

KINGS MOUNTAIN

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CHRISTMAS TIME IN THE CITY



Kings Mountain citizens gather around the tree at Mauney Memorial Library Tuesday night for the city's annual tree lighting ceremony. Below, three-year-old Dakota Mellon sits with his grandmother, Kaye Ramsey, as they listen to the mayor read "Twas The Night Before Christmas."

Tree lighting kicks off Christmas in KM

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
Staff Writer

Mayor Rick Murphrey had just finished reading "Twas the Night Before Christmas" to children gathered at the library when his cell phone rang. It was none other than Santa Clause.

The jolly old fella was in town and could stop by the library, Murphrey announced to the young crowd. That was all it took for the little ones to stream toward the door. Soon after they assembled on the library's front lawn, flashing red lights could be seen down Piedmont Avenue.

A bearded, rotund Santa arrived on a Kings Mountain Fire Department engine along with green-clad elves Krista Harris and Taylor Cox.

After the tree was lit, Santa headed inside to take requests and pose for photos.

Before Santa arrived, Murphrey read the Christmas story from the gospel of Luke and the holiday classic by See Tree, 3A



KM, Grover parades Saturday

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
Staff Writer

If you love a parade, Saturday is the day. Both Grover and Kings Mountain will hold Christmas parades.

In Kings Mountain, military representatives will serve as grand marshals. Army Sgt. Michael Zurling, Navy Petty Officer Marcia Frailey, Air Force Technical Sgt. Peggy Spence, Marine Pvt. Christopher Biggers and Army National Guard First Lt. Kenneth Caldwell will ride

on a National Guard Humvee. Caldwell is a veteran of the second Iraq war.

While titles like Tiny Mister Kings Mountain typically conjure up toddlers, the city's reigning Tiny Mister is 16-year-old Chris Beheler. When the teen learned that his successor had not been crowned, he decided to make an appearance.

"He's still tickled to death about it," said Barbara Burgess Riley, Beheler's mom. They now live in Lenoir. Chris' dad James Beheler lives in Shelby.

Riley said she was surprised to learn Kings Mountain had not held a pageant since 1991. Her son was the only redhead among almost 50 entrants. He was three years old when he won the title.

Beheler will wear a beige tuxedo similar to the one he wore in the 1991 parade.

Beheler is a junior at West Caldwell High School where he is a member of the marching band, wrestling team and ROTC.

Beheler's brother Tony Taylor was See Parades, 3A

Jimmy Wayne hasn't forgotten KM

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
Staff Writer

Even though he's now famous, Kings Mountain native Jimmy Wayne hasn't forgotten his childhood.

The country singer known for hits like "I Love You This Much" and "Stay Gone" has produced "Paper Angels." The song is about the childhood Christmas when Wayne and his sister's paper angels were picked from a Salvation Army tree. The pair spent Christmas day playing with the Uno cards he received.

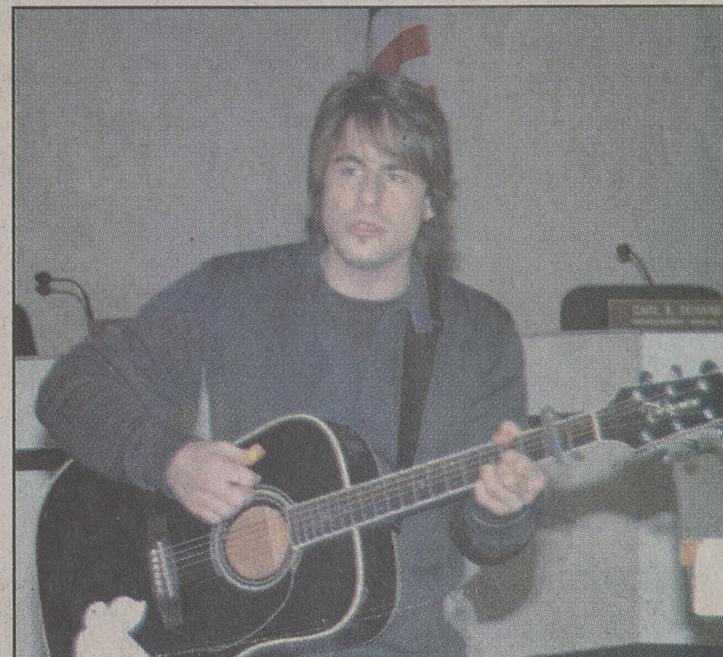
"I wrote this song to make more people aware of how little it can take to make kids happy," Wayne writes on his website, jimmywayne.com.

