

The Herald

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Winter's first ice storm kayos KM

City electric director says line damage most extensive in at least two decades

ANDIE BRYMER
abrymer@kingsmountainherald.com

Thursday's ice storm created the most extensive electric line damage in at least two decades, according to Nick Hendricks, City of Kings Mountain electric director.

At the peak of Thursday's ice storm, approximately 80 percent of Kings Mountain lost electricity, Hendricks said. By 1 a.m. Friday, 85 percent of those customers had power restored and by mid-morning Friday that number was up to 90 percent. By Sunday afternoon, 99 percent was restored. Remaining outages were due to electrical problems within the home or business, Hendricks said.

City gas, water and sewer and public works crews assisted in the effort to restore power, Hendricks said. Six Fayetteville city line workers arrived Friday with two bucket trucks and one line truck to help restore remaining sporadic outages. Kings

Mountain is part of an ElectriCities arrangement which shares crews in emergencies. Kings Mountain linemen traveled to eastern North Carolina earlier this year to help restore power after a hurricane.

Hendricks believes that the storm was so severe because some trees still had leaves, which meant more surfaces for ice to form.

Mayor Rick Murphrey declared the town in a state of emergency on Thursday. He'll forward that declaration to the governor. If approved, the town will receive FEMA funding to pay for storm-related expenses.

Murphrey praised crews for their work. "I give them a lot of credit," he said. "It was a team effort. They worked very hard."

Murphrey, who stayed out with crews until around 1 a.m. Friday, said he watched tree limbs falling all around workers.

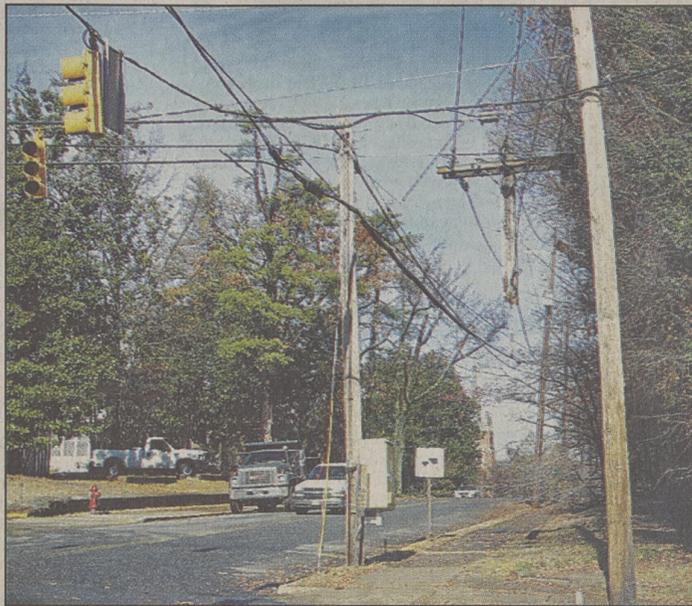
"They just kept working," he said. "They're an inspiration." City crews worked around the

clock, sleeping in shifts.

On Friday, Duke Power reported 683,000 outages, 30,000 of those in Cleveland County. That is only 13,000 fewer than caused by Hurricane Hugo. On Monday morning, 1,300 Cleveland County Duke customers remained in the dark. Only scattered outages were reported Tuesday morning.

Cleveland County Red Cross served eight people at an emergency shelter Thursday at its Kings Mountain office on South Piedmont Avenue, according to spokesperson Sandi Bolick. The shelter closed early Friday morning when electricity was restored.

Cleveland County Schools were closed Thursday and Friday because of bad roads and because several schools did not have electricity. Students will make up the days on Friday, Feb. 24 and Friday, April 14. These are the first two of five make-up days built into the current calendar.



ANDIE L. BRYMER/HERALD
This electric pole at the intersection of Piedmont Avenue and West King Street was one among many damaged by an ice storm on Thursday.

Fuel oil declining but still over \$2

ANDIE BRYMER
abrymer@kingsmountainherald.com

Natural gas prices have gone down over the last three months, according to the City of Kings Mountain.

Prices went up 31 percent in September, according to Jean Wyatt, billing director for the city.

