

The Herald

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PRIMARY ELECTION 2006 Question and answer session with Commissioner hopefuls

GARY STEWART

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The Herald recently mailed a questionnaire to all candidates for Cleveland County Commissioner. Their responses follow. Democrat Freddie Ellis did not respond.

1 - What qualifies you to be a county commissioner?

Boggs - I understand the concept of teamwork and will be able to contribute the knowledge and experience that I have gained serving on the school board.

Holbrook - I have been a resident of Cleveland County for 35 years and have seen the good times and not so good in the county. I have worked in athletics, fund raising, small business ownership and have led fundraising campaigns for GWU, the YMCA and the community college. I worked with state and federal legislators regarding economic issues and grants for the county. As a result of my varied experiences and desire to see our county and citizens establish and succeed in a new economy I feel I am qualified for this tremendous challenge.

Hastings - I have a vision for our county that includes the safety, health and economic well-being of

THE CANDIDATES:

Democratic Primary - Jo Boggs, Kenneth Ledford, Mike Putnam, Eddie Holbrook, Fast Freddie Ellis*
Republican Primary - Kelly Hastings, Ron Schaeffer, Bill Chambless

*Did not respond to questionnaire.

our citizens and the strength of our immediate and extended families.

Schaeffer - Business Administration degree from Cleveland Community College; 18 years experience in customer service and management in retail and manufacturing/distribution industries; currently instruct classes on work place safety.

Putnam - With 34 years experience as owner of Mike's Flowers and a B.S. degree in Business Administration from Limestone College, I bring a working knowledge of finances to the commissioner board. I will use sound judgement on all financial matters.

Ledford - Over 20 years on the Board of Education; knowing how to work with a budget; especially in times such as we're in now. My business background qualifies me, and having served on the Economic Development Board.

Chambless - Resident of Cleveland County for 18 years; business owner in Cleveland County; a sincere desire to help; a graduate of the University of Louisiana with a degree in Business Management.

2 - What are the main two issues you see facing Cleveland County in the next four years?

Putnam - The first issue will be the lack of employment in Cleveland County. With the loss of many jobs we must work diligently to attract job opportunities for our great county. The second issue would be education. We must remember the school children of today are our leaders of tomorrow.

Chambless - Rising Medicaid costs are taking a greater percentage of the county's revenue; Lack of quality high-paying jobs.

Schaeffer - During the next four years, I see water supplies and crime as the two biggest obstacles to recruiting new jobs to Cleveland
See Primary, 2A



BOGGS



PUTNAM



HASTINGS

Photos of the other candidates were not available.

City pay plan discussed in budget meeting

ELIZABETH STEWART

Herald Correspondent

A new pay plan for the 200 Kings Mountain city employees that was scrapped a few years ago was on the agenda Tuesday as budget deliberations got underway by city officials.

Mayor Rick Murphrey said MAPS, Inc. presented a proposal to council last week. The MAPS consultant gave survey results that recommended entry-level workers be paid at market standards and a program of merit pay. The mayor said the consultants offer plans for cities to be competitive with other municipalities.

"We are not far off in our pay scale," said the mayor. The benefit package to all associates includes paid insurance. The city pays 100 percent of the cost. After 20 years of service, a city employee receives this benefit for life.

Dr. Lyle J. Sumeck, president of Lyle Sumeck Associates, Inc. of Heathrow, Fla., and City Manager Greg McGinnis led the first portion of the city's budget retreat, which began at 1 p.m. Monday afternoon, by listening to staff recommendations. The mayor and the seven members of city council on Tuesday started penciling the requests and giving direction to the city manager for what Murphrey hopes will be a "very conservative budget" for fiscal year 2006-2007. The retreat ended at 5 p.m. Tuesday.

The city's current budget is \$30 million, and although Murphrey sees costs rising, he is hopeful that the city will maintain its 36 cents per \$100 property tax valuation and there will be no increases in utility fees. Recently the mayor said the city had to pass along part of a fuel adjustment charge that will increase 4.5 percent to help offset a surcharge from Duke that has resulted in over \$800,000 increase. Murphrey said the city negotiated a base rate with Duke that will not increase until 2009; however, every contract has a fuel
See Budget, 2A

Mountaineer Partnership to show off new office

Open house and ribbon-cutting at the new offices of The Mountaineer Partnership Inc. will be held Thursday from 5-7 p.m. at 241 S. Battleground Avenue.

Morgan Edwards, the executive director, said the new location is a perfect example of what the organization is all about - the hub of downtown. "We are pushing downtown revitalization and that's where we will be working - downtown," he said.

Edwards said Mountaineer Partnership is designed to create a culture of change but he says volunteers are needed to serve on four committees: organization, promotion, design and economic restructuring.

Joni Smith, who has actively pushed the program the past three years of its founding, has said that the goal is having a prosperous, vibrant and appealing downtown that will provide a high quality of life in a unique historic environment. The public is invited.

SPRING TIME IN GROVER



Linda Greene, manager of Main Street Mini Mall in Grover, took advantage of last week's warm temperatures to wave to passing motorists, but the first day of Spring Monday greeted area folks with rain, sleet and temperature in the 30s and 40s.

