

KINGS MOUNTAIN The Herald

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INSIDE SPORTS



G. STEWART / HERALD
Kings Mountain High football coach Dave Farquharson watches his players go through opening-day drills Saturday morning.

Mountaineers start hitting on Saturday

Kings Mountain High's football team has been conditioning for a week, and now they're eager to get down to serious business. The team will have its first heavy contact practice Saturday with a Black-Gold scrimmage. 6A

PEOPLE

Moore attending GOP convention



Kings Mountain's Tim Moore is having a ball as an alternate delegate to the Republic Party's

Convention in Philadelphia. The party's presidential candidate, George W. Bush, will officially accept the nomination tonight. 5A

Jim Belt resigns from Senior Board

Jim Belt, longtime chairman of the Kings Mountain Senior Center's Advisory Board, has resigned his seat on the Board effective immediately. Belt was also recently removed from the Planning and Zoning Board and Board of Adjustments because his neighborhood was annexed into the city. 5A

COMMUNITY

KM Little Theatre prepares for play

Kings Mountain Little Theatre is gearing up for the season at Kings Mountain Woman's Club. KMLT has planned "Get Acquainted Thursdays" every Thursday in August and is also auditioning for "Nuncracker" on August 13-14. 2B

SCHOOLS

KM bus routes, menus announced

Kings Mountain students will be heading back to school Monday morning. The school bus routes, lunch menus, and stories on orientation at local schools are on page 5B

School bells ring Monday

No merger, business as usual for KM

By GARY STEWART
Editor of The Herald

School bells will ring for some 4,500 students in Kings Mountain Monday morning - and they're still a part of Kings Mountain District Schools.

With the planned merger of the KM, Shelby City and Cleveland County systems still in limbo because of KMDS lawsuits against the Cleveland County Commissioners and State Board of Education - and, also, because the U.S. Justice Department has yet to preclear the plan under the Voting Rights Act - Kings Mountain students and parents should see a typical school year.

Partly because of the hovering merger, but mainly because of its past success, KM Supt. Bob McRae said there will be no major changes in programs this year.

"We really have tried to keep an even keel," McRae said. "Given the fact that we do have to face the possibility of merger, we didn't think it was fair to try to do a lot of new things. But part of that is, our folks have done very well and we feel like what we're doing is working and we need to keep the course."

Kings Mountain students will see a lot of new faces in administrative roles this year. The Central Office has made appointments to key departments, KM High and Middle Schools have new principals and assistant principals, and Bethware and Grover Elementary Schools have new assistant principals.

See School, 3A

Closing the Gap

Educators, citizens seek ways to improve minority test scores

BY ALAN HODGE
Staff Writer

Educators, civic leaders, and concerned citizens met last Thursday evening at Adams Chapel AME Zion Church in Kings Mountain searching for answers to the academic achievement disparity between black and white students.

Dubbed "Closing the Gap Public Forum," the meeting focused on teamwork between schools and parents to improve scholastic performance for students who were below grade level proficiency.

Reading and math proficiency percentages between black and white students in Kings Mountain schools for the last four years have differed by as much as 30 percent in some

years and categories. Efforts to reduce the disparity have seen increases as high as 15.3 percent proficient in reading in black male students in Kings Mountain.

At a low of 48.9 percent in 1995-1996, the percent of black males proficient on their end-of-grade reading tests has risen to the 1998-1999 figure of 64.2 percent. For this same period, the percentage of black females who were graded proficient in their reading scores was never below 65.3 percent and was as high as 77.6 percent. For the period 1996-1997, the percentage of black females proficient in reading in Kings Mountain schools was higher than white males by a score of 75.1 to 73.9 percent.

See Gap, 3A

Coming to the aid of a neighbor

Employees of Concrete Concepts fix up 86-year-old woman's home

BY ALAN HODGE
Staff Writer

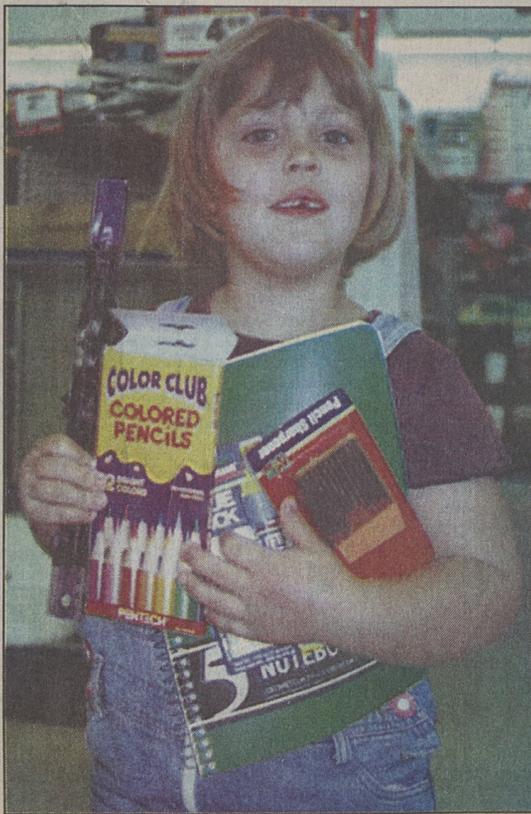
Though their usual projects involve building tilt-wall industrial structures, Concrete Concepts of Kings Mountain took a couple of days recently to help 86-year-old Mrs. John Ida Tomes fix up her house.

