

# Showcase opens to one of biggest crowds yet



KMHS senior Heather Johnson presents an artistic collage featuring city landmarks to Mayor Rick Murphrey and City Manager Marilyn Sellers as Johnson's father, Greg Johnson, and Chamber officials and others look on.

Obviously surprised and humbled last Tuesday by the Cleveland Chamber's "Business Person of the Year" award, The Herald's Ron Isbell accepted with a wide smile and "thanks" to one of the biggest crowds ever attending the 2012 Business Showcase.

The lobby area of Kings Mountain City Hall was standing-room only and crowds milled around 51 exhibits by the largest number of participating businesses. Guests munched on a variety of goodies and greeted friends.

Gregg Johnson, of the Chamber advisory board congratulating Isbell, said the announcement of the top award is always kept secret. He praised Isbell's community-first approach in all areas of city life and as a prominent leader in the business community.

The City of Kings Mountain also shared in accolades as City Manager Marilyn Sellers and Mayor Rick Murphrey accepted on behalf of the city a beautifully-framed "Character of Kings Mountain 2011," an artistic photo collage of city landmarks. The gift was the crowning achievement of Kings Mountain High School student Heather Johnson's senior project. Heather is the daughter of Gregg and Shannon Johnson.

"This is one way to show my love for my hometown," said Ms. Johnson, who added that the Chamber's Kings Mountain Executive Director Shirley Brutko was her mentor for the project. Copies of

the poster are available for \$10 each at the KM Chamber office and proceeds benefit the Gateway Trails.

Schools Supt. Dr. Bruce Boyles welcomed the crowd of 150-200 to the kickoff ceremonies, calling the 14th annual showcase, open daily at city hall through March 16, "our biggest ever". He invited all citizens to take pride in the outstanding exhibits, a real showcase of what's available in Kings Mountain, and all meritorious winners.

Cleveland County Chamber of Commerce President Michael Chrisawn took the occasion to thank supporting businesses and the general public who use those services. "This is a special occasion and welcome," he said.

Johnson recognized presenting sponsors First National Bank and Warlick Insurance Agency and sponsors City of Kings Mountain, Kings Mountain Hospital, Kings Mountain Woman's Club Premier Federal Credit Union, and Bobby Home Construction and food sponsors Big E BBQ, Food Lion, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Linwood Restaurant and Subway.

Johnson presented the mayor for remarks and introduction of city council.

Brutko closed the evening celebration with the presentation of a number of handsome door prizes from participating businesses.

Ribbon awards went to the following exhibitors:

**BEST OF SHOW** - large table - Southern Arts Society, 1st place; Warlick & Hamrick

Insurance, 2nd; First National Bank, 3rd; Baker Dental Clinic, 4th.

**BEST OF SHOW** - small table - Cleveland Community College, 1st; Adventures in Advertising, 2nd.

**MOST INFORMATIVE** - large table - Joy Performance Center, 1st; Hospice of Cleveland County, 2nd; and Kings Mountain Hospital, 3rd.

**MOST INFORMATIVE** - small table - Crowders Mountain State Park, 1st; KM Historical Museum, 2nd.

**NEAT AND CONCISE** - Large table - Caromont Family Medicine, 1st; Cleveland Endocrinology & Kings Mountain Internal, 2nd; Humana Market Point, 3rd.

**NEAT AND CONCISE** - small table - City of Kings Mountain.

**MOST CREATIVE** - large table - J. Oliver's, 1st; Kings Mountain Herald, 2nd; KM Woman's Club, 3rd; and Life Enrichment Center, 4th.

**MOST CREATIVE** - small table - Verizon Wireless, 1st.

**BEST THEME** - large table - Mauney Memorial Library, 1st; Edward Jones, 2nd; YMCA, 3rd; and Patrick Senior Center, 4th.

**BEST THEME** - small table - KM National Military Park, 1st; Reno Chiropractic, 2nd.

**MOST COLORFUL** - Bradley Insurance Services, 1st.

**BEST BUSINESS DISPLAY** - Milanco Chemicals, 1st; Allen Tate Realty, 2nd; Gaston Gazette and Shelby Star, 3rd.



## Photos By Ellis Noell

One of the biggest crowds ever in the 14-year history of the Chamber's KM Business Showcase gathered in the lobby area of Kings Mountain City Hall last Tuesday night to enjoy 51 exhibits which continue open during the day at city hall until March 16.

## He gets it from his grandma



Eric "Big E" Pardo is pictured here with his grandmother, Pauline Harbin - one of his biggest inspirations.

**EMILY WEAVER**  
Editor

Eric "Big E" Pardo, owner and operator of Big E's Original BBQ Company, has won a lot of awards for his culinary skills over the years. A strong contender of the "que", he's brought home

top 10 finishes for pork in every contest he's competed in since 2009.

He's worn the "crown" of the "Highest Scoring Cleveland County Team" in Kings Mountain's Firehouse BBQ Cook-off twice. He finished a fraction of a point behind the Cook-off's Reserve

Grand Champion in 2010. Plaques and trophies line Big E's walls and shelves.

In many rights, he's already a champion, running his booming, ever-popular Kings Mountain restaurant. But his eyes reflect another champion, one who's inspired him his whole life...his grandmother.

"I spent a lot of weekends with her. She'd call Price Cab Company in Kings Mountain and they'd come pick us up and take us downtown to do her shopping," Eric said, thinking back to the heydays of downtown.

In those days, Alliance Bank was Rexall Drug. The building that now houses J. Oliver's Coffee Shop was home to the Eagle Dime Store. There was the Plonk Brothers' department store on the corner of Gold St. and

Railroad Ave. And even a grocery store - B&B Food Stores, Inc. brought in a lot of customers off of S. Battleground Ave.

In the crowd of shoppers every weekend was Eric and his grandmother, Pauline Harbin. "That's where she'd get her groceries," he said.

But his favorite stop was the one they'd hit last - the Eagle Dime Store, where a new toy always awaited. She'd tell me to go pick out a toy and I'd head straight back to the department on the right, Pardo said.

After downtown, came another treasured treat - cooking with grandma in the kitchen of her house on E. King St.

"She'd make all kinds of stuff in the kitchen," he said, "even barbecue. She can

See PARDO, B2

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