

The Herald

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State approves merger, injunctions sought

By GARY STEWART
Editor of The Herald

Attorneys for Kings Mountain District Schools Board of Education and the parents group Save Our Schools were attempting to get court orders this week to stop the July 1 implementation of the merger of the Kings Mountain, Shelby and Cleveland County school systems.

The State Board voted 9-3

Thursday in Raleigh to approve the Cleveland County Commissioners merger plan, and the Board of Commissioners last night named an interim board to oversee the transition.

However, Kings Mountain vows to continue the fight until all avenues are exhausted.

Lue Lesegne, attorney for Save Our Schools, filed a motion with the Office of Administrative Hearings to stay

the merger action and was due to have a conference call with Judge Sammie Chess of High Point Wednesday.

Attorneys Richard Schwartz and Bryan Shaw, representing the KM School Board, were preparing to seek an injunction in Cleveland County Superior Court until the legal question of whether or not 183 Gaston County students belong to Kings Mountain or Gaston County schools is settled.

The KM School Board has contended all along that those students are legally a part of KMDS and that the Cleveland County Commissioners' merger plan is illegal because it was not approved by the Gaston County Commissioners.

If that position holds up in court, Cleveland County Commissioners would have to re-draw their merger plan with Gaston County approval, and re-submit it to the State Board

of Education.

If that position does not stand up in court, Kings Mountain School Board members fear it would mean the end of the 105-year-old Kings Mountain School System.

Kings Mountain officials got excited at last week's State Board meeting when Board member Robert Douglas of Asheville made a motion to deny the merger request. However, State Treasurer

Harlan Boyles quickly made a substitute motion to approve the plan, and it passed.

"Our stomachs sort of jumped into our throats," KM Board Chairman Larry Allen said of the motion to deny. Eddie Davis III of Durham and Ronald Deal of Hickory voted with Douglas to deny the plan.

Just knowing that three board members had questions about

See Merger, 3A

Senior Center to break ground

By GARY STEWART
Editor of The Herald

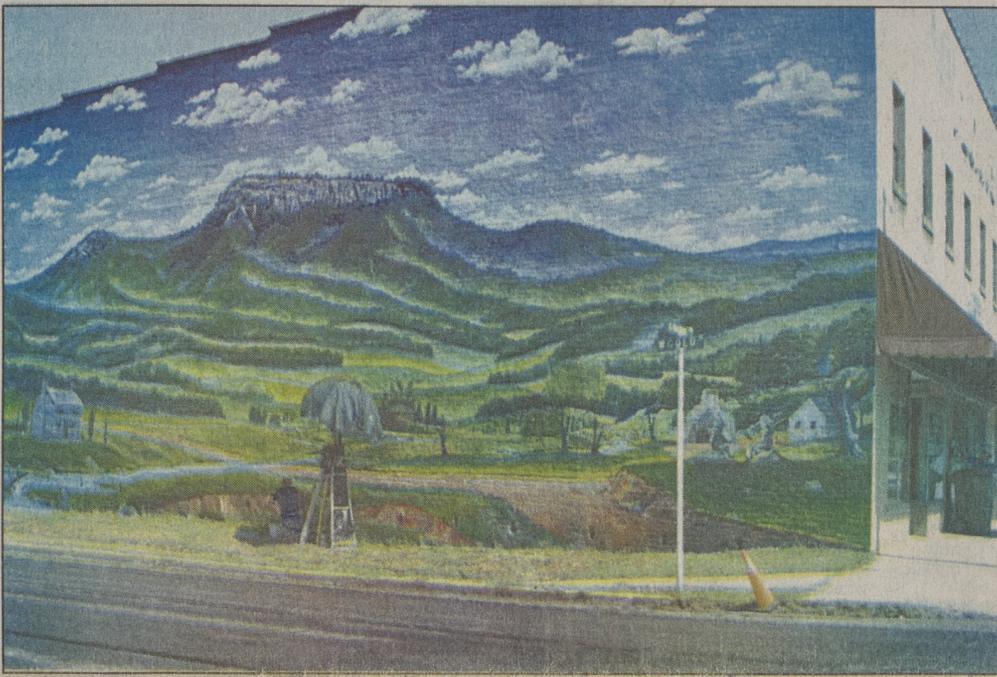
Kings Mountain Senior Center will break ground for the new \$1.4 million H. Lawrence Patrick Senior Life and Conference Center on East King Street Friday morning at 10:30. Rain date is Friday, June 16.

Mayor Rick Murphrey, Senior Center Director Monty Thornburg, and other city officials will take part in the ceremony. Both will make remarks and the Mayor will also introduce members of the Senior Center Capital Campaign Committee and other special guests.

Tents will be set up and refreshments served to the public. The city will unveil the architect's drawing for the 16,000 square foot facility which will be located on 7 1/2 acres of land. City Council hopes to receive bids and begin work on the facility by late July or early August. The Senior Center hopes to occupy the facility by September 2001.

The Capital Campaign Committee, chaired by Jim Belt, Johnny Harris, Charles Mauney and Stella Putnam, led an effort that topped the \$1.4 million goal. The City of Kings Mountain pledged \$700,000 to the project, Mrs. Lawrence Patrick donated \$150,000, the Cleveland County Board of Commissioners appropriated \$150,000, and the project received a \$100,000 state grant provided the new facility is occupied by September 2001. The remaining funds were pledged by businesses, civic groups, other

See Center, 3A



BEACH BLAST

Summer fun, music, mural dedication highlight first annual downtown event

By GARY STEWART
Editor of The Herald

If you're not one of the lucky ones who'll be vacationing on the coast this Saturday, you can still get a good taste of the ocean atmosphere at the first annual Beach Blast at Patriots Park (gazebo) in downtown Kings Mountain.

