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CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING



Seated on the Maaney Memorial Library porch, Kings Mountain Mayor Rick Murphrey reads "Twas the Night Before Christmas" to children gathered around him.

ANDIE BRYMER / HERALD

Annual ceremony officially kicks off Christmas in KM

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Children were giddy with excitement as they awaited the arrival of Santa last week during the City of Kings Mountain's annual tree lighting ceremony at Maaney Memorial Library.

After Mayor Rick Murphrey read "Twas the Night Before Christmas," he told the youngsters Santa had called from his cell phone and was nearby.

"He's coming. I know he's coming," Murphrey said.

One child told the mayor she had heard his sleigh bells.

"I heard the bells too. He's got to be close," Murphrey told her.

An airplane flew overhead generating much speculation. Alas it wasn't the anticipated guest. However moments later the siren and red lights from a Kings Mountain Fire Department truck cut through the crisp night air. The much awaited moment had arrived. Children shrieked, jumped up and down and pointed to Santa as he made his way through the throngs of people gathered on the library lawn. Santa then flicked the switch, illuminating the evergreen.

Yellow ribbons also decorate the tree this year. The bows are in honor of members of the 505th National Guard Unit and other local people serving in Iraq and other locations.

"Give me a big yell from Kings Mountain. I think they'll hear it," Guard Sgt. Greg Thompson told the crowd.

Prior to Santa's arrival, students from East, North and West elementary schools sang Christmas carols under the direction of Monica Martin. Dance Magic and the Grace Team from Patterson Grove Baptist performed. Murphrey read the Christmas story from the second chapter of the gospel of Luke.

"We don't want to forget the birthday of our dear savior," he said. "Carry the spirit of love and compassion through the year."

After lighting the tree, Santa and his elves Celisa Bolch, Erica Carpenter and Erin Moore set up shop in the library auditorium where they heard Christmas wish lists. Refreshments were served.

New Grover councilmen to be sworn in Monday

GROVER - New commission members will be sworn in during the Monday night council meeting at the Grover Town Hall.

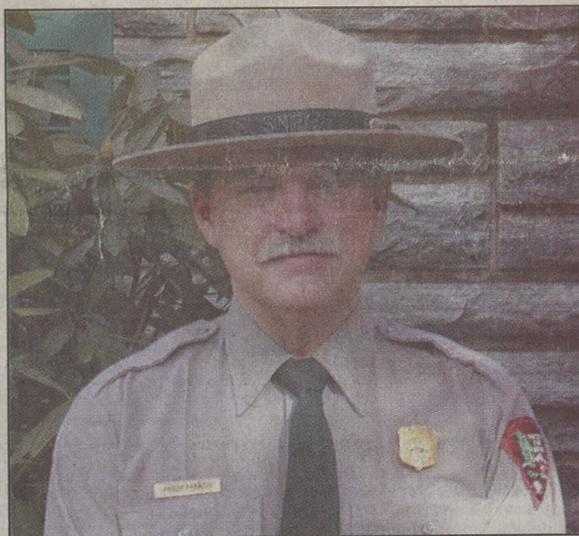
Adam Green, Christopher Brent White and Calvin Huffman will take the oath of office as town commissioners. No information on who will do the swearing in was available at press time.

In November's election White and Green both garnered 22 percent of the vote and Huffman took 20 percent. They defeated incumbents John Harry, Max Rollins and Bill Willis.

The council is expected to put a referendum on alcohol sales before the voters early next year.

Monday's meeting starts at 7 p.m. and is open to the public.

New on the Blue Ridge



Grover native Philip Francis has been named superintendent of the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Francis superintendent of Blue Ridge Parkway

National Park Service Southeast Regional Director Patricia Hooks announced today the selection of Philip A. Francis, Jr. as Superintendent of the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Francis who has been acting in the position since August, comes to Blue Ridge from his position as Assistant Superintendent at Great Smoky Mountains National Park where he served for 11 years. Phil's extensive knowledge, skills, and experiences gained from a 33 year career with the National Park Service (NPS) have provided him with outstanding leadership skills and an impressive record of accomplishments in a wide variety of areas.

A native of Grover, Francis began his career with the NPS at Kings Mountain National Military Park as a seasonal park ranger and later as

Administrative Assistant. In 1978 he entered the two-year NPS Administrative Officer training program. Francis went on to serve as Administrative Officer at a sequence of parks of increasing size and complexity. Prior to his arrival at the Smokies in 1994, Francis was the Associate Regional Director, Administration for the Southwest Region for three years. He is a graduate of Clemson University with a Bachelor's degree in Administrative Management, and he has completed the Department of Interior Senior Executive Service Training Program, a year-long series of training and detail assignments designed to prepare graduates to be appointed to the most senior positions in government bureaus.

