

KINGS MOUNTAIN

The Herald

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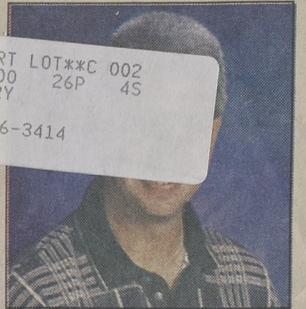
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A LOOK BACK AT 2001



BEN LEDBETTER / THE HERALD

Kings Mountain fireman Johnny Caldwell prays during prayer service at B.N. Barnes Auditorium for victims and families of the September 11 terrorist attacks.

A year that brought the U.S. to its knees

By GARY STEWART
Editor of The Herald

Deciding the top story of the year is usually tough, because there are so many things that go on that affect so many different people.

As unfortunate as the situation was, it was not hard to choose the top story of the year 2001.

It was the same story whether you were living in Kings Mountain, New York City, Washington, DC or in rural Pennsylvania.

The September 11 terrorist attacks which left some 4,000 people dead was the type of event that people will not only always remember, but will always remember where they were and what they were doing when they heard the news.

The hijacking of four planes - two of which crashed into the World Trade Center twin towers in New York, one that crashed into the Pentagon in Washington, DC, and another which crashed into a field in Pennsylvania - literally brought America to its knees. That day, and many since,

churches, cities, individuals and groups all over the country have held special prayer days and benevolent opportunities to help victims and their families.

Almost one month later, on October 7, the United States began carrying out President Bush's pledge to rid the world of terrorism by sending warplanes and ground troops into Afghanistan to flush out the suspected mastermind of the attacks, Osama bin Laden. The U.S. and anti-Taliban forces have been very successful in ridding Afghanistan of the Taliban rule, but terrorism is still alive all over the world.

The U.S. humanitarian efforts have even reached Afghanistan. While bombing Taliban strongholds, U.S. military planes also dropped food and medical supplies for the hurting Afghan people, and school children all over the U.S., including Kings Mountain, gave a dollar each to help children in Afghanistan.

Other top stories in Kings Mountain during 2001 included:

#2 - Economy.

Local folks not only felt the deep pain of war, but many lost their jobs in an economic decline that hit as hard in Cleveland County as anywhere. For most of the year, Cleveland County had the highest unemployment rate in North Carolina. Many businesses - especially in the textile field - either closed or cut back drastically.

CommScope, which announced early in the year that it would build a multi-million dollar facility near Kings Mountain that would employ 600 people, by the end of the year had cut its workforce back so much in nearby Hickory that it dumped its plans to move to Kings Mountain and put its building and property here up for sale.

Mauney Hosiery, a longtime Kings Mountain business, closed its doors in November.

Another longtime KM business, Hayward Pools, closed down during the year.

All the economic news was

See 2001, 2A

LOOK AHEAD TO 2002

Grover stores to go into lottery business on January 7, 2002

By BEN LEDBETTER
Staff Writer

With the start of the South Carolina state lottery just days away, many Kings Mountain area residents are already talking about it.

At Rick's Ole Country Store on N.C. Highway 216, customers in and around the store had varying opinions on the lottery, which is scheduled to start January 7.

The first tickets that will be on sell will be scratch-off tickets that will cost between \$1-\$2. In March the lottery will start a Pick-3 game.

Kings Mountain resident Robert Bess said he wants to play the lottery to win lots of money.

"I've been working hard all my life," Bess said. "I need some money. I'm going to play it until I hit it."

Bess said he wanted to see a lottery in North Carolina, but for now will settle for going to nearby areas across the state line.

"If the cops don't stop me going down there, I'll be there," Bess said in a tongue-in-cheek manner.

Melissa Wilson, who was working on opening preparations at the grill inside the store said she thought the lottery was a good thing.

Proceeds from the South Carolina are expected to go to various educational purpose and Wilson, a former Gaston County Schools employee, said putting the money toward education is the best idea.

"Education is the best thing they could do with that money," Wilson said.

"Got to have education or you're done because the whole world's going to be computerized," Bess said.

Winslow McClain, who was with Bess, said he thinks the lottery revenue will go to its intended educational purpose.

Other people in Kings Mountain had differing views on the South Carolina games.

Mike Miller said he thought the lottery would benefit South Carolina and did not see anything wrong with it.

Terri Wright said, even with the lottery being just a few miles across the state line, she does not plan on playing it.

But Mount Holly resident and retired auditor Tom Mosier said he's skeptical of whether the lottery revenue in South Carolina will go toward its intended purpose.

See Lottery, 2A

New water line will be top priority for KM in '02

By BEN LEDBETTER
Staff Writer

While the city of Kings Mountain saw many capital projects finished in 2001, officials said they hope to continue a similar pace in the new year.

One of the items on top of a list expected to be discussed at a January work session is the completion of phase three of a 36-inch water line. The previous two phases were completed last year.

Mayor Rick Murphrey said the water line is part of the city's aim to look at all support services and utilities.

"The city continues to move forward progressively, improving all our utilities and support services," he said.

Other proposed projects with water and sewer utilities include expansion of the water treatment plant and workshops on storm water management.

The second fire station for the Kings Mountain Fire Department on Shelby Road is expected to be completed. The new station will be the first expansion for the fire department which is currently based behind Kings Mountain City Hall.



MAYOR MURPHREY

Capital projects from 2001 included the new H. Lawrence Patrick Senior Center and Conference Center, a new playground at the Jake Early Sports Complex, and a walking track on Watterson Street, near Mount Zion Baptist Church.

At-large Councilman Gene White said the city did well by accomplishing the projects while keeping its finances in good shape.

"We got some very major league projects accomplished," White said. "We have wound up the year so far with some major fund balance."

And with the current state of the national economy, White said he wants to make sure all the specific details of a project are known before making a decision.

"That's the one thing I want to make absolutely sure the picture is understandable and clear," White said.

But capital projects are not the only items getting attention from city officials.

Beautification and downtown revitalization projects, such as recycling will be discussed in 2002.

See City, 2A

Schools hope to beat merger, ease overcrowding in new year

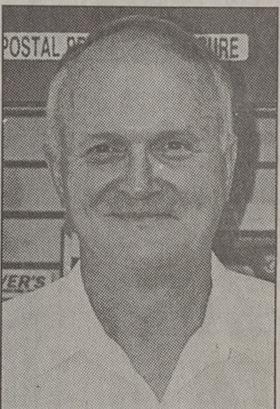
By BEN LEDBETTER
Staff Writer

The Cleveland County school merger issue, overcrowding, and the new Kings Mountain Intermediate School will be three of the issues on the minds of school system officials in 2002.

During the past three years, merging the three Cleveland County school systems has been an issue of great interest.

And with the case the school system has filed against the North Carolina State Board of Education still with the N.C. Court of Appeals, the issue has yet to be decided.

With merger undecided school system officials said it has not



DR. ALLEN

hurt Kings Mountain in finding new employees.

"We've been able to get good new employees for vacancies we've had," KMDS Superintendent Larry Allen said. "Generally, I don't think the merger issue will create a problem hiring teachers and folks for the schools."

Finding people to fill positions at the district's office in the Central School building would be a problem though, Allen said.

If the three county districts merged, there would be no guarantee that current central office employees in Kings

See Schools, 2A



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