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GOP chair Westmoreland announces for NC Senate

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Cleveland County GOP Chairman Wes Westmoreland announced Tuesday that he will challenge Democrat Walter Dalton for the 46th District State Senate seat.

Westmoreland said he will step down as party chairman, a post he has held for the last five years.

In a press release, Westmoreland laid responsibility on Democrats and Dalton, who chairs the Senate Appropriations Committee, for increasing taxes, failing to hold the line on government spending, and a lack of focus on priorities like education and roads.

"It is time to stop throwing more money at the same problems. It is time for a proactive conservative approach to the challenges facing our State," Westmoreland said.

The challenger also blamed Dalton for supporting legislation which hurts business in North Carolina.

"Senator Dalton's idea of an economic development plan is to spend your money on a Tea Pot Museum in Sparta, an ACC Hall of Champions in Greensboro, and roads in eastern North Carolina," Westmoreland said.

Westmoreland criticized Dalton and other Democrats' treatment of education.

"While our state's teachers are forced to purchase school supplies out of their own pocket, education spending makes up a smaller and smaller part of our total budget," Westmoreland said.

He also cited Dalton for Medicaid spending.

"He has worked with the liberal Democratic leadership to increase Medicaid benefits to the point that they are greater than those offered our state's employees," Westmoreland said.

For the past three years See Wes, 5A

In God's Hand



JOSEPH BRYMER / HERALD
Joann McGill stands in front of her home near Bessemer City, which was severely damaged by a tornado Friday afternoon.

KM preacher and sons escape injury as tornado severely damages their home

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Joann McGill and her sons Michael and Anthony were in their Barker Ridge subdivision home Friday night when Michael spotted a funnel cloud coming toward them.

"By the time he said 'tornado' the windows in the back were burst," Joann McGill said.

McGill tried to take cover but could not move. Strong winds, rushing through a hole in what used to be the roof, trapped her. At that point McGill, who is on staff at Bynum Chapel AME Zion Church in Kings Mountain, cried out for God.

"Have mercy, Lord, save us," she cried.

The wind tore McGill's bedroom door from its hinges. The airborne door grazed her earlobe. Broken windows flew by her. McGill describes it as the worst 15 seconds of her life.

"After that it was peace and calm," McGill said.

McGill, her sons and their neighbors poured into the streets of the subdivision to check on one another and survey the damage. The roof of the house located behind McGill's home was now laying in her backyard. Beside it sat siding and duct work from McGill's home. Another neighbor's basketball goal was in her front yard. Winds had slammed an in-line

skate into Michael's car windshield. McGill and son Anthony's cars also were damaged.

The awful scene brought out the best in the community. Families whose homes were not damaged opened their doors to McGill and others.

What officials are calling a "gustnado" cut a path through the subdivision, leaving several homes unfit for human habitation. Others were untouched. No one was injured.

"Truly God guided that wind and held us in the hollow of his hand," McGill said. "Material things can be replaced; lives cannot."

McGill and her sons moved into the Barker Ridge Drive home, located near Bessemer City, five months ago. Now they are staying at a nearby Best Western. McGill does not yet know if her house is a total loss or if the existing structure can be repaired. If she must rebuild, she wants to do so on the same lot.

"We hope to move back here if it's God's will," McGill said.

McGill serves as a local preacher at Bynum Chapel and in May she is slated to be ordained as a deacon. She anticipates her 15-second ordeal will have a long range impact on her ministry.

"Friday night I had to walk in shoes I hadn't before," she said. "You really don't know what people are going through."

MLK message: Progress made, problems remain

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We might be out of Egypt but we have not yet reached the Promised Land, was the message during a Monday morning breakfast honoring the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King. Rev. John L. Houze of People's Baptist Church gave the keynote address during the event held at Bynum Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church.

Houze called King "another Moses."

"All he (King) wanted to do was God's will," Houze said. "That is love one another as God loved us."

While there has been progress from the pre-Civil Rights era, problems remain, Houze told the crowd. He cited minorities being the last hired and first fired; legislation which favors those who have more; and disparities within the criminal justice system.

He condemned fighting between blacks and whites, whites and whites, blacks and blacks and faith denominations.

"As long as we fight among ourselves, we are slaves," he said.

Houze encouraged people to vote, saying that those who don't go to the polls don't believe in hope.

