

TOP TEN

From 1A

of their financial losses.

Other top stories of the year:

3 - Dr. Talley

Dr. Joseph Talley of Grover had his federal DEA (narcotics) license revoked and his medical license suspended for a year by the NC Medical Board after a hearing in Raleigh concerning his history of prescribing drugs including oxycontin.

4 - National defense.

For the first time since World War II, members of the Kings Mountain National Guard were called into active duty because of the military's involvement in Afghanistan. Most of the guardsmen and women were called up to fill duties of persons who were sent to the Middle East. Hundreds of people lined the streets as a National Guard convoy slowly moved down King Street on its way to Fort Bragg.

5 - Election.

After being delayed because of redistricting, primary and general elections finally occurred late in the year and many Kings Mountain people were involved.

Tim Moore, a KM resident and Shelby Attorney, defeated incumbent Andy Dedmon in the 111th NC House race. Debbie Clary also returned to Raleigh, but John Weatherly, a former House member who ran against incumbent Senator Walter Dalton, was defeated.

In the County, Raymond Hamrick pulled off one of the most lop-sided victories ever over an incumbent in the Cleveland County Sheriff's race. In the September Democratic primary, Hamrick out-distanced incumbent Dan Crawford by a 2-to-1 margin. In the November general election, he won by more than 4-to-1 over Republican Richard Hill of Grover.

Incumbents Willie McIntosh and Dr. Jerry Self retained their seats on the County Board of Commissioners. Self had been appointed earlier to fill the unexpired term of the late Charlie Harry.

6 - Highway 74 robbery.

An attempted robbery at a business on Business 74 near Kings Mountain resulted in the death of one of the suspects.

Two men allegedly tried to enter Blue Ridge Enterprises at 5123 East Dixon Blvd. One of the suspects, Kenneth Ray Gregory of South Carolina, was shot by Randy Wright, who was "house sitting" the business while the owner was away. Gregory later died at Cleveland Regional Medical Center.

Because of the robbery and reports that there may be other suspects on the loose, The Sheriff's Department ordered a code red lockdown at nearby Bethware Elementary School, and Kings Mountain Police ordered a lockdown at West Elementary, Kings Mountain High School, Kings Mountain Middle School, and Kings Mountain Intermediate School

7 - Drug Bust.

A drug bust conducted on the Thursday morning before Christmas resulted in 59 charges against 21 individuals.

Over 30 officers from KMPD and the Sheriff's Department conducted the bust. According to KM Chief Melvin Proctor, it was the biggest bust he could ever remember in Kings Mountain.

Most of the charges involved cocaine.

8 - Hospital merger.

While most prospective mergers of the past in Cleveland County drew a storm of protest, about the only persons protesting the possible merger of Kings Mountain and Shelby hospitals were a handful of doctors.

Most of the trustees of both institutions threw their support behind the idea, and after several joint meetings the trustees finally approved the merger in the Fall. It officially took place January 1.

Kings Mountain Hospital will receive approximately \$5 million for renovations of the emergency room.

9 - New school.

For the first time in 28 years, Kings Mountain students moved into a brand new school last August.

Kings Mountain Intermediate School, which houses grades five and six, was constructed on Kings Mountain Blvd. at a cost of \$11.5 million.

Most of the money was saved from half-cent sales taxes earmarked for school construction, but Cleveland County Commissioners also kicked in approximately \$1.5 million to finish off the financial package.

10 - Economy.

For the second straight year Cleveland County had one of the highest unemployment rates in North Carolina.

Numerous businesses closed or cut back their operations, especially in the area of textiles.

In Kings Mountain, Anvil Knit announced early last year that it would phase out its Kings Mountain operation by early 2003, and Wirtz announced it would close both of its plants in Grover.

All news wasn't bad, though. Sara Lee announced that it would expand its KM plants and hire an additional 250 employees.

Other news notes of 2002: Stores just across the State line in Grover went into the lottery business on Jan. 7...

The City completed phase 3 of its 36-inch water line from Moss Lake to KM...

Grover Police Chief Ed Pheagin retired and the city contracted with the CC Sheriff's Dept. for police protection...

