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## Cities cringe at new annexation reform laws

*Gone are the days of land-grabs and sprawling municipalities... here are the days of MAJORITY RULES*

**EMILY WEAVER**  
Editor

Cities, you have met your limits. If you want to grow, you will have to get permission.

The North Carolina General Assembly passed a pair of bills recently that essentially fixes the boundaries of cities and bans involuntary growth. It also grants free accessibility to city services for all who are annexed.

Annexation reform was near the top of a master-to-do list for lawmakers in the short session, who returned from their drawing board with a July 1st death sentence on any

future involuntary annexations.

"This makes it impossible for cities to continue to grow," said Mayor Rick Murphrey. "We have the infrastructure and the services to offer to those we annex and they have that when they're annexed."

Police protection, fire protection, and solid waste removal services come to residents of every annexation, forced or otherwise. Although fire protection can lower a homeowner's insurance, city taxes and fees for services come to new citizens as well. Water and sewer utilities can also be accessed...for a price...until now.

A few residents in the Crocker Ridge sub-

division, annexed into the city in 2010, were surprised to find their street lined with new green trash cans greeting them with a note that said, "Welcome to the City of Kings Mountain" July 1st.

The city was surprised they were surprised.

Notices of the annexation intention were mailed to all residents and appeared several times in advertisements and stories in The Herald.

State law requires all municipalities to first pass a resolution of consideration identifying the areas intended for annexation. A copy of the resolution with a map of the pro-

posed area of annexation must be mailed to all property owners. Then, city fathers must pass a resolution of intent, give public notice, hold informational meetings and hearings before taking a final vote.

But in four days the law will change. Before city leaders can vote on annexation, the ones being annexed will have to vote and their majority will be the one that rules. The city will pick up the tab for the election.

In House Bill 925, which passed into law without Gov. Beverly Perdue's signature, property owners of annexed areas (voluntary

See ANNEXATION, 7A

## To Close or Not To Close?

*Citizens speak on safety, traffic concerns on closing RR crossing*

Will city fathers close the Oak Street railroad crossing?

City council members and the public were weighing in on that question Tuesday night at 6 p.m. At the Herald's press time the seven city commissioners were hearing comments from the public.

Three times this year truck and train accidents have happened at the Oak Street tracks because truck drivers have ignored posted "absolutely no truck crossing" signs posted by the city.

Tractor-trailers and trucks are prohibited from crossing both the downtown Oak and Gold Street crossings. Undercarriages of the big 18 wheelers get stuck on the tracks and

See HEARING, 7A

## Crosby found mentally unfit to stand trial for murder

Joe Crosby, 48, the Mary's Grove Church Road resident charged with murder in the 2010 strangling of his wife, Gaylain, 51, was found mentally incompetent to stand trial in Cleveland County Superior Court this week.

Judge Timothy Kincaid ordered the man admitted to a state mental hospital for treatment.

On Monday a psychologist testified in court that Crosby was afraid his wife was plotting to poison him.

In the early morning hours of August 2010, law enforcement responded to a 911 call from Crosby who said he might have killed his wife.

See CROSBY, 7A

## Out-on-bond KM couple back in jail with 2nd meth lab

A Kings Mountain couple - out on bond and awaiting trial for possessing a meth (methamphetamine) lab - is back behind bars after law enforcement officials say they found the two with another lab in room 221 of the Victory Inn.

Narcotics officers with the Cleveland County Sheriff's Department and Kings Mountain Police officers went to the Kings Mountain inn on June 22 to investigate possible drug activities. Officers knocked on the door of room 221 and found Mark and Catherine Stacey, who were busted on March 19 for possessing a methamphetamine laboratory in Gaston County.

