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KM not backing down on merger

By GARY STEWART
 Editor of The Herald

It's official! The Kings Mountain Board of Education is appealing the recent ruling by the North Carolina Court of Appeals that the June 2000 approval of the Cleveland County School Merger Plan is valid.

Speaking at Monday night's regular monthly meeting at Central School, some Board members said they are concerned that continuing the merger fight is expensive, but their focus is on the children of Kings Mountain District Schools and they are "worth fighting for."

Kings Mountain's merger lawyers Brian Shaw and Richard Schwartz of Raleigh are currently evaluating the Appeals Court judges' written order, which was filed on August 6. KMDS has 30 days from that date to file an appeal.

"There's no way of knowing what the result will be," Supt. Larry Allen told the Board, "but their intent is to follow your directions and pursue an appeal until you tell them to stop."

All of the Board members said they have had numerous calls from citizens, and a couple of them even admitted that they had been told to give up the fight. But, the majority of the callers, they said, encouraged them to appeal the ruling.

"I'm still getting calls...and they are telling us to exhaust every resource" to hold off the merger, vice-chairperson Stella Putnam said. "My phone rings all day and most of it is school business. I haven't had a single call telling us to stop."

Jerry Blanton said the School System has "gone too far" to give up now. "Our system is worth fighting for," he said.

"I've been told we're wasting money and need to give it up," added Terry McClain, "but those comments weren't from people in Kings Mountain. I think we do have some problems in our schools, but I don't think merger will solve them."

Trace Barnette, who was sitting in on his first meeting since being appointed to fill the unexpired term of Melony Bolin, said he took his daughter out of private school to enroll her at East Elementary, and "the attention she has gotten at East School has been phenomenal."

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GARY STEWART / THE HERALD
 Roger Brooks, left, and Joe Wright of Dallas Electric connect conduit below the roof framing at the new Kings Mountain Intermediate School on Kings Mountain Blvd. Construction is going full speed ahead to get the school ready for students in August 2002.

School construction is ahead of schedule

By GARY STEWART
 Editor of The Herald

The new Kings Mountain Intermediate School, which is scheduled to open in August 2002, is well underway toward completion, Supt. Larry Allen told the Board of Education at its monthly meeting Monday night at Central School.

Allen and the general contractors are confident the school will be in the dry within three

months.

Extensive brick and block work, as well as plumbing, air conditioning and electrical work, have been going on for the past several weeks and the driveways and parking lots are beginning to take shape.

"I met with the foreman out there this morning," Dr. Allen said Tuesday, "and he said they have had the good fortune of having a lot of brick and block masons available who were

waiting for other jobs, and they put them down here allowing them to get a head start on all of that work."

Allen said the roofing contractor is preparing to move in any day now to start putting the roof on. After the roof is on, Allen said workers will begin putting doors and windows in place.

The school will serve up to
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Seven more file for City Council races

By GARY STEWART
 Editor of The Herald

Seven more Kings Mountain citizens filed for Council prior to Friday's deadline, bringing the total to 21 persons seeking seven Council and the Mayor's seats in the November 6 election.

The late filing guaranteed a race in every ward.

Kay Hambricht filed to oppose Dean Spears in Ward 4; Brenda Ross filed to oppose Jim Guyton and Preston Leonard in Ward 2; Ken Hamrick, Wayne Worcester and Gary Cooke came out against Clavon Kelly in Ward 3; and Bernice Chappell and Glenn Carroll filed to battle Rick Moore, Jerry Mullinax and Gene White for the two At-Large seats.



Carroll



Chappell



Cooke



Hambricht



Hamrick



Ross



Worcester

Jim Belt and Pee'Wee Hamrick had earlier filed to oppose Mayor Rick Murphrey. Lamar Fletcher earlier filed to oppose Howard Shipp in Ward 2; and Jerry Bostic had earlier filed to oppose Carl DeVane in Ward 5.

Hambricht, Ross and Chappell hope to become just the second female elected to City Council. Norma Bridges served several terms on Council before losing her seat in the last election. The only other woman to serve was Mrs. O.O. Walker, who was appointed to fill the unexpired term of her husband in the 1960s.

The most recent candidates have mixed ideas on what they would like to see the city accomplish during the next two years. Many of them want to see the current progress continue, while others say the city is not doing enough for the youth and the elderly.

Carroll, who operates Community Grocery, is very outspoken about why he's running for Council. He said the city is big business and should be run by businessmen and he'd like to see a clean sweep of Mayor and City Council.

"I think it's time for some new faces and young blood," he

said. "The City Council is more important than the Presidential election because City Council controls your life more than the President does."

Carroll said he would be "afraid to show my face" if he was a member of a Council that "did some of the things" the current Council did during the past two years.

"The two-mile ETJ was a major mess-up," he said. "It could have been handled in a smoother way instead of the City making everyone in the new ETJ come in and have their property rezoned. It was a major disaster."

"In the CommScope deal, the seven gentlemen up there broke every regulation they had, and it was done behind closed doors. If I had done something like that I wouldn't show my face in this town again."

He also criticized the city for spending "a half-million dollars" for a new fire high-ladder fire truck which he says has only "made one trip to Shelby."

"I think the only three-story buildings we have in town are Firestone and Central School, and the new doctor's office. If Central School ever catches on

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Ground broken for walking track

By BEN LEDBETTER
 Staff Writer

Some communities gather in a town square, while some have a restaurant or gym.

The Watterson Street community in Kings Mountain used to gather around a spring where residents could stop for a drink of water.

And when the walking track is finished at the city-owned site beside Mount Zion Church, city officials said a plaque is expected to be built near the old spring.

Construction and grading of the track will be done by Charlotte firm Pavilon, and is expected to begin in two to three weeks.

Pavilon, whose bid for the project was approximately \$60,000, is scheduled to complete work at the track within a month, according to City of Kings Mountain Mayor

Rick Murphrey.

The Charlotte firm is also doing work on the city's playground which is expected to be built at the Kings Mountain YMCA and is building the new fire department sub-station on the west side of Kings Mountain.

Margaret Leach said the park will affect both senior citizens and the youth of the community.

"I think we'll have a lot of the youth to come in and walk along with us," she said.

Leach, who has lived on Watterson Street since her childhood, said the community's population has become more diverse, especially after an urban renewal project in the 1960's.

"It has brought in a lot of new people," Leach said. "On the upper end of Watterson St. is a much younger group of people. And on the farther end just about everybody up there are senior citizens."

Urban renewal might have relocated the community geographically, but not much of the area's residents, Mount Zion Baptist Pastor Clinton Feemster said.

"This has been a work in progress since the mid-sixties, and it's finally getting to a stage that we can appreciate in the community," Feemster said.

One of the more visible changes in the community is Mount Zion Baptist Church. The church is located on the site of the segregation-era Davidson School.

James Boyd Jr. said the new track will be more accessible to the Watterson St. residents, which he said the majority is composed of senior citizens, than the current track on Cleveland Avenue.

"I think it's going to be a big help to the community on this side," Boyd said. "It will

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BEN LEDBETTER/THE HERALD
 Marie Burris, left, and St. Paul's Church Minister Clarence Wright discuss possibilities for the name of the Watterson St. Greenway which was dedicated Friday.

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