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INSIDE

Horn, Holbrook headed
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7A



SPORTS,
1B

School safety: What would your child's school do in an emergency?

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"We're rethinking our best practices," Stephen Fisher, Director of Administrative Services, told the Cleveland County Board of Education at a workshop session Monday night.

He was speaking about school

safety. "Each time a school tragedy happens we look at each situation differently and we're in conversations daily since the horrible shooting in an elementary school in Connecticut," he said. Fisher added that the safety committee is focusing on three areas:

physical structure, school reaction and our plan; and communication in community and emergency response.

Several board members mentioned that several local campuses include more than one building, how to protect mobile units, some campuses have more than one en-

trance, what about lunchrooms, schools with breezeways and fencing?

"We're looking at all the needs and we're taking these questions seriously," said Supt. Dr. Bruce Boyles.

Safety plans are in place at each school in the county and school re-

source officers work in all secondary schools with a supervisor, all paid employees of the school system. Security entrances, safety drills, including fire and tornado, a code red system for emergencies and critical incident kits are a few of the safety steps already

See SCHOOL SAFETY, 8A

Faunce continues to seek rezoning

City Council will get a recommendation from the city planning board Jan. 29 to continue a Kings Mountain businessman's request for rezoning "to give everyone more than adequate time to review his site plans and conditions for rezoning."

For several months David Faunce of Faunce Properties has sought rezoning of property at King and Mountain streets, most recently reducing the number of uses and presenting a site plan showing what could be used in the zoning classification of Office, a medical or non-medical building.

Residents of Mountain Street, where part of the neighborhood is designated historical, have challenged the rezoning for some time. The Faunce location is currently occupied by a day care center at West Mountain and King streets. The new plans call for elimination of access to Mountain Street

At last Tuesday night's meeting of the planning and zoning board Faunce agreed to withdraw his zoning request long enough to allow West Mountain Street property owners more time to review the site plan, which includes parking lot, driveway access, layout and application changes.

City Council makes the final decision on zoning matters.

Input sought for planning and growth

What do you value most about Kings Mountain and what would you like to see happen in the future? How should our region grow?

Your input into these questions and more about future planning and growth is invited at an open house Thursday, Jan. 17, from 4-7 p.m. at H. Lawrence Patrick Senior Center, the eighth in a series of 30 community open houses planned in the "Connect Our Future" project spearheaded by the Carolinas Council of Governments.

Kings Mountain is part of a 14-county region billed as one of the fastest growing in the nation, with

See YOUR INPUT, 8A



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KMH file photo

Minister of Music Avery Jones leads the Mt. Calvary Baptist Choir in a moving rendition at the 10th annual Martin Luther King Jr. tribute in 2012.

Photo contest to highlight ML King Day celebration

The late Civil Rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. spoke numerous words of inspiration on "Faith" and "Faith" is the theme of the Martin Luther King Day 2013 photography contest at Kings Mountain City Hall on Monday, Jan. 21.

King once said "Faith is taking the

first step even when you don't see the entire staircase." He also said, "All who call on God in true faith, earnestly from the heart, will certainly be heard, and will receive what they have asked and desired."

The photography show will be

See CONTEST, 8A

Dropout rates down in Cleveland County

Figures released recently show 28 percent fewer students left local high schools without graduating last year.

Some 180 students in grades nine through 12 (3.56 percent) dropped out of schools in Cleveland County in 2012 - 70 students less than in 2010-11 when 250 (4.81 percent) left without graduating.

Last year's rate of 3.56 percent represents an improvement of more than 3 points since 2007-08 when the rate was 6.76 percent. And, the number of students dropping out each year has been reduced by half since 2007-08 when 376 students left school before graduating.

State average dropout rates also improved last year to 3 percent down from 3.43 percent in the for students in grades nine through 12.

The annual dropout rate differs from the four-year cohort graduation rate. The cohort graduation rate follows a group

of ninth-graders across four years' time and reports the percentage of these students who graduate four years after they begin high school. The annual dropout rate illustrates the number and percentage of students who drop out during one year's time.

A lower dropout rate often corresponds with a higher graduation rate as is the case in Cleveland County. The local graduation rate exceeded 77 percent in 2012 - an improvement of more than 4 percentage points from the previous year and the highest rate ever recorded.

Figures show 77.7 percent of those local students who entered ninth-grade in 2008-09 completed high school in four years or less. This is up from 73.2 percent in 2011 and an improvement of more than 15 percentage points since 2005-06.

See CLEVELAND COUNTY, 8A

Flu appears to be weakening

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The flu appears to be on a downward trend in Kings Mountain as well as all over the nation.

But health officials are still warning that if you feel any flu-like symptoms, stay at home unless seeking medical attention.

Dottie Leatherwood, Director of the Public Relations Department of Cleveland Regional Hospital, said that the effects of the flu in Cleveland County seem to have reached their height and have begun to subside.

Over 10 percent of all patients tested for the flu have tested positive according to Leatherwood who said that most of the doctors and emergency rooms in the area have stopped using the test because it is not 100 percent accurate and is very expensive.

Now if the patients exhibit flu-like symptoms, most doctors go ahead and treat them for the flu she added.

Cleveland Regional and Kings Mountain Hospitals are still enforcing the directive that no one under the age of 12 is permitted to visit patients.

Area nursing facilities are asking that no one with coughs or other flu-like symptoms visit the residents.

Flu vaccinations are available at your family physician's office, many area pharmacies, and the Cleveland County Health Department's General Clinic located at 315 E. Grover St. in Shelby. The Cleveland County Health Department is now offering free flu vaccines to uninsured and underinsured. There is a consent form available to download on the health

See FLU, 8A

Council remains undecided about police coverage

BESSEMER CITY - By the end of January Town Council will make a decision on whether to re-launch its own police department 14 years after disbanding it.

City Manager James Inman says it's a tough call for the six member board and purely a financial decision.

"Regardless of any rumors around town our working arrangement with Gaston County has been a good one, there have been no issues and police do a great job in this community."

Mayor Becky Smith handed each board member reams of material from the city, consultants and Gaston County at Monday's council meeting to take home to study. She plans to call a special meeting later this month for a vote on the issue.

Inman said that a poll recently conducted on Face-

book, at Angel's Shop and Central Drug Store revealed that 73% of the city's 5,400 residents want their own police department run by the city.

Gaston County has announced its plans to terminate its contract with Bessemer City July 1 unless the contract can be negotiated. Currently, Bessemer City pays Gaston County \$430,000 annually which includes a 5% increase each year. In 2013 the cost to Bessemer City from the county for police patrolling will be \$640,000 with increases for the next three years bringing the total cost by year 2016 to \$1.2 million dollars.

After first hearing the county's request for more funds in September, Inman enlisted a private consultant to examine the cost of

See BC COUNCIL, 7A



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