

# KINGS MOUNTAIN The Herald

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Mountaineer volleyball team wins in state playoffs



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## HOMEFRONT

### Robbery suspect caught in act by security guard at First Charter Bank

A security guard at First Charter Bank in Kings Mountain foiled a robbery attempt Wednesday afternoon and held the suspect at gunpoint until Kings Mountain Police officers arrived at the scene.

Armando DeSpaigne, 54, of Gaffney, SC, was charged with armed robbery and placed under a \$100,000 secured bond, according to Captain Derek Johnson of KMPD. Johnson said the FBI Field Office is assisting in the investigation.

When KMPD officers arrived at the scene shortly after 1:18 p.m., the security guard had the suspect lying on the floor at gunpoint.

According to Johnson, a suspect entered the bank brandishing a handgun and wearing a camouflage toboggan. He demanded money from a teller, and then jumped on the counter and emptied the cash drawer. He then attempted to empty the remaining cash drawers, but as he got to the last cash drawer the bank security guard, who had been in the surveillance room, came out and ordered him to drop to the floor. Bank employees called 911.

There were no injuries and the money was returned to the bank.

## CANDIDATE FORUM



State Senator Walter Dalton, right, addresses a question at Thursday's candidate forum at Cleveland Community College. Challenger Wes Westmoreland, left, listens. Below, Representative Tim Moore fields a question about the State House race.

## NC Senate candidates spar at Thursday forum

EMILY WEAVER  
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Cleveland Community College's Mildred H. Keeter Auditorium housed a heated Candidate Forum Thursday night. From a random drawn seating chart, Republican Wes Westmoreland and Democratic Incumbent Walter Dalton, both in the running for state Senator, were seated side by side as they answered questions and defended attacks. Westmoreland interrupted Dalton twice, against forum decorum, while Dalton tried to maintain the look of innocence asking for more time to answer.

In regards to the new ethics law, requiring a closer look at campaign money and expenses, Dalton said that the legislation they worked on this year was a step in the right direction. "The people have to have confidence in the political process," he said. "I think we've had a good start this session. But I think there is still more to do."

"I think that the ethics reform we've seen this year is a very weak start. There's no question that people have lost confidence in the system," Westmoreland said. He said

that more restrictions are needed to put trust back in the system.

He said that the rising malpractice insurance rates are a critical problem for North Carolina doctors and patients. "We're putting doctors out of business and we're driving costs up for the consumer because of the liability insurance that doctors are forced to pay," Westmoreland said. "In the last session four bills were introduced and none were allowed on the floor for discussion." He said that tort reform is needed and the time for reform is now.

Rising costs do not stem just from malpractice insurance but are coming from all across the board, Dalton said. The Senate passed a reformation bill this session to the House but no action was taken, he added. "I wish the House would have taken it up and we could have negotiated and debated and passed something that would have been meaningful."

Dalton said that Medicaid is a burden on both local and state budgets. "It's all tax money," he said, explaining that it is a balancing act. What the state pays for in

See Senate, 6A



Moore and Fonvielle have different opinion on House issues 3A

McHenry: We should stay in Iraq

Carsner: We should pull out 3A

## Chris\*Craft, Indian MC close on buildings

EMILY WEAVER

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Stephen Julius, chairman of Chris\*Craft and Indian Motorcycle, and Steven Heese, president of the two companies, called a press conference Tuesday to announce that they have settled all of the paper work and are now the official owners of the two buildings and properties that will house their two industries. Axle Alliance Company signs still line the drive and building of what will soon be Chris\*Craft off of Countryside Road. But the signs will soon advertise the CC logo.

Julius said that the sign that gives him the most grief in Kings Mountain, however, is the sign that tells the story of how America beat the British to gain their independence. "I've asked the Mayor to take down the sign," he said in his heavy British accent, as the room exploded with laughter. "It concerns me. Now there will be, in the newspaper, in a couple of months time 'an unmarked vehicle crashed into the sign.' You will know that it was myself and I will not be inebriated. I will have done it on purpose," he joked, not being able to keep from joining the laughter.

He said that they have a lot of work ahead of them. They acquired Chris\*Craft back in 2000, when it was a struggling factory in Sarasota, Fla. They bought the trademarks from Rupert Murdoch, owner of the FOX conglomerate. "The company was the giant of the industry. It had something like 11 factories, 4,000-5,000 employees. It was a marine industry. The word Chris\*Craft is synonymous in many countries for boating," Julius said, adding that the word in the Greek dictionary means "small boat." The company has global recognition, he said. "By the late 70s or 80s, the company had lost its way. We took this company from the ashes in 2000. We canceled all of the previous models. We had no employees. People thought we were insane. We rebuilt the company brick by brick," he said. Today the company has 12 models and is continuing to grow, revive and reinvent the popular name of Chris\*Craft. The new Kings Mountain location will be its second plant as they experience the growth of Chris\*Craft.

One of Harley-Davidson's largest competitors, Indian Motorcycle, filed for bankruptcy in the 90s, was brought back to life in 1998 and went bankrupt a second time in 2003. The company was founded a couple of years before Harley and for many years continued as the no. 1 producer of motorcycles in the world. Julius said that they bought the company, the engineering specs and the trademark back in 2004. "We spent two years trying to figure out what to do with the company. The purchase of the factory here is the first concrete steps on that long journey of relaunching this brand," he said, admitting that it will be a challenge. But, he is hoping the name of Indian will speak for itself. "If we can get the bread crumbs of Harley-Davidson, then we will build a business that will be worth several hundred million dollars," he said. "I don't care how long this takes. We will do this slowly and patiently. We will trip but we will

See Buildings, 2A

## INSIDE



Kings Mountain's Rusty Bumgardner (right) MVP in World Series Softball Tournament.

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## City gas customers may see fuel saving

ELIZABETH STEWART  
Herald Correspondent

Natural gas customers may see some fuel savings this year, Mayor Rick Murphrey said during City Council's Tuesday night meeting, noting that unless winter is bitterly cold the trend in savings could be as much as 30 percent.

"We are buying gas in advance as the price to us becomes lower and are also not passing on Duke Power's fuel adjustment cost this fiscal year to our electric customers," he added.

The mayor gave the report based on findings from consultants and prior to the board's action authorizing him to execute a Energy Savings

Performance contract with Siemens Building Technologies Inc. Interim City Manager Marilyn Sellers said Siemens identified \$3 million worth of financial savings to the city over the next 12 years and those savings, she said, would enable the city to finance \$2.4 million worth of improvements.

The mayor said Kings Mountain may be the first municipality in the state to utilize this method of procurement.

Project Finance Chairman Keith Miller outlined the major projects that would generate financial and energy savings as: replacement of four pumps and motors, two at the Water Plant and two at the Booster Pump Station; replacement of aerators

See Saving, 2A



GARY STEWART / HERALD

Everybody was all smiles Friday night at John Gamble Stadium as Kings Mountain's Mountaineers defeated East Rutherford in their homecoming game. At halftime, Monet McClain, center was crowned Homecoming Queen by Nikkie Summitt, right, last year's queen. At left is Monet's father, Maury Williams

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