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DEATHS: The obituaries can now be found on page **A5**

MORE MEDALS: US women's gymnastic team goes for gold. **B1**

Published daily for loyal reader Dennis Zimmerman and all of Burke County

Hopes swirl about lake park deal

Officials anticipate Easley announcement at Lake James on Thursday

BY SHARON MCBRAYER
AND JOSHUA HARRIS
THE NEWS HERALD

MORGANTON — An event on Thursday may seal the deal for a state park expansion at Lake James.

Officials said yesterday that Gov. Mike Easley, along with local dignitaries, are expected to be at the lake to announce that a deal has been made between Crescent Resources and the state for a 3,000-acre addition to the state park.

"It's my understanding the governor will be there, and I have been invited to attend, along with other area legislators," said state Rep. Mitch Gillespie, R-McDowell, who represents a portion of Burke County.

The expected announcement comes on the heels of a \$310-million state House bill signed by Easley that allows \$20 million for state parks. The bill did not include any mention of Lake James, but state park officials have said that development of a state

park at the lake is a priority.

"This probably is one of the largest pieces of legislation that impacts the area I represent," Gillespie said.

The advisory that the event would be held at the lake on Thursday came from Crescent Resources late yesterday afternoon. Crescent officials would not comment on the announcement expected Thursday or on Easley's attending the event.



Gillespie

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MITCH GILLESPIE
R-MCDOWELL

PLEASE SEE EASLEY, A7