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First KMLT performance at Joy opens Friday night

By BEN LEDBETTER
Staff Writer

The Joy Theater, once the home of motion pictures, will now house the Kings Mountain Little Theater.

According to Little Theater President Jim Champion, the KM Little Theater raised over \$300,000 for purchasing and renovating the building.

The renovation of the Joy involved several parts which included an extension of the stage area, refurbishing the marquee, a new neon sign, and work toward the original appearance of the theater.

The theater will open Friday with the Little Theater's production of "Forever Plaid."

"This was an exciting opportunity for us to purchase the Joy and renovate it," Champion said. "We've had great community support for it"

Other renovations include bringing the concession stand back to its original location and adding a new light and sound system by the end of the year.

"This will give the building, and our group, when we use it, a lot of flexibility," Champion said. "It will also make the building appropriate for arts related performances."

Other groups will be able to use the theater as well, Champion said.

The auditorium, which seats 224, can also be used for things such as corporate training and town meetings.

Champion said the seats are comfortable, spacious and have good sight lines.

Barnes Auditorium at Kings Mountain High School and the Council Chambers at Kings Mountain City Hall have been two widely-used facilities for meetings in the city. Rental
See Joy, 3A



GARY STEWART / THE HERALD
 Employees of Comco Signs of Charlotte use a crane to place the vertical marquee in place at the new Joy Performance Center, which opens Friday with the performance of Forever Plaid.

Diamond buys Caldwell Chevy

By BEN LEDBETTER
Staff Writer

A Charlotte car dealer has purchased the Chevrolet dealership previously owned by Fred Caldwell of York Road in Kings Mountain.

Diamond Chevrolet-Isuzu is owned by Reggie Hubbard, who also owns Metrolina Dodge in the Queen City.

"We're looking to expand and the opportunity arose and we came to a mutual agreement," Executive Manager Jeff Tomascak said.

Tomascak said the Charlotte dealership had negotiated for about two months on the property, and bought it and the dealership at market value. He would not disclose the cost of the sale.

The Kings Mountain location is the first expansion for the Charlotte car dealer.

Diamond started doing business last week in Kings Mountain. It will not sell Isuzu vehicles at the Kings Mountain location.

Tomascak said a number of employees in Charlotte are from Kings Mountain.

"We have several employees that work in Charlotte from Kings Mountain and they thought there would be additional opportunity for retail sales in the area."

Currently the Kings Mountain dealership employs 30 people, with an expected increase to 45 workers.

General manager at the Kings Mountain store is Steven Berry, who has 15 years of experience in automobile sales. Berry previously worked in Charlotte.

Tomascak said he thought the business would do well, noting Cleveland County's unemployment situation.

EDC work session set November 28 at KM City Hall

By BEN LEDBETTER
Staff Writer

The Cleveland County Economic Development Commission will hold a series of work sessions around the county on the subject of job recruitment.

The series of meetings, which will last from 5:30-7:30 p.m. will start Tuesday, Nov. 27 at the Crest High School Auditorium and will be in Kings Mountain Wednesday, Nov. 28 at City Hall.

After a Thursday meeting in Lawndale, the last of the meetings will be at the County Administration Building in Shelby on Saturday from 9-11 a.m.

Cleveland County, which currently has North Carolina's highest unemployment rate at 11.7 percent, has suffered from a slowdown in the textile industry.

Economic Development Director Steve Nye said the meetings are tied in with the work session the county Board of Commissioners and the EDC held with local and state leaders on Nov. 5.

Nye said he hopes the sessions will increase the amount of leads his office has already received.

"We've had a couple of leads come from folks who have called us up," Nye said.

Nye said he intends to collect the information from the work sessions and make it available publicly sometime in December.

See Session, 3A

New senior center dedicated

By GARY STEWART
Editor of The Herald

Hundreds of Kings Mountain citizens and guests gathered Sunday afternoon where grass and weeds once grew to dedicate the new 17,000 square foot, \$3.1 million H. Lawrence Patrick Senior Life and Conference Center which city officials say will serve the needs of Kings Mountain area senior citizens for generations to come.

Keynote speaker, former Kings Mountain mayor John Henry Moss, said the site at the intersection of East King Street and Canterbury Road was once "an unattractive area of grass and weeds. We drove past it daily. Now as we drive by we have a sense of deep pride as we view this facility."

Moss said the mayor in the early-70s, when at a town meeting the Rev. Kenneth George shared a dream of his to have a pro-

gram geared for helping senior citizens. George later became the city's first aging director and led a program out of the basement of the Community Center which provided meals and transportation.

After just a few years the program relocated at the old Southern Railway Depot on North Battleground Avenue where programs expanded to include crafts, exercise activities, and numerous classes and trips.

In its 26-year history, the Aging Program has had only three directors - George, Teresa Melton, and current director Monty Thornburg who has held the post for 15 1/2 years.

"All of them did a great job providing a viable center and social functions," Moss said.

Moss said the Depot has been renovated and expanded several times - to the point
See Center, 3A



GARY STEWART / THE HERALD
 Mayor Rick Murphrey, Mary Helen Patrick and Monty Thornburg cut ribbon to officially open new H. Lawrence Patrick Senior Life and Conference Center.

Transit service to begin in KM after first of year

By GARY STEWART
Editor of The Herald

Mayor Rick Murphrey will name a special committee at next Tuesday's City Council meeting to work with city staff and the Transportation Administration of Cleveland County to bring transit service to the city.

Murphrey and Tom Crider, director of TACC, have been talking for several weeks and both hope to have transit service in the city shortly after the first of the year.

The committee will work with Crider and city planning staff on schedules and routes. Crider said the fee for the service, which initially will be supplied by a large van, will be one dollar, one-way.

"We're shooting for January," said Crider, whose non-profit organization eventually hopes to bring transit service all over Cleveland County. Currently, the system operates in Shelby, and after the KM system is put in place it will extend its services to Boiling Springs and then
See Transit, 3A

Costners' Midpines home to shine

By BEN LEDBETTER
Staff Writer

Grady and Katie Costner want the Midpines area south of Kings Mountain to be a Christmas town.

So to help fulfill the desire, they have decorated their home for Christmas.

"It started off little and it just kept getting bigger," Grady said.

The couple decorates their yard and house with cartoon characters, trees, a carousel, a manger scene, and a burning bush. And with the different scenes are a flurry of lights that take two breakers to shine.

A lot of the ideas for the decorations came from Christmas-themed coloring books.

Possibilities were also found from household things.

"I had been hunting for a peacock," Katie said. "And one day I went through the house and there they were on that potato bag."

Much of the decorations are lit, and people may come by their house on Thanksgiving night until New Year's to see lights from 5:30 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Santa Claus will also be at the Costners', sitting near the entrance to the driveway, which winds around the back of their house.

But before the lights go on, they have to set the ornaments out, and then light them. The couple, along with family friend Mark Bumgardner, started on this year's lights at the end of September.

Grady said although putting on a display that gets nicknamed "Little

McAdenville," after the Gaston County town, is a time-consuming task, he enjoys doing it.

"My wife and I both enjoy doing it," Grady said. "So there's really no labor to it since we enjoy doing it."

Although their yearly scenes have a moniker for a bigger display, the Costners said they did not know where the nickname came from.

"A lot of people, they tell me they quit going there so much, they would rather come down here," Grady said.

Putting up thousands of lights can be costly, and Katie said donations help pay for the power bills, candy canes, and Santa Claus.

See Lights, 3A



Mark Bumgardner, left, and Grady Costner work on Christmas scene in front yard of Costner's home in Midpines.



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