

# Hispanic population growing in county

BY ALAN HODGE  
Staff Writer

Te hablas español? If you do, it might mean you're one of the growing number of Hispanic folks who are calling Cleveland, Lincoln, Gaston, and Mecklenburg counties home.

Actually, so many people of Hispanic origin are coming into the area, no one is sure just what the percentage of increase is. Not even the U.S. Census is positive on the count.

For the period 1990 through 1999, the estimated number of Hispanics in Cleveland County went up 129 percent. Neighboring counties saw similar or larger increases. Gaston County also posted a 129 percent increase for those years.

Mecklenburg's Hispanic population supposedly went up 164 percent, and Lincoln County saw a 170 percent estimated increase. Statewide, the number of Hispanics was estimated to have risen 129 percent for the 10-years since the 1990 census.

Though the percentages seem quite high, it must be taken into consideration that they reflect just that - a percentage and not actual head count figure. For instance, in 1990 there were 376 Hispanics in Cleveland County. In 1999 that figure had risen to 862 people - a jump of only 486 folks. For North Carolina as a whole, the number read 76,745 people in 1990, and 175,707 people in 1999 - up less than 100,000 Hispanic men, women, and children.

Reasons for what many feel are low or inaccurate counts are due to the fact that many Hispanics did not fill out census forms in 1990 or 1999, and that some don't speak English. Another factor is the migratory nature of the agricultural work many Hispanics perform. Still others are illegal aliens or fail to fill out tax forms.

Reasons for the influx are economy driven. With many jobs available on construction sites and in the service sector, Hispanics are one group that is taking advantage of the situation.

Nationally, North Carolina, Georgia and Nevada experienced the largest percent increase in minority populations.



ALAN HODGE/THE HERALD  
Four Kings Mountain Police Department officers were recently given awards by the N.C. Criminal Justice Education Standards Commission. Pictured are, from left; Melvin Proctor, Eugene Johnson, Maurice Jamerson. Not pictured, Lisa Proctor.

## Four KM police officers earn certificates of merit

Four Kings Mountain Police Department officers recently received certificates of merit from the North Carolina Criminal Justice Education Standards Commission.

Awarded Advanced Certificates were Eugene Derek Johnson and Melvin Fred Proctor. Recipients of Intermediate Certificates were Lisa Capps Proctor and Maurice Edward Jamerson.

The Advanced Certificate is the highest Professional Certificate awarded to law enforcement and criminal justice officers in North Carolina. Typically, 500-600 Advanced Certificates are awarded yearly by the Standard Commission. To qualify for the certificate, officers must complete a combination of professional training and relevant education, as well as meet minimum employment requirements.

The Standards Commission certifies all of the State's law enforcement officers, correctional officers, probation and parole officers, and youth services officers. It also established minimum employment and training standards, training content, and instruction standards. The Commission maintains certification files on over 22,000 criminal justice officers. Johnson and Proctor were two of the 157 officers who received the Advanced Certificate at the Commission's quarterly meeting in Wilkesboro.

Captain Melvin Proctor is assistant chief at the Kings Mountain Police Department. He joined the force in 1987 as a patrolman. He has also served as detective sergeant and detective lieutenant. He is a graduate of John T. Hoggard High School in Wilmington and is attending Cleveland Community College. He has many special training recognitions including SWAT,

Specialized Defensive Instructor, and Specialized Firearms Instructor. He has been named Officer of the Year three times. Some of his memberships include the International Chiefs of Police, North Carolina Narcotics Officers Association, and North Carolina Internal Affairs Investigations Association.

Lt. Eugene Johnson has been with the Kings Mountain Police Department since October 1, 1988. He began as a reserve officer in 1985 and became a patrolman in 1988. He was a member of the Shelby Rescue Squad. Johnson graduated from Kings Mountain High School in 1981 and attended Cleveland Community College. He has training in diving, Management Development, and SWAT with a total of 2,488 hours law enforcement related training. He was Sergeant of the Year in 1988 and is a member of the N.C. Law Enforcement Officers Association and Cleveland County Fraternal Order of Police.

