

# Database to help downtown compete with shopping centers

A new electronic database is set to give The Mountaineer Partnership a competitive edge in downtown development.

The Mountaineer Partnership Incorporation is taking a significant step toward competing with successful auto-oriented, large corporate retail shopping centers through more informed and proactive economic development efforts by managing the downtown much the same way a big shopping center does.

Shopping centers typically have a competitive advantage over traditional downtowns because they own the real estate, research the market, manage the business mix, actively recruit, require uniform hours, cooperatively advertise, monitor business performance, and insist on frequent store makeovers.

As a non-profit organization, the Mountaineer Partnership is not in the business of real estate ownership, but its first priority in being a strong economic supporter for the City of Kings Mountain, in the management of downtown growth, is to thoroughly know the downtown real estate and the downtown tenants.

The Mountaineer Partnership's economic restructuring committee led by property and business owners Bobby Horne of Horne Construction & Design, and Howard Elmore of Hometown Hardware

will oversee the volunteer effort to do a market analysis after the creation of the downtown property and business inventories are completed.

Economic Restructuring Committee co-chair Bobby Horne and MPI board member Gina Collias have begun to create the downtown building/property inventory spreadsheet and will help to oversee the volunteers who will help research and compile the data to be housed in the database yet to be created.

The database will include information about each of the buildings in the downtown area including assessed value and taxes, last sale date and amount, availability for sale or rent, total square footage, building amenities, zoning class, historic status and building condition.

The database will also include information about each business including the category of business, age of business, hours of operation, volume of foot traffic, busiest times, type of goods and services, and business assistance needs.

Using the downtown database, Mountaineer Partnership will be able to output a variety of reports and maps to answer questions about the downtown posed existing businesses, realtors, bankers, developers and businesses prospects.

What is the total assessed value for all downtown properties?  
Is the value going up or down and by how much?  
What properties meeting specific criteria, such as a specific amount of floor space, are for sale or for rent?  
How many square feet of retail, office, storage, public and other space is located downtown?  
What are the strengths and weaknesses in the business mix?  
Where are the strong or weak business clusters in the downtown?  
The inventories and resulting database combined with surveys of customer preferences and needs, business owner perspectives, and sales data from large national databases will be the informational building blocks for the creation of a concerted economic recruitment and incentive plan for the downtown.

Based on this data, Mountaineer Partnership will create a profile of downtown customers and determine the geographic area from which the downtown draws most of its traffic.

The profile of downtown customers will then be compared with census information from the downtown trade area to discover differences and similarities that will indicate business opportunities.

"The downtown data-

base will help the Main Street manager truly assist local businesses and the City of Kings Mountain to manage the downtown area more effectively," noted Gina Collias.

The manager can serve as an advocate for renting and selling downtown property.

The downtown database will assist the community, realtors, developers and new businesses in efficient site selection.

Finally, the downtown database will be crucial for evaluating the current supply of products and services which when combined with consumer demand will help determine business expansion and recruitment opportunities.

These inventory and database efforts are part of a larger effort being led by the North Carolina Main Street Program staff to assist MPI with the development of a comprehensive economic development plan for the downtown.

NC Main Street staff will facilitate the Economic Vision Forum to be held June 10, where a diverse group of community leaders will assist MPI in identifying economic drivers for our downtown.

Interested parties may volunteer for the downtown market analysis team by calling Kings Mountain Main Street Program Manager Adam Hines at 704-491-1226.

Neurologist Dr. Kevin Klein will answer questions about Parkinson's Disease for the Parkinson's Support Group Tuesday, May 25, at 6:30 p.m. at the Life Enrichment Center in Shelby, 103 T. R. Harris Drive.

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## NEWS BRIEFS

**Dover YMCA to host 15th Community Prayer Breakfast**

SHELBY—The Cleveland County Family YMCA will host the 15th Annual YMCA

Community Prayer Breakfast, Friday, May 21, at the Dover Foundation YMCA in Shelby.

The keynote speaker this year will be Clayton King, a 1995 Presidential Scholar graduate of Gardner-Webb University. While at GWU, he received the Outstanding Male Graduate of the Year Award and served as president of the Honors Club.

He is the founder and president of Crossroads Ministries and Crossroads Summer Camps, and the author of five books including "Dying To Live" with Harvest House Publishers, releasing June 1, 2010 nationwide.

The public is invited to this breakfast event. The serving line will open at 6:30 a.m. with the program beginning at 7:15 a.m. Tickets are on sale now for \$13 per person or \$100 per table of eight. Seating is limited. Tickets may be purchased at the Dover Foundation YMCA, Kings Mountain Family YMCA and the Ruby C. Hunt YMCA. For more information call the YMCA at 704-484-9622.

