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After the storm



A tree is split in front of Miracle Tabernacle Ministry Church, 610 E. Gold St., after a storm ripped through Kings Mountain Tuesday morning. The fallen limbs missed the church and the neighboring house.

Citizens wake up to outages, damages

Duke Energy reported over 200,000 power outages in North Carolina Tuesday morning after a powerful storm swept through the area in the wee hours.

Lightning, hail, rain and strong winds ripped up landscapes, leveled some outbuildings, uprooted trees, snapped power lines and caused several other damages.

Tracy Stewart of Grover awoke to find her bedroom window blown

See STORM, 6A

County tells state: 'Hands off budget'

State looks at cutting counties to settle debts, county looks to state reps to protect them

EMILY WEAVER
 Editor

While the state armors up to battle a \$2.4 billion budget deficit in July, public entities throughout North Carolina are eyeing each other to see which one is going to feel the brunt of the blow. But the state is looking at them, too. No one seems to want to hold this hot potato (a.k.a. the 2011 budget) for too long. Counties could be in the hot seat. "The Governor's Office has presented a chart of 2009-10 county fund balances to House and Senate Appropriations chairs to illustrate that counties have sufficient re-

serves on hand to withstand ongoing financial shifts of state responsibilities to counties," said David Thompson, executive director of the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners, in a letter to Cleveland County Commissioner Ronnie Hawkins.

"It seems like the state has budgetary problems that they don't want to handle in-house. They want the counties to handle it if they have a surplus," Hawkins said. "If we were able to use any surplus, I would prefer to help our own employees in our own county instead of giving

money to the state to balance its own budget."

Passing the buck—or lack thereof—onto counties like Cleveland, would be a mighty blow, according to some commissioners. "On the chart, the Governor's Office indicates that an 8 percent fund balance level is the statutory set-aside required for county fund balances," Thompson writes.

But county commissioners across the state argue that 8 percent is the tipping point—the minimum they must maintain to run on. Counties like Cleveland,

See COUNTY, 7A

When you wish upon a star...



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Ethan Jenkins is pictured here with The Hoppers, one of his favorite Gospel groups. He's been to over 100 of their shows. L-r, Claude Hopper, Michael Hopper, Connie Hopper, Ethan, Kim Hopper, Dean Hopper.

EMILY WEAVER
 Editor

Two wishes were granted in Kings Mountain on the night of March 17. The Hoppers, a famous Gospel group, came to serenade a crowd gathered inside the Family Worship Center.

To one it was a familiar wish that had been granted before though not so close to home. To another it was a wish on a career, stoked by passion, coming into bloom.

It was the first time Gabriel Thomas, 21, was promoting a concert of this magnitude for a band nationally known. To bring a "big name Gospel group" so close to his hometown of Grover was a big goal worthy of an even

larger check mark.

He has been a fan of Gospel music since the age of five. The Hoppers were big on his fan list. Their tour bus rolled up about 6 p.m. A crowd of spectators had formed a line outside the church by 7. The concert was on. The stage was set. The crowd was ready. A wish was coming true.

"I was nervous at first, but things are working out," Thomas said, inside the church before the concert started. "I'm just looking for God to show up and show out."

He was there. Ethan Jenkins felt it just like he has so many times in his blessed life — a life doctors never guaranteed he'd have. Born with DiGeorge syn-

See WISH, 7A

A Born Miracle

At almost 21 years old, Ethan Jenkins continues to beat the odds living with DiGeorge syndrome, a rare disorder that affects the development of several body systems. Doctors didn't think he'd live this long.

His grandmother, June Phifer, gives the glory to God.

Before he was born, doctors noticed trouble. In ultrasounds they pointed out that his body wasn't developing correctly, June said. But his mother had already lost two children. She couldn't lose this baby.

Ethan has faced many challenges but continues to be an inspiration and a blessing to all around him.

Academic Awards at KM High



EMILY WEAVER/HERALD

KMHS Principal Ronny Funderburke awards a National Honor Society stole to a senior during the recent Academic Awards Ceremony in Barnes Auditorium. See more awards, page 4A.

City signs new water customer

ELIZABETH STEWART
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Kings Mountain City Council inked a 10-year contract with Bessemer City last Tuesday, an agreement which will make the neighboring city

Kings Mountain's largest water customer.

"It's a win-win for everybody," Mayor Rick Murphrey said.

City Attorney Mickey Corry said the contract calls for a rate of \$2.83

See BESSEMER CITY, 7A

KM to host county Democratic convention for first time at Joy

The annual convention of Cleveland County Democrats will be held Saturday morning at Joy Performance Center, Railroad Avenue in Kings Mountain.

Chairman Bobby Rauf said this is the first time the convention has been held in Kings Mountain and he anticipates a large crowd.

Business of the meeting will include election of executive committee officers, members and alternates to state committees and a vote on resolutions proposed by committees.

Registration begins at 9 a.m. and refreshments will be served. The business meeting gets underway at 10 a.m. and a feature of the convention will be an auction of baked goods, decorative items, potted plants, and vacation packages, among other things.

The Joy is readying for the event with red, white and blue decor on the stage area.

GET FIRED UP!

Firehouse Cookoff kicks off April 15

Get fired up for the 15th Annual Kings Mountain Firehouse Cook-Off slated for Friday, April 15 and Saturday, April 16 at the walking track near the Kings Mountain Family YMCA on Cleveland Ave.

There are 51 teams signed up to compete in the cook-off and about half of the teams are local (within a 30-mile radius of Kings Mountain), according to Kings Mountain Fire Chief Frank Burns. Teams are coming from as far away as Florida, Ohio, Tennessee, Georgia, South Carolina and Virginia for this year's competition.

See BBQ COOKOFF, 7A

Be a link in the Thread

Ideas for a new path that would connect Moss Lake to the Gateway Trails, as part of the Carolina Thread Trail project, are being carved out. City of Kings Mountain officials are hoping to hear from the public before this "ground work" is finally paved.

Officials are urging citizens to "help shape the future of greenways and trails in our community."

A greenway master plan public open house will be held from 4:30-7 p.m. on Thursday, April 14, in the lobby of Kings Mountain City Hall, 101 W. Gold St.

"Citizens of Kings Mountain and Cleveland County are invited to provide input on the draft route and implementation for the Kings Mountain Carolina Thread Trail," according to Carolina Thread Trail Community Coordinator Randi Gates.

"Participants will be able to view and note their suggestions on the draft map of the proposed trails and provide feed-

See CITY, 6A



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