



Art on the Green

Joni Stone, a Denver artist and instructor, will be among the 40-plus local and regional artists participating in the 2nd annual Art on the Green festival at the Iredell Museum in Statesville on Aug. 25. It runs from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Admission is free. Exhibitors will show and sell a variety of paintings, sculptures, pottery, wood turnings, stained glass and weaving. Stone, who majored in art at Mundelein College in Chicago, previously worked at The Art Institute in Chicago. For more information about the upcoming festival, call 704-873-4734.

Prostate screening sessions coming up

Lake Norman Regional Medical Center will sponsor free prostate-screening sessions in September. The first will be held Saturday, Sept. 8 from 10 a.m. until noon at the hospital. The second will be offered Saturday, Sept. 22 from 10 a.m. until 12 p.m. at FitCare Life Center in Huntersville.

LNRMC active staff urologists Dr. Clifford Kass and Dr. Michael Cram will conduct the screenings, which will consist of a PSA blood test and a digital exam. Both screenings are free and are open to the public. September is National

Prostate Health Awareness Month. Men with the following high-risk factors are encouraged to participate: African-American and Hispanic-American men, African-American and Hispanic-American men with a family history of prostate cancer, men with little or no health insurance, and men with signs or symptoms of prostate cancer. All participants must register in advance for a screening.

To register, please call Amy Winecoff, RN, LNRMC Director of Community Outreach, at 704-660-4004.

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Police searching for car vandals

Mooreville police recently investigated damage to property reports involving several vehicles — two at Norman Drive residences and one on South Main Street.

Mooreville-South Iredell Crime Stoppers is offering a reward for any information about these incidents that may help investigators with the case.

According to reports, a man called police to report that his 1989 Jeep Cherokee had been damaged sometime between 10:30 p.m. on Aug. 5 and 9 a.m. on Aug. 6.

The front windshield, the driver's side rear window and a passenger side

Crime Stoppers

window were smashed. A metal object, which may have been used to break the windows, was found in the back seat of the Jeep.

At the house next door, a 1997 Ford Contour suffered similar damage. The owner of the car reported that she discovered the damage around 8 a.m. on Aug. 6. The front windshield was smashed.

And, a South Main Street man flagged down an officer around 3 a.m.

on Aug. 6 and reported that someone had kicked out the windshield of his 1985 Ford Thunderbird sometime between 1 and 3 a.m.

Anyone with information should call the Mooreville Police Department, 704-664-8045, or Mooreville-South Iredell Crime Stoppers at 704-663-7066.

Crime Stoppers offers rewards for information leading to arrests in connection with criminal incidents. Callers do not have to give identify themselves or make an appearance in court and rewards of up to \$1,000 are possible.

Police Blotter

Local law enforcement agencies reported the following recent charges and incidents:

MOORESVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Mooreville police filed the following recent charges:

Jonathan Arthur Neary, 48, 185 South Haven Drive, DWI (.13); Calvin Lewis Lewis, 50 of Canton, DWI (.11), possession of an open container of alcohol in the passenger area of a motor vehicle, expired tag, no insurance; Cheryl Lynn Snelling, 44, 112 Comata Road, DWI (.12); Kasey Conroy Farr, 25, 135 Aqua Drive, DWI (.11); Eric Channing Hartness, 28, 716 Central Drive, Statesville, possession of drug paraphernalia, resisting, obstructing and delaying a law enforcement officer; Emely Dare Menster, 17, 977 Perth Road, Troutman, possession of a malt beverage by a person less than 19 years of age; Mark E. Bova, 41, of Mooreville, being intoxicated and disruptive; Marcus Ray Worthington, 24, of Charlotte, possession with intent to sell and deliver a Schedule VI controlled substance, DWI (.09), driving while license revoked; Joaquin Garcia Jaramillo, 21, 339 E. Mills Ave., DWI (.15), driving while license revoked; and Thomas Martin Rose III, 39, 929 Oak St., DWI (.13), speeding.

Also, Edgar Keith Curtis, 44, 212 Beatty Ave., possession of marijuana, possession of drug paraphernalia; Robert Lee Turner Jr., 23, 517 Sycamore Lane, uttering of endorsement (three counts), forgery of endorsement (four counts); Kevin Mark Storms Jr., 17, 430

Hoover Road, Troutman, making a false report to police; Terry Allen Helms, 44, 105 Starwood Drive, DWI, driving while license revoked, inspection violation; Guzman Velez Carrera, 43, 188 Lansing Circle, DWI; Wanda Kay Springs, 47, 406 Sharpe St., larceny of a firearm; Steven Gray Pettit, 49, 1205 Shelton Ave., Statesville, harassing phone call; Jackie Lee Miller Jr., 27, 633 Oak St., possession of marijuana, possession of drug paraphernalia, failure to appear on charges of speeding and inspection violation; Nancy Jane Hunter, 40, 715 Spruce St., forgery (three counts), uttering a forged instrument (three counts); and Pamela Ann-Glenn Carey, 46, of Clarkton, larceny.

IREDELL COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Deputies filed the following charges during recent license checkpoints:

James Michael Barnett, 21, of 160 Pilch Road, Statesville, was charged with possession of marijuana after marijuana was found in his vehicle while deputies searched the car. According to reports, deputies noticed a 1985 Honda turn around in the road after approaching a license checkpoint on Ostwald-Amity Road near Bethesda Road on Aug. 3.

