

The Herald

*****CAR-RT LOT**C 008
 307 11-11-05 0002A00 8P 85
 MAUNEY MEMORIAL LIBRARY
 100 S PIEDMONT AVE
 KINGS MOUNTAIN NC 28086-3414

outscore St.
 Stephens 63-42

1B



Thursday, October 28, 2004

Vol. 116 No. 44

Since 1889

50 Cents

Election is Tuesday

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
 Staff Writer

Cleveland County Democrats and Republicans are working almost around the clock as election day nears.

Wayne King, head of President George W. Bush's Cleveland County campaign, predicts his man will win.

"That goes without saying. North Carolina is a conservative state," King said.

The GOP stand against gay marriage and abortion make the party popular here, according to King.

County Democrat Chairperson Betsy Wells calls those issues a distraction from the economy, war with Iraq and rising healthcare costs.

Wells points to a \$200 trillion deficit and a war with a nation which did not attack America. She calls the GOP a threat to social security.

"They give to the rich and take from the poor," Wells said.

Wells spent late 2003 and early 2004 in New England campaigning for John Edwards. The North Carolina Senator is Democrat presidential contender John Kerry's

running mate.

Closer to home, King calls Republican State House hopeful Jim Testa a "credible candidate." Testa, who owns Kings Mountain Truck Plaza, is running against incumbent Walter Dalton, a Rutherfordton lawyer for 111th seat.

GOP county Chairman Wes Westmoreland calls it the "single biggest race to watch."

He predicts a close race for the 111th State House seat. Voters will choose between incumbent Republican Tim Moore, an attorney,

and Democrat challenger Kathryn Hamrick who manages the Shelby Met Life office.

Three Cleveland County commission seats are up for grabs. Incumbents Chairwoman Mary Accor and Tom Bridges, both Democrats, and Republican Ronnie Hawkins will face off against Republican challengers Johnny Hutchins and Will Troutman and Democrat Robin Hendrick.

"If anybody makes a bet on county commission, they're crazy," Westmoreland said.

He praised all six candidates as caring individuals. Westmoreland

believes Hawkins will be at the top of the ticket. He called Hutchins and Troutman "viable candidates" with a "reasonable chance."

Incumbent Governor Mike Easley is running against Republican Patrick Ballentine. Westmoreland is concerned that Easley's campaign dollars will make the race tough for Ballentine.

Polls will be open Tuesday from 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Voters who need a ride should contact their respective parties. The Democrat party can be reached at 704-481-8683 and the Republicans are at 704-482-4467.

PRETTY AS A PUMPKIN



JOSEPH BRYMER/HERALD

Madison Faith Allen enjoys herself in the pumpkin patch at Bethlehem Baptist Church Monday afternoon. She is the 14-month-old daughter of Jason and Krista Allen of Kings Mountain. Her grandparents are Bill and Norma Meyers and Les and Peggy Allen. The pumpkin patch is a fund raiser for a youth mission trip. The church will host a free community fall festival Saturday from 6 to 8:15 p.m. Hot dogs, games, a cake walk and costume contest are all part of the fun.

Manager granted leave of absence

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
 Staff Writer

With just over two months on the job, Kings Mountain City Manager Greg McGinnis is taking a leave of absence.

City Council met Friday at 11 a.m., going into closed until approximately 12:20 p.m. According to Mayor Rick Murphrey, the council reached a consensus to grant McGinnis the leave he requested. Murphrey did not give a time frame for the leave.

In a memo to Murphrey and council, McGinnis recommended City Clerk Marilyn Sellars as acting city manager.

McGinnis is not listed in the telephone directory. A message left for him with a family member Friday has gone unreturned.

Murphrey said Monday he thought McGinnis would be paid sick leave using time he has built up at other municipalities. It was unclear at press time whether McGinnis would be receiving health insurance during the leave of absence. A call to city Risk Manager Ray Wilson was not returned.

Council members have declined comment, citing state law which makes personnel matters confidential.

Under the Family Medical Leave Act, the city must allow employees up to 12 weeks leave for medical conditions, to care for a sick parent, child or spouse or at the birth, adoption or foster placement of a child. This applies to employees who have been with the city for at least 12 months.

