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No property tax increase proposed for 2013-14

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No property tax increase is proposed in the \$7.4 billion 2013-2014 county budget prepared by Interim County Manager David Dear.

The current county property tax rate is 57 cents per \$100 valuation. The tax rate

for the county-wide school district will remain at 15 cents. The early payment discount for taxpayers who pay during the month of August will remain at the current discount rate of one half of 1%.

Nothing is passed – and won't be until after the public hearing June 18 at 6 p.m. at the Charles F. Harry Administrative Building in Shelby.

County commissioners continued their discussion of the budget at Tuesday night's meeting and heard recommendations from the county manager and Finance Director Chris Cripps on future property revaluation.

The proposed budget includes an increase in tipping fees of \$44.65 per ton and household fees by \$12 a year.

Household fees have not been increased in 20 years.

It has been several years since county employees received a pay increase. The proposed budget includes a 2% cost of living adjustment for all permanent fulltime employees. Set hourly rates will also rise by 2 percent.

Dear said that beginning last year the county provided

employees with a Health Savings Account as the only health insurance plan option. He said health insurance costs have been controlled over the past several years due primarily to the savings in the HAS plan. For next year, he is projecting that premiums paid by the county on behalf of employees will rise by 8 percent with no in-

crease in dental premiums. The budget reflects that per pupil funding in the Cleveland County School System will remain the same at \$1,763.38. The current expense allocation will be reduced by \$558,643 due to the projected decrease in the number of students. The

See NO INCREASE, 6A

Leaders tout growth

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Cleveland County's economy is barreling ahead on the strength of new industry and business development incentives. Meanwhile, taxpayers are getting a lot of bang for their buck from robust and efficient utilities services to award-winning schools that boast high test scores and smaller-than-average class sizes.

That was the message as Kings Mountain and county leaders gathered last week at the annual State of the Community, sponsored in part by the Cleveland County Chamber of Commerce.

Two dozen grants – from public and private sources – drove hiring at businesses ranging from Steag Energy (40 jobs) to AT&T (43 jobs) and Solaris Industries (32 jobs), said Mayor Rick Murphrey in the address to local leaders and members of the public. All told, money from the N.C. Rural Economic Development Center, City Industrial Incentive and Community Development Block Grants helped create 510 jobs – or in some cases, slots for future jobs – across a handful of industries, including manufacturing, service and textiles, Murphrey said.

Many schools within the Cleveland County School System are fast becoming model schools that are the envy of other districts, according to Superintendent Dr. Bruce Boyles. Class sizes are below the North Carolina average in all grades, and administrators have been able to reduce the dropout rate by 50 percent in the past five years, Boyles said.

Two schools in the district scored in the top ten percent statewide, and eight scored in the top 25 percent in tests administered by the

See ECONOMY, 6A

"Flemming" to take the stage



Frank Lattimore, left, as Henry and Bridget Allen, as Karen, have the lead roles in the KMLT's "Flemming," opening Friday night at the Joy. photo by LIB STEWART

Kings Mountain Little Theatre will ring up the curtain on "Flemming, an American Thriller" by Sam Bobrick and directed by Georgianna Wright, Friday night at 7:30 p.m. at Joy Performance Center.

The play, a spoof of the film noir thrillers from the 1940s and 50s, will also be presented this weekend- on Saturday at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday at 3 p.m. and next weekend, June 14 and 15 at 7:30 p.m.

Bored by his privileged, but mundane life, Henry Flemming (Frank Lattimore) sells his lucrative brokerage firm to become a detective. On his very first case and to the horror of his wife, Karen (Brid-

get Allen), and his two crazy neighbors Suzy and Stan (Dawn Rickus and Sean Whitworth), the Flemming living room begins to fill up with dead bodies. One of them turns out to be Karen's father, Warren Larsen (David Allen). Ryan Dever is the plainclothes cop Lt. Davis, Carolina Allen is Miss Havenhurst, a sweet young thing who's had a tough life; and Jeff Cooper plays Vito Mardigan, a tough, threatening hoodlum. Even though Henry keeps showing up at home every day more disheveled and beaten up, he couldn't be happier. Henry is convinced he's found his life's

See KMLT, 3A

According to officials...

