

KINGS MOUNTAIN The Herald

Thursday, June 26, 2003

Vol. 115 No.26

Since 1889

50 Cents

Over 300
participate
in KM
triathlon

6A



*****CAR-RT LOT**C 002 25
307 11-11-03 000-100
MAUNY MEMORIAL LIBRARY
100 PIEDMONT AVE
KINGS MOUNTAIN NC 28086-3414

Four-year term idea discussed in hearing

BY ABIGAIL WOLFORD
Staff Writer

City Council held a public hearing on Tuesday evening about the proposed move from two-year to four-year terms for the mayor and Council members. If the Council decides to go ahead with the plans to change term length, the issue will come before the public at the November election. If passed, the change will take effect in 2005.

Only two people spoke at the public hearing, and both people were against the change in term length. Jane Martin, who frequently speaks at Council meetings, said that the current term lengths "have merit." She also recommended imposing a limit on the number of terms a mayor can run for office, citing the term limit placed on the President of the United States.

Jim Zeunik also opposed the change.

"The four-year term for Council is not in the best interest of Kings Mountain," he said.

He said that the Council members should be able to learn the job in two years' time, just as any other employee for any other business is expected to learn the job quickly. Inability to learn the job in only two years is one of the reasons cited by term change supporters.

"I suggest that they put more time into the job," he said. "That's what I did [at my job]. It's an option everyone has in the private or the public sector."

He also said that in the unlikely event that a whole new Council and mayor were elected one November, the City would survive because the City Manager would be able to guide them.

"It would not be earth-shaking. The probability of that happening is very remote. Everyone here has been reelected more than once," he said. "It's not a valid argument."

Howard Shipp, mayor pro tem, said that an entirely new board and mayor would effect the people
See Hearing, 3A

READY, SET, GROW



ANDIE L. BRYMER/HERALD
Kyondra Adams and teacher Jan Sabetti make moose antlers using finger paint. The activity is part of Ready, Set, Grow, a kindergarten preparation program.

Summer pre-kindergarten program familiarizes children with classroom

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
Staff Writer

Kindergarten is a big transition for most children but especially those who have not attended pre-school. Kings Mountain educators are using the Ready, Set, Grow program to make the rite of passage a little easier for those children.

"We think it's such an important start for kids," said John Goforth, executive director of curriculum and instruction for Kings Mountain Schools.

The four-week program familiarizes children with a classroom schedule, helps them learn to follow directions and play with others.

"For some it's their first opportunity to be with a group of kids on a regular basis," Goforth said.

Basic academics also are part of Ready, Set, Grow. The youngsters learn colors, shapes and numbers. They also hone gross and fine motor skills by using scissors, pencils, bouncing balls and dance.

Certified teachers Melinda Canniff and Jan Sabetti are teaching the program at East Elementary. They may see some of the students in their classrooms this fall.

"These 20 days are going to make a big difference," Canniff said. "We can see such a difference already."

Ready, Set, Grow also is taking place at Grover Elementary and Bethware schools.

Goforth believes that the program benefits more than the targeted students. The early preparation keeps teachers from having to spend as much time reviewing basics with a small group, meaning more time for the class as a whole.

The free program also includes bus transportation for students.

"We wanted to make this something the parents could find no reason to pass up," Goforth said.

Last Tuesday morning, students count
See Ready, 3A

Hospitals to acquire Day's Grover office

BY ANDIE BRYMER
Staff Writer

Grover residents will have another physician to serve them later this summer.

Cleveland County HealthCare System President John Young announced plans during that organization's board meeting Monday to acquire an existing practice in Grover.

The healthcare system will purchase the practice owned by Dr. Philip Day who closed his practice earlier this year.

Young would not release the name of the physician who will staff the practice.

"We're still in negotiations on a couple points," he said.

Young estimated it would take six weeks to have the practice open.

Citing real estate privacy laws, Young would not disclose during the open board meeting how much the health system will pay for the practice.

