



**Mountaineers win share
of Southwestern 3A
Championship**

8-A

**Grover students
receive free dental care**

1-B



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United Fund merges with county

Kings Mountain United Fund was dissolved Monday by its board of directors and merged with United Way of Cleveland County.

The two county charitable organizations announced the partnership at a press conference at City Hall Tuesday morning after the unanimous action by the Kings Mountain board at a luncheon meeting Monday.

The merger had been talked for several years, voted down at least once and came after several weeks of discussions among

United Way leaders.

Ruby Alexander, a past president and campaign chairman for Kings Mountain United Fund and a new member of the board of the Cleveland County United Way, was instrumental in bringing about the merger and said there are numerous benefits to the collaboration.

"The fund raising and allocations procedure conducted by both the United Fund and United Way will now be handled through one organization. This will make the process easier for both the agencies and

contributors," she said. "By combining these two organizations, the attention the campaign will get from the professional staff at the United Way of Cleveland County can only enhance our fundraising efforts."

"The needs all around Cleveland County continue to grow daily while the resources do not. The volunteers of the United Fund have done a wonderful job raising the funds to help meet these needs but it is time to give the effort the full time, year round attention that is needed," she said. "We are ex-

tremely excited about this new opportunity and hope the residents of our hometown will share that excitement."

Longtime volunteer and retired hardwareman J. C. Bridges, who worked in the Kings Mountain United Fund beginning with its inception in the early 1950's, echoed Alexander's sentiments. Bridges made the motion to merge, seconded by banker Elaine Grigg, at the Monday meeting.

Alexander, bankers Jay

See United, 2-A



UNITED FUND MERGES - J.C. Bridges, Ruby Alexander, Sherwood Southerland and UF President Mikie Smith, left to right, made the announcement Tuesday of the merger of the Kings Mountain United Fund and United Way of Cleveland County.

Utility bill irks KM woman

A 71-year-old Kings Mountain woman says she has been hit by the city with utility bills she doesn't owe at least twice in recent months and now she's hopping mad because the city manager won't return her telephone calls.

Aileen Ross, of 306 Blanton St., said four months ago she got her electric bill for \$800 and complained to Councilman Jerry Mullinax who discovered a computer error.

"The woman handling that job at City Hall was fired," says Ross who said she wasn't out to get anyone fired.

Ross, who is also a city gas customer, recently received a bill that didn't include gas and when she received the second bill with no gas listed on it she called the city and informed them that something was wrong with the meter.

"Someone came out and looked at the meter and said, 'No, it's not working and left,'" she said. She said she called the city and told them they'd better bring her out a new meter the next day and they did.

However, the next bill she received was for \$375.64 which she was told was estimated by using figures from an average of consumption over the last three or four years.

Ross says she owed for gas only for two months but that she and her daughter went to City Hall on February 7 and paid \$70 on the bill and she paid her regular utility bill of \$37.95.

The city's Customer Service Representative Mary Bowen confirmed that she offered Ross and three other customers whose gas meters malfunctioned recently a contract to pay the back gas bills over the several months it took the city to change out the meters and install new ones. Bowen said in hardship cases the city spreads the payment time. Ross won't be charged a \$10 late fee if she pays current charges monthly on time which the city says she does.

Bowen said Mrs. Ross called the city January 8 after she found no gas charges on her December billing.

"Customers use very little gas in October but it picks up in November and December," said Bowen. She said the work order and getting a history of consumption is time consuming.

"It usually takes a couple of months to bill but we always give the customer time to pay for any back charges that could come from malfunctioning meters," she said.

Monday Mayor Scott Neisler signed a contract with the city to pay \$50 a month on the re-

See Ross, 3-A



The late Ellen Sisk was carried to Bessemer City Memorial Cemetery in the horse drawn hearse purchased by her husband, Frank F. Sisk, founder of Sisk-Butler Funeral Home. The hearse, which dates back to 1914, was made by the Pennsylvania Amish. Sisk purchased the unique carriage in 1969 from an antique store in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

City approves rezoning for plant

City Council approved a rezoning request Tuesday night that paves the way for Patriot Homes of Elkhart, Indiana to build a 120,000 square foot \$3.5 million dollar plant on Crocker Road which could mean up to 200 new jobs.

Norma Divers, engineer, said if all goes well that the plant could be up and ready by August or September for production of manufactured houses. He said preliminary site designs are underway.

Realtor John Barker and Economic Development Officer Steve Nigh, both of Shelby, said the new industry would bring the largest influx of new jobs to Cleveland County in more than 10 years. Nigh said the jobs would be very welcome in this area since the closing of the big Clevevont Plant which left many workers out of a job.