Sponsored by KM Pools and the Kings Mountain Business and Professional Association, Beach Blast 2000 will feature a lot of sand and water events, bikini and shag contests, music by the popular beach band Ocean Blvd., and the long-

awaited dedication of the downtown mural depicting the history of Kings Mountain as it was at the time of the Battle of Kings Mountain in 1780.

Activities get underway at 3 p.m. with a performance by Dance Magic. The Teenie Weenie Bikini Contest for ages newborn-3 and 4-6 will take place at 4 p.m., and the mural will be dedicated at 5.

Ocean Blvd. will play at 5:30 and will break at 6:30 for a shag contest, then resume following the contest.

In between the above activities, beach-goers will have plenty of time to participate in watermelon eating contests, beachball race, kiddie fish

pond, face painting, dunking booth, photo booth, and many other activities.

The championship Kings Mountain High School women's volleyball team will put on an exhibition, and members of the Mountaineer Car Club will provide entries for a classic car show on Railroad Avenue.

Entries for the shag contest (\$5 per couple) and the bikini contests (\$5 each child) must be turned in to Ashley's Antiques on Railroad Avenue by 5 p.m. Friday.

See Blast, 3A

Commissioners appoint interim school board

By ALAN HODGE
Staff Writer

The Cleveland County Board of Commissioners selected a board for their merged school system Tuesday night. The process was carried out by paper ballot before a standing room only crowd in the commission chambers. No protest followed the announcement.

Members from the current separate school boards selected to serve four-year terms on the new board include Dr. Larry Allen and Shearra Miller from Kings Mountain District Schools, Jo Boggs and Tommy Greene from Cleveland County Schools, and Dr. Jack Hamrick and Richard Hooker from Shelby City Schools.

Allen is a former superintendent of Kings Mountain District Schools and lives in Kings Mountain. Miller is head of the Cleveland County Arts Council and also lives in Kings Mountain. Boggs is a piano teacher from Fallston. Greene serves as vice president of Cleveland Community College and lives in Boiling Springs. Hamrick is an orthopedic surgeon from Shelby. A businessman, Hooker is also from Shelby.

The three at-large members selected to serve one-year terms are Dr. George Litton, Dr. Steve Curtis, and Mary Evans. Curtis is the brother in law of commissioner Joe Cabiness, retired superintendent of Shelby City Schools, and a Shelby resident. Litton is from Shelby and is the former principal at Crest High School. Evans is a retired Shelby school teacher and lives in Shelby.

For the at-large seats, commissioners had 43 applicants from all over the county and walks of life.

"We have a number of very, very qualified people for these positions," said commission chairman Jim Crawley.

Crawley and commissioner Willie McIntosh both stated that since so many good people applied for the at-large seats, and because only three could be chosen, they hoped the applicants would consider trying again at a later date for advisory or other positions with the new school system.

"We will be needing qualified people to help us in the future," McIntosh said.

Before the ballots were taken for the new board members, commission attorney Gil Middlebrooks reminded the commissioners that they were

See Interim, 3A

BB&T robbed on Monday

By ALAN HODGE
Staff Writer

Rain wasn't the only thing going down Monday morning in Kings Mountain. While a steady drizzle hit the pavement outside, a lone thief was also hitting the BB&T bank at 410 E. King Street.

According to police, the suspect entered the bank at 9:49 a.m. and told employees he had a gun. The suspect then ordered tellers to fill a bag with money.

Police are looking for a white male in his late 30s or 40s with a dark mustache. He was wearing dark pants and a dark T-shirt. He also had a bandana tied around his head.

After leaving the bank with an undisclosed amount of money, the suspect drove off in a small red truck. No one in the bank was injured.

Repaving, clean-up projects under way

By ALAN HODGE
Staff Writer

Several streets in Kings Mountain are getting a summer spruce-up. Work currently in progress in town will not only make driving smoother, but will also clean up a stretch of sidewalk that was getting to be rather shabby.

Motorists and pedestrians on King Street may have noticed a crew of workers from the N.C. Department of Corrections facility in Dallas working diligently to beautify the sidewalks on both sides of that thoroughfare. The 10 or so guys hard at work are being supervised by Officer Brooks.

"We're using bush axes, shovels, and rakes to trim the sidewalk," Brooks said. "After the

trimming is done, we put the trash and other debris in bags and take it away."

Brooks estimates that he and his crew have filled up over 50 bags so far. Plans are for the entire length of King Street from one city limits sign to the other to be cleaned up. The job will continue until the end of this week. Time permitting, the crew will also begin a general litter pickup around town.

That roaring sound many residents of Gold and Mountain streets heard last week wasn't a runaway locomotive. Part of a project to repave the two roads, a huge pavement grinding machine operated by Delta Contracting was skimming off the top layer of tarmac so that a

See Paving, 3A



Workers for Delta Contracting have been smoothing the pavement on several streets in Kings Mountain for new paving. Pictured on Gold Street are Roger Green and grinder operator Dustin Vongliss.

ALAN HODGE/THE HERALD

<p>FIRST NATIONAL BANK Celebrating 126 Years</p>	<p>Kings Mountain 300 W. Mountain St. 739-4782</p>	<p>Gastonia 529 New Hope Rd. 865-1233</p>	<p>Shelby 106 S. Lafayette St. 484-6200</p>	<p>Bessemer City 1225 Gastonia Hwy. 629-3906</p>
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