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Lt. Col. Maury Williams of the NC Army National Guard, left, and Mayor Rick Murphrey carry a wreath of flowers to lay at the Veterans Memorial. AT RIGHT, Frank Williams flies an American flag for his 1-year-old great grandson, Lance Abrams, as his son, Lt. Col. Maury Williams (not pictured) of the NC Army National Guard gives the keynote address at the city's Memorial Day service. TOP LEFT, Two-year-old Braylin Abrams flies an American flag. PHOTOS by EMILY WEAVER



We 'celebrate the memory'

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Memorial Day is more than the first unofficial beginning of summer with pool openings, cookouts and a holiday from work, speakers reminded the crowd at Monday's 10 a.m. ceremony in Veterans Park of Mountain Rest Cemetery. It's a day of reverence and renewal of patriotism, service and sacrifice.

A stark reminder that our country is still at war, the day is not only a solemn remembrance of those heroes who made the ultimate sacrifice but a day to "celebrate the memory," said Lt. Col. Maury Williams in his keynote address.

"We should thank God (on Memorial Day) that such men (who died in battle) lived."
 - General George Patton

Commander of the Recruiting and Retention Battalion for the N.C. National Guard headquartered in Raleigh, Williams is a decorated soldier of 27 years. Williams' family joined the speaker and local families for the service at which Mayor Rick Murphrey gave the welcome address and the KM

Police Department Honor Guard advanced and retired the colors.

Piper Jane Gulden and soloist Shana Adams presented special music and bugler Paul Fulton played "Taps." Sheriff Alan Norman led the pledge of

REMEMBERING, 7A

County jobless rate falls below 10% ... finally

Unemployment rate now, lowest it's been in four years

Cleveland County's unemployment rate fell to 9.8 percent in April, the first time in four years the county has been below 10 percent.

Although above the state-wide rate of 9.4% (seasonally adjusted and 9.1% non-seasonally adjusted) the jobless rate showed a full percentage point drop from March.

"Great news," says county commissioner Ronnie Hawkins.

Freddie Harrill, West Regional Liaison for US Senator Kay Hagan (NC) emailed county officials Tuesday "Good Work Y'all."

Dale Carroll, NC Department of Commerce Deputy Secretary, said that the number of workers employed (not seasonally adjusted) increased in April by 14,542 to 4,212,226 while those unemployed decreased 24,714 to 421,197. Since April 2011 the number of workers unemployed decreased 42,802, while those employed increased 35,770.

Thirty-two counties were at or below the state's non-seasonally adjusted unemployment rate of 9.1%. Unemployment rates fell in 93 of the state's 100 counties over the month, increased in three counties and remained the same in four counties.

Unemployment rates decreased in all 14 Metropolitan Statistical areas for the second consecutive month.

JOBLESS, 6A

A Red Letter Day

El Bethel's 200th birthday Sunday

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They worshipped in a brush arbor 200 years ago and their first house of worship, "the little log church in the woods" in 1812 was of logs and crude handmade benches.

Sunday, the 176 members of El Bethel United Methodist Church will celebrate the church's 200th anniversary at a 10:45 a.m. worship service. Bishop Larry Goodpaster, of the Western North Carolina Methodist Conference, will fill the pulpit and offer congratulations to a church congregation which has grown not only in numbers but occupies a beautiful sanctuary, fellowship building, playground, and adjoining cemetery, a landmark for the community. The worship service will include special music followed by a picnic lunch at noon.

At 1 p.m. the congregation will open the cornerstone which was last opened 50 years ago. Friends and former members are invited

EL BETHEL, 7A



Sandra Wilson, Rev. Tom Jolly, pastor, and Jeanne Ware, left to right, are among members of the 200th celebration committee of El Bethel United Methodist Church readying for Sunday's observance. photo by LIB STEWART

Main Street offers tips to grow downtown BC

EMILY WEAVER
 Editor

BESSEMER CITY - The heart of North Carolina's city with a heart is beating with renewed passion these days. The beat seemed to quicken at an early evening meeting on May 17 as its citizens listened to hear about the future possibilities of downtown Bessemer City.

INSIDE

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MAIN STREET, 6A



NC Small Town Main Street coordinator Sherry Adams shares a report with citizens inside city hall.



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