Intermediate Certificate recipient Detective Sergeant Lisa Proctor has been with the KM-PD since March of 1992. A 1987

graduate of Crest High School, Proctor is studying for her AA in Criminal Justice at Cleveland Community College. She has served a patrol sergeant, DARE officer, and is currently a Detective Sergeant/Narcotics. She made top score on the state Basic Law Enforcement Training exam at Isothermal Community College in 1991. She has 1,468 hours of special law enforcement training and was 1995 Kings Mountain Police Department Officer of the Year.

A 10-year veteran of the Kings Mountain Police Department and recipient of the Intermediate Certificate, Maurice Jamerson has been with the Detective Division since June. He is a 1980 graduate of Kings Mountain High School and attended Winston-Salem State College for two years. He has 1,523 hours of law enforcement training and has concentrated on the School Resource Officer position. He has been active in the Boy Scouts and has received commendation from the Kings Mountain District Schools for his work.



ALAN HODGE/THE HERALD  
Kings Mountain's newest corporate citizen, Commonwealth Aluminum Tube, will be ready for business in November. Helping get the facility ready are employees, from left; Felicia Smith, Karen Earls, manager John Rom, J.C. Bible, Heather Henkenmeier, Dan Jordan.

## Commonwealth Aluminum to open KM plant in November

BY ALAN HODGE  
Staff Writer

Miles and miles of piping will soon be flowing from Kings Mountain's newest corporate citizen. Located on Industrial Drive off Highway 161, Louisville, Kentucky-based Commonwealth Aluminum Tube Enterprises is gearing up for production.

Housed in a 100,000 square foot facility developed by Johnson of Spartanburg, Commonwealth is currently in the final stages of installing equipment and creating office spaces. This work has been going on for about two months. Manager for the operation is Cleveland, Ohio native John Rom.

"We expect to begin operations in early November," Rom said. "Initially we will employ 21 workers. In a couple of years, that figure could double."

Rom says that the plant will have a capacity of around 1 1/2

million pounds of aluminum tubing per month. The process takes an 8,000 foot coiled sheet of aluminum, and through a high frequency electric welding process, makes the tubing. Pipes made are from one-half to three inches in diameter and come off the machinery at a rate of 600 feet per minute. The product is then shipped to customers who use it in a variety of applications.

"Much of the process is automated, especially the packaging," Rom said. "We are also developing a high involvement, work team approach that will empower our associates."

Employees will also rotate positions so they can become familiar with all aspects of the operation.

Kings Mountain mayor Rick Murphrey is proud of the fact that Commonwealth is the first corporation to take advantage of the economic incentives the city has offered firms.

"Commonwealth Aluminum Tubing is another example of a successful corporate citizen choosing Kings Mountain and the new Kings Mountain Commerce Center as their location," Murphrey said. "The city wishes them many years of operation here."

### Kings Mountain Weather Report

	Aug. 30-Sept. 5	Year Ago
Total precipitation	6.16	.97
Maximum one day	3.90 (2nd)	.97 (5th)
Year to date	37.13	26.87
Low temperature	57 (5th)	52 (31st)
High temperature	84 (31st, 3rd)	89 (2nd, 3rd)
Average temperature	74.1	74.0

### CAMERA

From 1A

zoom capability also gives officers extra security because they can more easily see how many passengers are in a vehicle.

Besides enhanced video, officers are also wired for sound. A tiny microphone attached to the uniform picks up and records every word that transpires between the policeman and the person they are talking to.

"The audio can be picked up by the camera from several car lengths away," Moore said. "The microphone is very sensitive."

Cost of the camera and its accessories is \$3,650 per car. The mini-camera itself is \$3,450 and the overhead control console adds another \$200. According to Captain Melvin Proctor, that's a small price to pay for the benefits the cameras bring to the Kings Mountain police.

"The cameras will be especially useful when it comes time to take a case to court," Proctor said. "Pictures tell a thousand words and don't lie."

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