

KINGS MOUNTAIN The Herald

Thursday, June 15, 2000

Vol. 112 No. 24

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BEACH BLAST



Ten-year-old Trinity Logan got his face painted by artist Dana Wray at Saturday's Beach Blast 2000 in Kings Mountain. Dedication of the new mural by Clive Haynes was also part of the fun that brought hundreds downtown. Getting ready to salute the mural are, from left; Dale "Mountainman" Putnam, Haynes, Rick Murphrey, and Don Homesley of the Cherryville Shooters.

Merger goes to hearing Friday in Raleigh

BY ALAN HODGE
Staff Writer

Like a weary mule staggering along in the noonday sun, school merger continues on its tortuous path to some sort of finality.

Since the State Board of Education's decision to approve merger two weeks ago, the July 1 date for implementation is approaching with increasing rapidity. Though time seems to be running short for opponents of the plan, many still feel they have a chance to stop it.

"I feel every judge we have seen has validated our case," said Stella Putnam. "They just said the timing was wrong. I think we have merit in our case to stop merger. I think we can still win it."

One angle that merger opponents are working is the issue of voter's rights. Putnam and other members of the three separate school boards that were in office before the interim board was named June 6 argue that by merger eliminating their jobs, the election that put them there has been declared null and void.

"How can the county commissioners overturn the voters who put us in office for four years and fire us after six months?" Putnam said. "The

fifteen people who were on the pre-merger boards were elected by the people."

Another argument that anti-merger folks are hoping will turn the tide in their favor is the question of the 188 students who live in Gaston County, but who go to school in Kings Mountain. The Kings Mountain anti-merger group Save Our Schools says that because these students live in Gaston County, then the county commissioners there must also approve merger. Their argument for an injunction to stop merger went before Judge Sammie Chess on June 9. Chess is expected to rule on the question June 22.

This Friday will see another round take place at 9 a.m. in Raleigh at the Office of Administrative Hearings when the Kings Mountain School Board's lawsuit against the State Board of Education is heard.

"We are arguing that merger is based on an illegal plan and should have included the students in Gaston County," said Kings Mountain school board member Ronnie Hawkins. "In a legal merger plan, Gaston County should have signed off on it too."

While the legal battle continues, See MERGER page 3A

Beach Blast 2000 hot event

BY ALAN HODGE
Staff Writer

Hot cars, hot pavement, hot music and cool water were just a few of the attractions that made Saturday's Beach Blast 2000 in Kings Mountain a resounding success. The event was organized by the Kings Mountain business and professional Association and KM Pools.

Literally hundreds of folks flocked to Patriot's Park and the new Gazebo to take in all the summer fun that the Blast had to offer. Attractions included a watermelon eating contest, hot rod show, teenie

wienie bikini contest for the tots, face painting, water dunk, food, dedication of the downtown mural, musketry by several Cherryville Shooters and much more.

"This is an excellent event," said nine-year-old Josh Human. "It's just like being at the beach."

No beach would be complete without water, and Beach Blast 2000 had it in the form of an open fire hydrant. As the water shot high into the air and cascaded down again in a cooling spray, scores of glistening children cavorted with glee.

"This is a well attended event," said Skip Hord, Kings

Mountain Parks and Recreation director. "It's good to see something like this that gives the people a place to gather and have some fun. This should become an annual event."

Music for the get together was provided by renowned beach band Ocean Blvd. Many a memory of days gone by at the coast came flooding back as the band played oldie goldie favorites from the days when penny loafers and Bermuda shorts were required beach club wear. Proving that a good band will make your feet move, many couples took the floor for a bit

of vigorous shagging.

Also part of Saturday's action at the Blast was the dedication of Clive Hayne's mural. Depicting a panoramic view of the Kings Mountain countryside, as well as bits of history from the town's past, the mural is an eye opening piece of work. Dedicating the mural with a blast of musketry were several guys from the famous Cherryville Shooters.

One of the best things to come to town in quite a while, Beach Blast 2000 left everyone with a smile on their face and eager for more.

New engine will take KMFD far into future

BY ALAN HODGE
Staff Writer

Look! Up in the sky! It's a bird, it's a plane, no it's a Kings Mountain fireman in the air on the ladder of their new fire truck.

After a year of shopping around, chief Frank Burns and his crew at the Kings Mountain Fire Department have a new 46,000 pound baby in the form of a Pierce-Aerial machine that has so much glistening red paint and sparkling chrome trim that you need sunglasses to look at it.

"The new fire engine will give us the ability to reach the taller buildings in town," Burns said. "An example where we could have used the aerial ladder on the new truck was the fire last Christmas at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church. Now, we can reach the top of three-story structures such as the new Holiday Inn or the Central School building."

At maximum extension, the truck's ladder can erect 75 feet. The attached water cannon can squirt 1,500 gallons per minute. Four other nozzles on the truck's sides can put out a total of 500 gallons per minute for a total of 2,000 gallons per minute of high pressure spray.

Another technical feature of the rig is its 500 horsepower Detroit Diesel engine. The machine gets about 8 miles per gallon.

"We went to the factory in Appleton, Wisconsin and picked the fire engine up," Burns said. "It took about 200 gallons of fuel to drive it back to Kings Mountain."

Even though the fire truck cost \$499,684, it was a bargain. The fact that it was a demonstrator model with 4,000 miles on the odometer saved the city about \$50,000.

"We searched for a used model that we could fix up," said Burns. "But no used fire trucks were out there that didn't need around \$200,000 to get in decent shape."

The truck will last the fire department about 30 years. It will add to the security of the tallest buildings in Kings Mountain now, and down the road as well.

"If some day buildings as tall as six stories are built in Kings Mountain, we will be able to deal with them," said Burns.

Though the new aerial truck is in the fire department garage awaiting its first day of action, Burns said his men will need a month of training to be proficient on all its features.

"It will take us into the future," he said.

Groundbreaking ceremony held for new KM Senior Center

BY ALAN HODGE
Staff Writer

In a long-awaited ceremony, ground was broken Friday for the new H. Lawrence Patrick Senior Life and Conference Center in Kings Mountain.

To be located on East King Street near Canterbury Road across from the Herald building, the \$1.4 million center will encompass 16,000 square feet on a 7 1/2 acre site. Now that the ground has been officially broken, work on the structure itself will begin the last part of July or early August.

"This is a very exciting day," said Senior Center director Monty Thornburg. "When we

actually start seeing the bricks go up, then I'll feel even better."

Many dignitaries as well as civic and business leaders attended the ceremony which was held under a crystal blue sky and warm morning sun. Just a few of the folks who attended the event included Reps. Debbie Clary and Jim Horn, members of the Kings Mountain city council, mayor Rick Murphrey, members of the Senior Center Advisory Board and the Capital Campaign Committee.

Others at the ceremony included Shirley Brutko from the Kings Mountain branch of the Cleveland County Chamber of

See SENIOR CTR. page 3A



ALAN HODGE/THE HERALD
The Kings Mountain Fire Department recently took delivery of a brand new Pierce-Aerial fire truck. The rig has a ladder that can extend 75 feet and a water cannon that can shoot 1,500 gallons per minute. Pictured on the ladder are firemen John Caldwell II (left) and David Ayscue.



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