

Mustangs win 2A Western Regional

East Lincoln to face Farmville Central Saturday in Chapel Hill. **PAGE 4**



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Men arrested in child sex sting by LPD

Staff report

Three men have been arrested in a Lincolnton Police Department sting operation for allegedly trying to meet what they thought was a child for sex.

Michael Wilson Lesswing, Tadesse Zewdie Sullivan and Donald Joseph Klausing were arrested after making contact online with an undercover detective posing as a child and then agreeing to meet the child for sex.

Officers said Lesswing, 45, of 3403 Shady Bark Trail in Catawba, South Carolina, is a long-distance truck driver with prior convictions for disorderly conduct in South Carolina and driving while impaired in New York. Lesswing was arrested on Feb. 29 and charged with solicitation of a child by a computer to conduct a sex act and appearing to meet such child. He is being held under a \$75,000 secured bond.

Sullivan, 46, of 1611 Peachtree Road in Charlotte, is a restaurant manager, according to a press release from the Lincolnton Police Department. Officers said Sullivan has a prior conviction for driving while impaired. Sullivan was charged on Feb. 29 with solicitation of a child by a computer to conduct a sex act and appearing to meet such child and simple possession of marijuana. He was released on a \$75,000 secured bond.

Klausing, 55, of 12609 471st Ave. SE in



Klausing



Lesswing



Sullivan

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Downtown housing developments moving forward after brief delays



LTN File

Pictured is, top, the northeast side of Lincolnton's Court Square and, bottom, an artist's rendering of The Iverness, a proposed housing development that would occupy the space.

Piedmont Companies residential project could break ground later this year

PHIL PERRY
Senior Writer

The concept of three new downtown Lincolnton developments housing 38 new multi-family units is inching closer to reality. The three structures will be erected in three phases, six to nine months apart.

"We have followed all the meandering paths through local and state government to make downtown development a reality," Piedmont Companies

President William Heafner said via email. "We feel all is near the destination of having both city and county government review and approve our downtown development plans. The latest delay has been Piedmont Companies, Inc. attorney being out of town. I believe our attorney and the city attorney will complete the draft agreement for council to review and approve by April. With city approval and DDA approval it will then go to county for approval."

City officials feel confident that the

project is in a good place and that all parties are in agreement.

"Things are going well," interim Lincolnton City Manager Steve Zickefoose said. "Once Piedmont's counsel provides the information, we will move forward. I don't think there are any questions that need to be answered regarding whether or not we are going to do this. All parties involved have agreed that we are going to do this. It is just at a formality stage now."

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Senate candidates question endorsements

ADAM LAWSON
Staff Writer

A pair of state Senate hopefuls each announced endorsements from the same two elected officials last week, and both question the authenticity of their opponent's claims of support.

Mooresville resident Chris Carney listed 17 current or former politicians from Iredell County as supporters to his run in a post made Thursday afternoon on his campaign Facebook page. It took

less than 24 hours for Lincoln County Republican Sen. David Curtis, Carney's competition in the District 44 Senate primary race, to announce on social media that he had the backing of Iredell Commissioner Steve Johnson, one of the names on Carney's post.

Curtis said he had called Johnson on Friday morning to make sure he had his support. "What triggered it was Carney put on his Facebook that he was glad to have the

See SENATE, page 9

Deputies: Man arrested on crack charges after car chase

Staff report

A Mount Holly man has been charged with leading Lincoln County Sheriff's Office deputies on a car chase on Friday.

Deputies conducted a vehicle stop against Harvey Eugene Boyd, 52, of Pope Road, on Gastonia Highway and saw what appeared to be crack

cocaine in plain view on the car's center console, according to a press release from the Sheriff's Office. Deputies said Boyd partially rolled down his window to speak with investigators and refused to exit the vehicle.

See CHASE, page 10



Boyd

Meetings focus on county land use

ADAM LAWSON
Staff Writer

Lincoln County Planning and Inspections held the first of three public input meetings Thursday to discuss the coun-

ty's land use plan.

Department director Andrew Bryant led the session at Lincolnton's James W. Warren Citizens Center. Future meetings are set for Thursday at

the Lincoln County Shrine Club in Vale and March 24 at Denver's East Lincoln Community Center.

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Rep. Saine touts tax changes

ADAM LAWSON
Staff Writer

Last week, as North Carolinians started paying sales tax on a slew of previously untaxed services, Lincolnton Republican Rep. Jason Saine defended the state's financial picture.

"The idea of it was being a refresher on some of the tax changes we've made. Some of the narratives that have been in newspapers is that there are new taxes," said Saine, who serves as co-chair of the House finance committee. "We're trying to remind folks of what those tax changes have entailed. We're growing North Carolina in a positive way, and this is a victory lap

for all of North Carolina."

Personal income taxes fell by \$437 million during the 2015 session year, according to a Senate-produced handout. Though sales tax revenue grew by \$143 million, corporate taxes fell by \$23 million.

Since 2011, North Carolina's tax liability has fallen by \$2.7 billion.

"In 2017, we get everything implemented and citizens will pay \$720 million less in taxes," Lincoln County Republican Sen. David Curtis said. "We've expanded the base and it's only expected to bring in \$166 million."

Critics of the sales tax expansion, which impacts auto

See TAX, page 10



Rep. Jason Saine

Obituaries

Mary Garrison Allen
Pamela Anderson
Harry 'Pete' Bruner, Sr.
Nadine Campbell
David Chronister, Sr.

Barry E. Friday
Clara Hartman
Troy Lee Lawing
Donald Neal, Sr.
Linda Sullivan Reed

Harold Summey
Alisa Swanson
Dewey 'Jud' Turner

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