

Laura Falls celebrates 91st birthday

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Developer wants to buy KM lakes

City Council snubs mayor's budget

City Council Friday night in a four-hour long budget workshop apparently shot down Mayor Scott Neisler's proposal to cut taxes from 40 cents per \$100 valuation to 36 cents and his budget plan that he says will put the required money in the city's reserves fund before the

June 30 current fiscal year ends June 30.

"I'm really beating my head against a wall," said Neisler as he attempted to show the six of seven members present (Councilman Jerry White was absent) that Kings Mountain could end criticism from

the state by rebuilding the reserve fund now since Kings Mountain apparently has the money.

Last year the mayor's budget plan was rejected by the Local Government Commission. This

See Mayor, 11-A

At least a dozen residents of city-owned Davidson and City Lakes aired their concerns Monday to the city utilities committee about rumors they had heard that the city is selling the lakes and approximately 104 acres of land.

Jerry L. Smith of DreamCatcher Enterprises recently sent the city a letter of intent to buy the property but he said Monday he really has no immediate plans and had only the best intentions for use of the

property if the city wanted to sell it to him.

Smith's offer got some immediate reaction from Council members present at the utilities meeting and from neighbors.

"I don't care who buys the property as long as we are protected," said Bobby Maner.

"We have no security. The last thing we want to see done is something to harm us or the land," he said.

Because the properties - 86 acres on Davidson Lake and 18 acres on City Lake - lie outside the city's extraterritorial jurisdiction, the city has no zoning control over the area. The county has no zoning there either.

"The lakes are a liability, not an asset to the city," said Utilities Chairman Jim Guyton. "We just spent \$300,000 renovating the

See Lakes, 12-A

Merger contract ready next week

A formal contract between Charlotte Mecklenburg Hospital Authority and the Cleveland County Board of Commissioners for a 17-year lease of Kings Mountain Hospital is expected to go out to all parties in the proposed merger next week.

Hank Neal, administrator of Kings Mountain Hospital, said that a detailed proposal has been completed.

CMHA already has a management contract with KMH and also with Cleveland Memorial Hospital in Shelby.

At Tuesday's meeting of the KMH Executive Committee the board conducted a first reading of a proposed amendment to the current by-laws that would provide for continuous leadership during the process of transition. Terms of four members on the board expire in June.

The amendment will take a vote of the full board of trustees.

Neal said that a new woman internist coming to Kings Mountain on July 1 has purchased the former McGill Clinic from Dr. John C. McGill.

"Dr. Minor will be in the office See Hospital, 11-A

Study request going to council

A utility rate study that could cost as much as \$55,000 will be recommended by SVBK Consulting Group of Charlotte Tuesday night to the Kings Mountain City Council.

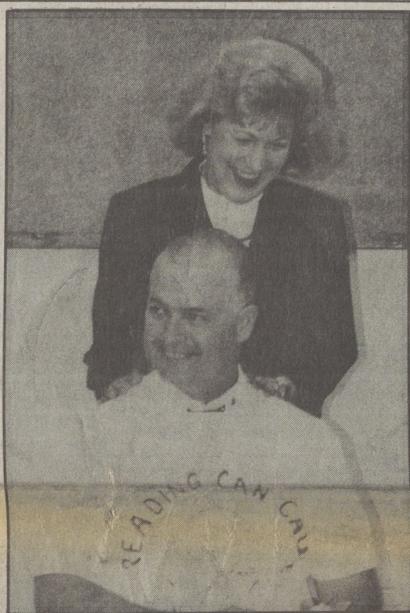
The board meets at 7:30 p.m. in Council Chambers at City Hall.

Dan Stone, representing SVBK, will present his findings from a recent utility audit which identified numerous problems in metering and billing and concludes with about 20 recommendations including a major rate study.

Stone will also recommend that the city hire a customer service representative, a new position in the city finance department.

The board is also expected to set the date for public hearing on the city's 1995-96 budget

'NEXT!'



West School Principal Sherrill Toney, above, makes good on his reading bet with his students by getting his head shaved. Hair stylist Joyce Bridges presented the principal in various hair styles until a clamor from them to "take it off."

Promise to readers leaves West School principal bald

West School Principal Sherrill Toney discovered Thursday that "reading will make you bald."

He got a shirt with that appropriate inscription after hair stylist Joyce Bridges shaved his head at the urging of his students who yelled at the top of their voices, "take it off."

Toney had his head shaved in front of the elementary school student body, keeping good his promise that if students read more this year he would pay off a bet.

The school goal in the Accelerated Reader program was 5,000 points. West students ended the current school year with 6,557.4, 1,557.4 points over goal.

Before the final shave, however, Bridges and Toney had fun with the students. Bridges presented Toney in a Mohawk look, a clown hairdo and finally took the shaving cream to his nearly bald head and gave him his crowning glory to the delight of the audience.

Fifth grader Meagan Spicer was top reader for the

school with 275 points followed closely by fourth grader Virginia Neisler with 266.4. Third place winner was second grader Stacey Spicer, 125.7 points. Other top finishers were Erica Odems, third grader, 113.4 points, and first grader Lauren Gaffney, 52.9 points.

Fourth graders were the top readers, compiling 2,197.6 points followed by the fifth grade with 1,756.3 point, the third grade with 1,140.5 points, the second grade with 1,100.9 points and the first grade, which did not participate until February, 28.6 points.

A total of 29 students in grades 1-5 participated in the reading program.

Toney said he gave the students their choice of dunking him, kissing a pig, sitting on the roof for a day or having his hair shaved.

"They voted by ballot and 95 percent of them wanted me to shave my head if they won our bet," he said.

