



The three leaders of city and county government and the school system (Dr. Steven Fisher, left, Mayor Rick Murphrey, and Jason Falls) pronounced the community "excellent" at the annual "State of Community" breakfast sponsored by the Cleveland County Chamber last Wednesday morning.

Photo by ELLIS NOELL

## City on track for 2014-15

"The city of Kings Mountain is proud of a perfect audit for 16 years, our general fund closed at 24% of last year expenses (the Local Government Commission requires 8%), and we have adopted a number of internal cost programs as we look forward to a new budget year" said Mayor Rick Murphrey who presented a PowerPoint presentation detailing how departments stayed within their budgets last year and the projected budget for 2014-15.

One of the biggest projects ever is the \$33M water and sewer expansion project for which the city borrowed the money for a 20-year, no interest state revolving fund (SRF) for these projects which include a new 36-inch water line from Moss Lake to the city limits.

This year NTE Energy announced plans to construct, own and operate the Kings Mountain Energy Center, a 480MW natural gas electric generation facility off Dixon School Road at I-85. When completed, the plant will supply electricity to power approximately 300,000 homes and represent an investment of \$450M, providing numerous benefits to Kings Mountain.

The mayor also mentioned that the city has installed fiber optics to municipal buildings and vital infrastructure and a \$2,000/month in savings. The city will soon be offering rack space for local business to store their information in an affordable yet secure environment. Kings Mountain is the only city in the south to fully implement "Smart Meter" in electric, gas and water and a Smart Meter Fair will be held June 11.

Jason Falls, chairman of

the county board of commissioners, presented a PowerPoint presentation which detailed a county proposed county budget that has no tax increase.

He said the county is seeing increased health care costs and is partnering with Cleveland Community college in workforce development.

The county has completed phase I of the county/state Wildlife Commission public shooting range and will soon integrate a Human Services campus which will join DSS and the Health Department. This will be a one stop shop for Cleveland County residents, he said, adding that the new county health department could be open by the end of 2014.

The site for the new combined facilities is behind the current DSS on South Post Road in Shelby.

Falls said upgrades to the animal control program will be a model for our communities and the gas chamber will be eliminated at this site. Property tax revaluation is slated for 2016, he said.

A task force to encourage more retail business in the county is hard at work and he announced plans for remodeling Cleveland Mall and to welcome a new business, Dunham's Sports. He said the county expects to end the fiscal year with an over 16% fund balance.

Like Kings Mountain city, employees of the county will receive a 2% cost of living raise in the new year budget and the tax rates will remain the same for both Kings Mountain and Cleveland County.

Jack Hamrick, chairman of the county board of education, took the occasion to recognize the retiring Supt. Dr.

Bruce Boyles and he was given a round of applause. Hamrick presented Kings Mountain native Dr. Stephen Fisher who will become the new superintendent July 1.

Hamrick presented a PowerPoint that featured performance records of Kings Mountain students. He said this is the second year that Cleveland County Schools has seen an increase in the graduation rate and there is a 66% decrease in drop outs. Eighteen percent of teachers are nationally certified and 35% of the faculty holds advanced degrees.

He congratulated Kings Mountain High School Symphonic chorale for 39 years of top awards and KMHS Band for 34 years of superior ratings in grade IV music. He congratulated KMHS for successful implementation of a Smart Lunch program and said West Elementary School is one of only seven schools in the state recognized as Blue Ribbon Schools.

"The new field house at KMH is the way of the future," he said, heaping congratulations on the Touchdown Club sponsorship and the entire community that raised funds to build it.

Improvements have included a new soccer field, a new greenhouse, a new softball field house for high school and middle school girls, new stage curtains at Barnes Auditorium, repainting at the high school and more security doors. He also recognized Shearra Miller, vice chairman of the school board who is state president of the NC School Boards Association.

Breakfast sponsors were Kings Mountain Hospital of which Alex Bell is Administrator and vice-president of Cleveland County Healthcare System, and Southeastern Container of which Charles Roach is General Manager.

Micki Padgett, chairman of the board of Cleveland County Chamber, gave the welcome and invocation. Doug Sharp, interim Chamber president, introduced officials and speakers.

# Market Minutes with Margot

Saturday was another gorgeous market day at Foothills Farmers' Market Kings Mountain! The morning looked like it might be a bit rainy first thing, but the clouds opened just enough for the sun to periodically peek through. There was also a cool breeze, which kept things very comfortable!



Margot Plonk  
Foothills Farmers Market

Rumor has it that Lineberger's Maple Springs Farms will be on hand Saturday with blackberries. Blackberries just make you think of summer, don't they? Both strawberries and blackberries are extremely high in Ellagic acid, an antioxidant that acts like a scavenger. This reportedly can make cancer-causing chemicals inactive. It also helps to reduce the genetic damage that can be caused by air pollution and tobacco smoke. They also contain other antioxidants that help lower blood pressure and are a deterrent to cardiovascular disease. So, pie and cobbler bakers- get ready to bake some "health food" for your families!