"Since October they've steadily declined," said Wyatt. The city offers a supplemental security income 10 percent discount for individuals who are either 65 or older or disabled and also have a household income less than \$20,000. Right now 148 customers receive the discount, Wyatt said. While the city has always advertised the discount, it has received more attention this year, according to Wyatt. The number of new customers receiving the discount won't be available until January, Wyatt said.

Fuel oil prices are making a similar decline after a Hurricane Katrina-related spike. From Sept. 1 to Sept. 8 prices went from \$2.29 a gallon to \$2.49 a gallon, according to Mike Royster of Royster Oil Company of Shelby. Prices continued to climb through Oct. 14 reaching \$2.79 a gallon. On Nov. 2 prices started to fall with fuel costing \$2.69 a gallon. On Dec. 8 prices were \$2.45 a gallon.

"They're not where I would like them but it's more reasonable," Royster said.



GARY STEWART / HERALD
City employees work to remove a huge oak tree from East King Street during Thursday morning's ice storm.

Henry Gilmore new principal at KM Intermediate

ANDIE BRYMER
abrymer@kingsmountainherald.com

Henry Gilmore has been named principal at Kings Mountain Intermediate School upon the

retirement of Ethel Pedersen.

This summer Gilmore moved from his post of three years as an assistant principal at Kings Mountain High to an assistant principal's post at KMIS. Prior to that he taught technology for four years at Kings Mountain Middle School.

Gilmore received his Bachelor's degree from Johnson C. Smith University and his Masters from Gardner-Webb University.

Gilmore's administrative philosophy is to create an inviting environment for students and parents.

"Then you'll have a wonderful place for teaching and learning," he said. "You want people to feel loved and cared for."

He and his wife Wanda have two children and live in Kings Mountain. He is the choir director at Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church and is a vocalist.

Gilmore enjoys reading non-fiction that relates to his job, and inspirational authors.



JOSEPH BRYMER / HERALD
Ethel Pedersen and her husband Pete wave goodbye to crowd of well wishers Tuesday at Kings Mountain Intermediate School.

Principal Pedersen retires after 31 years in education

ANDIE BRYMER
abrymer@kingsmountainherald.com

When Ethel Pedersen started teaching at Kings Mountain's Central School in 1974, her plan was to stay there five years then move to a school closer to her Polkville home. That didn't happen. Pedersen continued to teach here and then become an administrator.

After 31 and one-half years, Pedersen is retiring. The Kings Mountain Intermediate School principal's last day

was Tuesday.

Pedersen's interest in education was sparked by her 11th grade social studies teacher Ruth Childers, someone she says students respected but also could talk and laugh with.

"Thinking back I wanted to be like her," Pedersen said.

When Pedersen's son Dennis started kindergarten, she went back to school at Gardner-Webb University.

"We did our homework together," she said. See Pedersen, 8A

Election fever heating up in Cleveland County

ANDIE BRYMER
abrymer@kingsmountainherald.com

While filing for Sheriff, county commission, clerk of court and other offices doesn't begin until Feb. 13, signs are already up and several contenders say they're in the running. Filing ends Feb. 28.

Cleveland County's Sheriff's race may be the most interesting. Sheriff Raymond Hamrick faces challenges from within the Democrat party. County Commissioner Willie McIntosh of Lawndale is opting not to run again for that seat and instead run for Sheriff. Lattimore resident and Cherryville Police Capt. Gary Gold also is making a bid. He has been in law enforcement for 19 years.

On the Republican side, retired SBI agent Don Allen of Shelby is running. Also seeking the Republican nomination is Woody Allen, a state DMV officer in the license and theft bureau. He lives between Boiling Springs and Shelby. Allen has been in law enforcement for 25 years. His father Haywood Allen was formerly Sheriff of Cleveland County.

Dennis Theis of Shelby also is running for Sheriff. Candidates running for county commission won't face at least one incumbent, McIntosh, and maybe none.

Republican Jerry Self of Lattimore has not yet decided if he will run again. Currently three of the commissioners are from the Kings Mountain area and speculation is Shelby or upper Cleveland will seek candidates from their areas.

Clerk of Court Dianne H. Thackerson said Tuesday she does not plan to run. She was appointed when Linda C. Thrift retired.

Assistant Clerk Mitzi Johnson of Boiling Springs will run. She has worked in the clerk's office for 18 years.

Democrats Sharon Jones of Boiling Springs who works in See Election, 8A