

LOCAL

# Tornado strikes Kings Mountain trailer park

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A tornado struck Cobb's Mobile Home Park off of Yarbro Road, in Kings Mountain, around 9:40 Monday morning, blowing the roofs off of homes, destroying three vehicles and leaving nearly 12 people homeless for the night.

"No one got hurt, thank goodness. They're just bad shook up," said park owner Revonda Cobb.

A few of the residents, who were displaced by the tornado's wrath, were inside one of the homes when the twister

hit. But no injuries were reported on Monday. "The Red Cross is taking care of them tonight and I'm going to relocate them into other homes tomorrow," Cobb said.

The damage was first thought to have been caused by a microburst, which is a strong, concentrated downdraft of air with peak gusts usually lasting from 2 to 5 minutes. But after officials from the Greenville-Spartanburg branch of the National Weather Service surveyed the damage, they classified it as a "weak tornado."

According to the report, "Two aspects of damage were observed in the park.

Straight line wind damage was observed on the East end of the mobile home park where skirting was blown off (of) homes, tree limbs were down and a large tree fell on three vehicles.

"Toward the West end of the mobile home park, damage consistent with a weak tornado was observed. A portion of a roof was blown off (of) one home and tossed several hundred feet. The roof over the home's deck was severely damaged. Another home was dislodged from its blocks. Also, a metal utility shed was destroyed with parts tossed in opposite directions."

The report went on to say that the

"damage observed would classify the tornado as a EF-0 with winds likely in the 70-80 mph range. The damage path was only about 200 yards and the tornado was only 110 feet in diameter."

"I think one (mobile home) is all I'm totally going to lose. With this one, we'll probably rebuild the roof over it," Cobb said, pointing to one of the homes partly scalped by the gales. A blue tarp covered the roofs of a few of the homes in the park, marking the tornado's path of destruction.

The homes that were targeted were also the few that were not insured, Cobb said.

# Fisher promoted, two new principals named in KM

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The Cleveland County Board of Education shuffled some personnel into new positions at its meeting Monday night.

Superintendent Dr. Bruce Boyles gave recommendations to the Board to fill 10 positions, some of which, he said, were left open due to retirements. He said that they advertised the vacancies "extensively." After interviewing 25 individuals from the nearly 50 that applied for the 10 vacancies, he recommended and the Board approved two new principals in Kings Mountain.

## Kings Mountain Middle School

Principal Stephen Fisher is stepping down from his role at Kings Mountain Middle School to fill the empty seat of Steve Borders, Director of Administrative Services for Cleveland

County Schools. Borders is retiring in June. Fisher has been the principal of KMMS for the past three years. Prior to his principalship, he served as assistant principal at the school and as a teacher at Kings Mountain High School.

Aaron Allen, the current principal of West Lincoln Middle, will be taking the reigns at KMMS. "Mr. Allen is a former teacher and coach at Kings Mountain High and assistant principal at North Lincoln High and West Lincoln Middle schools. He is a graduate of UNC-Chapel Hill and received master's degrees from Gardner-Webb and Temple University and an Educational Specialist Degree from Appalachian State University," according to information released by CCS.

"He has worked in our system. He's a graduate of our system," Boyles said, "and he comes highly recommended."

## East Elementary

Jerry Hoyle retired from East at the

end of March to become Executive Director of Cleveland County's Communities in Schools. He retired after leading East for 15 years and after 37 and a half years in education.

Jennifer Wampler, an assistant principal of Pinewood Elementary School in Mount Holly, is set to be East's next leader. "A Kings Mountain resident, Mrs. Wampler also taught high school in Wake County. She is a National Board Certified teacher and was a N.C Teaching Fellow and N.C. Principal Fellow at Appalachian State University where she received bachelor's and master's degrees," according to CCS.

After the meeting, Dr. Boyles conceded that Hoyle has left behind some big shoes to fill at East, but he has confidence in Mrs. Wampler. "She comes highly recommended and we believe that she will do a great job there at East," he said.

Board member Connie Phifer Savell

said that she was pleased to hear that the new leaders will still have mentors close by to help them transition into their new roles.

Gary Blake, principal of Burns Middle and a former principal at West Elementary, will become principal of Burns High; Jeff Benfield, principal of Crest Middle, will become principal of Burns Middle; Amy Jones, assistant principal of Crest High, will become principal of Crest Middle; Gloria Sherma, principal of Jefferson Elementary, will become principal of Springmore Elementary; Shannon Millen, principal of Springmore Elementary, will become the county's curriculum coordinator; Paula Peeler will move up from assistant principal to principal at Jefferson Elementary; and, Eric Lamanna, assistant principal of Boiling Springs Elementary, will become the new principal at Casar Elementary. All positions are set to begin on July 1, 2008.

# Johnny Hutchins injured while skydiving, undergoes surgery in Charlotte Tuesday

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Cleveland County Commissioner Johnny Hutchins was airlifted to Carolinas Medical Center in Charlotte Tuesday morning after sustaining injuries from a skydiving adventure.

Hutchins, a Kings Mountain native, has been parachuting on a moderate basis for several years. He ascended to his jump with Skydive Carolina, in Chester, SC, around 10:30 a.m. "It was actually a very routine skydive," said Sales Manager James La Barrie, of Skydive Carolina. "He flew a beautiful pattern. The flight pattern was textbook."

La Barrie, an expert skydiver, said that everything looked fine. "(There was) nothing abnormal about his parachute, nothing abnormal about his landing," he added.

Hutchins just wasn't standing back up. When

La Barrie and a few others, who watched his descent, noticed that he wasn't getting up, they rushed to his side. "I thought he twisted an ankle," La Barrie said.

He added that Hutchins was fully conscious when they got to him about a minute later. It was a routine flight and a routine landing, but pain ripped through him when he touched down. "He said, 'hey I think I broke my leg,'" La Barrie said, and they called for transport. "From what he's explained to me, he just had somewhat of a firm opening on deployment."

A "hard opening" is considered to be a jarring effect which can happen to the body when the parachute opens. Hutchins suffered a broken femur and a fractured pelvis.

His daughter, Tammy Hogue said that she spoke to him before he was wheeled into surgery on Tuesday. Family and friends have asked for prayers during this time.

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