Petting zoos can, and do, occur safely

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Petting zoos or animal contact exhibits have not been banned from the Cleveland County Fair but Fair Manager Calvin Hastings says petting zoos may be absent "because of time constraints" at the 2013 Fair when it opens Sept. 26 for an 11-day run at the Fairgrounds.

Bethware Fair officials will not include live animals in exhibits at the community fair later this month, on the grounds of Bethware School in Kings Mountain.

Hastings said he has been waiting to solicit applications from petting zoos until safety findings were released by a 17-member Cleveland County Fair Study Commission looking at fair safety.

"I do foresee future petting zoos at the fair for kids to enjoy but maybe not this year," he added.

Hastings said the Cleveland County Fair Association will implement all the recommendations released Monday to make the 89-year-old agricultural fair safer for patrons in 2013. He said that implementing the

See PETTING ZOOS, 6A

Bethware Fair set for June 25-29

The Bethware Progressive Club is currently planning its largest fundraising event of the year, the 65th annual Bethware Fair.

This year's Fair runs nightly from 6-10 p.m. June 25-27, and from 6-11 p.m. June 28-29. Admission is free and all festivities are held in the track-field area adjacent to Bethware Elementary School in Kings Mountain.

"Since 1948, the Bethware Fair has served as a wonderful opportunity to bring the community together for a great cause," said Bethware Elementary School Principal Jennifer Wampler. "Initially, the event started out as a major fundraiser for the school and primarily served the Bethware community. Over the years, the appeal of the fair has grown to include Cleveland County and beyond, and now it is something that people of all ages look forward to attending."

While the annual fair always features rides, booths and food, Progressive Club members will debut several new attractions during this year's festivities. Bingo will be held every night in the school's auditorium, texting competitions will be featured each evening, a display of RV campers will also be available for public viewing each night. Themed 'car shows' will give auto enthusiasts a unique opportunity to enjoy new cars, motorcycles, trucks, and 4-wheel drive vehicles, rat rods, and of course, classic cars.

For many years, animals and agriculture



Rylie Carroll is the reigning Bethware Fair Queen and will kick off the 2013 Bethware Fair with an appearance on June 25.

have played an important role at the fair, but this year officials have decided to have no live animals on the premises. Instead, students will participate in a unique "barnyard

See BETHWARE FAIR, 3A

Will revaluation be pushed back?

The subject of property revaluation was on the table for discussion at Tuesday night's county commission meeting in Shelby.

Chairman Ronnie Hawkins said the county is still within the eight-year period required by law for revaluation. State law requires local property revaluation to be examined at least every eight years. The last county revaluation was in

2008 and the next one was scheduled in 2012.

However, due to an unstable housing market, it was put off until 2014.

If the commissioners change the date, revaluation will be in 2016.

Also at Tuesday's regular meeting the board was expected to honor the public service of Rep. Tim Moore of Kings Mountain with a resolution of appreciation.

ABC Board to hold budget hearing

Public hearing on the Kings Mountain ABC Board's proposed 2013-2014 budget of \$1,278,700 will be held Monday, June 24, at the Kings Mountain ABC Store, 220 Cleveland Avenue. The meeting is open to the public and a copy of the proposed budget is available for inspection in the office of the board's general manager Aileen Ormand at 220 Cleveland Avenue in Kings Mountain.

Ormand said the ABC

Board submitted the proposed budget May 28. The new fiscal year budget includes a modest increase in operating expenses.

Members of the Kings Mountain ABC Board are Mark Hullender, chairman; David Faunce, secretary; Sandra Murphrey, Ragan Harper and Ralph Grindstaff.

The KM ABC Store employs six people.

"We hope to have a good year coming up in 2013-2014," Ormand said.



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