He directed the church to be "concerned about the whole of mankind, Jesus was, Martin Luther King was."

Houze looked to the time when Sunday morning would no longer be the most segregated hour; youth would not kill one another in the streets; and black students would not be expelled for offenses that whites are not.

He admonished the crowd not to rest on the laurels of Martin Luther King instead to make the dream alive; for those who are blessed to reach back and help others.

"I pray it will not be long," Houze said. "Brothers and sisters, we need to be about our Father's business."

Rev. William H. Puryear, senior pastor of Bynum Chapel, introduced Houze.

The interracial Pastors' Prayer Circle organized Monday's breakfast. Bishop Roger Woodard of Family Worship Center served as master of ceremonies. Bishop Brady Jackson of Royal Praise Ministries led a prayer. Phillip Hager, Elliott Moss, Brother Lonnie Tucker, Margaret Leach, Naeemah James and Esther Campbell also lead portions of the service.

Malasha Parker and A.J. Wright of the International Gates of Dance performed and the Bynum Chapel choir and People's Baptist praise team sang.

Members of Bynum Chapel prepared a full breakfast for the event.



ANDIE L. BRYMER/HERALD
Rev. John L. Houze delivers the keynote address during Monday morning's breakfast honoring the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King held at Bynum Chapel AME Zion Church.

Board seeks information on Hamrick's poker request

Video poker operator Ken Hamrick was in the process of renewing his conditional use permit to have the machines when those same machines were confiscated by the Cleveland County Sheriff's Office in late December.

The Kings Mountain Board of Adjustment discussed the situation during its Monday afternoon meeting. Board member Bob Myers said he would ask the CCSO for official paperwork regarding the confiscation. The board also requested that Kings Mountain Code's Director Holly Black be at its next meeting to address the effect of the violation.

In other business, the board unanimously approved Mike Heath's permit renewal allowing him to have three video poker machines at his 902 South Battleground Avenue location.

The board will meet again on Feb. 21 at 5:30 p.m.

Nicole Moore wins MLK speech contest

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JOSEPH BRYMER / HERALD
Shana Adams sings "Amazing Grace" during the Dr. Martin Luther King celebration Monday night at the Joy Performance Center in Kings Mountain.

Kings Mountain High senior Nicole Moore took top honors Monday night during the City of Kings Mountain's Martin Luther King Day speech contest held at the Joy Performance Center.

Moore spoke on the need for a better education for a world that is currently studying war, terrorism and poverty. She also talked about the need for love, grace, unity and understanding in order to keep King's dream alive.

Moore plans to pursue advanced degrees in education and open a literacy and writing center. She is the daughter of Patricia Moore of Kings Mountain and Kevin Weaver of Charlotte.

Hannah McGill took second place and Sarah Roper, third.

Rev. William H. Puryear, senior pastor of Bynum Chapel AME Zion Church, gave the keynote address. He looked to the story of Joseph's dreams recorded in the book of Genesis as the text. He also cited the dreams of Columbus, Copernicus and King.

"Dreams stir the heart," Puryear said. "What is your dream?"

Puryear told the audience it was important that dreams be attached to the "true

vine" Jesus. He cautioned that many don't want the responsibility of a dream.

Puryear advised those who have succeeded to mentor the young.

"We've got to reinvest if we're going to keep the dream alive," he said.

Sacrifice is another requirement.

"Two thousand years ago God's son hung on a tree, marked, flayed, sacrificed," Puryear said. "We've got to give till it hurts."

Puryear ended his remarks with a request for prayers for those who don't know God or who have backslidden.

Shana Adams sang "Amazing Grace" and the "Lord's Prayer." Lester Williams recited King's "I Have a Dream" speech.

The International Gates of Dance and the Silver Strutters performed. Choirs from Ebenezer Baptist, Vestibule AME Zion and Bynum Chapel AME Zion sang.

Donna Huie-Brooks was the master of ceremonies. Contest judges were Karlee Jenkins, Shelia McClain and Hazelene Abernathy.

Rev. Howard Shipp gave the invocation. Event sponsors were Corry and Luptak Law Offices, Cleveland Headline News, Printin' Press and the Kings Mountain Historical Museum Foundation. The City of Kings Mountain hosted the event.



Nicole Moore took first place in MLK speech contest.