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■ **KM Wrestlers Sweep Cleveland County**



Life in Cleveland County
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Carl White

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In Gaston County Feds Bust big video poker den

An illegal video poker house in Gaston County has been shut down with federal investigators saying the operation pulled in about \$10,000 a day from 2012-2014.

Documents released last week say Clarence Larry Calhoun, 1840 S. Battleground Ave., faces illegal gambling and money-laundering charges in connection with "Mr. Lenny's Place," which held more than 60 machines.

Calhoun faces up to 25 years in prison and could have to pay millions of dollars in fines.

According to a filing from Assistant U.S. Attorney Kevin Zolot, the government alleges that the establishment earned and concealed more than \$4 million during the two-year time frame.

The documents issued by federal officials claim that Calhoun and an unnamed partner opened their video poker house in 2012, then moved it in February 2014 into a large warehouse "on a major thoroughfare" in Gaston County.

The dozens of machines located there ran nonstop, with the two men employing a staff of eight, including guards who would meet customers at the door, providing them with free food and beverages while they gambled — or while they waited to gamble.

Under the terms of the agreement with federal prosecutors Calhoun will be required to forfeit "all property

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City eyeing new contract with YMCA

City Council was considering a new 20-year contract with the Kings Mountain Family YMCA for recreation at the Tuesday night meeting at City Hall.

If approved, the city and Y would embark on major, joint fundraisers to improve the existing building, expand existing programs and add additional equipment to pro-

vide increased recreational programming for Kings Mountain area citizens.

The City of Kings Mountain has contracted for the past 15 years to provide recreation and Mayor Rick Murphrey says "the partnership has been beneficial, providing more programs and saving our city money while expanding recreational opportunities."

DOT closes local bridge

As part of a continuing effort to improve and update the state's infrastructure system, the N. C. Department of Transportation closed a Cleveland County bridge near U.S. 74 Monday, Jan. 26, for maintenance.

The bridge on Bethlehem Road over Beason Creek, just west of Kings Mountain, will be closed until late February. A signed detour will direct southbound motorists to take Barrett Road to Range Road, then to Bethlehem Church Road to return to Bethlehem Road. Northbound motorists will reverse the detour.

For more details about North Carolina's bridges, visit NCDOT's bridge information website.

For real-time travel information at any time, visit the Travel section of the NCDOT website, call 511, or follow NCDOT on Twitter. Another option is NCDOT Mobile, a phone-friendly version of the NCDOT website.



Great Expectations after making a soft landing near E. King St.
 Photo by DAVE BLANTON

On a clear day you can see forever

Taking advantage of a break from the freezing weather the area has seen lately, Jim Falls took his hot air balloon for a ride Thursday afternoon.

He and three others enjoyed a cloud cruise that began near the intersection of I-85 and York Rd. and came to a stop a few miles away in an industrial park on the far east side of town.

The trip was also a kind of classroom in the sky.

For Richard Duren, it was his first turn as a student pilot, as he was learn-

ing more about controlling the aircraft and packing it away after landing.

"This is my fifth or sixth time up, but my first time as a true student pilot," Duren said.

Falls, his instructor and the pilot-owner of "Great Expectations," has been flying hot-air balloons for 26 years.

"We were in the air about an hour today," Falls said of the trip, which saw the small crew climb to a top altitude of 2,300 feet amid "very light wind."

Judy Ware Ford likes working with children

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When Judy Ware Ford retired from teaching second grade at West School several years ago she didn't quit doing what she loved.

"I love children and I love to see the smiles on their faces when they finish something they like to do," said Ford whose creativity and knack for involving children in creative projects is well known at Mauney Memorial Library and by hikers who frequent the Gateway Trails.

Ford got the idea for a



Judy Ford holds a youngster at the Gateway Trail where the Storywalk she leads has become very popular with young people.

summer science camp for students at West School and pitched the idea at Kings Mountain Family

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Clean audit for city again

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The City of Kings Mountain has a clean audit for the 17th year with no major findings for the 2013-14 fiscal year ending June 30.

According to the audit report from Martin Starnes & Associates, the assets of the city exceeded its liabilities at close of fiscal year by \$47,274,580 and combined fund balances increased \$582,197 with available fund balance for the general fund at 22.43% of last year's expenditures. The Local Government Commission requires 8% or roughly one month, the audit report noting that this

is a bare minimum reserve requirement. Currently the city has almost three times that amount as available fund balance.

The City of Kings Mountain's total debt increased by \$3,918,883 during the current fiscal year. The key factors in the increase were the new State Revolving Fund Bonds and debt issues to cover the cost of smart meters.

North Carolina General Statutes limit the amount of general obligation debt that a unit of government can issue to 8 percent of the total assessed value of taxable property located within that

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A new look at grading scales

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The way North Carolina high schools assign A's and B's will change with the freshman class at the beginning of the 2015 school year.

The North Carolina Board of Education, meeting in Charlotte last week, voted to move the state's high schools to a 10-point grading scale from the seven-point scale that has long been used.

The move has been advocated by the state's largest school districts as a

way to simplify the system and level the playing field in college applications.



Dr. Stephen Fisher

"It was a push from folks inside N.C. to get all students on a 10-point grading scale," said Cleveland County Schools Superintendent Dr. Stephen Fisher. "It's in the best interest of students."

See NEW LOOK, Page 10

A place to call home

Diane Wilson is looking for a place for women with substance abuse problems to call home.

"I've been there and now that I have my non-profit (5013C) in my hand I am looking for land to build a house or a house already built that I can fix up and rent with donations I hope to receive for this project," she said this week.

Wilson, of Tate Terrace, said she was cured of substance abuse in 1997. A retired certified nursing assistant, she can officially



Diane Wilson

start fund-raising now since she has a non-profit designation.

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