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Slow start to hot race

By ELIZABETH STEWART
staff writer

A check of three precincts about noon Tuesday showed no lines and only a trickling of voter activity.

The mid-term election year Primaries were underway and several races brought out supporters in warm weather passing out campaign literature. It was anybody's guess who would emerge as a possible nominee from the Democrats and Republicans for the High Sheriff which has dominated much of the interest in this season's political campaign as six men seek the position. There was speculation among poll watchers there could be a runoff in the sheriff's race. Tuesday's nominees face-off in November and a runoff, if necessary, would be held June 22.

Nearly 2,400 people turned out at the Elections Board office in Shelby for early voting which ended Saturday. "Kings Mountain needs a site for early voting," said retired Police Chief Bob Hayes as he talked with friends outside the Kings Mountain YMCA Tuesday morning. Former Democrat Party chair-

See ELECTION, 3A

Prayerful day

National Day of Prayer Thursday

Four community-wide events on Thursday, May 6, will be kicked off by residents joining in the observance of National Day of Prayer.

Family Worship Center on Shelby Road will host the mayor's annual prayer breakfast beginning at 8 a.m. Tickets are \$15 and may be purchased from members of the church or at City Hall.

The Kings Mountain Ministerial Association, of which Rev. James Lochridge is president, will lead the National Prayer Day service of prayers - 20 minutes of meditations - from 12:20-12:40 - in front of the fountain at Kings Mountain City Hall. The public is invited.

Rev. Travis Northcutt, pastor of Oak Grove Baptist Church, will lead the pledge of allegiance, give the invocation and read the event text scripture Nahum 1:7. After remarks by Mayor Rick Murphrey local lay people and ministers will offer prayers including Jennifer S. Wampier for school personnel; Bill McMurray for military and local public servants; Vik Kapoor for local business people; and Rev. Steve Tay-

See PRAYER, 3A

Grant comes down the line

By ELIZABETH STEWART
Staff writer

A state grant for \$97,500 to run a county water line for future expansion was announced this week by Kings Mountain Mayor Rick Murphrey and N.C. House Rep. Tim Moore.

The new water line will take nine houses off the current Spectrum Mill system and enable those residents to hook on to Kings Mountain and also serve expected development in the Country-side section of the city.

The mayor acknowledged that new owners of Spectrum are utility customers of the City of Kings Mountain but have not announced their plans for the mill which closed two years ago after 36 years of operation.

Cleveland County applied for the grant for the new water line.

WELL DONE



Left to right, Mayor Rick Murphrey, Scott Campbell, Nick LaVecchia, Bobby Horne, Sharon Horne and MPI President Mitch Johnson stand in front of the future site of Old Stone Steakhouse and Battleground Bar.



This rendering, provided by the Mountaineer Partnership, shows the façade of the new Old Stone Steakhouse, which will feature gas lanterns, a current American flag, a Revolutionary-era flag and a state flag.

New steakhouse coming downtown

Set to open in early Fall, bring 25 jobs to city

By EMILY WEAVER
Editor

One year from the day on which liquor-by-the-drink was voted on in Kings Mountain, the promise of an upscale restaurant that supporters said would come, if passed, is now coming to pass.

Father and son restaurateurs Nick and Rich LaVecchia have partnered with downtown property owners Bobby Horne and Scott Campbell to open the Old Stone Steakhouse and Battleground Bar on the corner of Railroad Ave. and Gold St., in two of the three storefronts that once housed the old Plonk Department store. The \$850,000+ renovation project will create new jobs in construction to transform an empty shell into the new 3,600 sq. ft. restaurant, set to open early in fall and

bring up to 25 full-time jobs to the city.

"May 5th is the one-year anniversary of liquor-by-the-drink and we're glad to be announcing this," said Scott Campbell, who, along with Horne will have a stake in the upcoming Old Stone Steakhouse.

"If it wasn't for liquor-by-the-drink, we would've never considered coming into this market," said Nick LaVecchia.

They were drawn to the city before, attracted to Kings Mountain's historical ties and its vision for the future. Nearby parks, museums, festivals, entertainment and the new Gateway Trails are all attractive.