The job got underway when Tomes' friend Ruby Mackey was visiting her home on Tracy Street and noticed the poor condition Tomes' porch was in. Mackey called Amanda Hoyle

at the Cleveland County Council on Aging, who in turn referred the case to Sharon Eaker at the Kings Mountain Senior Center. Like the U.S. Cavalry coming to the rescue, Concrete Concepts soon entered the scene and went to work on Tomes' porch.

When the first of two crews from Concrete Concepts arrived on the scene, they expected to find a cement porch in need of fixing. The job, however, was a

See Porch, 3A



ALAN HODGE/THE HERALD
Amber Owens was loading up on school supplies Tuesday morning in Kings Mountain. The first-grader said she was excited about beginning her academic career.

Commissioners hold off on loan for KM school

BY ALAN HODGE
Staff Writer

Citing more pressing needs for their \$3.3 million cash reserve, Cleveland County Commissioners turned down a request by Kings Mountain District Schools Tuesday night for a \$2.7 million loan to build their planned grades 5-6 school.

"We're caught between a rock and a hard place," commissioner Joe Hendrick said in reference to uses already slated for the cash reserve.

Several times throughout his presentation to the commissioners, Kings Mountain Schools superintendent Dr. Bob McRae emphasized that the requested money would not be "a gift" but would be paid back as soon as possible. McRae also stressed that the money would be used frugally to build the best school as cost-efficiently as possible.

"It is good business sense to go ahead with this project," McRae told the commissioners. "The loan would open the door to get the project done."

McRae went on to remind the commissioners that Kings Mountain had not built a totally new school since the 1970s. He also assured the commissioners that a lot of effort had gone into selecting a site that provided the best land for the money.

"We want to build a solid, attractive school," McRae said.

See County, 2A

Commissioners face another merger-related lawsuit 3A



ALAN HODGE/THE HERALD
Bethware Elementary principal Mary Accor and Shelby businessman Richard Hooker looked over some materials before last Thursday's "Closing the Gap" forum at Adams Chapel AME Zion Church in Kings Mountain. The forum focused on parents getting involved in their children's scholastic performance.

State Board may reaffirm school merger

By GARY STEWART
Editor of The Herald

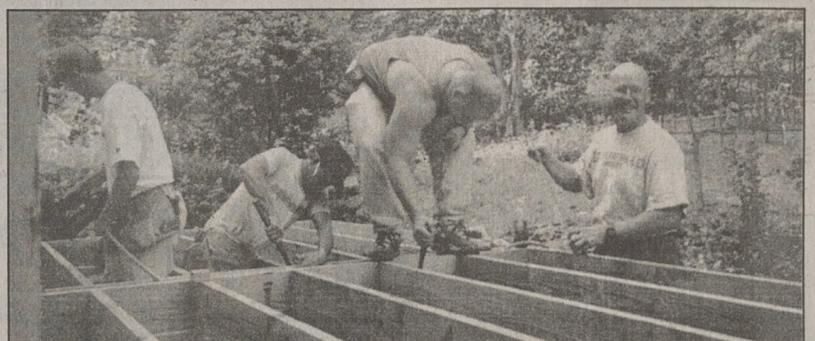
The State Board of Education is expected to reaffirm its approval of the merger of Kings Mountain, Cleveland County and Shelby Schools at a meeting Thursday morning in Raleigh.

Chairman Phil Kirk told The Herald Tuesday night that the Board would meet in closed session Wednesday afternoon to study transcripts from Administrative Law Judge Morrison, who had earlier denied at Kings Mountain request for an injunction to prevent implementation of the Cleveland County Commissioners' merger plan.

The State Board took the merger action off its agenda last month because it had not received that information.

Kings Mountain's merger at-

See Merger, 3A



Concrete Concepts in Kings Mountain recently volunteered two crews of employees to help 86-year-old Mrs. John Ida Tomes repair her home. Among the workers who helped were, left to right, Jeff Young, Johnny Mills, Jeff Horton, and Chris Walker.



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