

It's official! Blachford coming to KM

By BEN LEDBETTER
Staff Writer

It's official. After months of discussion, up to 80 jobs will move into Kings Mountain and the city will have one of its largest utility customers. Blachford RP Corporation will relocate its plant in Crossville, Tenn. to the 105,000 square foot former Wix/Dana Building at 707

Broadview Drive. Blachford will be one of the city's top electricity users which could offset the loss of its second largest utility customer Anvil Knitwear. The company expects to start hiring within one month and to start production in September. It's expected to be fully operational in about three years. "We're really excited about the

job opportunity," Mayor Rick Murphrey said. Discussion with the company, which involved city, county and state representatives started at the first of the year. Blachford RP Operations Manager Gus Biddle said the company chose Kings Mountain because of its progressive thinking. "Our decision was based on the many progressive attributes of the

city," he said. "The new community built playground, the children's wing at the library, the educational and recreation facilities, the variety of sporting venues, the festivals and concerts, the impressive senior center and the plans for a series of walkways, bike and hiking trails all demonstrated a commitment to progress." Biddle also emphasized the cooperation between the different

state and local officials and a skilled workforce in Kings Mountain. The Michigan-based company will make noise reduction materials for cars and heavy trucks at its Kings Mountain plant. Founded in Montreal in 1921, Blachford now has other plants in Ontario and Illinois which make industrial lubricants for other industries.

Kings Mountain Hospital to add MRI scanning

Beginning in June, Kings Mountain Hospital will offer mobile Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI). The mobile scanner will be at the hospital on Sundays.

MRI is a sophisticated diagnostic tool that uses a magnetic field to scan inside the body, and is especially effective in imaging soft tis-

sues. It produces detailed 3-dimensional images allowing a physician to more easily and accurately diagnose illness or disease. Among its many advantages, an MRI is ideal for:

- Diagnosing multiple sclerosis
- Diagnosing tumors of the pituitary gland and brain
- Diagnosing infections in the brain, spine or joints

- Visualizing shoulder injuries, or torn ligaments in the wrist, knee and ankle
- Evaluating masses in soft body tissues, bone tumors, cysts, and bulging or herniated discs in the spine

A Mobile MRI open house will be held at Kings Mountain Hospital on Sunday, June 9 from 2 p.m. until 4 p.m. This is an oppor-

tunity for the public to see the technology up close, and learn more about the benefits of MRI. "Providing this cutting edge diagnostic service is another example of Kings Mountain Hospital's commitment to the community. The Mobile MRI rounds out a host of radiological services at KMH, which already offers diagnostic x-rays, ultrasounds, mammograms,

nuclear medicine and computerized tomography (CT) scans," Administrator Hank Neal said. Kings Mountain Hospital is a 102-bed hospital with an adult behavioral health unit, an around-the-clock emergency department, in-patient and out-patient surgeries, a pain management center, and a skilled nursing center. KMH has been a part of Carolinas HealthCare System since 1994.

City changes insurance plan, cuts out cost of living raise

By BEN LEDBETTER
Staff Writer

During a special meeting last Wednesday, Kings Mountain City Council decided to change its health insurance plan for the next fiscal year and denied giving employees a two percent cost of living adjustment. City Manager Jimmy Maney and Risk Management Director Ray Wilson presented a partially-self funded insurance plan, which they said was prompted by steep increases in the healthcare busi-

ness. Besides council, all department heads were required to be present and Maney said he wanted them to be informed about why the increases are occurring. "It's probably one of my most challenging tasks," he said about dealing with health insurance. Wilson said several cities have seen steep increases of at least 20 percent. Currently the city has coverage through Cigna, which costs approximately \$802,000 a year. The new cost would be about \$1 mil-

lion, an increase of approximately 23 percent. City Council passed a motion to begin a contract with National Benefit Resources and United Healthcare for coverage during the next fiscal year. It also approved starting a contract with Kanawaha Healthcare Solutions as a third party administrator. Council also approved the start of setting aside \$250,000 in a health risk pool to begin paying claims. The pros and cons of going with a partially self funded plan were discussed and one downside

would be the insurance company not covering anyone who has had major surgery, Maney said. Maney and Wilson also averaged a 20.6 percent increase over the next ten years and came up with \$1,777,331.18 for health coverage in 2005-'06 if the city stayed with its current coverage. That number could be near property tax revenue, Maney said. "I think we're at a crossroads that we've never been before," Maney said. Mayor Rick Murphrey, who works for a local company, said a

partially self funded plan has done well in the private sector. "A lot of the private sector has gone to this," he said. "That's what happened to us and it worked out good." Wilson said not much would change in coverage and it would only affect employees with dependent coverage. Councilman Howard Shipp said he was pleased with the plan presented. "I think this is outstanding and I think this is the way we should go," he said.

Conditional use permit request denied by BOA

By BEN LEDBETTER
Staff Writer

Two things were different about J.R. Queen's third hearing with the Kings Mountain Board of Adjustment on Tuesday. He had a different attorney, Shelby lawyer Fred Flowers, and he did not speak to the Board concerning his request.