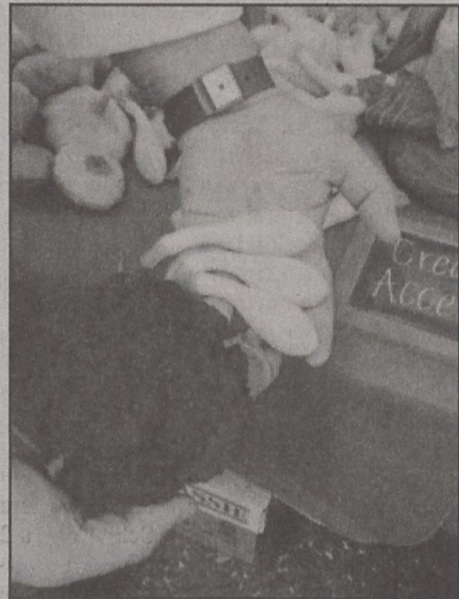
Burton Farms had some absolutely gorgeous produce once again. The purple and green broccoli made for gorgeous photographs! I understand yellow broccoli will be at the market this coming Saturday as well. Although I haven't yet tried it, I understand the alternative broccoli colors taste the same as the green, it just add a splash color to your dinner plate. They also had the first baby crookneck and straight-neck squash I have seen at market. Chef Marty from Inn of the Patriots snapped some of these up, along with beets and spring

onions. The pictures he posted Sunday on Facebook were frame-worthy.

Do you remember the small cedar chests that a local furniture store used to offer and market as "the perfect graduation gift?" BMC woodworking has mini cedar chests as well as striking, full sized ones. Each is well built, of cedar, and is an absolute work of art! Cedar is naturally resistant to rot, decay and is insect resistant, besides being absolutely beautiful! Among other things, Bennie also has hand built birdhouses and feeders and is very knowledgeable about birds. Come meet this interesting gentleman- you'll be glad you did!

As more produce starts to come in, additional vendors will be joining us every week. You owe it to yourself to come and check out the variety of goods and services at Foothills Farmers Market. Get to know your local artisans and farmers!

I promise it will make a positive difference in your life!



## SMART METERS: public invited to citizen fair on new technology

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meters, according to city officials.

Customers will be able to access up-to-date information about their usage through the www.cityofkm.com web site. Information about individual accounts will also be available on cell phones that are capable of connecting with the internet, city officials said.

"They're designed to save the city money and to help customers to manage their money," said Mayor Rick Murphrey. "A lot of towns are using smart meters for one utility, maybe two. We're the only municipality to have all three."

The mayor will join city council members and staff members of the city's Energy Services at a citizen fair next Wednesday from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. at Patrick Senior Center to demonstrate the new technology and to answer questions from customers. Visitors to the fair will be able to sign

up for a raffle at a chance to win iPads and a flat-screen television. Officials will help those interested sign up for access to the information portal at the fair, which will also offer popcorn and cotton candy.

"It's for people to come by and ask questions," Murphrey said. "We'll have the energy services staff there to answer questions."

The idea behind smart meters is to give customers as much current information about their usage as possible. Homeowners and business owners will be able to access daily and even hourly information on their electrical use. For water and gas consumption, they will be able to get information on a per-day basis. For electric customers, smart meters will generate a bill projection based on current usage and usage patterns.

Smart meters eliminate the need for monthly visits from door-to-door meter readers, city officials said. They're also intended to provide accurate information about outages and restoration times and to increase efficiency - letting its workers spend less time on the road reading meters and hunting down problems. The city is providing information about the smart meters to its customers through billing inserts. City leaders say they are proud of the program and the fact

that they are leading the country in their implementation. They're already fielding interest from other towns who are considering adopting smart meters of their own. Last week, the mayor, city manager and other officials of Red Springs, a small town in Robeson County, visited to check out the project and meet with staff members from the Energy Services Department. Red Springs provides water and electricity services to its residents and is considering adopting smart meters.

The city has hired a third party -- Utility Partners of America, of Greenville, S.C. -- to handle the large retrofitting and equipment upgrade job over the summer.

Workers from that company will come to every customer's house, knock on the door to make sure it's a good time to cut the main power for a few minutes and get to work. If they cannot reach anyone but have no trouble accessing the equipment, they will carry out the upgrades at that time. If there is an impediment, such as a locked gate or shrubbery, workers will leave a door hanger to notify customers that an appointment can be scheduled.

To learn more about smart meters, visit www.cityofkm.com/portal.asp.

## Facility inspections

Cleveland County Health Department facility inspections for the period May 19-23 included: My Grandpa's Country Store, Bethlehem Rd., 95 and Kings Mountain Care Center, York Road, 90.

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