A license checkpoint was set up on Old Mountain Road near South Iredell High School on Aug. 5. Around 3 a.m., according to reports, John Drummond Cronin, 48, of 348 Duck Creek Road, Troutman, was charged with possession of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia after marijuana and a pack of



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Mooreville Police Department • NC Division of Motor Vehicles

Iredell residents may have to pay up if sales tax passes

By ALLISON HART

North Carolina lawmakers moved a step closer to a vote on the contentious half-cent local option sales tax last week when the House Finance Committee included it as a provision in its proposed tax package.

The plan, referred to by lawmakers as the 105 percent proposal, would eliminate reimbursements to local governments and give cities and counties the option of raising their sales tax to 6.5 percent.

The state could rake in as much as \$330 million if it is approved. Proponents say collections would net local governments at least 105 percent of their withheld reimbursements.

Opponents say consumers shouldn't pay for the state's financial blunder.

Although many low-wealth counties are backing the option, the thought of higher taxes raises a few eyebrows in more prosperous Iredell.

Alfred Gordon, president of Gordon's Furniture Stores in Statesville, said raising the sales tax in Iredell would stifle his competitive edge against neighboring counties that may pass on the option. Gordon said he has concerns about inconsistent taxes sending customers over the county line for big-ticket items.

"Because of the shortfall, I see why it is necessary to raise taxes," Gordon said. "But I would like to see it statewide to keep an even playing field. If Rowan County can hold their tax rate, we've got to stay competitive with our neighbors."

Iredell commissioners forwarded a resolution against the tax option to state lawmakers following their Aug. 7 meeting.

The board typically reserves tax hikes to build schools or implement new programs. This option, said Commissioner Godfrey Williams, forces counties to raise taxes to make up for the lost funds. The county's only other revenue source, the property tax, was set in July.

"The state is causing counties to raise taxes for something we've already been getting," Williams said. "We're not getting one new thing, not one new school. As a county commissioner, I feel we've been blackmailed."

Commissioner Chairwoman Sara Haire Tice,

a Republican, echoed Gordon's fear of losing business to other counties.

"This can hurt our business community," Haire Tice said. "If it's implemented statewide, it would not be a problem."

Rep. Frank Mitchell of Iredell said he won't vote for the half-cent tax option, and neither will many of his fellow Republicans.

"The half-cent sales tax will have very serious problems getting passed in the House," Mitchell said. "Serious opposition is rising against it."

He said House Republicans are offering the majority Democrats budget-balancing options other than cutting essential state programs and using the counties as a tax-raising scapegoat.

But if the half-cent local option is included in the House's proposed tax package, it may fall into more receptive hands in the Senate. Democrats and Republicans have voiced opposition to the House Finance Committee's other proposals. Many senators have said they would prefer a 1-cent sales tax increase statewide, but the chamber as a whole has not taken a stance.

Sen. Cal Cunningham, D-Davidson, said he hasn't decided how he would vote. He noted he's received an overwhelmingly favorable response from many of the state's leading industry and government groups.

"They're coming from the biggest business groups," he said. "The North Carolina Citizens for Business and Industry voted unanimously to support it. The (N.C.) County Commissioners Association sends a letter literally every week. I've heard from numerous groups advocating it, from health and human service groups to groups for education."

Cunningham said the other two counties in his district are in favor of the option. Many smaller eastern counties with a low property tax base are pushing their senators and representatives to approve the measure. The state could easily fill the remaining hole in the budget with tax revenues, he added.

"What's fueling the debate is that the state is hundreds of millions of dollars in deficit. We've made \$700 million in cuts, and it's still not enough," Cunningham said. "They're eyeing that \$330 million as an easy way to make up for the shortfall."

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State, local agencies' joint investigation spurs drug charges

Iredell sheriff's deputies have arrested three Charlotte men on charges of selling Ecstasy.

Lago Lavelle Weaver II, 23, Johnathan Russell Counts, 23, and Luther Thomas Smith, 24, were all charged last Friday following a two-month undercover investigation by Iredell sheriff's deputies and State Bureau of Investigation agents.

Ecstasy is a designer drug that is becoming more prevalent in Iredell County among the 18 to 23 age group, said Sgt. C. Harris, Jr. Ecstasy is made from a combination of drugs including cocaine and amphetamines. Often makers use other narcotics.

Some call it "X" or "rolls" and the drug is popular for its euphoric highs. Many makers use emblems on the pills such as the Nike swoosh and the Playboy bunny. The first buy Harris made had a Reebok shoe symbol on it. Another quantity had P2 for Playstation 2.

The drug sells for about \$25 to \$40 per pill on the streets.

Harris began investigating what he calls the fairly

large operation at the first of July. On two separate occasions, he bought quantities of 30 pills and 19 pills.

During the third and final buy, Harris bought 100 pills, he said. One hundred is the amount that leads to a trafficking charge.

The total street value of all the buys made was about \$4,000.

"You normally don't see this many at one time," he said. "It's usually just two or three pills at a time."

Weaver and Counts were both charged with felony trafficking of ecstasy. Smith was charged with conspiracy to sell ecstasy. All three are were given a \$50,000 secured. Other charges and arrests are pending, Harris said.

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