The Board of Adjustment denied Queen's request for a conditional use permit for a business he wanted to open on South Battleground Ave. While the Board received tax listings from Rutherford County for three of the six poker machines, Flowers did not have proof of registration in either Cleveland or Rutherford County. Flowers would not vouch for the

existence of the machines. "I don't have any personal knowledge about these machines," he said. "I'm not making a factual representation about the machines myself." Flowers had also presented an affidavit signed by machine owner Leonard Steen who said the machines' taxes have been paid in Rutherford County, but did not

have any other information. Board member Ron Humphries requested the Rutherford County material initially and he has not seen all the documents requested. The tax listing says the machines have been listed with a county's tax office by Jan. 31, 2000, according to state law. This law was written so new machines could not come into North Carolina, Humphries said.

While Queen's proposed business would be close to Friendly Billiards, which also has machines, it would also be less than 200 feet from the children's wing of the city's library. Testimony from a previous meeting said the business would be close to a home that is on the National Register of Historic Places.

CPR class helps students succeed in business

By BEN LEDBETTER
Staff Writer

Two years ago, Will Denton worked as a grocery store bagger. This summer, building on skills he learned at Kings Mountain High School, the 18-year-old is general manager of a computer store. Denton, who graduated this year and will study technology at Gaston College, honed his skills under KMHS instructor Alfred Ash. Last year, Denton began working at BBG Computers in Kings Mountain. This year, he's running the store. Denton's love of computers became a real job skill in the Computer Recycling Class. Denton said the hands-on part of the CPR is what helped him excel on the job. "You can read a textbook or manual all day long," he said. "But until you really see the computers, unless you get your hands on them, you really don't understand." Denton's CPR teacher Alfred Ash and two partners started BBG Computers a

year ago. Ash saw Denton's potential and brought him on board. "Will showed an interest," he said. "He had good test scores and the talent level so we hired him." Denton started out as a computer technician last June, but now he's been promoted to the position of general manager. "I'm a firm believer of working at a job you love and I truly love this job," Denton said. CPR teaches students how to build, troubleshoot, repair and upgrade computers into faster, state-of-the-art machines. ExplorNet's Computer Recycling project provides students with real-world job skills as well as soft skills like dependability, responsibility and leadership that will make them better employees in the future. The students also provide the tech support for the computers in the schools. The CPR program is a unique workforce development program created by

Raleigh-based ExplorNet with the N.C. Department of Public Instruction and funded by the General Assembly. The course introduces high-tech job training at the high school level. Once they've been through the classes, students are eligible to take the A+ Certification exam, the industry standard for computer technicians. With this certification, an employee can expect to earn an annual starting salary of approximately \$30,000. "Even with A+ certification, potential employers want to know if you have experience before they hire you," Ash said. "I wanted to

give students at the top of the class a good opportunity." Denton plans to get his certification this summer while he works full-time at BBG Computers. He plans to focus on computer engineering this fall in college. Students in 165 schools, including Kings Mountain, participate in ExplorNet's CPR program. For more information about ExplorNet and its other programs, please contact Nicole Hare, Community Relations Manager at (919) 878-0540 ext. 243 or at nhare@explor-net.org.

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Bible Study	Day & Time	Start Date	Teacher
CROWN MINISTRIES (YOUTH)	SUNDAY 6:00PM	JUNE 9TH	JOE HEAD
CROWN MINISTRIES	SUNDAY 5:00PM	JUNE 9TH	RUSTY & DARLA BRIDGES
BEGINNING STEPS (NEW BELIEVERS)	SUNDAY 9:45AM (SUNDAY SCHOOL)	JUNE 2ND	RUSTY BRIDGES
EXPERIENCING GOD	THURSDAY 6:30PM	JUNE 13TH	MICHAEL WARE
LIVING A LIFE OF TRUE WORSHIP	WEDNESDAY 7:00PM	JUNE 12TH	TERESA GREEN
VIRTUOUS WOMAN	SUNDAY 5:45PM	JUNE 9TH	ASHLEY SULLENS
FIRST PLACE (REPEATERS)	WEDNESDAY 6:45PM	JUNE 12TH	STEPHANIE CHAMBERS & AUDREY TONEY
FIRST PLACE (BEGINNERS)	SUNDAY 5:45PM	JUNE 9TH	HEATHER HUSKEY & ANN SMART
JESUS ON LEADERSHIP	SUNDAY 5:00PM	JUNE 28TH	VINCE SULLENS

ORIENTATION & REGISTRATION DATES: Sunday, May 19th & May 26th at 3:30pm. **Location:** Christian Freedom Baptist Fellowship Building. All studies will be small group, classes will fill up quickly. An orientation for each study will be held on these dates, to introduce you to the studies. **Registration** will immediately follow orientation. Here you will be able to sign up for the study the Lord has led you, through prayer, to take. At this time, you will pay for the materials needed for the study. If you have any questions concerning the studies contact Vince and Ashley Sullens. 704-734-0964.

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