

The Herald

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Board asks rescission of merger

By GARY STEWART
Editor of The Herald

It was a historical night for Kings Mountain Monday night as three of its citizens were sworn into office as Cleveland County Commissioners, marking the first time ever that Kings Mountain has held majority of the board seats. Ronnie Hawkins, Mary Accor and Tom Bridges were seated for four-year terms replacing outgoing commissioners Jim Crawley, Joe Hendrick and Joe Cabaniss.

And, almost immediately, the new Board adopted a resolution which proposes to end the controversial decision the past Board of Commissioners made earlier this year to merge the Kings Mountain, Shelby and Cleveland County School Systems.

Hawkins' resolution to ask the State Board of Education to rescind its approval of the merger and also asked the U.S. Justice Department not to pre-clear the plan, passed unanimously.

Commissioner Charlie Harry, the only commissioner now supporting merger, was absent.

A standing room only crowd applauded the new commissioners' action, and also gave a roaring round of applause when County Manager Lane Alexander announced that the county's merger attorney, Gil Middlebrooks, had resigned effective that date. The new commissioners had indicated they would relieve Middlebrooks of his duties if he did not voluntarily step aside.

Hawkins said the county has already paid Middlebrooks over \$200,000 to implement the merger plan, and with the matter still held up in courts because of lawsuits by the Kings Mountain Board of Education and Kings Mountain parents, the cost would only escalate. He pointed out that the citizens' overwhelming support of the three new commissioners was an indication that the majority of the citizens oppose merger.

Hawkins said the State Board's action should also be rescinded because the previous County

See Merger, 5A



GARY STEWART / THE HERALD
Kings Mountain residents Tommy Bridges, Mary Accor and Ronnie Hawkins, left to right, take the oath of office as new Cleveland County Commissioners at Monday night's meeting in Shelby.

No upset bid yet on lakes

Anyone else interested in bidding on two Kings Mountain water lakes have until Sunday to do it.

Sea Island Corp. recently bid \$630,000 for the old Davidson and City water lakes and the city received the bid under the 10-day upset bid process which is required by state law.

Sea Island plans to use the lakes for residential development.

If no other bids are received by Sunday, City Council may act on selling the lakes as early as its meeting on Tuesday, Dec. 12 at 7 p.m.

Council has the right to reject any and all bids.

Also Tuesday, Council will set dates for public hearings on approximately 26 rezoning requests in the city's new ETJ areas.

CHRISTMAS COMES TO KM



GARY STEWART / THE HERALD
The Eden Gardens float was one of about 110 units in Saturday's annual Kings Mountain Christmas parade. Despite a steady drizzle that stopped right before the start of the parade, and bitterly cold weather, the parade attracted one of its biggest crowds ever. See story and more photos on page 5B.

Commercial property abounds in KM

By ALAN HODGE
Staff Writer

With the influx of new business and industry into Kings Mountain, commercial real estate availability is at the top of many manager's minds. No matter if a firm is seeking a new structure or wanting to locate in an older, existing building,

there are several good choices in Kings Mountain.

According to mayor Rick Murphrey, the city works hard to match relocating businesses with properties that suit their needs whether it be for a new or older place.

"We are in constant contact with various real estate agencies and have a listing of avail-

able commercial properties in Kings Mountain," Murphrey said. "We strive to match businesses with their property requirements."

Though a new building is often the way a company prefers to go, many firms find that an existing structure is better suited to their needs. The difference sometimes hinges upon the

physical space properties and how they mesh with what type of operation the firm has in mind.

"An older building often lends itself to an incubator business which can locate there until it actually needs more room," said Kings Mountain planning and zoning director Steve McClain, who has worked for

See Property, 5A

Grover Council adopts fee policy

By ALAN HODGE
Staff Writer

Business license fee chisellers in Grover could get the hammer with a new policy adopted at Monday's town council meeting.

"Some people haven't paid their city business license fees while others have," said mayor Bill Favell. "We want everyone to be on the same page."

Licenses for businesses whose home mailing address is in Grover must pay an annual fee. The cost varies according to the type of operation and can range from \$5 to \$40. Fees are due by July 1 of each year and run through June 30 of the following year.

Grover city attorney Mickey Corry informed council members concerning the state law on business license fees and nonpayment penalties. He also gave them a couple of options regarding recourse for delinquents.

"You can take civil action to restrain the business or you could consider nonpayment as a class III misdemeanor and issue a warrant," Corry said.

See Grover, 5A



WILLIS KING

PEARL HARBOR DAY

KM's Willis King well remembers the 'date that will live in infamy'

By ALAN HODGE
Staff Writer

To many people, Thursday, December 7 will be simply one day away from the end of another work week. To others, December 7 is forever burned in their memories as the date when all hell broke loose at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii.

No American who was alive on Sunday, December 7, 1941 can ever forget where they were when the radio crackled with the news that the Japanese had attacked U.S. Navy ships at Pearl Harbor. Addressing the nation, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt called the strike "a date that will live in infamy."

Leading a 33 ship strike force, Japanese Vice Admiral Chuichi Nagumo launched 360 carrier-based aircraft at Pearl Harbor in a surprise Sunday morning attack. Incredulous Hawaiians and Americans at Pearl Harbor at first thought the whole thing was an elaborate mock battle.

By the time the shooting was over, 2,388 people at Pearl Harbor had been killed. Those wounded amounted to another 2,000. In addition, 21 U.S. Navy ships were sunk or destroyed as well as 300

U.S. airplanes. Japanese losses were a handful of airplanes and a midget submarine.

The phrase "Remember Pearl Harbor" became a rallying cry for America. By the tens of thousands, men and boys nationwide enlisted and went forth to fight. One of the first to answer the call to duty was Willis King of Kings Mountain.

"We went to Fort Bragg, then to Fort Jackson in South Carolina," King said. "From there we rode a train to San Francisco and got on a ship bound for Pearl Harbor."

King was part of the U.S. Army's 25th Division, the "lightning division". He was an artilleryist on a 155 mm howitzer and would go on to see four years of combat in places like Guadalcanal and the Philippines. The ship King and his buddies were on was the first troop transport to steam into Pearl Harbor after the attack. The memories of what he saw then are still vivid.

"When we came into Pearl Harbor you could see the sunken ships just under the surface," King said. "There were burned out airplane hangars and all sorts of wreckage laying around."

See King, 5A



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