Last week the Planning and Zoning Board voted 5-1 in favor of rezoning 80 acres of farm land owned by Phillip R. Elam from residential to light industrial. Worried that the plant would change the rural character of the area, Bob Lupean of Country Creek, Keith Miller from Quail Hollow, Cameron Ware and Mike Hutchins spoke at the public hearing but although area residents were present Tuesday no one spoke in opposition. City Council unanimously adopted the Planning Board's recommendation.

The new Kings Mountain plant, the first for the 25-year-old company in North Carolina, specializes in manufactured homes. The pay scale for employees runs \$9 an hour but with bonuses \$10.60 per hour, plant officials pointed out last week. Cleveland Community

College will begin training of carpenters, electricians and plumbers in May.

The plant will operate one shift from 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Normal production runs from one to two manufactured homes a day.

Nye said the company had looked at numerous sites in North Carolina, including Shelby and Boiling Springs, and chose the Kings Mountain site because of the availability of water, sewer, electricity and gas with access to I-85 and the potential for employees.

City planning director Steve Killian said by its action Council concurred with the Planning Board that commercial and industrial development should be encouraged in that 2.9 mile corridor from I-85 tp

See Plant, 3-A

City Manager to oversee lake

A reorganization of some departments in city government will begin with Moss Lake where the city will get tougher on people who don't pay leases in a timely manner and will run the lake operation as a business.

City Manager Jimmy Maney got the endorsement of his plans by City Council members attending the first work session on the 1997-98 budget Thursday night.

Chief Bob Hayes is assigning Ptl. Larry Ware to patrol the lake since the resignation of Officer Roger Coforth. The operation of the department would fall directly under the city manager's authority and that of the Planning Department Codes Officer Jeff Putnam.

Maney said that since the summer lake business is usually brisk on weekends that he will recommend that the beach area be closed except Saturday and Sunday to cut down on the costs.

"We need to inventory the lake shoreline and get a handle on the lake operation," said Maney.

"Everyone will pay his fair share," said Maney, saying that if lease payments become delinquent that residents won't get their leases renewed and have no access to the lake.

"We need to be firm and let people know who is in charge," said Councilman Jerry Mullinax.

Maney said that he hoped to include \$10,000 in capital reserves which is new to the budget proposal for lake operations.

Planning Director Steve Killian opened the discussion of the lake needs, noting that accountability, financial responsi-

See Lake, 3-A

City will retain animal control

By a vote of 4-3, Kings Mountain City Council Tuesday night rejected a proposal by the Cleveland County Health Department to take over its animal control duties.

Councilman Jerry White made the motion, seconded by Jerry Mullinax with Ralph Grindstaff and Norma Bridges also voting not to go with a country contract that would have called for a \$21,000 plus annual salary to the person running the job, turning over the city's new dog truck and a contract which left liability with the city due to the fact that the city has a leash law and the county does not.

Voting for the proposal were Councilmen Rick Murphrey, Dean Spears and Phil Hager. They joined Mayor Scott Neisler and City Manager Jimmy Maney in endorsing the proposal.

"There is a misconception here," said White, a county deputy, who said there isn't a single sworn officer currently in animal control and after hours those employees respond only in emergencies.

"I am 100 percent opposed," said White. "We have our own animal control department and we need to keep it here."

Hager said the board's failure to take the recommendation of the city manager was micro-management. "We hired Jimmy Maney to do a job and we're not letting him do it," charged Hager.

But Grindstaff and Mullinax disagreed.

"This is not micromanaging,"
See Animal, 3-A

KM residents get place to rest after their walk

A Conversation Patio and six park benches create a pleasant atmosphere for approximately 150 people who walk the city's walking track every day.

Karl Moss, the city's superintendent of public works, starts the day with the early walkers about 4:30 a.m. The walking track is open until 11 p.m. daily and is one of the busiest places in town.

Adding the park benches is a big boon for people who have to rest before taking another trek around the track, according to Moss.

David Green bricked the 39 by 29 feet patio with its 12 feet flower garden in the center surrounded by Bradford pear trees donated by the First Baptist Church and Kings Mountain

Fire Museum. The parking lot has also been expanded to accommodate 70 automobiles and topsoil is being added in front of the track and grass is being planted. Landscaper Robert Hutchinson said that seasonal bulbs are being planted and that the whole track will be resurfaced with five inches of new rock dirt. A new information sign is in place.

Kings Mountain Police stepped up patrol of the area since the vandalism of park benches and bathroom facilities.

Moss said walkers should start off slow and consult a doctor before beginning a rigorous program.

"It's fun and relaxing for people of all ages and it's good for your health," he says.



CONVERSATION PARK - A Conversation Park has been added to the city's walking track. Public Works Supt. Karl Moss, left, builder David Green and landscaper Robert Hutchinson survey some of the additions.