See COUPLE, 7A

## City lays fiber of the future

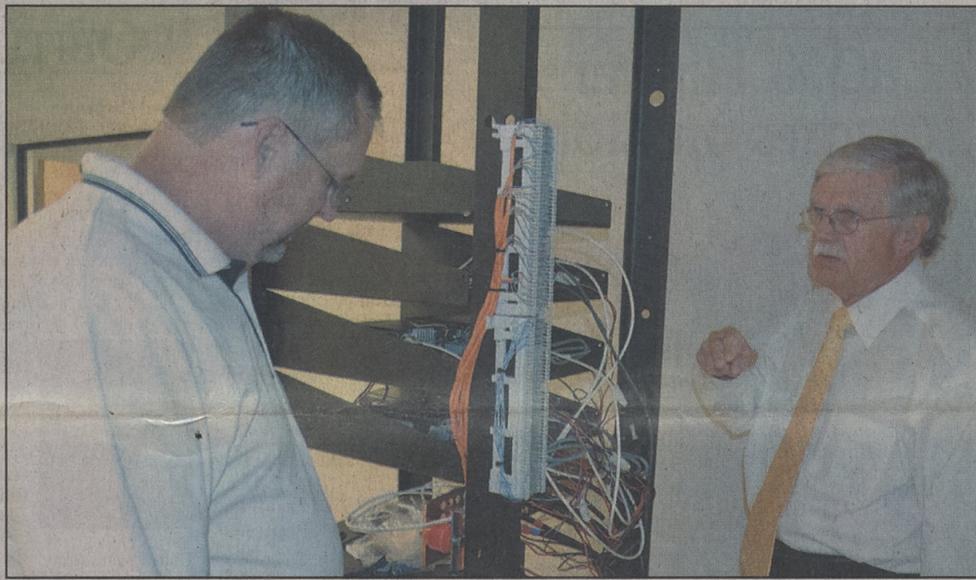


Photo by ELLIS NOELL

City Director of Energy Services Nick Hendricks, left, and Mayor Rick Murphrey look at a small portion of what will be the brains of the fiber optics project housed at the Citizens Service Center.

### Fiber optics to revolutionize city's connectivity, reducing costs

**ELIZABETH STEWART**  
lib.kmherald@gmail.com

The City of Kings Mountain is installing fiber optics connecting all municipal buildings.

That's what workers in big electric trucks are doing that you see downtown this week. The project is expected to be completed in August.

Mayor Rick Murphrey explains the process as a "self healing fiber network operating 24/7."

The mayor said the new system will remove contracted monthly phone line expenses of the city, create faster connection on the Internet and increase data transfer speed while reducing costs. Fiber linkage to critical utility components in the electric, natural gas, water department and all city

operations and facilities is a big plus. Fiber optics will also be a linkage to radio 911 communications.

Construction is underway for a state-of-the-art Fiber Hub Data Center at the Public Works/Electric Department building for 24 hour video surveillance.

"It will be fire suppressant and will

See FIBER, 7A

## Revolutionary 4th events start at 11

The City of Kings Mountain will celebrate the 4th of July with the "Revolutionary 4th" at the Walking Track Park in Kings Mountain. The event will feature music, muskets and the largest fireworks show between Charlotte and Asheville. Activities begin Wednesday, July 4th at 11 a.m. with the opening of a Colonial Era Living History Encampment.

Revolutionary War militias including the 84th Highland Immigrant Militia, the South Fork Militia and the Charlestowne Artillery will gather and participate with musket and cannon demonstrations, a children's militia muster and games. Everyone is invited to sign the Declaration of Independence.

Colonial craft making skills will be shared throughout the encampment. And, for those wishing to learn more about Revolutionary War combat techniques, there will be a bayonet training demonstration and opportunities to talk to all the re-enactment groups.

At 6 p.m. on the 4th, "Jeff Luckadoo and Southern Wave" will perform at the

See JULY 4TH, 6A



photo by ELLIS NOELL

Reenactor Jamie Walls practices his aim. Several reenactors will be at the Walking Track July 4, providing live history demonstrations on Colonial life.



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