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See details on page 12!

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Downtown developments



Members of the Gateway Trail committee rally around machinery that will soon be carving the trail to life. Front row, left to right, Don Crawford, Ronnie Franks, President David Ozmore, Paul Cabe, Jay Majors, Dean Spears, Robert Rodgers, Marilyn Sellers, Bill McCarter, Houston Corn, VP Shirley Brutko. Back row, l-r, Jeff Carley, Gina Ayscue, Larry Hamrick Jr., Mary Wade and Mitch Johnson. Inset: map of the trail's first phase.

Construction to begin soon on Gateway Trails project

By EMILY WEAVER
Editor

After over six years in the making, the earth is moving on the Gateway Trails.

Board members gathered at the future trail-head site on Tuesday afternoon for a photo opportunity with the heavy machinery that will soon carve the dream of a trail that will one day connect downtown Kings Mountain to three local parks to life.

The trail was the brainchild of Shirley Brutko, vice president of Gateway Trails, Inc. She said that as the day of creation draws closer her excitement for the project she envisioned years before soars on new heights.

"I'm really excited. It's been so long in coming," Brutko said.

"It's a big vision. It will take many years to build. But I'm excited to get started," said trails President David Ozmore.

On Monday, the group was still lacking one signature on a conservation easement to begin development. But everything was set for go. The signed papers would be in by the end of the week.

"In order for us to get our grant funding from the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund and the other grants they required that we have a particular contract signed," she said. "In reality they have been signed but they changed a little bit of

See TRAILS, Page 3

Black history



Photo by Lib Stewart
Arlene Barrett, Carolyn Stalls, Margaret Leach, Nora Nelson and Brenda Lipscomb, left to right, perform line dances at the senior center's 7th annual Black History Month celebration.

Patrick Senior Center honors Black History Month

By ELIZABETH STEWART
staff writer.

Regardless of color or race we are all one, former mayor Scott Neisler said at the 7th annual Black History Month program Monday morning at H. Lawrence Patrick Senior Life and Conference Center.

Other speakers - Rev. William Thompson, Rev. Daris Curry, Rev. Peggy Ford, Rev. Howard Shipp and chairman Hazelene Abernathy talked about "Reflection, Introspection and Projection" to share the knowledge of one common ancestry before a large crowd of people, some who attended the old Compact High School and the old Davidson High School before these former all-African American schools were consolidated with Kings Mountain District Schools.

Neisler focused his remarks on how the minority Ward District I was formed during his administration. "It was the right thing to do," he said, as he congratulated the first elected commissioner from Ward I Phil Hager and the current Ward I commissioner Howard Shipp. Neisler said that currently there are 6,000 registered voters in a population of over 10,000 in Kings Mountain and a 60 percent minority ratio of voters in Ward I. "We live in extraordinary times and we all come together today for a common cause," he said.

Shipp, 74, said he grew up on what was called Hord Row not far from the Senior Center. He walked past Central School to enroll as a first grader at Davidson School. There was no lunch room until later years and

See HISTORY, Page 3



Hazelene Abernathy

Grover faces \$63K deficit? - 3A • Boat built to match car - 11A



Photo by EMILY WEAVER

County Elections Director Debra Blanton talks to the Board of Elections board members Wednesday about KM's liquor by the drink referendum set for May 5.

City will vote on LBTD May 5

Vote to cost at least \$50,000

By EMILY WEAVER
Editor

The citizens of Kings Mountain will head to the polls on May 5 to determine whether or not the city will allow the sale of mixed beverages within its borders.

The referendum has come at different prices for different groups. For Citizens for Progress, proponents of liquor-by-the-drink, the price is more than paid for by the prospects of eco-

See VOTE, Page 3

Mountaineer Partnership may have found new leader

By EMILY WEAVER
Editor

Downtown development may see a new face soon.

Mountaineer Partnership is on the verge of hiring someone to fill the executive director slot left behind by Caroline Dover Wilson, who vacated the position last fall, according to

Shirley Brutko, an MPI board member.

"We interviewed five applicants today," she said on Monday. "We listened to five wonderful candidates today and we're very excited about the future of Mountaineer Partnership."

About seven board members assembled to interview the applicants on Monday. "We

started interviewing at 8:30 and we got through at 1 o'clock," Brutko said.

The board is looking for an energetic cheerleader of downtown, a mover and shaker of change. Brutko said that they need someone who can get businesses in the empty buildings along Battleground and Railroad avenues and Moun-

See LEADER, Page 3

Still in love



Mr. and Mrs. Knox Neely

Neelys share 62 years of 'give and take' love

by ELIZABETH STEWART
staff writer

Together on Valentine's Day for the 62nd year, Knox and Margaret Beam Neely have kept the love in their marriage by "lots of give and take."

The Grover couple are an exception in today's society where some marriages, unfortunately, are not as successful.

Mrs. Neely teases her husband that "Knox does what he wants to and I do what Knox wants to do."

Neely, 90, and Mrs. Neely, 89, tied the knot on Oct. 19, 1946 at their pastor's house, the Rev. Coy Cobb, in Blacksburg, SC. Neely was friends of Margaret's brothers and had worked at a service station in Grover and after his service with Uncle Sam's Army in the South Pacific started dating Margaret Beam. Knox, the only surviving child of one of eight children of Moffett and Edna Neely, was raised on a farm in Hickory Grove, SC.

Margaret Beam Neely also grew up on a farm in Grover, one of 11 children of Monroe and Molly Beam. She has one living

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