Until recently, Grover was home to two medical practices. Currently, there is one practice owned by National Medical Clinic.

Cleveland County

"We've been looking at ways to bring health care all across Cleveland County."

**John Young, CEO,
Cleveland County
HealthCare System**

HealthCare System is eager to open a practice in Grover.

"We've been looking at ways to bring healthcare all across Cleveland County," Young said.

The Grover practice will mean more referrals to Kings Mountain and Cleveland Regional hospitals, according to Cindy Cook, director of public relations.

"This is crucial to our market," Cook said.

She called the area from Cherryville to Blacksburg, S.C. the health systems "fertile crescent." There are no physician's practices in Blacksburg, Cook said.

ER, surgery department top KM renovation plans

BY ANDIE BRYMER
Staff Writer

If state officials give their okay, Kings Mountain Hospital will build an \$8 million addition.

Cleveland County HealthCare System's trustee board gave its approval during Monday's board meeting for the construction project. Most of the \$8 million will be used in the emergency and surgery departments.

"These are the two places Kings Mountain has the most need. The market share is there to fill it up," said Cindy Cook, director of public relations.

The emergency department will triple in size if not quadruple, according to Cook.

The hospital's current emergency department sees almost 18,000 patients annually. The additional space should maximize efficiency, she said.

"With more space and moving people through quicker, more people will consider coming to that emergency department," Cook said.

Currently, the general entrance to the emergency department and the ambulance entrance are only approximately 10 feet apart, Cook said. The construction plan calls for building two completely separate entrances giving more privacy to patients being transported by ambulance.

The plan also calls for additional surgery suites
See Plans, 3A

Council to hire full-time engineer

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
Staff Writer

Kings Mountain City Council voted to hire a full time city engineer in a two to four decision during Tuesday night's council meeting.

Council member Gene White said hiring an engineer would eliminate problems with conflicts of interest.

"We all know what we're talking about. We ought to make a clean cut and hire an engineer," White said.

Council member Clavon Kelly told fellow council

members that the city has spent approximately \$240,000 on engineering services within roughly the last fiscal year.

"We could hire an engineer for a lot less than \$240,000 annually," he said.

Councilman Dean Spears argued against the proposal, saying that some of the \$240,000 was used on studies which would still have to be out sourced even with an engineer on staff.

"If we have one on staff, he'll have another engineering firm on speed dial," Spears said.

See Council, 3A



ANDIE BRYMER / HERALD
Joaquin Minter demonstrates trick riding on his BMX bike.

Bikers told there's chance individual will build park

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
Staff Writer

Kings Mountain City officials gave two teens who would like to see a bike and skate park built here some good news during Tuesday night's council meeting.

Mayor Rick Murphrey Jr. told Joaquin Minter and Mat Walker that a private individual is interested in building a park in the town.

"It's under discussion. The city manager is going to continue to investigate this," the mayor said.

The teens told council members that bike and skate facilities have a low injury rate.

They presented council with a petition requesting a park. The petition had approximately 800 signatures.

During a Tuesday afternoon inter-

view with the Herald, the teens said local laws prohibit them from riding on the sidewalk. Area businesses call law enforcement when bikers use their parking lots due to liability fears. The only area left is public roadways where trick riding is prohibited.

"There is no where to go," Minter said.

Both teens say the city could generate revenue and create jobs if it built a biking and skating facility. The closest ones are in Charlotte, China Grove and Cornelius.

Neither teen enjoys conventional sports like football or basketball.

"We're looking for something you can go fast, extreme," Minter said. "Throwing a ball around does not sound like fun."

See Bikers, 3A



FIRST NATIONAL BANK
Celebrating 129 Years

Kings Mountain
300 W. Mountain St.
704-739-4782

Gastonia
529 New Hope Road
704-865-1233

Shelby
106 S. Lafayette St.
704-484-6200

Bessemer City
1225 Gastonia Hwy.
704-629-3906

Member, FDIC