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Front Porch Music

By Ron Isbell, Publisher Emeritus

Business of the Year

Erin Broadbent and I were sitting away from the celebration in Kings Mountain City Hall Tuesday evening trading stories of life in a wheelchair.

I was learning a lot from her 35 years of experience and attitude. I've gotten more than a few words of encouragement from family, friends, neighbors and readers, but nothing comes close to those from Erin, who lives and works with it every day.

By the way, if you don't know, working with it daily means running our local national park. A huge job with huge responsibilities.

By comparison my job isn't nearly as big or important. We do, however, share a role of custodian of history. Hers of a battle more than 235 years ago. Mine more like yesterday or last week.

Any conversation I have with Erin can turn engaging. This one probably was a little more so. Certainly more personal than our usual conversations about what's going on at the park.

So, I really wasn't paying a lot of attention when Gregg Johnson began to introduce this year's Kings Mountain Chamber of Commerce's business person of the year.

I caught a word or two here and there...Rotary, Mountaineer Partnership, Chamber Advisory Board...but was still more interested in Erin's advice on wheel chair cushions. I

planned to catch up on the Chamber announcements and news later.

At least until Wendy tapped me on the shoulder when Gregg announced my name and started pushing me down the aisle.

Erin smiled at me mid-sentence. She smiles a lot. She either had been paying attention more than I had or was in on the surprise.

And a surprise it certainly was. At a time in my life when surprises don't tend to be all that pleasant this one was over the top.

I've been honored to receive awards for developing compelling and successful advertising programs, competing against newspapers as large as The Miami Herald. Others for news that shaped and improved our communities.

But this was the first recognition for a business accomplishment. While I'd still rate my ultimate goal of making our town a better place to live as the most important, it's also important to note that if we are not successful as a business, we won't be around to accomplish ANY other goal, even if it's just to make sure the garbage gets taken to the curb.

And that applies to every business in town. If they are not successful your son's baseball team may not get

See AWARD, 2A

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!



EMILY WEAVER/HERALD

Molora Kellstrom sings as a scene in her first music video is filmed inside of the Family Worship Center. Backing her up, left to right, Jonathan Williams, Lakeishea Childress, Jeff Childress, Yvonne Lowery, Joseph Lowery and Gabriel Ramirez.

Kellstroms star in first music video

EMILY WEAVER
 Editor

A music video featuring the title track of Molora Kellstrom's fifth CD, "The River", starring Molora, her daughter Sophia and a talented cast from Kings Mountain, was filmed throughout the city last week.

The two-day shoot with Director and Producer Patrick Hill, a youth worship leader for the church of popular minister, Joel Osteen,

started Friday. Weaving a storyline with scenes from Davidson Lake and a field on Oak Grove Road to a makeshift concert hall and party scene inside of the Family Worship Center, "The River" flowed to life.

The music video was a first for Molora, whose video will premier worldwide online at www.molora.com and YouTube. The album and headlining song can be

See KELLSTROMS, 5A



Molora Kellstrom sings with Trudy Thomas on violin.

EVERYONE WINS

More jobs, more tax dollars coming with AT&T data center

EMILY WEAVER
 Editor

Gov. Bev Perdue took the honor of unveiling "Project Cardinal" - a two-year endeavor to land an AT&T data center in Kings Mountain - Wednesday morning at the Cleveland Country Club. AT&T will bring 106 new high-paying jobs and invest \$851 million (over 14 years) in a new 900,000-square-foot data center on 130 acres of T5's Kings Mountain server farm.

The company plans to invest more than \$200 million to construct the data center off of Countryside Road and fill more than 1,000 construction-related jobs through 2013. It took more than \$1 million in state grants, generous city and county incentives and a gag order to seal the deal on this

industry for Cleveland County.

Following on the heels of industry expansion announcements for Baldor adding 166 jobs and Kendrion FAS Controls adding 57 jobs, AT&T's announcement came as welcome news to leaders in a county where at least 5,200 workers struggle with unemployment.

Both the City of Kings Mountain and Cleveland County offered generous incentives to lure AT&T: refunds of 67%-to-all property taxes paid over a span of up to 30 years; water and sewer line extensions to the property; and, a waiver of all development-related fees. At no cost to the company, the county also agreed to build an access road/main entry to the property and widen Countryside Road. In



Photo by ELLIS NOELL

Cynthia Marshall, president of AT&T North Carolina and Kings Mountain Mayor Rick Murphrey at the AT&T announcement Wednesday of the new data center in Kings Mountain.

an incentive agreement with AT&T, county officials noted that preliminary estimates to build an access road to the property will not exceed \$200,000. If it does, the county has agreed to cover the bill, up to \$500,000.

The agreement estimated it would only cost the county \$260,000 to widen Countryside Road. But the county agreed to cover all overages to "ensure no cost to the company."

See AT&T, 4A

LEAP BABY

A Happy 4th...um, 16th Birthday

Today is a special day. It only comes around once every four years. Most of the time the day is leaped over - skipped altogether - but not this year. Today is Leap Day and for Kings Mountain's Megan Haraszkiwicz it's quadruply special.

Today Megan turns sweet... or is that 4? She's only had four true birthdays, though she's lived 16 years.

Megan was born on February 29, 1996, on a leap year, two weeks late and 14 minutes before March 1 in Gastonia. She was born to proud parents, Kimberly and Walter Haraszkiwicz of Kings Mountain. Ten toes. Ten fingers. A healthy beautiful baby, who arrived a little early or a little late, just in time for Leap Year.

See LEAP, 5A

Contest develops for county commissioners

A contest has developed for the three seats up for grabs on the Cleveland County Board of Commissioners. Susan K. Allen, a 56-year-old retired UPS executive of Shelby, threw her hat into the ring before filing ended Monday announcing her bid for a seat.

She will face off against incumbents Mary Accor, Johnny Hutchins and Ronnie Hawkins, all of Kings Mountain, in the November elections. Hutchins serves as chairman and Hawkins as vice-chairman of the five-

member board. Accor and Hawkins are also former board chairmen.

Mother to two sons, Allen has lived in Cleveland County 28 years. She retired after 29 years with UPS as the director of strategic accounts and worked with several Fortune 500 companies as a consultant.



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Fire probe heats up, leads to arrest

A three-party investigation of a Feb. 15 fire that gutted a home at 131 Lake Montonia Road, led to the arrest Monday of 56-year-old Letitia Adams Wallace, who was reported last week to have been living in the house.

Wallace has been charged with sec-

ond degree arson and was being held under a \$30,000 secured bond on Monday.

Kings Mountain Police, the SBI Arson Team and Kings Mountain Fire Department teamed up to investigate the fire that had spread through the

home at 7:15 a.m. Feb. 15. KM Fire Chief Frank Burns said that the fire was "pretty involved" when they arrived.

He said no one was home at the time and estimated damages of \$25,000-\$45,000. No injuries were reported. The residence belongs to Samuel Adams.



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