

KINGS MOUNTAIN The Herald

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DONE DEAL?

Hospital merger may be decided at July 15 meeting

By BEN LEDBETTER
Staff Writer

A merger between Cleveland Regional Medical Center in Shelby and Kings Mountain Hospital may be close to happening July 15.

That's when an announcement will be made on whether the two medical facilities, managed by Carolinas Health Care System, will consolidate.

The CHS flagship hospital is Carolinas Medical Center in Charlotte.

According to Kings Mountain Hospital CEO Hank Neal, if the two hospital boards approve conditions in a letter of agreement, a 1 p.m. press conference will be held to announce the preliminary approval of the merger.

A merger would have to finally be approved by the Cleveland County Board of Commissioners. The two hospitals are owned by county citizens.

While talk between Cleveland Regional and Kings Mountain may be getting closer to merger, Neal said it could still take time.

See Hospital, 2A

READY FOR THE FOURTH



Kings Mountain firemen Bobby Cash, left, and Joey Davis use the city's ladder truck to place flags on the front of the fire department for Independence Day.

GARY STEWART / HERALD

Commissioners consider another 1/2-cent sales tax

By BEN LEDBETTER
Staff Writer

Cleveland County Commissioners and officials representing municipalities met last Thursday in Shelby to discuss a local half-cent sales tax, which would require county approval.

According to a memo from County Manager Lane Alexander, commissioners would have to adopt the tax by July 15 and it would be in effect on August 1.

If commissioners decide not to go with the sales tax, according to Alexander, they could cut the budget, increase property taxes or both.

Alexander said a sales tax increase may be viewed as a better alternative to a property tax increase.

The tax would be split between point of sale and population.

The issue is expected to be on the agenda for a July 9 commissioners meeting.

While reimbursements won't be coming to cities and counties statewide, state representatives said during the meeting that they were not entirely sure utility franchise tax money would be given either.

That could hurt cities

CORRECTION

The Kings Mountain City Council story in last week's Herald incorrectly stated that Mayor Rick Murphrey was attending a seminar in Montana. The Mayor was addressing a meeting of the Ebenezer Baptist Association.

such as Kings Mountain, which provides four utilities.

Kings Mountain is expecting to get about \$485,000 from the state and it has already been figured into the budget, Murphrey said.

If the franchise tax money does not come back to Kings Mountain it would affect the city, Murphrey said.

"It will be a tremendous impact," he said. "It's \$485,000. We'll have to address that loss. With our fund balance we've made up some of these other short falls and we'll just have to take a serious look at it at this time and see."

Counting other funds, Kings Mountain could lose a

See Tax, 2A

KM has 5th highest alcohol related crash rate in State

Officers will be out in full force during holiday

By GARY STEWART
Editor of The Herald

Kings Mountain is ranked #5 in alcohol-related accidents among cities in North Carolina with populations of less than 10,000.

The city's police chief, Melvin Proctor, feels the ranking, created through statistics reported to the NCDOT Traffic Safety Systems Management Unit, is directly related to the June 1, 2000 annexation which brought parts of I-85 and the US 74 Bypass into the city limits.

The rankings are based on accidents from 1999-2001.

"We've been working on this," Proctor noted, "but the biggest kick we've had is because of I-85. Since we took it in that has contributed to our death rate."

See Crash Rate, 5A

KMPD hopes 3-way stop will cut speed on Sherwood

By GARY STEWART
Editor of The Herald

It was a hot, muggy day but city street department personnel were busy on the first day of the new fiscal year Monday installing stop signs which city officials hope will curtail speeding in a busy Kings Mountain neighborhood.

Street department employee Jeff Randolph, with a towel draped around his neck to wipe the perspiration in 90-degree heat, installed two new stop signs at the intersection of Sherwood and Sharon Drive in the Kings Mountain

See Stop, 5A



Jeff Randolph, left, of the City Street Department, Captain Maurice Jamerson, center, and Chief of Police Melvin Proctor at newly-erected stop sign at the intersection of Sherwood Lane and Sharon Drive.

GARY STEWART / HERALD

Local people disagree with pledge ruling

By BEN LEDBETTER
Staff Writer

Last week's ruling by the U.S. Court of Appeals Ninth Circuit that the pledge of allegiance is unconstitutional would affect nine western states, but would not be binding here.



Grover School student Zachary Saldo pledges allegiance to the flag during recent patriotic program

At issue in the ruling were the two words, "under God," which the court said established a religion.

According to two Associated Press articles that ran in a local daily newspaper, the decision, which was approved 2-1, was written by Judge Alfred T. Goodwin.

Goodwin said the clause "one nation under God" can not be a neutral profession with respect to religion.

The two words "under God" were inserted by Congress in 1954.

If the ruling stands, it would ban children from saying the pledge in public schools in those states covered by the court.

Kings Mountain School Board Chairman Shearra Miller said she was sur

See Ruling, 2A

Red Cross office back in Kings Mountain



BEN LEDBETTER / THE HERALD
Robert Curry gives blood during the blood drive last Wednesday at the Cleveland County Red Cross's Kings Mountain office.

By BEN LEDBETTER
Staff Writer

It's back to the way it used to be. There used to be two Cleveland County offices of the American Red Cross, and the new office in the city is almost complete.

And last Wednesday, the board used their new office at the former Herald building downtown for a board meeting and emergency blood drive. Although a lot of remodeling was done in the building, some things were left in place.

The original front counter from when the Herald occupied the building is still there. A sign from the last time the Red Cross was here was also displayed.

During the meeting, Director Rick Dancy said a few days earlier that work was still being done on the building.

While final cost of the building has yet to be determined, Dancy said it's expected to run between \$130,000 to \$140,000. Except for spending \$30,000 to remove asbestos, Dancy said the

cost should be close to budget.

The emergency blood drive was held because the Red Cross is in a national appeal.

"Blood supplies always get critically low this time of year, right around the fourth of July," he said. "Part of the problem is that school is out, people are on vacation, they just forget or it's not convenient for them to donate. And yet people are traveling, and there are more accidents. A lot of folks put off elective surgeries until after the kids are out of school. So blood usage goes up and blood donations go down. It creates a gap."

Dancy said the Red Cross finds itself in appeal situations several times a year, and they're predictable.

Even with the chapter not intending to open the building on Wednesday, Dancy said he was pleased with everything.

Some of the workers were Red Cross personnel and community members performed some of the last minute work.

See Red Cross, 2A



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