

Entertainment

Riverdance begins a six-day run at Ovens Auditorium next Tuesday.

5A



Prep basketball

Forest Hills boys advance to the third round of the playoffs with a 76-72 win over Lexington.

1B



The Enquirer-Journal

February 26, 2009 • 50 cents

Your county • Your news • Your paper

Monroe, N.C.

THURSDAY



Partly cloudy
High: 63
Low: 47
Complete report: Page 7A

Deaths

- Cynthia Aultman
- Geraldine Cook
- Woodrow Huntley Jr.
- Curtis Osborne Sr.
- Jerry Dean Pressley
- Van VanOrsouw
- Yvette Young

WHO'S NEWS

Woman pleads in suicide pact

MONROE

One of three women involved in a 2008 suicide pact pleaded guilty on Feb. 17 to involuntary manslaughter and trafficking opium or heroin.

Linda Kinschasa Maples, 28, was sentenced by Superior Court Judge Erwin Spainhour to 87 to 105 months, or about seven to nine years, in the Department of Correction. She must also pay a \$50,000 fine for the drug charge.

Maples, along with Jennifer Ashleigh McCord, 24, were arrested last March and charged with first-degree murder and felony conspiracy to commit murder after McCord's mother, Deborah McCord Gibson, 45, was shot to death in the women's home on Oglethorpe Lane in Monroe. McCord and Maples did not go through with their plans to kill each other. McCord was also charged with attempted first-degree murder.

Investigators also found that the women forged prescriptions to obtain prescription pills. Soon after her arrest, Maples pleaded guilty to forging a prescription for pain killers. Her two children live with relatives.

McCord pleaded guilty on Feb. 5 to involuntary manslaughter and trafficking opium or heroin by possession. Spainhour sentenced her to 90 to 117 months, or about eight to 10 years, in the Department of Correction. He also recommended psychiatric and psychological counseling.

BIRTHDAYS

Best wishes are extended to everyone who is celebrating a birthday today, especially:

- Diane Montgomery, Charity Richardson, Kim Renee Williams, Wilma Conder, Doyle McManus

Call (704) 261-2278 or e-mail birthdays@theej.com to add your names to the list.

INSIDE

- Classified 4B
- Comics 6A
- Entertainment 5A
- Obituaries 2A
- Opinion 4A
- Sports 1B
- State 3A
- Stocks 7A

DOT: Bypass funds are safe

Chief disputes reports that \$180M would be used for I-485

BY JASON deBRUYN
Staff Writer

MONROE
Funding for the much-anticipated Monroe bypass is still safe.

N.C. Transportation Secretary Gene Conti said Wednesday that \$180 million set aside for the bypass from the N.C. General Assembly will not be given to fund the final loop of Interstate 485 north of

Inside

How N.C. Department of Transportation allocates road funds 3A

Charlotte, as was reported by Charlotte-area media Tuesday.

"We are moving ahead with the Monroe bypass," Conti said. "We are re-

serving those funds so we have them where and if we need them" for the Monroe bypass.

In a press conference in Mint Hill Tuesday, reporters inferred from Conti's remarks that some or all of that money would be spent on completing I-485. Conti disputed those reports Wednesday, saying that the Monroe project remained the No. 1 prior-

ity and would get as much of that money as it needs. If it is fully funded, however, and there is money left over, Conti said the excess funds might be spent on the I-485 project.

"But we're not moving the funds until we know they won't be needed," he said.

The N.C. General Assembly last year approved \$24 million in annual gap

funding for the bypass. That money is to be used as leverage or a down payment on bonds to pay for the project. Tolls from the turnpike will then repay those bonds, with the \$24 million filling any of the gap. It is a separate fund from the \$180 million that has accrued through the state's equity formula.

See **BYPASS** / 3A



E-J staff photo by Ed Cottingham

Sha-Rayah Mena, 5, and Jose Mena, 4, work together on one of the new computers donated to the Union County Head Start program. The two are in Shirley Horne's class at the Winchester Center.

Head Start gets seven computers

MONROE
Union County Community Action has received seven computers to help prepare students for elementary school.

"We are very pleased to have them," said Lillie Seels, contract administrator for the organization.

Seels said she applied for the computers and was the only one of 55 applicants to be awarded the machines from IBM.

The computers will be distributed to Head Start locations at the Winchester Community Center, Western Union School, Wingate and

Richmond County. The computers will help 4-year-old children prepare for school in math, science and reading.

The National Head Start Association reports that the nonprofit program serves 1 million children in the United

States, through 200,000 staff members in 2,700 Head Start programs. It began in 1965.

"We have several other classrooms, so we are hoping to get more computers donated," Seels added.

— **Staff Writer Jason deBruyn**

Lawmakers support Obama

MEDIA GENERAL NEWS SERVICE

WASHINGTON — North Carolina lawmakers applauded President Barack Obama's pledge Tuesday to trim spending when he issues his first budget later this week.

"I want to pass a bud-

get next year that ensures that each dollar we spend reflects only our most important national priorities," Obama said. "Given these realities, everyone in this chamber — Democrats and Republicans — will have to sacrifice some worthy priorities for which there

are no dollars." Republicans and Democrats from the state said they were encouraged to hear Obama pledge to halve the deficit by the end of his term.

"The way to build 'a new foundation of lasting prosperity' is not to continue spending lavishly

on things that do not help Americans weather the storm or stimulate economic growth. Taxpayers simply cannot afford it," said Rep. Patrick McHenry, R-Cherryville.

After Congress passed a \$787 billion economic

See **OBAMA** / 3A

Scant clues in baby's death

Examiner says abandoned infant lived less than two days

BY BILLY BALL
Staff Writer

WAXHAW

The baby found dead in front of a Union County home Tuesday was likely born within 48 hours of its death, a medical examiner told the Union County Sheriff's Office Wednesday.

Investigators kept most details of the case, which is being considered a homicide, secret for now.

"We cannot speculate as to the cause and manner of the baby's death at this time," Sheriff's Office Capt. Mike Easley said in the release. "The medical examiner has informed us that additional investigation will be necessary to determine how the infant died."

Easley met with the medical examiner Wednesday afternoon. The body is being held at the medical examiner's office in Monroe. Autopsy results would not be released because the information is "evidentiary," according to a Sheriff's Office press release. The Caucasian female was delivered after a full-term pregnancy, Easley said.

Sheriff Eddie Cathey called for locals to submit any tips to Union County Crimestoppers at 704-283-5600. Tipsters can remain

See **BABY** / 3A

Construction starts on MLK extension

BY JASON deBRUYN
Staff Writer

MONROE
Bulldozers and backhoes have begun digging a path to extend Martin Luther King Boulevard.

"It's going well," said Barry Moose, Union County's N.C. Department of Transportation

division engineer. Once complete, the 3-mile road will serve as a Monroe bypass of sorts. Instead of taking traffic north to Charlotte, as the actual Monroe bypass will, Martin Luther King Boulevard will offer

See **EXTENSION** / 3A



E-J staff photo by Ed Cottingham

Construction has begun on a road extension that will link Martin Luther King Boulevard to N.C. Highway 200/Lancaster Avenue.