KM opened its second peak shaving operation at its substation on York Road...

Grover's Jackie Lavender was KMDS Principal of the Year...

County Commissioners appointed a committee to study district representation.

City Council and the State Legislature approved a local hotel tax for tourism...

A mistrial was declared in the Scottie Wayne Crocker murder trial because of juror misconduct...

Melvin Proctor was sworn in as the new KM Police Chief after Houston Corn retired...

KM Relay for Life raised over \$80,000 for cancer research...

The State withheld \$314,656 in inventory taxes and state collected local

money...

A fund drive began for a \$2 million life enrichment center on KM Blvd....

KM was ranked in the top 100 sites for industry by Site Selection Magazine...

CC Health Dept. expanded services to its KM office to include a full-time nurse...

KM native Jeff Hedden was appointed by President Bush as a Federal Marshal for the eastern district in Tennessee....

Det. Billy Benton of KM and the CC Sheriff's Dept. retired after 30 years in law enforcement...

KM YMCA announced a fund drive for a \$4.5 million expansion...

A proposed apartment building near KM Intermediate School drew protest from neighbors. The complex was eventually approved by City Council, but building has not gotten underway because the developer failed to receive a state tax credit...

CrossWalk, an outdoor Easter drama, was held for the second year in downtown KM.

An effort was begun to raise \$150,000 for a liver transplant for KM resident Don Phifer...

KM Woman's Club launched its centennial celebration, and also began a fund drive to buy a thermal imaging camera for the KM fire and police departments...

After several meetings to trim costs, KM approved a 2002-03 budget of over \$24 million...

KM successfully renegotiated a contract with Gastonia that would trim about \$17 million off KM's 30-year contract for wastewater treatment chargers at Crowders Creek...

A fire did approximately \$400,000 damage to Ruppe Hosiers on E. Gold St...

KM Schools took an option to buy the old Lambeth Rope property across from KMHS. It will be used for vocational programs. The cost of the building is over \$500,000 and total cost after renovations will be \$1.6 million over a 3-year period...

Cleveland County Red Cross opened a KM branch at the old Herald building on S. Piedmont Ave...

A KM school bus burned but no one was injured...

A second KM fire station on Business 74 was dedicated in memory of the late Jacob Hord...

KMHS career and technical students ranked first in the State in end-of-course testing...

KM opened a new office at Mountain Rest Cemetery...

Jimmy Maney announced his retirement effective December 31; and City Council approved him as interim city manager effective January 1...

City Council approved leasing the old Depot to the Southern Arts Society...

East School crossing guard Pressley Anderson was injured when hit by a car...

The city received a \$219,633 CDBG grant for second phase of the West Gold St. sewer project...

Sarah Propst represented KM in the Carrousel Parade Thanksgiving Day in Charlotte...

Numerous well-known citizens died, including County Commissioner Charlie Harry, former KM educator D.B. Blalock, former NC State football and baseball standout Zeb Plonk, and former KMHS football coach Shu Carlton.

BLANTON

From 1A

Blanton said she has seen a lot of changes.

"We have more manpower and much better equipment because of different grants that we were able to get. We have a new building that we're just very proud of," she said of the changes she has seen in her time at the police department. The new police department building has been open for over three years.

The department has become computerized as well. When she first came to the police department, Blanton said she had to do everything by hand and by typewriter. Now she has the convenience of a computer to use at her job.

She has also seen the city prosper in the last twenty-five years, she said. The area has grown and improved to keep up with the times.

"The city has prospered. Even though we've lost some businesses, there have been new businesses to come in," she said.

Blanton has earned several awards during her time at the police department, including several "Administrative Assistant of the Year" awards from both Region C and the Kings Mountain police department.

When she is not at work, Blanton enjoys spending time with her family. She will have been married to her husband, Jerry, who works for the Kings Mountain District Schools, for twenty years next October. Blanton has a daughter and son-in-law, Laura and Todd Scism, who live in Kings Mountain with her grandson, Justin, who is eleven. Her son, Steven, will enter Fruitland Baptist Bible College in January to study for some type of ministry.