The city's policy also allows employees up to a year of unpaid leave for education, special work that will benefit the city, continuation of sick leave for self or family or other reasons deemed justifiable by the city manager.

Human Resources Director Pat Blanton did not know of any past Kings Mountain city managers taking a leave of absence.

"I don't recall any of them going on an extended leave," she said.

Council voted four to three to hire McGinnis Aug. 20. His annual salary is \$65,000, a monthly \$400 car allowance and all benefits and retirement offered full-time employees.

McGinnis is Kings Mountain's second permanent city manager this year. Phil Ponder left in February after an apparent dispute with some elected officials involving micro-management. Gary Hicks served as interim city manager between Ponder and McGinnis.

McGinnis worked as Boiling Springs town manager from 2001 to 2003. He left that position when Emory University offered him a full scholarship to its seminary. McGinnis declined that offer when he and his wife were not able to sell the family's Cleveland County home.

Before Boiling Springs, McGinnis managed the Town of Vinalhaven, Maine from 2000 to 2001. He was assistant city manager in Kannapolis from 1998 to 2000. He interned as a budget analyst and in management for the City of Charlotte from 1996 to 1998. McGinnis also served in the U.S. Army for four years.

He graduated from UNC-Greensboro with a Masters in Public Administration in 1996. McGinnis is a 1979 Kings Mountain High School graduate.

Andie Brymer can be reached at abrymer@kingsmountainherald.com or 704-739-7496.

Plant to vote on union

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
 Staff Writer

Within a few months workers at Kings Mountain's newest plant, Axle Alliance, will get a chance to do something few North Carolinas workers can do - vote on a labor union.

The Detroit-based plant's contract with the United Auto Workers gives employees at all plants the right to vote on representation.

Nationally 12.9 percent of workers are represented by labor unions. At 3.1 percent, North Carolina has the fewest number of unionized workers, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the AFL-CIO. The national number has dropped from 20 percent in 1980.

Ever since the bureau began keeping stats, the Carolinas have ranked lowest in the nation for workers represented.

Dr. Roxanne Newton, a Mitchell Community College instructor who studies labor unions in the south, lists several reasons why she believes unions haven't gotten a foothold in the region.

Traditionally the south was a rural farming area while industry was concentrated in the northeast and somewhat on the west coast. When northern companies moved their jobs south in the early 20th Century, unions appeared foreign to most southern workers.

The unions were largely associated with northern agitators in the mind of

many here. Collective bargaining did not appeal to the independent Scotch-Irish personality, according to Newton.

All these factors made it hard for unions to find workers willing to join despite \$9 a week wages and forced overtime, Newton said.

The nationwide General Strike of 1934 dealt a blow to unions. Some 500,000 workers, both unionized and independent, walked off their jobs. The unions were not able to support these individuals and the strike failed. State militias were called out in North Carolina and across the country. Striking workers were beaten and sometimes killed. Newton says most workers blamed the union instead of

See Union, 2A

Candidates get in last hits at Sunday NAACP forum

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
 Staff Writer

SHELBY - Cleveland County Commission and North Carolina House and Senate candidates participated in a county NAACP forum Sunday afternoon at Mt. Calvary Baptist.

Solutions for unemployment and underemployment were the first questions posed.

Tim Moore, incumbent Republican House candidate, said unemployment numbers are down from 12 percent to 10 percent over the past two years. Moore said he sponsored bills to lower taxes and give industries incentives from the

state. He supports legislation to repair problems with DOT minority business discrimination and to give research and development tax credits to two local companies.

His opponent Kathryn Hamrick said she supported Closing the Achievement Gap efforts, industry recruitment and higher standards for businesses receiving local incentives. These would include requiring the businesses hire locally.

State Senate Democrat incumbent Walter Dalton sponsored industrial incentive legislation. He supports infrastructure help for industry including water and sewer, early childhood programs and the New

See Forum, 2A



JOSEPH BRYMER / HERALD

State House opponents Tim Moore, left, and Kathryn Hamrick answer questions at Sunday's forum.