

The Herald

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Councilmen not happy with proposed budget

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
Staff Writer

Two Kings Mountain City Council members are objecting to a proposed \$26.9 million budget submitted by staff last week, despite that budget being \$1.25 million less than last year.

"I'm not real happy about it," said Councilman Rick Moore.

Moore said he opposes increases in water and sewer rates and continued funding for some social activities offered by the town.

The increase in utility rates would cost the average consumer \$1.68 more a month, according to

finance officer Lori Hall.

The rate for city residents would increase six percent for availability and six percent for volume. The rate for industry inside the city would increase six percent for availability and 3.5 percent for volume.

The draft budget appropriates \$109,713 for the public relations/special events department which coordinates concerts and other public events. That department is down from last year's \$110,062.

"I support quality of life as long as we can afford it," Moore said. "We've got to take some of the

cherries out."

Moore would also like the council to consider eliminating the insurance coverage available to city council members.

The councilman is also questioning if the city should continue its support of the Kings Mountain Crisis Ministry. The city contributed \$10,000 in fiscal year 2003-04. That same amount is budgeted for next year.

"Go back to the old days where neighbors helped neighbors," he said.

City Councilman Jerry Mullinax shares Moore's opposition to the draft budget.

"I don't think a whole lot of it," he said.

Mullinax said he gets the most complaints from constituents over the vehicle tag tax. It is \$5 per auto and brings in approximately \$42,000 annually. That money helps fund street maintenance.

He's also opposed to the increase in water and sewer rates and the city continuing to pay 100 percent of health premiums for its employees.

The councilman is questioning if the city should continue to support the Kings Mountain Historical Museum, an annual triathlon and



"I support quality of life as long as we can afford it. We've got to take some of the cherries out."

-Councilman Rick Moore on KM's proposed budget

Hutchins joins 9-person race for commissioner

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
Staff Writer

When filing ended Friday, nine people had thrown their names into the running for Cleveland County Commission.

In addition to the three Kings



Mountain incumbents, local resident Johnny Hutchins, a 57-year-old Republican, is making his first political bid.

A self-described blue collar worker, Hutchins is campaigning on a platform of no increase in property taxes.

"People have spent a life time working generally in mills and then bought their mill house. Taxes and rising prescription drug cost really makes it hard on them," he said.

Part of his campaign involves meeting county department heads to learn about their budgets and look for places cuts could be made.

"Less and less people are working but our taxes keep going up," Hutchins said.

Hutchins said he is concerned about the county having resources to fight drugs.

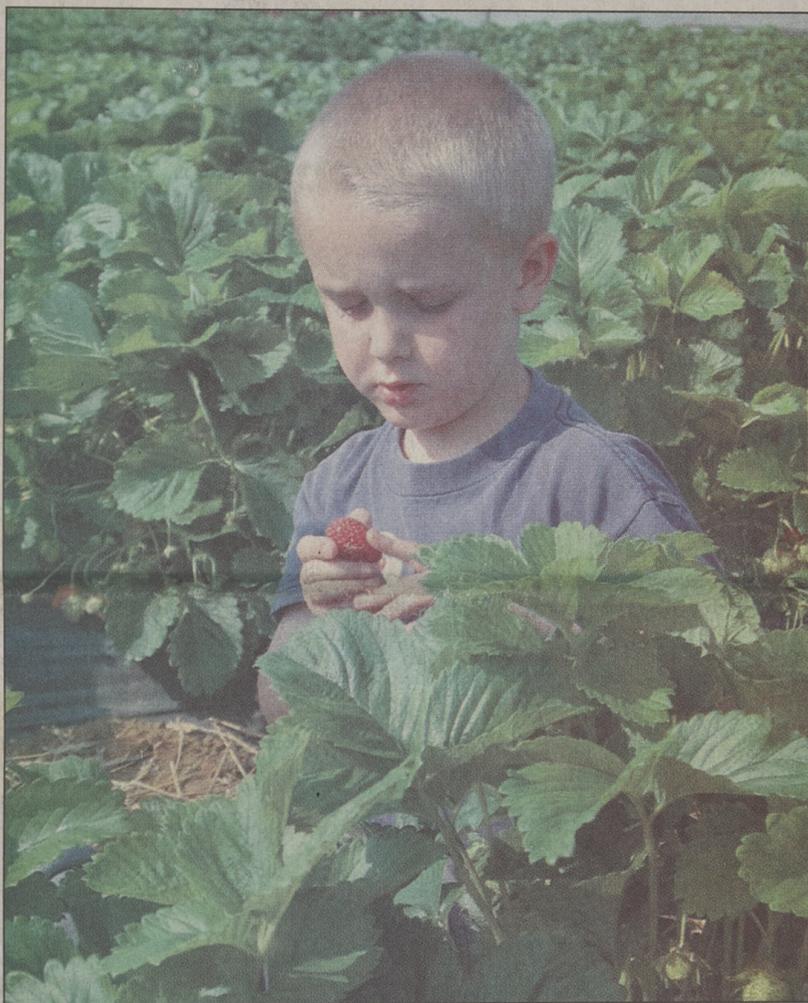
"That's an area that really needs to be looked at," he said.

The candidate is also studying the impact of schools using styrofoam plates on the county landfill.