Blanton, daughter of Stokes and Louise Wright of the Oak Grove community, said she is a lifelong member of Oak Grove Baptist Church and has been the pianist there for many years. She began to take piano lessons when she was in elementary school. She began to play the organ on Sunday nights at her church when she was 13 years old, she said.

Blanton said she was most influenced by her parents to become who she is today. She said she was raised in a strong Christian home.

"There wasn't a choice of whether you went to church or stayed home. We knew we were to be in church on Sunday," she said.

Blanton said her family has always been very close. Her brothers and sisters all live near or in Kings Mountain. Her oldest brother, Charles, lives in Greer, while her older brother, Bill, lives next door to her. Her older sister, Beth, lives in Gastonia. Her younger brother, Howard, died as a child.

Blanton's hobbies include sewing, crafting, knitting, and going to the mountains every chance she gets, she said.

In the last 25 years, Blanton said she has seen a lot of changes in Kings Mountain. But Kings Mountain has had one constant at the police department: Marty Blanton.

BRIEFS

KM Relay for Life kick off January 13

The kick-off party for the 2003 Joseph R. Smith Relay for Life will be held Monday, January 13 at the Kings Mountain senior center.

Registration is at 5:30 p.m. The program begins at 6.

All persons interested in helping with the event are encouraged to attend. Refreshments will be served so anyone planning to attend is asked to RSVP 734-4563 by January 8.

Revival slated at Rain Bow Temple

Revival services will be held at 7 p.m. January 3-4 at Rain Bow Temple, 1802 Shelby Road, Kings Mountain.

Guest speaker will be Rev. Steve Jones of Healing Convention.

Rev. Dean Webb is pastor. For more information call 734-1498.

Revival Jan.5-8 at Midview Baptist

Revival will be held January 5-8 at Midview Baptist Church, 703 Margrace Road, Kings Mountain.

Services are at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 5 and 7 p.m. Monday through Wednesday.

Guest speaker is evangelist Rev. Bobby Bolin of Blacksburg, SC. There will be special singing nightly by church members and guests. For more information call Rev. Bob Hope at 739-1290.

ESC continues to assist workers

Approximately 50,000 unemployed North Carolinians lost their remaining weeks of extended unemployment benefits December 28 when the federal Temporary Extended Unemployment Compensation (TEUC) program came to an end. The N.C. Employment Security Commission (ESC) is working to inform those workers - many of whom have been unemployed for nearly a year - of ongoing assistance the agency can provide as they continue their job search.

"The ESC has been lobbying Congress to consider additional extended benefits when it return sin January," said ESC Chairman Harry E. Payne Jr. "Because we want people to be able to collect those benefits as soon as

they are approved, we are encouraging workers whose TEUC benefits expire December 28 to continue filing weekly claims with the ESC. In the event that a third extension of benefits is granted, those workers who continue to file should be able to receive their benefits more quickly."

State law also allows workers whose benefits have expired to file a new claim for regular Unemployment Insurance benefits if 52 weeks have passed since a worker's initial claim for benefits was filed. The "Benefits Estimator" program on the ESC web site, www.ncesc.com, may be used to check an individual's eligibility to file a new claim. For more information, workers should contact their nearest ESC office.

ESC offices can also continue to assist unemployed workers in finding training opportunities, connect workers with available job openings, and help customers find additional assistance from other state agencies.

KM trash pickup schedule altered

Because of the New Year's holiday, Wednesday's trash route will be in today.

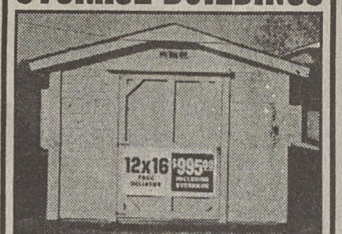
Thursday's route will run Friday.

Parent conference night set at KMMS

Kings Mountain Middle School will have parent conference night Tuesday, January 14 from 3:30-7:30 p.m.

Parents should call the school at 734-5667 to make an appointment to meet with their children's teachers. Teams also have a team planning time each Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Parent conferences may also be held during those times.

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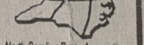
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