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6A



Second Democratic primary Tuesday

Ledford challenges incumbent Bridges in runoff



TOMMY BRIDGES

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
Staff Writer

Democrat Cleveland County Commission candidate incumbent Tom Bridges faces a run-off challenge from Kenneth A. Ledford on Tuesday.

Election law allows the fourth place candidate to ask for a run off when none of the candidates get 40 percent plus one of the total vote, according to elections Director Debra Blanton.

Bridges, a first-term commissioner, listed as his top accomplishments getting water systems across the county connected and merging the Economic

Development Commission with the Cleveland County Chamber of Commerce.

Bridges retired after 40 years managing Bridges Auto Parts. He is a pilot and flight instructor and has flown for Pilots for Christ and the South Carolina Forestry Service.

Bridges grew up in Fallston and has spent his adult life in Kings Mountain.

This will make Ledford's third runoff for a chance at a county commission seat.

Ledford, who served 20 years on the Cleveland County School Board, said he opposed the county commission's

decision to eliminate a 1 cent education tax.

"That's taking away over \$.5 million from our children," he said.

Ledford also opposed the merger of the county's three school systems.

He believes the county's decision to merge the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce and the Economic Development Commission implied the county does not care about recruiting industry. According to Ledford, jobs should be a "major objective" of the county commission.

Ledford serves on the boards of
See Primary, 5A



KENNETH LEDFORD

SCHOOL DAYS



East Elementary student Sharda Whitesides crosses the street with her mother Jessica Brown and sister Essence Brown Monday morning for the first day of school.

ANDIE BRYMER / HERALD

Smooth opening for schools

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
Staff Writer

Despite talk of civil disobedience, schools in Kings Mountain started on a calm note Monday morning.

Earlier this summer organizer Mike Smith had called for parents of children living in the Gaston County portion of Kings Mountain insist that schools accept their children without the \$1,414 tuition. Kings Mountain Police were on standby at East Elementary though no incidents were reported at any Kings Mountain area schools, according to Capt. Jerry Tessneer.

Smith said Monday that protests were called off to give students a peaceful first day. Smith addressed the Cleveland County School Board Monday night when it met at Casar Elementary.

He called the Gaston County School Board "dead beat dads" for not allowing funds to follow students out of county. Smith asked the Cleveland board to be like "loving step-fathers" and do away with the \$1,414 in tuition being levied to

make up for the money from Gaston.

Smith, a former Kings Mountain District Schools board member and East Elementary teacher, wants Cleveland County to suspend the tuition for one year. In that time he hopes to have Cleveland County's line moved to I-85 so all of Kings Mountain will be in one county.

Smith told the board it is losing approximately \$1 million in state and federal funds by not allowing the affected students into its system.

Board member Terry McClain of Kings Mountain asked the board to examine that issue.

"I don't know if we really took a hard look at the state and federal funds we'll lose to Gaston County," he said.

Superintendent Dr. Gene Moore told the board it would be a year before Cleveland would feel the impact of those funds. He also said the "other side" of the issue is Cleveland is not having to use its funds to serve those students.

Board member Shearra Miller of Kings
See School, 5A



JOSEPH BRYMER / HERALD
Mike Smith address School Board at Monday's meeting in Casar.

Longtime educator Withers dies

By GARY STEWART
Editor of The Herald

Longtime Kings Mountain coach and educator Fred Withers died last week at the age of 79.

Withers came to Kings Mountain High in 1955 as assistant football and head baseball coach and eventually served as principal of Kings Mountain Junior High when it was housed at Central School and later at what is now the middle school.

He was respected by his peers as an innovator in education, often introducing new concepts that put enjoyment into education.

Bill Bates of Hendersonville, who served as a coach and later as an administrator with Withers, said Withers' philosophies would make a major impact on education if they could be done today.

"He really believed that down in the first, second and third grades that they ought to teach children to enjoy going to school," Bates said. "Fred always got upset when he'd see kids coming in crying and afraid to go to school."

As a history teacher at KMHS when it was housed at Central School in the fifties and early sixties, Withers introduced TV-taught U.S. History classes. Over 100 students would be in his class and each day he would set up a TV at each end of the auditorium stage.

Bates remembered that, as a principal, Withers began a program that used automobiles to teach children all subjects.

"If you were in science you learned about the motor," Bates noted. "If you were in math you learned to calculate distance and mileage. The kids picked up on that real well. Some of those who weren't interested got interested."

When the new junior high was built on Phifer Road, Withers introduced the open classroom concept.

Dr. Larry Allen, Deputy Assistant Superintendent of Cleveland County Schools, taught under Withers at Central School.

"He was a very effective leader," Allen said. "He had a vision and led the staff to fulfill that vision. He was a very fair principal and he had high expectations."

See Withers, 5A



WITHERS

Hicks staying in KM Hall proposes condos

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
Staff Writer

Kings Mountain interim City Manager Gary Hicks will stay on the job until a permanent city manager is hired. Hicks' offer to pay approximately \$900 a month to continue working was unanimously accepted by council Thursday night.

Because Hicks receives retirement from the state employees system, he can only make up to a certain amount annually before retirement benefits are jeopardized. Hicks had reached that threshold and wanted to receive his pay through a temporary staffing agency which would protect his retirement.



GARY HICKS

Last month four city council members balked when Hicks asked the city to pay the agency's approximate \$1,800 monthly fee. During a closed meeting Thursday night council and Hicks reached a compromise when he agreed to pay half.

"It still costs us too much but its better than the alternative," Councilman Jerry Mullinax said.

Mullinax along with council members Kay Hambricht, Rick Moore and Brenda Ross had voted at the July meeting against the council paying the entire amount.

Some council members previously thought the city could run for a short while without a manager on staff. However, City Attorney Mickey Corry interpreted the municipal charter to state a manager must be on the job. State law prohibits the mayor and council members from doing the
See Hicks, 5A

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
Staff Writer

Kings Mountain will probably get a condominium community behind Food Lion.

Several neighbors gave conditional support of the project during a public hearing before the city planning and zoning board Tuesday night.

The board unanimously asked builder Tommy Hall to come back next month with additional information on traffic issues, berms and other privacy devices, population density and water run-off.

Hall told the board at today's prices the condos would cost around \$170,000 for a single garage unit and \$190,000 for a double. Plans call for around 64 three bedroom, two-and-one-half-bath units each with its own driveway. Kitchens and bathrooms would have tile floors. Other rooms would have

hardwood. Sidewalks would lead from the front door to the main sidewalk system through the community. A neighborhood covenant would forbid multiple families living in one unit.

"We don't want three or four families (in one unit). We want to keep it upper scale," Hall said.

Board members were concerned the one entrance and exit would limit access by emergency vehicles. Hall said having multiple entrances and exits would chance the complex being used as a cut through for non-resident traffic. The board asked him to consider installing gates at all entrances.

The community apparently would primarily be marketed to senior citizens. Neighbor Heath Miller told the board he was afraid these individuals would have difficulty turning onto the heavily traveled Shelby
See Condos, 2A