital keeping the old McGill Clinic open longer than it intended.

"The hospital planned to close McGill Clinic December 31 because it has not been profitable to keep it open but now we feel we must continue to have a physician in that office to help out in the current medical shortage in the community," he said.

Dr. Lee, a partner with Dr. Thomas Durham in Kings Mountain Family Practice, remains a patient at N. C. Baptist Hospital in Winston-Salem.

"We're working to keep our hospital open and I can say in all honesty that we are in much better shape financially now than we were eight months ago," said Bridges.

"The illness of Dr. Lee and the exodus of doctors from our

See Hospital, 7-A

## A GIFT FROM THE HEART

Miracle boy Billy Bridges gives wagon to The Children's Hospital at CMC

Christmas is the time of year when hearts turn to those who are less fortunate and in need. Though Billy Bridges fits this category himself, he and his grandparents, Helen and Clarence Barnett, feel very fortunate and blessed and expressed their gratitude to the staff of The Children's Hospital at Carolinas Medical Center for all they have done for Billy with the donation of a brand new Radio Flyer wagon.

Wagons are "THE" mode of transportation for pediatric patients. Some youngsters are still recovering from surgery or tired out from treatments, but still want to get out of bed and play for a while. The wagon is their gate-way to the playroom where toys and activities await and illness is left behind. Getting the children up and out helps them recover faster and keeps spirits high.

Billy was born in Lincolnton February 1, 1991 with Ellis Von Crevell syndrome, which is usually deadly. He has six fingers on each hand, six toes on each foot and a chest cavity so small it won't

permit the normal growth of such internal organs as his lungs and liver, all symptoms of this rare disease. Billy wasn't expected to live but a few months but, at the age of 4, Billy has already proved to be a miracle child.

Just hours after birth Billy was transferred to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Carolinas Medical Center where he stayed until January 1992. Since his first trip home Billy has made many trips back to The Children's Hospital at Carolinas Medical Center for continued treatment. He travels to the playroom or down the hall in a similar wagon, when one is available. There are only four wagons on the entire floor. With help from the Barnetts' neighbors, Joe and Lib Spough, the wagon was assembled and delivered to The Children's Hospital this week. Billy presented his gift, and a card, to the nurses who have cared for him and the place he's known as a second home for the past four years. Billy's donation is a true gift from the heart that will keep on giving for years to come.



Billy Bridges presents a Christmas gift along with his gift of the Radio Flyer wagon he is riding to nurses, left to right, Pedro Medina, Melinda Willis, Kristen May and Susan Jeffers. The wagon will be used by pediatric patients at The Children's Hospital at Carolinas Medical Center.