

# The Herald

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## Farquharson named KM coach, AD

By GARY STEWART  
 Editor of The Herald

Dave Farquharson has been named head football coach and athletic director at Kings Mountain High School.



The former offensive line coach under coaches Dennis Hicks and Ron Massey was informed of the school's decision

Wednesday afternoon, and expressed excitement over the prospects of continuing the successful program built by departing coach Ron Massey.

"We want to play good football and we want to continue in the direction that we've been going," he said. "We want to be legitimate contenders for conference championships. We want to set our goals to make the playoffs, and set our goals again for Chapel Hill. That's what Coach Massey got started and if it's not broken there's no need to fix it."

Farquharson has been an assistant at KMHS since 1989, and has also served the past several seasons as head wrestling coach. He said he will probably relinquish those duties to assistant coach Alfred Ash.

Ronnie Wilson, Asst. Supt. of Personnel, said Farquharson was in the running for the head job from the outset of the coaching search. Seven prospects were interviewed, including three head coaches at established 4A programs. Two of those coaches were offered the job but turned it down, and the third withdrew from consideration.

"Dave Farquharson will do an outstanding job as athletic director and head football coach," Wilson said. "He brings experience with the program. He is well respected by the kids, and he has been a successful wrestling coach."

Farquharson and Wilson are immediately beginning a search for at least two top-notch assistants. Farquharson's promotion creates one assistant's position, and the resignation of DJ Williams creates another. There is also a possibility that assistant coach Aubrey Hollifield will join Coach Massey in Kannapolis.

"There's some good people out there," said Farquharson. "I just haven't had a chance to get on the phone and get busy. But we're going to look for two quality coaches to come in and pick right up and contribute at the level that our assistant coaches contribute."

"What Coach Hollifield does will make a difference in what we do staff wise. That's another phone call I'm going to have to make."

Farquharson said he is grateful for the opportunity to become head coach, and is grateful to former coaches Hicks and Massey for helping him along the way.

"The five years that Ron was here, and the years before that all attributed to what the game is about," he said. "It's a learning process no matter how long you've been coaching. Things are always changing. Athletes come and go, and you have to be able to change with the times. You have to make things exciting for the kids and the fans, and that's what we're looking to do."

## MEMORIAL DAY



ALAN HODGE / THE HERALD  
 Three-year-old Blakely Philbeck and her mom, Christy Philbeck, spent part of their Memorial Day at the Kings Mountain Walking Track park. Balmy breezes and bright sunshine made the weather perfect for the outing.

## Merger plan goes before State Board

By GARY STEWART  
 Editor of The Herald

Kings Mountain's attempts to head off a merger of the three Cleveland County school systems took a pair of blows last week, and the knockout punch could be delivered at Thursday morning's meeting of the State School Board in Raleigh.

The State Board will act on the Cleveland County Commissioners' merger plan shortly after its meeting convenes at 8:30 a.m. The county's merger lawyer, Gil Middlebrooks, will have 30 minutes to explain the county's plan and the Kings Mountain, Shelby and Cleveland County school systems will have up to 15 minutes each to present their views.

The Kings Mountain School Board's attempt to get an injunction to prevent the State Board from hearing the request was denied in Wake County Superior Court last week, and a similar request by the attorney for the parents' group Save Our Schools was denied in a telephone hearing.

Both groups have filed lawsuits that claim the rights of 183 Gaston County students who also live in the City of Kings Mountain and have always attended Kings Mountain District Schools are being violated by the merger plan and that it would cause irreparable harm to those students.

In the two hearings last week, judges ruled that an injunction could not be granted because, before a decision is made, irreparable harm has not been caused.

Lou Lesegne, attorney for the Save Our Schools group, filed papers with the Department of Justice late Tuesday afternoon claiming the plan also violates the 1965 Civil Rights Voting Act.