"We feel that the city itself has the components in place to be a very vibrant, fun, exciting place to spend a day or an evening out," LaVecchia said.

After the final stumbling block (a ban on mixed beverage sells in city limits) was removed, "We thought that now is as good a time as any," he added. "We're not letting this

recession scare us. This is an underserved market."

Adam Hines, executive director of The Mountaineer Partnership, agreed. A 2007 downtown revitalization study showed that roughly \$15 million in Kings Mountain restaurant sales was lost to three outlying communities. Over half of the "leakage" was tied to big-name restaurants, like Outback Steakhouse, in Gastonia, and Applebee's, which sandwich the town with locations in Shelby and Gastonia.

This will be restaurant number five for the LaVecchias, who also own the popular Nix Burger & Brew and LaVecchia's, both in downtown Charlotte, and the Old Stone Steakhouse and JAX Backstreet Tavern, which is under construction, both in Belmont.

Old Stone's new plans

In a walk-thru of the empty building Mon-
See STEAKHOUSE, 5A

KM Sports Hall of Fame induction Saturday at Central United Methodist

Kings Mountain golf legend Stoney Jackson, three-sport KMHS athletes Brent Bagwell and Ollie Harris, Jr., and the state championship 1993-94 KMHS men's swimming teams will be inducted into the Kings Mountain Sports Hall of Fame Saturday, May 8 at 6 p.m. at Central United Methodist Church.

Tickets for the 23rd annual event, which includes a meal catered by Linwood Restaurant, are \$10 each and are available from any member of the Hall of Fame Committee and at the door.

Four long-time supporters of KM sports will receive the Hall of Fame's Distinguished Service Award, which is given each year to persons who have offered many years of service to and support of athletics in the KM area. They are Charlie Smith, Jimmy Jolly, Kenny Bridges and Chuck Austin.

Numerous KMHS senior athletes will receive college scholarships.

The late Ollie Harris, Jr. was a three-sports star at KMHS in the early 1950s

See HALL, 3A

RATE HIKE

Water/sewer going up

By ELIZABETH STEWART

Staff writer

Water and sewer rates went up May 1 and your next monthly bill will reflect the change—15% for water and 35% for sewer.

By 6-1 Kings Mountain City Council last Tuesday increased the water and sewer rates on recommendation of City Manager Marilyn Sellers. "This is very difficult for me to recommend but we simply can't continue to operate this fund at the current rate structure which leaves nothing for emergencies," she said.

Councilman Rick Moore said after the meeting that he objected to the water/sewer increase because "it needs more study" and he said the hike could "mean the difference between businesses making a

See HIKE, 3A

Cruz reaches thousands with story of true redemption

By EMILY WEAVER

Editor

Nicky Cruz's powerful message Saturday night inside Cleveland County Fairground's Gandstand Arena was just as much aimed at parents as it was today's struggling youth. Thousands came to hear it.

One of the volunteers in the Nicky Cruz Outreach event said it was the largest crowd he had ever seen in the arena.

To the youth and all who came, Cruz told a tantalizing, gut-wrenching story:

Cruz was born the son of satanic worshippers in Puerto Rico. He recalls being beaten to the point of no longer feeling pain, of no longer being able to cry.

He remembers one day he came across his mother, who was talking to others, in a strange voice. Her speech sounded like that of a man's, deep and raspy. She told him to come and look in her eyes. Little Nicky did

not want to look.

When he finally did, it wasn't his mother that he saw. Her eyes glowed orange, he told the crowd.

She told him that he wasn't her son; he was the son of the devil and she never wanted to see him again.

"When I was nine years old, I died," he said.

Utterly lost after years of neglect and brutality, he heard a voice urging him to kill himself and end the pain.

Cruz said that he climbed a tree with a rope to do just that when his younger brother found him.

"He had tears streaming down his face," he recalled. "He cried, 'No. Don't do it Nicky!'"

His younger brother climbed the tree and brought him down. "He saved my life," he

See REDEMPTION, 4A



NICKY CRUZ



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