Hutchins is a Cleveland County native and attended Grover School and Kings Mountain High School. After serving three years in the Army, he worked at

See Hutchins, 3A

STRAWBERRY FIELDS



ANDIE BRYMER / HERALD
 Dillion Heaton, age 4, picks berries Tuesday morning at Lineberger's Killdeer Farm on Goforth Road. Dillion visited the farm with his grandfather Allen Heaton of Woodbridge.

Hall of Fame ceremony is Saturday

By GARY STEWART
Editor of The Herald

The 17th annual Kings Mountain Sports Hall of Fame banquet and induction ceremony is slated for Saturday, May 15 at 6 p.m. at the H. Lawrence Patrick Senior Life and Conference Center.

The event promises to be one of the biggest and best yet. It is expected to draw people from at least eight states and Japan.

All pre-sale tickets have been sold but a limited number of tickets will be available at the door.

This year's inductees are baseball player Bobby Biddix, football player Guy Fisher, basketball standout Ken Mitchem, and the 1989-90 KMHS men's basketball team.

In addition, the Hall of Fame will pay special recognition to John Dilling and Bill Grissom, who have been active in sports in the community for many years. Dilling has been involved in duckpin bowling on the local, state and national level for about 50 years and is a member of the National Duckpin Hall of Fame. Grissom has been involved in youth sports for many years, first as a coach and for the past 36 years has filmed KMHS football games.

Special achievement awards will go to KMHS swimmer Michael Allen for winning the state championship, and the KMHS men's basketball team for winning three straight conference championships.

Five deserving KMHS seniors will be presented scholarships. Scholarship donors include the City of Kings Mountain, KMHS Booster Club, the Hall of Fame, and Carl and Pat Champion.

Bobby Biddix was an outstanding pitcher for Bethware High School, American Legion Post 155 and Wake Forest University in the late fifties and early sixties. He posted a combined 39-12 high school/legion record and was 15-5 at Wake Forest and played on two ACC championship teams. He now lives in Reston, VA and is a budget technician for the Arlington, VA Police Department. Biddix will be inducted by his high school/legion catcher Jerry Morris.

Fisher was a football standout at KMHS, in the U.S. Army, and at Lenoir-Rhyne College, where he was an All-Conference defensive end and helped lead the Bears to four straight North State Conference championships. He played at KMHS in 1949 and '50 under Shu Carlton, and in 1951 under Art Weiner. He now lives in Lewisville, NC and is retired from RJ Reynolds Tobacco Co. Fisher will be inducted by Jack Sink of Charlotte, who was an assistant football coach and baseball coach at KM in the early fifties and was a long-time successful baseball coach at Myers Park High in Charlotte.

Mitchem was the first Black basketball player at KMHS in 1965-66. He started all four years in high school and made the All-Conference team three times. He played four years at Pan American University in Texas and played ten years of semi-pro softball. He was a two-time All-American for the Pharr Yarns Reds and was the National Tournament MVP in 1972. He lives in Springs, TX, where he works for a medical laboratory. Mitchem will be inducted by his sister, Carolyn, who was also a standout basketball player at KMHS.

The 1989-90 KMHS basketball team, coached by Larry Sipe, compiled an overall record of 26-3. The Mountaineers won the Southwestern Conference, Sectional and Western NC Regional championships before falling to DH Conley in the State Championship game at Chapel Hill. One of the team members, Quan Smith, will be coming all the way from Japan for the induction ceremony, and another team member, Mark Byers, will be coming from New York City.

Testa wants to develop interchange

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
Staff Writer

A Kings Mountain business man hopes to develop approximately 50 acres around the interchange of Dixon School Road and Interstate 85.

Jim Testa, who owns Kings Mountain Truck Plaza, would like to see a motel built on the north side of the interstate. While Testa would not say which motel he is recruiting he did describe it as higher end

lodging which would include meeting rooms.

Testa said the motel could create 100 jobs, though it will not become a reality unless the town passes liquor by the drink. Larger motels will not consider a location unless they can generate revenue from alcohol sales, according to Testa.

Testa, who is running as a Republican candidate for the 46th District State Senate seat, would not be able to call for a vote or referendum.

"The city fathers and voters will hopefully vote for it," Testa said.

The area, which is not inside the city limits, is served by municipal water. Testa said he thinks the land would have to be annexed before the city would be willing to run sewer and gas lines.

"I would think they (City of Kings Mountain) would want some way to recover their investment," Testa said.

Any building construction would not happen until after fall of 2005 when road construction in the area is completed.

Testa said he believes the three area parks make the area a prime tourist destination. He believes a series of planned trails connecting the City of Kings Mountain with the Kings Mountain National Military Park and two state parks will continue to drive up the number of visitors to this area.



ANDIE BRYMER / HERALD
 Danny Willis prays during a National Day of Prayer service in Grover.

Pausing to Pray Grover, Kings Mountain citizens join in National Day of Prayer

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
Staff Writer

GROVER - Heads bowed, hands folded, eyes closed - 14 people gathered at Town Hall on Thursday to pray. Most sat in folded chairs arranged in a circle, a few late comers stood close by.

Mayor Robert Sides and Rev. Tony Fulbright of First Baptist welcomed the group.

Gayle Fulbright led the first prayer, thanking God for freedom and security. Some others offered their own prayers, leaving short pauses between each one.

Government leaders were lifted up. Other prayers were said for people serving in the military and their families, local law enforcement, forgiveness, evangelism, an end to abortion, protection of Jerusalem and concern over homosexuality.

See Pray, 3A