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**Pres. and Mrs. Polk on display at inn**

Now - 6/11 - First Lady of the United States of America, Sarah Childress Polk and North Carolina's pride, President James Knox Polk - historic exhibition of the UNC law graduate, their receptions in the White House, a china exhibit of their dinner plate and teacup with saucer on display next to famed favorite recipe, Hickory Nut Cake is on display at The Presidential Culinary Museum at The Inn of the Patriots Bed & Breakfast, 301 Cleveland Avenue, Grover, 704-937-2940, www.theinnofthepatriots.com

## DOWNTOWN From Page 1

And, as long as they comply with federal, state and local laws, they are welcome.

"We look forward to working with them in the future," Sides said, adding that he hopes they can all work together for the betterment of the town.

On Tuesday morning, the mayor said he met with Duke Power to get price quotes on the possibility of adding new decorative lights along Main Street.

"We've got a few things (in the works)," he said - things that are sure to bring an extra touch of life to downtown.

The Main Street buildings, many of which had been vacant for years, have housed Internet cafes and other shops offering sweepstakes games as a "marketing tool" to sell what businessmen have said are their primary goods - time on the Internet or phone cards.

Since they set up shop last April, the stores have attracted more business to downtown than the city has seen in years and have added a few jobs.

Mayor Sides said that his meeting with the businessmen last week was "positive and productive".

The raise in privilege license fees takes effect July 1st.

## TRIATHLON From Page 1

Gold Street, past Kings Mountain High on Phifer Road and back. All participants must complete the race in 4 hours-15 minutes.

Two competitors have already broken the two-hour-10-minute record for the course. 2009 was a record-setting year. Justin Park, then 29, of Chapel Hill finished the race first in 2:07:56, followed by 31-year-old Kevin Lisska of Charlotte, who came in second overall with a time of 2:08:37.

Lisska beat the record first place finish time he set in 2007, crossing the finish line at 2:11:05.

David Sokolofsky, of Wilmington, finished first in 2008 with an overall time of 2:14:44. It was just a few

seconds shy of his first place finish in 2006 when Sokolofsky completed the course in 2:14:28.

For the past three years, Stacey Richardson, 38, of Chapel Hill has led the women with a first place finish time in 2009 of 2:24:49, in 2008 of 2:24:58 and in 2007 of 2:27:14.

As of Friday, Lisska, Sokolofsky and Richardson had signed up to participate in Saturday's race.

Locally, 18-year-old Joshua Boyle, of Bessemer City, and Eric Collins, 32, Liza Dellinger, 43, Ashley Harris, 42, Larry Hyde, 45, Drew Kinney, 41, George Patterson, 47, Melissa Phillips, 32, Alan Riggs, 19, and Jim Sotelo, 59, all of Kings Mountain, have signed up to compete.

Athletes will be coming

to Kings Mountain from as far away as New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Illinois, Alaska, Wisconsin, California, Pennsylvania and Florida to compete. The city will hold a spaghetti supper for participants and their families at 6 p.m. at the H. Lawrence Patrick Senior Center, 909 E. King Street.

Over the Mountain has grown to become the qualifying match for the USA Triathlon Mid-Atlantic Regional Championship, a step away from the USAT national event. Over the Mountain has had a maximum cap of 500 competitors, but for the past two years, over 500 have signed up to participate.

City Special Events Director Ellis Noell said that they decided to raise the cap to 550 this year.

## BUDGET From Page 1

ices, which the town must pay to have any aid from the county, has gone up to \$200 per year.

The City of Kings Mountain, which supplies water to the town, raised its rates (water up 15 percent, 35 percent sewer). Audit process fees have increased and the price of Internet software the town is required to have has also risen. Revenue has not.

The new budget, which will be on display at town hall for 30 days, includes a general fund balance of \$273,660, a cemetery fund balance of \$4,800, a Powell fund balance of \$25,200 and a water-and-sewer fund bal-

ance of \$317,160.

Property taxes remain at 29 cents per \$100 assessed value of land and water and sewer taxes are set for nine cents per \$100 assessed value of land, leaving taxes at 38 cents per \$100 assessed value of property.

The town has submitted a grant for up to \$1 million to upgrade its existing wastewater treatment plant. Sides said that they received a letter of support from Rep. Tim Moore that was sent off with the grant.

To the EMT's - Thanks for being there for my urgent need on 4-26-10.

To the Kings Mountain Hospital & staff, the churches, my family and friends who prayed for me and for their concern - thanks so much. I'll always be grateful.

Thank you, Marilyn Tapley

Thank you for your support on May 4<sup>th</sup> For Coroner

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