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## Two restaurants join forces

Big E's BBQ moving into 238 Cherokee Street downtown



Eric "Big E" Pardo, left, shakes hands with his new business partner at 238 Cherokee Street Tavern, Robert Bolin.

EMILY WEAVER  
Editor

Two popular restaurants are joining forces in Kings Mountain. To the delight of diners downtown, all of the favored dishes at Big E's BBQ will be served at 238 Cherokee Street Tavern come Monday.

Award-winning chef "Big E" Eric Pardo is moving into Robert Bolin's 238 on Monday, bringing with him his smokers, mouth-watering recipes and seven employees.

"All of the great food you could order at Big E's, you'll be able to get here. And this merger is coming without any layoffs," Bolin said.

His restaurant was chosen as the site of then-presidential candidate Newt Gingrich's visit to Kings Mountain because of Bolin's commitment to create and keep jobs in a county that has been rocked by high unemployment. Gingrich came near the end of April. The restaurant was packed.

Big E's BBQ is likely to bring in more crowds to mingle with the many regular diners already enjoying the home-style favorites served at the Tavern.

"I think what our menu has to offer and his seems to be a perfect fit," Bolin said.

The Cherokee Street Tavern opened in January of last year, as a second location of Cramerton's Center Street Tavern. Bolin purchased the business on Aug. 15, a day before Pardo's birthday.

The two restaurateurs have been talking about a possible merger for several months. The move will allow Pardo the freedom to explore his passion in cooking, catering and competing in BBQ cook-offs, while Bolin continues to manage the restaurant.

Pardo has continued to place in the top 10 for pork in every contest he's competed in since 2009. Last year at Gastonia's Carolina Smoke-off BBQ

See BIG E'S, 7A

## CCS stands against bullies

ELIZABETH STEWART  
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School bullies create misery for children victimized by their actions. That's why parents and teachers are taking a stand, school board members said Monday night.

"Eighty percent of our students do what you ask them, 15 percent do it but need direction and 5 percent need mediation," said Dr. Stephen Fisher, Director of Administrative Services for Cleveland County Schools, in a presentation on the NC Bullying Law to the Board of Education's Monday night workshop.

See CCS, 7A

## CAREFUL CROSSING



KYRA TURNER / HERALD

Do you see the difference at the West Gold Street train crossing? The City of Kings Mountain, in an increased safety effort, has installed new "stops" to keep trucks from crossing the tracks. Orange barricades and posts that eliminate wide vehicles from crossing add to the "absolutely no truck traffic" signs already posted. The city will conduct a public hearing June 26 at 6 p.m. on whether to permanently close the Oak Street crossing a block away. It has been the scene of numerous wrecks by truck drivers ignoring the signs. After meeting with railroad officials, city leaders are determined not to close the Gold Street crossing.

## \$13K Schools' audit finds \$2K as only misuse

ELIZABETH STEWART  
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An independent audit of the schools' books has found no additional purchases for personal items by employees other than those questioned in a state probe last March into misuse of over \$2,000 in local funds in the school system's maintenance department.

Martin Starnes & Associates, hired by the county schools at a cost of \$13,000, has completed a "focused" audit and reviewed the procedure used and the findings in a report to the school board Monday night.

The accountant said his job was not to express an opinion.

Some of the expenditures questioned in the 2011 state probe into the system maintenance department went back several years, Finance Director Dr. David Lee said. "We have been doing what we needed to do," he added, referring to the audit authorized by the school board after an investigative report from the N.C. Auditor that found local funds misspent by some employees in the maintenance department.

Since hiring the accounting firm to perform a "focused" audit, the board has hired a permanent internal auditor for the school system and budgeted \$89,539 for the position, including benefits.

See AUDIT, 7A

## Public hearing set Thursday on KM city budget

City council will conduct a public hearing Thursday at 6 p.m. on the proposed \$34.4 million budget for fiscal year 2012-13.

The public is invited to give input at the special meeting in Council Chambers at city hall.

After a public hearing, the board is slated to adopt the budget, which is \$211,000 less than last year. It includes a 3 percent across-the-boards cost of living raise for the 180 full time

city employees and money for three new programs as well as capital projects.

City Manager Marilyn Sellers said at recent work sessions that the big obstacle in balancing the budget was the cost to the city for health insurance. Last year the city's tab for claims for health insurance was \$30,000 a week. City employees receive health and dental coverage and spouses get reduced rates.

The pilot programs funded in the new year budget include a "Smart Meter" program, which is expected to expedite utility

See HEARING, 7A

'If you dream it, you can do it.'



Paul Ledford, left, and his classmates of 2012 look out to the stadium stands, packed with loved ones and fans at Graduation Friday night. FOR THE FULL STORY AND MORE PHOTOS, see page 3A.



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Danny

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