



**Front Porch Music**  
By Ron Isbell, Publisher

*It takes a village to build a community*

I guess this goes under the ole "The more things change the more they stay the same" category.

As both the Mountaineer Partnership and the City of Kings Mountain focus efforts on improving our downtown we hope the spirit that brought us a wave of beautification 10 years or so ago is still alive.

I know that "improvement", like "beauty", is in the eye of the beholder. However, when those improvements to our downtown bring us a better environment in which to conduct our business, an environment that encourages new business to locate here and existing businesses to expand, and more opportunities for us to enjoy our lives here in Kings Mountain, I imagine we all see "improvement" as a good thing.

For one thing, we come out of this process with more choices...in places to shop, places to eat and services to choose from. We come out with a larger tax base that spreads the cost of providing city and county services among more taxpayers, and our share of that burden should be lessened. We come out with more jobs for us and our families.

These improvements almost always translate into opportunities. When somebody hands you \$100 it's easy to see the benefit. When somebody hands you the opportunity to make \$100 it isn't always so obvious, but \$100 is \$100 either way.

We all need to identify the good that can come to us individually from downtown improvement, whether it is opening our own new business and creating a future for our family or being able to buy something right here in town that we might have had to drive elsewhere for.

The benefits to improving our downtown aren't always obvious to those that must make the decisions that make it all happen either. But the truth is, and has been borne out in recent history, that efforts and the costs that go along with them pay dividends.

From projects like Patriots Park and downtown murals to the YMCA and Patrick Senior Center, our lives are richer because community leaders stood up and said the cause is worth the price. Those that made it happen can proudly claim their due.

Improving our downtown will be the feather in our community leaders' hats. For each small improvement they will deserve the credit due for making it happen.

But just as one person could not have built the senior center, it will take many people to bring about the vision of a strong downtown Kings Mountain. Each person, each group will contribute their talents and assistance. That's what "community" is all about.

Kings Mountain was facing the same thing back in 1999, and former editor Gary Stewart's view of the situation still rings true:

**First impressions are lasting**  
Usually when a governing board considers spending tax money on anything other than the basic services that it owes citizens, it's going to get some complaints.

That's good. Elected officials are supposed to be good stewards of the public's money and they should be held accountable for the decisions they make.

Sometimes, though, things that at first seem unnecessary to some folks may bring big dividends down the road.

We think that could be the case with the new Kings Mountain gazebo and the recently approved mural which will be painted on the side of the Plonk building across the street from the gazebo at Railroad Avenue and Gold Street.

The cost of the projects - \$24,000 for the gazebo and \$16,000 for the mural - drew some opposition from citizens at recent council meetings. The cost is astronomical for most of our pocketbooks, but in a multi-million dollar city budget it is not that much money. The benefits those projects may bring to the enjoyment of Kings Mountain citizens and economic gain to the city should be far greater than \$40,000.

Downtown Kings Mountain has needed a facelift for years. We believe very strongly that first impressions are lasting impressions, and if the person driving through town sees an attractive city they may be inclined to stop and eat at our restaurants, shop in our stores, and if they're looking for a home, may even consider locating here.

Through the efforts of the city, the Kings Mountain Business and Professional Association, the Chamber of Commerce, garden and civic clubs, citizen committees and many others, the entranceways to the city and downtown are undergoing some changes. The median between the National Guard Armory and West King was dressed up a couple of years ago, due largely to the efforts of former Mayor Scott Neisler. Visitors entering the town via East King Street are now seeing dilapidated old service stations replaced by impressive modern businesses such as the new Eckerd's Drug Store, and soon construction will begin on a \$1 million-plus Senior Center.

The gazebo and the mural, and hopefully some other beautification projects that will follow, will show persons entering the city from Highway 216 South that Kings Mountain is proud of its heritage and is proud of its appearance.

And we think they'll make a lasting impression.

For an example of first impressions, read on...

**Here's proof**  
Shirley Bruko of the Kings Mountain branch of the Cleveland County Chamber of Commerce this week passed along a letter she received from a couple in eastern North Carolina whose home was flooded during the recent hurricanes.

The couple was interested in locating in a more secure area, and called the chamber seeking information on Cleveland County.

The family visited Kings Mountain and Shelby, made contact with local realtors and bankers, and on Jan. 14 will be moving into their new home in Bethlehem Estates.