JOSEPH BRYMER / HERALD

Adjustment board denies Hamrick's poker request

ELIZABETH STEWART

Herald Correspondent

Kings Mountain Board of Adjustment Tuesday denied a request by Ken Hamrick for replacement of video poker machines at Mountain Associates, the Silver Villa, 606 E. King Street.

Hamrick was not present for the meeting. Basis of the denial included findings of fact that the business owner was charged with violation of state laws in direct violation of prior conditional use permit. Machine serial numbers 1011, 1997 and 12365 seized by the Cleveland County Sheriff's Department were included in the application. Apparently no replacement machines were mentioned and no amendments to the application came forth, according to the findings of fact unanimously approved by Bob Myers, chairman; Howard Shipp, Clavon Kelly, vice-chairman; and Jim Childers. Member Angie Richardson was absent.

Two variances were approved by Myers, Tommy Hawkins, Kelly, Herman Green and Shipp.

Rebecca Falls Scism asked for a reduction of minimum lot frontage on pre-1996 easement on her property on the south side of Patterson Road. The property is zoned R-10, and the new lot for a single family residence would approximate 12 acres.

Also approved was a side yard setback vari-
See Poker, 2A

KINGS MOUNTAIN PEOPLE

Relay for Life holds special place in Joyce Roark's heart

ELIZABETH STEWART

Herald Correspondent

The Relay for Life banner at the front driveway of Foust Textiles, inc., wholesale distributor of fabrics on Canterbury Road, is a symbol of the support of the Kings Mountain business for the campaign for funds to fight cancer which began with eight teams in 1998 under the leadership of the late Joe R. Smith and Mike Neely.

Nine years later the Relay has blossomed into one of the big events in Cleveland County and heralded among the top 10 community efforts in the nation.

Foust Office Manager Joyce Childers Roark has shared in the excitement of Kings Mountain's success from the beginning but since 2003 has worked in the background, serving as financial chairman and volunteering with the David Baptist Church relay team. Foust continues as a corporate sponsor.

Smith, who was employed at Foust, got the relay ball rolling and all 24 employees



JOYCE ROARK

chipped in, said Roark, who co-chaired the relay in 2001-2002 and named the event the Joseph R. Smith Relay for Life in memory of Smith, who died of cancer.

Roark's life was touched by cancer in her family. Daughter, Donna Roark, was diagnosed with Hodgkins disease in 1998 and underwent

extensive chemotherapy and radiation. Donna was 28 at the time. Her disease is in remission.

"Donna had been bothered with strep throat and it was a big surprise and a traumatic experience when cancer was discovered," said Joyce, adding that her initial involvement in the relay was to honor her daughter and to help Joe Smith and the Foust team raise funds to help other cancer patients.

"Joe (Smith) and Mike (Neely) were co-chairs from 1998-2000 and saw the teams grow to 19 and donations top \$35,000. Joe died of cancer and Betty Mitchell and I wanted to honor him and in 2000 there were 36 teams with contributions of over \$70,000. In 2002 there were 33 teams with contributions of over \$84,000."

A second member of the Foust family, John O Plonk Jr., founder of the company which he started in the second floor of Plonk's Department Store and moved to the new building July 4, 1990, died of
See Roark, 10A

Feasibility study underway for KM Gateway to Parks

GARY STEWART

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A dream that began almost five years ago is closer to becoming reality after Kings Mountain Gateway Trails, Inc. signed a contract Thursday with EMW Corporation to do a feasibility study to connect the proposed trail to Kings Mountain State and National parks.

President David Ozmore and vice-president Shirley Brutko, representing Gateway Trails, and Ron Morgan and Carl Elliott of EMW Corporation, signed the contracts at the local Chamber office and received an initial payment of \$12,500 for their services. Another \$12,500 payment will be made at the conclusion of their study in about 60 days.

Elliott and Morgan said the study would include a plan to connect the city to the park trails near City and Davidson lakes with paved trails for walking, hiking, running and biking; estimate the resources that will be necessary to build the trail; and give advice on ways to find funding through land donors, easements, government bodies, grants, etc.

"The idea is to connect directly to the state and national parks so Kings Mountain can connect to its heritage and attract tourists," said Elliott, who

has consulted on other projects in town such as the Harris Children's Wing at Mauney Memorial Library.

"This is a very exciting day for Kings Mountain," noted Brutko. "Our group has been working on this for four years and last fall it just took off like a jet. We were incorporated, have executive officers and a board of directors, and representatives from North Carolina and the National Parks Service in Atlanta working with us on this."

Park trails which are now under construction will eventually connect Crowders Mountain just over the Gaston County line in Kings Mountain to the South Carolina State and Kings Mountain National Military parks just over the South Carolina line in York County.

Brutko says the proposed Kings Mountain trail, which would begin somewhere in the downtown area, will be around "three to four" miles to the area of City and Davidson lakes, then branch off either down Highway 161 to the park trails, or back through the Kings Mountain range to the proposed new visitor's center being built on Van Dyke Road.

Ozmore, who is also director of the Kings Mountain YMCA, sees a number of benefits for the city, area residents and visitors.
See Study, 10A



Carl Elliott, left, and David Ozmore sign contract as Ron Morgan and Shirley Brutko look on.