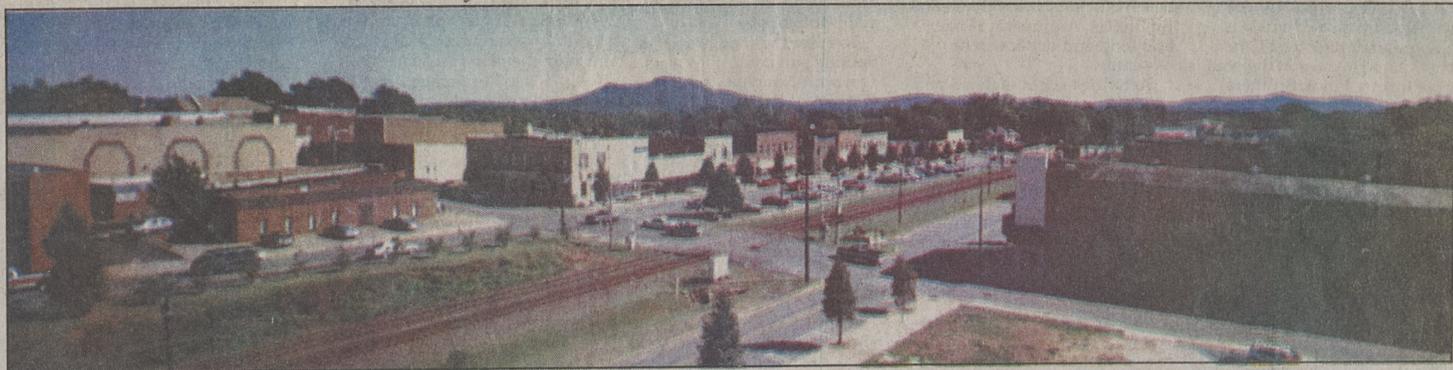
Lesegne said it's highly doubtful the Justice Department would do anything to stop the State Board from acting on the merger plan Thursday. But he does feel that approving the merger plan would carry racial overtones.

"There may be some racial overtones because the racial composition of the Gaston County part of Kings Mountain is substantially different from Cleveland County in general," he said.

Over 70 percent of the Gaston County students affected by the merger plan are minority students.

Both groups plan to activate their lawsuits if the merger plan is approved as is, and the School Board also plans to seek an injunction to prevent the merger from being implemented until the Gaston County issue is decided.

See Merger, 2A



Downtown Kings Mountain could take on new look if revitalization study is adopted

## Downtown revitalization study approved

By GARY STEWART  
 Editor of The Herald

After a lengthy discussion, Kings Mountain City Council Tuesday night unanimously gave Mayor Rick Murphrey the go-ahead to proceed with a strategic assessment for a downtown master revitalization plan.

For a fee of \$7,200, Communitas Insights and Initiatives for Developing Stronger Cities will assess the community's needs and interest in developing the downtown area for marketing, tourism and other areas important to the people.

The total cost of actually implementing a downtown revitalization program has been estimated to be as much as \$90,000 and city officials stressed that if such an endeavor is undertaken it would take the total commitment of the city and the community.

Some members of Council said they would be willing to finance up to 25% of the total project, but hinted they would not agree to contributing all of the funding.

Mayor Rick Murphrey is excited about the project and said he has already been in contact with businesses and individuals who are willing to put money and work into the effort.

"The downtown is the heart of a community and makes a statement about what you are as a city and gives impressions to current residents and visitors about the health and status of your municipality," Murphrey said.

"Revitalization of downtown would bring

beauty to our city and contribute to a better quality of life for all citizens through improvements in cultural, social and economic development. This must be a joint effort between the city government and the private sector in leadership and investment."

Steve Turner of Communitas recently met with about 50 citizens in a public forum type meeting to explain the process of downtown revitalization. Most of the people attending that meeting expressed a desire to go forward.

Communitas, after working with the City Planning Department, leaders in government and the community, will propose a master plan for the downtown area. At that point, City Council will decide whether or not to continue it.

Turner said he will review prior successes and failures of downtown, and tour the city and become familiar with the opportunities, problems and issues facing Kings Mountain. He will also seek commitments of time and money from the community.

A steering committee will be formed to oversee the effort and provide support, and develop an outline for the master plan which will include goals and funding strategies.

Murphrey said Kings Mountain will have to find its "niche" for downtown, but the "time is right for us to grow. We have to be visionary and work together. There's a lot of enthusiasm about this town and where we're going."

See Downtown, 5A

## Council approves purchase of land for new fire station

By GARY STEWART  
 Editor of The Herald

Kings Mountain City Council Tuesday night unanimously approved paying \$100,000 for property at the corner of Gold Street and U.S. 74 on which to build a satellite fire station to serve the west end of the city.

The property is owned by Maxine, Ronnie and Jake Hord Jr.

Mayor Rick Murphrey said the city hopes to begin drawing preliminary plans as early as July and be underway with the building project within six months.

The city has appropriated \$500,000 in the fiscal year 2000-01 budget toward the cost of the station. Murphrey said he hopes to see the city in the station by the end of the fiscal year (June 30, 2001).

"This is something the city needs," he said. "Adequate fire protection is desperately needed for the west side."

The property is 150' by 270'. Fire Chief Frank Burns envisioned a two-bay station which would be about half the size of the existing fire station at City Hall.

Burns said the station is desperately needed because the town is split by railroad tracks and a disastrous train derailment could make it virtually impossible to get to that area of town.

Plus, he said, the Insurance Services Office regulates that every household must be within 1 1/2 miles of a fire station and houses located in that proximity receive lower rates on their fire insurance.

The city eventually hopes to

See Fire, 2A

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