Wayne and his sister spent their childhoods in and out of foster care. When they were living with their mom, she would take them to the Salvation Army each year to complete angel tree paper work. Some years they received presents, other years there were none.

Wayne is hoping every child will have a present this year. He spent Friday at Cleveland Mall promoting the angel tree.

Wayne grew up in Kings Mountain and nearby Bessemer City. Seven years ago he moved to Nashville. There he was offered a job writing songs for the Acuff Rose company. He

See Jimmy, 3A



Jimmy Wayne sings for city employees Wednesday at Kings Mountain City Hall.

Council to study hiring own engineer

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
Staff Writer

The City of Kings Mountain will again look at hiring an engineer.

City council voted six to one Tuesday night to instruct its manager to analyze the potential cost savings of filling the position. The item was placed on the agenda at the request of Councilman Rick Moore who chairs the utility committee.

Councilman Carl DeVane cast the lone dissenting vote.

"We've studied it three times," he said after the meeting. "Every time it's not cost effective so why waste time studying it again?"

Commissioner Carl DeVane

The council hired Carson Fisher as engineer in January. He left less than two months into the job. Fisher told the Herald that he was accepting a job with the state land quality section in Asheville which he had applied for before coming to Kings Mountain.

During fiscal year 2003-2004, the city paid four firms \$113,000 for engineering, surveying, construction administration and observation, preparation and design of construction plans, preparation on bid and contract documents, professional services, technician services, clerical services, environmental consultation and geo tech services and expenses.

Those firms include Moretz Engineering, \$69,320; Byers Engineering, \$9,601; Progressive Engineering, \$34,704 and W.J. Turpish and Associates, \$203.

See City, 5A

KM's Hawkins will probably be county chair

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
Staff Writer

If tradition holds true, Ronnie Hawkins will head the Cleveland County Commission when it reorganizes Dec. 6.

Hawkins has served as vice-chairperson this year.

Typically the board chooses a new chairperson after each election. That post traditionally goes to the vice-chair.

Current Chairperson Mary Accor said some have questioned why she is "stepping down," a description she disagrees with.

"It's been a practice of our board to pass it around. We feel like we are all qualified," Accor said Monday.

Accor said she will vote for Hawkins but can only "speak for myself."

Commissioner Jerry Self would not speculate on who would become chairperson, only saying everyone was well qualified.

Hawkins has said he is willing to accept the post.

Hawkins said the board agrees to take turns at leadership. While he was this year's top voter getter with 20 percent of the vote, Hawkins said this does not determine who chairs the board.

While there is a Republican majority on the board with the election of Johnny Hutchins, Hawkins does not expect

See Hawkins, 5A

Moore to reintroduce marriage defense act

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
Staff Writer

Lower taxes, more highway funds, marriage, expanding sewer and creating a business friendly climate will be on the minds of local legislators when the General Assembly convenes in January.

Representative Tim Moore, Republican, told the Herald last week that he will concentrate on lowering corporate and personal taxes and gas tax. He also wants to eliminate the inheritance tax.

Moore says he wants to secure more funds for paving roads and making highway safety improvements.

Moore will re-introduce the Defense of Marriage Act which did not pass this year. He represents Cleveland County.

Debbie Clary, Republican, who represents portions of Gaston and Cleveland counties, said she hopes to secure funds for more water and sewer in the two counties. She said this will help with industry recruitment.

Clary predicted a tough budget process this year. November's election gave the House of Representatives

See Moore, 5A