To make a long story short, the appearance of Kings Mountain, the friendliness of the people they met and the helpfulness of the chamber, realtors and bankers sold them on Kings Mountain.

**Back to 2011.** A vibrant downtown can't help but lead to more new residents like this couple. As employment opportunities shift to include high-tech and more white collar jobs (data farms and Duke Power's training center) the opportunities to attract new residents will grow. These residents will expect the amenities a vibrant downtown can offer.

In looking back to 1999 I think we can all agree that our community leaders made the right choices then. I hope our community can put the right people in the right places to make that happen again as we move forward.

## Moore to be sworn in today

Rep. Tim Moore (R-Cleveland County) will be sworn into office this morning for his fifth term in the North Carolina House of Representatives. After taking the oath of office on capitol hill in Raleigh, Moore will join other legislators in the first official session of the NC General Assembly which convenes at noon.

Lawmakers will soon have to tackle the "elephant in the room": a \$3.7 billion budget deficit that must be cleared in the upcoming fiscal year. The "News & Observer" listed Moore as one of six new "power brokers" - "key Republican lawmakers who will carry out the vision of GOP leaders" in their first time taking control of the state House in over 100 years.

Rep. Thom Tillis (R-Mecklenburg) appointed Moore to the senior chair of the House Rules Committee. In his new role, co-chairing with Rep.

Stephen LaRoque of Lenoir County, he may have a louder voice in addressing the needs of Cleveland County. The committee controls the flow of legislation in other committees and to the floor. Moore will have the chance to influence which bills are heard and when they will be debated or voted on.

Moore has vowed to fight against any new taxes to help cover the looming deficit. He has also pledged to fight for jobs, requiring photo IDs for voting and inflicting stiffer penalties for driving-while-impaired repeat offenders.

More committee announcements may follow in the days to come.



Tim Moore

## Recycling is catching on in KM

Kings Mountain Mayor Rick Murphrey said that after eight days of recycling by citizens that city garbage trucks have hauled 10 tons of recyclable materials to the county landfill.

"We are excited," said the mayor.

City utility bills went out this week with the additional \$2 cost added on the monthly residential \$7.60 garbage fee. Some citizens have called city offices concerning the \$2 fee but the mayor said that if more people recycle that everyone will benefit. He said the city cur-

rently pays over \$20,000 a month for landfill costs and that for every ton of trash they recycle, the city will receive a credit of \$60 each.

"The county originally told us the credit would be \$33 a ton and this will help us pay for the over \$300,000 initial startup of the program," he said. The city spent \$216,000 for 4500 blue containers, \$127,000 for a new truck on order and \$60,000 for salaries of two employees and was recipient of a \$100,000 grant.

The mayor said as the project progresses that city council will re-

view expenditures and as more people recycle that costs will come down, both for the city and citizens. "We always review expenditures at budget time," he said. There is not enough revenue coming in to cover expenditures because there are fixed cost and it takes 3-4 years payback to cover because of the initial start-up costs.

The city collects household garbage once a week and recyclables every other week based on a schedule attached to the new blue cans deposited at residents' homes recently.



**When Feeling Great Can't Wait!**

**Busy Families and Individuals:**

- See a friendly, qualified medical provider - walk in TODAY!
- Available days, evenings and weekends.
- **WAHOO!**® - (Wait At Home Or Office); we'll call you when your exam room is ready.
- Most major insurance accepted, including Medicare, Medicaid and TRICARE, or a discount program is available for uninsured patients.



**NextCare**  
URGENT CARE  
1-888-261-9585  
NextCareVisit.com

**Open 7 Days A Week At Most Locations; Extended Hours**

**CHARLOTTE**  
3210 Prosperity Church Rd., Ste. 102  
3500 Mt. Holly Huntersville Rd., Ste. 200

**GASTONIA**  
3680 Robinwood Rd.

**SHELBY**  
419 Earl Rd.

**ASHEVILLE**  
136 Mimosá Dr.

# Need A Loan? See Us.



Brenda Lovelace - Commercial Lender

Mitch Johnson - Commercial Lender

JoAnn Hall - Retail Lender



**FIRST NATIONAL BANK**

*Stability. Integrity. Service.*

**Kings Mountain Office**  
300 West Mountain St.  
704-739-4782



[www.ibankatfnb.com](http://www.ibankatfnb.com)

Member FDIC