See Francis, 2A

Food Lion's second store to open Friday

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Food Lion announced that it is opening a store at the former Harris Teeter on Friday, Dec. 2 at 8 a.m. The store is located at 610 East King Street. The other location on Shelby Road will

remain open.

The store will carry fresh produce, full-service deli/bakery, Sara Lee® meats and cheeses, Butcher's Brand Premium Beef®, fresh pork and poultry, seafood; international, natural/organic and specialty items, a large wine

department, greeting cards, fresh-cut floral items, Western Union service, carpet cleaner rentals, propane tank exchange and a Coinstar machine. The store will offer approximately 28,000 different products.

Operating hours will be from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. daily.

The store will be managed by Max Jonas. Food Lion will employ approximately 20 full-time and 35 part-time. The number is 704-739-7458.

Grand opening activities include Food Lion gift card drawings, numerous specials and free product samples.

City of KM receives 'a perfect audit' for 5th straight year

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The City of Kings Mountain again got good marks from outside auditors. Heather Ball with Dixon Hughes PLLC reported the company's findings to city council members during Tuesday night's meeting.

She said the audit was "unqualified" meaning there were no problems with the city's finances. Utilities are highly collectable, no material weaknesses were found and the fund balance at the end of the fiscal year was at 16.2 percent, 8.2 percentage points beyond the Local Government Commission's required 8 percent minimum.

Mayor Rick Murphrey praised the city staff for having a "perfect audit" five years in a row.

"Lori Hall and her staff and everyone has done a

great job," he said.

In other business, Cleveland County Commissioner and King Mountain Extra Territorial Jurisdiction resident Johnny Hutchins spoke during a public hearing, asking for more representation on the Planning and Zoning Board. He said that representatives should come from Lake Montonia, Bethlehem, Oak Grove and the northeast portion of the ETJ. Currently there are two ETJ representatives on the board.

"We haven't felt like we've been fairly represented," he told the council.

Hugh Logan of Lake Montonia also spoke asking for more representation.

The issue has been continued until the January meeting.

David Faunce's request to rezone property at 814 West Mountain Street from RS-8 to Office failed to come to a vote. Faunce told council

See Audit, 5A

Christmas parades set Saturday in KM, Grover

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Love a parade? Eastern Cleveland County is the place to be Saturday. Grover will have its Christmas parade at 12 p.m. and Kings Mountain at 3 p.m.

Knox Neely will serve as grand marshal of Grover's parade.

Neely, a native of Mt. View, S.C., has lived in Grover most of his life. He worked for 38 years as a printer for Minette Mills.

"Anytime anyone needed anything, all they had to do was call him and he dropped what he was doing to help," said Evelyn Willis, parade organizer. "He's done a lot for the community."

Neely and his wife

Margaret Beam Neely have been married for 58 years and have two children. The octogenarian is a member of Bethany Baptist.

On Saturday he will ride in a vintage car owned by Max Rollins and driven by Robert Roper.

The parade begins at noon and line-up is at 11:15 at Spring Acres.

Entries so far include: Family Worship Center, Bethany Baptist, First Baptist Grover, Eaton Corporation, Shelby Star, Grover Elementary, Kings Mountain High School band, area rescue squads, GDS, Inc., the pig mascot from the Piggly Wiggly of Blacksburg, S.C., First National Bank, area car clubs, racing teams, Davis Jet Toner, Calvin Huffman,

See Parades, 5A

Bell ringers to solicit funds for Crisis Ministry

A familiar sound of Christmas, bells ringing for the Kings Mountain Crisis Ministry, can be heard this year at both Food Lion stores and Love's Fish Box.

Volunteer bell ringers will collect money Dec. 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 15, 16 and 17.

This is one of the ministry's primary fund raising opportunities. The agency is heavily dependent on funds collected at this time. Each year Crisis Ministry distributes over \$70,000 to families in need.

Donations may be mailed to P.O. Box 1335, Kings Mountain, N.C. 28086. For more information, call 704-739-7256. The ministry is located inside the Kings Mountain YMCA. It's hours are Monday, Wednesday,

Thursday and Friday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Volunteers are needed to help with reception and secretarial duties, "handyman" jobs for the disabled and elderly, picking up food (van or truck required), praying on site for clients, church groups and individuals to mentor families in need, sponsors for children within broken homes and children in need of "big brothers" and "big sisters."

The ministry is moving to a larger office within the YMCA in January. Donations of office and waiting room furniture, a copying machine, pictures and accessories for the walls, three long folding tables and 16 folding chairs are needed.