

The Herald

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Is new high school in future for county?

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
 Staff Writer

The merger of Cleveland County's three school systems earlier this year could mean more schools in the southern part of the county.

While the new Cleveland County School Board is holding off on making plans until student reassignment is complete, the board's chairman did offer some comments.

According to Dr. George Litton, Township III Elementary is the most overcrowded school in the system at this time.

"One of these days we're going to need a new elementary, middle school and high school in that area," Litton said in a telephone interview Tuesday. Litton said he was speaking as an individual and not for the board.

At the high school level, Crest, located in the southern part of the county, is the most crowded, however Kings Mountain and Burns high schools are full, Litton said.

The system will gain approximately 400 students this year growing from 17,200 in 2003-2004 to 17,600 in 2004-2005.

See School, 2A

7-cents tax hike in Grover FY budget

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
 Staff Writer

GROVER - The Grover Board of Commissioners accepted a \$540,000 budget which includes a 7 cents property tax hike last Wednesday.

The budget is open for public review through June 28. Before voting on the budget, a public hearing will be held at 7 p.m. at town hall. The public is welcome to comment.

The 7 cents increase brings that number from 20 cents on the \$100 property valuation to 27 cents on the \$100. The 9 cents sewer debt and operation tax remains the same.

Several fees are on the rise also.

Both the water and sewer
 See Grover, 5A

MEMORIAL DAY



GARY STEWART / HERALD
 Claude Pearson, left, Commander of American Legion Post 155, and Mayor Rick Murphrey place a wreath at the monument of Veterans Park during Monday's Memorial Day observance. Below, members of the KMPD Explorer Unit present the colors.

Rain stops for Memorial Day observance

By GARY STEWART
 Editor of The Herald

The early-morning thunderstorm gave way to less cloudy and dry skies Monday morning for the second annual Memorial Day observance at Veterans Park at Mountain Rest Cemetery.

Veterans of previous wars and other patriotic citizens watched from the hillside as Mayor Rick Murphrey and Odus D. Green Post 155 Commander Claude Pearson hailed the sacrifices of military men and women of all wars. American flags decorated the graves of deceased veterans who are buried in Veterans Park.

Members of the Kings Mountain Police Department Explorer Unit presented and retired the colors, and they also raised a flag donated for the ceremony by Kenneth Morrison of Kings Mountain, whose son Ronald K. Morrison served in Iraq. The flag was flown over Kuwait and Iraq on March 21, 2003.

Police Chief Melvin Proctor led the crowd in the Pledge of Allegiance, and City Councilman Howard Shipp gave the invocation. Paul Fulton played TAPS to close the ceremony.

Murphrey said Memorial Day is a time to honor the men and women who made the "ultimate sacrifice" to preserve freedom.

"These men and women knew the risk
 See Memorial, 5A



Car allowance budgeted for 8 city positions

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
 Staff Writer

The City of Kings Mountain is currently paying \$3,000 a month in car allowances to eight employees and one council member is questioning the practice.

During a budget work session last week Councilwoman Brenda Ross asked for details. She speculated on whether a mileage reimbursement plan would work better.

The following city positions receive the allowance: aging director, zoning officer, building inspector, codes director/chief building inspector, city planner, planning director, risk management/safety director and fire chief.

Money is also set aside in the fiscal year 2003-2004 budget for a \$375 car allowance for the city engineer and a \$400 allowance for the city manager. Interim City Manager Gary Hicks does not receive the allowance. The engineer position is currently vacant.

The vehicle allowance is taxed. Recipients use this money for insurance, gas and maintenance. They are not required to turn in records of how the money is spent.

Most other employees have access to a city vehicle to use on the job. These vehicle may not be driven home. Employees in a few departments which do not have a city car are reimbursed for mileage driven while on the job.

City records indicate that in July 1993, five employees received car allowances. Two codes department employees received \$200; the finance director, \$100; city manager, \$250 and planning and economic development, \$100.

Over time the number of people receiving allowances and the amounts paid has increased, according to Personnel Director Pat Blanton.

Ross isn't alone in her questions. According to Gaston County budget director Phil Ponder, a Gaston commissioner is raising similar issues with the county's practice of granting car allowances for senior department heads.

The City of Shelby pays its city manager a \$450 car allowance. The assistant city manager receives \$375 each month. Other employees are reimbursed for mileage or provided a city car.

Bell tower fund hits 35 percent

Monetary and in-kind contributions over the past two weeks have increased the total amount raised for the Mountain Rest Cemetery bell tower fund to \$24,500, or 35 percent of the \$70,000 goal.

To give to the fund contact one of the following committee members: Jim or Brenda Belt at 739-5425, Mike Blanton at 739-7496, Joe, Terri or Wayne King at 739-9318, Bell Belt at 922-5882, Jerry Mullinax at 734-5212, Mike or Kathy Butler at 734-0080, John or Erin Foster at 739-0747, or David or Christa Smith at 739-6085.

Contributions received during the past two weeks were from:

In-kind - Talley and Smith Architects, The Printin' Press.

Monetary: Steve Harmon, Norman McGill, Wanda Howze, Betty Gamble, Jeanne Maner, W.E. McCluney, Dorene Ballard, Louise
 See Bell, 2A

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Woman says unoccupied home is a safety concern

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
 Staff Writer

GROVER - An unoccupied home is causing concern for one neighbor and the owner says he knows the dwelling is an eyesore.

During last Wednesday's town council meeting, Janet White told commissioners that the Cleveland County Sheriff's Department visited the home over the weekend after shots were fired.

"If my child is in the yard and gets shot, whose responsible?" White asked.

White, who lives across from the 204 Laurel Street home, said she has seen boys ages 11 to 16 leaving as late as 2 a.m. White moved to the neighborhood in February and says the trespassing has gone on since at least then. She also says cats and snakes have come from the yard which is not mowed.

The home is owned by Billy Wease Jr. and

Lou Dellinger.

"We know it's an eyesore," Dellinger said in a telephone interview Thursday.

Dellinger said he would like to have the home burned by the Grover Fire Department and build two or three condominiums on the lot. He said he is in the process of applying for rezoning.

Dellinger said it would cost \$60,000 to \$70,000 to repair the home to "tip top" condition but he does not have the money. He says there are structural and foundation problems due to roof leaks. Dellinger said he owns other properties which were getting more immediate attention.

Dellinger says he has locked the home but cannot keep people from kicking the doors in. He also said he was interested in the selling the house.

Town commissioners discussed what to do about the structure. The Town of Grover
 See Home, 2A



ANDIE BRYMER/HERALD
 This 204 Laurel Avenue home in Grover is causing concern for city officials and neighbors.