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Christmas lights continue to shine in Midpines nightly through Dec. 26.

Costly Prank

Willett charged with bomb threats

Law enforcement was kept hopping for several hours Saturday responding to a dozen businesses in Kings Mountain where false bomb threats were made.

Kings Mountain Police quickly arrested John Christopher Willett, 35, of 504 Katherine Avenue and charged him with 12 felonies. Willett's first court appearance was Monday.

KM Police Det. Cpl. Doug Shockley said Willett was listening on a scanner as police, fire and emergency services responded to the calls. Shockley said that more charges may be coming as information is passed on to other jurisdictions that had similar incidents.

"It's a scary situation for people and these stores were crowded Saturday morning," said Shockley, who said that the prank also

See PRANK CALLS, 5A

Passing man saves neighbors from grease fire

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Smoke from a grease fire billowed from a house at 405 Baker Street around 1 a.m. Saturday, catching the attention of a neighbor, who was walking his dog. The man ran to the house and roused the residents, getting them all out to safety.

The Kings Mountain Police Department was the first on scene and put out the small fire still contained in the pan, that had also charred the wall behind the stove, according to KM Fire Chief Frank Burns.

When the Kings Mountain Fire Department and Rescue Squad arrived, the smoke had cleared. One of the four residents was transported to the hospital with non-life threatening injuries.

"After inspecting the house, we found that there was no working smoke detector to be found," Burns said, adding that the smoke and small fire could have been fatal. "The neighbor really saved their lives."

Luminaries will shine Saturday

Luminaries will glow Saturday night, Christmas Eve, December 24th in Kings Mountain. The city-sponsored event will take place at Mountain Rest Cemetery from 5:30 p.m. until midnight.

"We'll be directing all the visitors to enter through the main entrance on West King Street (Business Hwy. 74). It's a well-marked route, allowing cars to easily move through Mountain Rest, so families can enjoy this Christmas Eve tradition," said Jackie Barnett, Public Works Director for the city.

In memory of departed loved ones, a luminary will be placed at each gravesite, with additional seasonal themed displays throughout Mountain Rest. Close to 7,000 luminaries will be lit within the 27 acres, with Christmas music provided from the landmark Bell Tower.

Volunteers are needed to light the luminaries at Mountain Rest Cemetery this Saturday, December 24th.

"We will get started lighting the luminaries about 3:30 Saturday afternoon and need as many volunteers as we can get," Barnett said.

For more information visit www.cityofkm.com or call 704-734-0333.

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Giving the gift of life



Captain Jerry Tessner hugs his kidney donor - his friend and co-worker Penny Fulton.

ELIZABETH STEWART

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All Captain Jerry Tessner, 53, wanted for Christmas was a healthy kidney.

The veteran Kings Mountain police officer got his early Christmas wish November 1 when KMPD Ptl. Penny Fulton, his co-worker for 17 years, became his life-saving donor.

"Every day since my transplant surgery will be Christmas for me," said a jubilant and thankful Tessner as both police officers went back to work (part-time this Christmas week) at the Kings Mountain Police Department, Tessner as Captain in the Patrol division, and Fulton in the Records department.

"I owe my life to Penny," says Tessner, who has lived with adult-onset Diabetes for 15 years. Three years ago the disease and his blood pressure became life-threatening.

On Nov. 1, 2009 Tessner started dialysis nightly. Doctors gave him the bad news. He needed a transplant. Tessner prepared his family for the worst.

On Nov. 1, 2011 he received an answer to his prayer - a miracle by the grace of God and a fellow officer following her heart and the oath she swore to protect others.

"It's not an overnight process to get a transplant," says Tessner, who was on the transplant list at North Carolina Baptist Hospital for 18 months. "They called me (before) from the hospital that a donor was available and to get there quick but my wife and I were flying back from a vacation in Hawaii and we couldn't get there in time."

Waiting time for transplantation of organs can take months and years. Sometimes transplants are never available.

See PATROLMAN, 5A

Making Christmas truly bright

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The generosity of Kings Mountain people can be seen in the hundreds of Christmas gifts pouring into the toy room of the Kings Mountain Police Department.

"We've seen families bring gift-wrapped items, a tradition they say for their own children to give to a needy child at Christmas," said Sgt. Lisa Proctor, who has headed up the project for 10 years. Two brand new Huffy bikes, baby dolls of all descriptions, Lunar race cars, stuffed animals, patio sets, and miscellaneous items such as puzzles and books will be under some happy child's Christmas tree on Christmas morning.

Chief Melvin Proctor said that police will deliver the gifts, along with warm clothing for 60 or more families, by Christmas Eve.

See PUBLIC, 5A



Kings Mountain Chief of Police Melvin Proctor and his wife, Sgt. Lisa Proctor, get help from Santa Claus in readying Christmas gifts for distribution this week to needy children. Police are delivering hundreds of new toys and new clothing donated by many people to make Christmas merrier for over 60 local families prior to Christmas Eve.

photo by ELLIS NOELL

'Santa' Murphrey delivers toys to hundreds



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

John Murphrey, aka 'Santa' Murphrey, with his daughter, Lyndsey Murphrey, left, and Buffy Murphrey, his wife. The Murphreys recently delivered all of the toys and goodies they raised with the 17th annual toy run to children near and far.

EMILY WEAVER

Editor

Last week, John Murphrey of Murphrey's Scooter Shed continued an annual tradition of deliveries that have earned him the nickname of "Santa" and the love of children near and far.

After toys and money are raised through his annual Toy Run each November, it's the deliveries that make Christmas truly merry for Murphrey. Ten freezer-sized boxes brimming with toys, sporting equipment and hairdryers were raised through this year's 17th annual Toy Run.

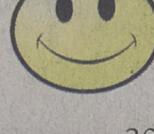
A couple of weeks ago, Murphrey carried his first load of toys to the Kings

Mountain Police Department in time for its Christmas deliveries to 60 local families.

On Thursday, he played Santa at Oak Grove Baptist Church for the White Plains Shrine Club's annual Christmas party attended by some of the many helped at the Shriner's Hospital, including his own daughter, Lyndsey.

On Friday, Lyndsey, her friend Bubba Moss, and Murphrey carried toys to children at the Shriner's Hospital in Greenville. And on Sunday, Lyndsey, Murphrey and

See MURPHHEY, 5A



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