Toney said that numerous awards went to the top winners including putt-putt games and pizza Thursday afternoon for the 34 members of the Principal's Club.

Study recommends city hire customer service rep

A 60-page audit of the city's billing system lays the blame for the city's underbilling and over-billing of electricity customers of thousands of dollars at the feet of both the utility and billing departments.

But Dan Stone, representing SVBK Consulting Group of Charlotte, doesn't stop there.

He also says customers are not without fault. They moved or left a home without notifying the city and the result is inaccurate billing for that residence.

Stone presented his findings and recommendations to the city utilities committee Monday night, recommending that the city undertake a rate study of all utilities and hire a customer service representative in the finance department.

The four Councilmen at the meeting, Jim Guyton, utility committee chairman; Dean Spears, Rick Murphrey and Ralph Grindstaff agreed that Council should implement the recommendations.

"Why pay \$25,000 for a study if you don't do what it says?" asked Spears.

The new rate study will cost between \$50,000-\$55,000.

Guyton also suggested that the city start at once billing out utilities on 30 day cycles.

"People on fixed incomes can't pay these bills for erratic readings," he said.

Guyton said that some customers get bills for a 12 day period and the next month the bill is for 40 or 60 days.

Spears also suggested that new meter reading routes need to be established, a recommendation of the consulting firm.

Finance Director Maxine Parsons said it will take about three months to change the metering system.

Guyton suggested that meter readers quit skipping streets when they read meters and work both sides of a street at the same time.

Grindstaff said Council should

See Audit, 12-A

KM utility bills to be increased

Your July 1 utility bills from the City of Kings Mountain will be slightly higher.

The 1995-96 preliminary budget calls for a 3 1/2 percent across-the-boards increase in sewer and a slight increase in sanitation fees due to increased costs to the city by the suppliers.

Last Friday City Council took no formal vote but indicated it would pass an increased sewer rates by the City of Gastonia for treatment of sewer at the Crowders Creek Plant instead of absorbing the additional \$67,000 annual cost.

City Manager Chuck Nance had recommended last week that citizens get a break in the sewer costs.

For a water customer using 5,000 gallons of water a month the increased cost will be 24 cents a month.

The county landfill costs for each residential customer will go up 26 cents a month. For the commercial customer, the rate will go from \$2.56 to \$2.95.

The same tax rate will apply as last year, 40 cents per \$100 valuation which will net the city about \$130,000. Since recent reevaluation by Cleveland County, tax bills will be higher.

Gastonia is raising its costs to Kings Mountain for sewer treatment 6.7 percent effective July 1.

Utilities Chairman Jim Guyton said that a major expense next year will be a basin and clarifiers at the Pilot Creek Wastewater Plant which could top the half million or higher figure.

Commissioners penciled several major expenditures on the capital outlay budget Friday, filling no new positions. One secretary in the Parks & Recreation Department.

Now in a part-time position, will work full-time in a reorganization move by that department. A customer service representative position is expected to be funded for

See Bills, 11-A



Pat Plonk, president of the Kings Mountain Historical Foundation Inc., presents a \$25,000 check, a state grant for renovation of the old post office as a museum, to treasurer Ruby Baker as some of the members of the Foundation look on. From left, Plonk, former Senator J. Ollie Harris, Ruby H. Baker and Chamber of Commerce official Jeannie Moore. Back row, Larry Hamrick Sr., Mary Neisler and Gene White.

Historical Museum gets \$25,000

The Kings Mountain Historical Museum Foundation Inc. has received a \$25,000 state grant, seed money for renovations to the old Kings Mountain Post Office to a Kings Mountain Museum.

"We are so excited," said Pat Plonk, president of the Foundation who said that efforts to establish a museum began as far back as 1985 when Hazel Fryer organized the Museum Foundation and it received a charter from the state on April 7, 1986.

Plonk said that a love of history and a desire to commemorate the city's role in the history of the region and the nation fostered the movement to renovate the empty building at the south-east corner of Mountain Street and Piedmont Avenue that once housed the city's post office.

A board of directors of 14 local citizens was formed to pursue the dream of a museum. Former Senator J. Ollie Harris offered his assistance in Raleigh to help secure the grant, one of about 400 re-

quests for funds totaling \$2 million which the General Assembly appropriated to support local historic projects in North Carolina in 1994.

Betty McCain, secretary of the N. C. Department of Cultural Resources, mailed the check to Plonk this week and she presented it to members of the board of directors Tuesday.

Over the years Plonk said that citizens contributed historic materials which are presently stored above the old fire department bays on North Piedmont Avenue. Museum cases have been purchased also from funds originally donated to the Centennial celebration for the City of Kings Mountain in 1974. A historical display is in the lobby of City Hall.

Plonk said that after the city purchased the old post office from the federal government that efforts were made for a number of years to obtain the building for a museum. The city had planned earlier to renovate the old post office as a law enforcement center but in 1994 city

fathers decided to turn the building over to the Museum Foundation for use as a museum and build a new police station when funds were available.

Plonk said that plans will get underway immediately to renovate the building. Since tax exempt status has now been established, it is expected the museum directors will start immediately to plan for local fundraising from the community, industries and businesses interested in preserving the history of Kings Mountain and this area.

Plonk said opening of the museum is expected by the end of 1995 if sufficient support and funds are given to the project. Local citizens and businesses are invited to join in the fundraising, renovation and accumulation of historic materials. Mrs. Plonk may be contacted at 739-2443.

The old post office was used as an air raid shelter during World War II. It was built about 1930 and is already included on the N. C.

See Grant, 11-A