

Mourne Observer

LARGEST SALES IN COUNTY DOWN

WEDNESDAY 7 DECEMBER, 2011

DOWN EDITION

e-mail: editor@mourneobserver.com

63rd YEAR

£1

**Ballynahinch High
prize-giving night
- Page 35**



**Industrial action
hailed a 'success'
- Pages 28 and 29**

**St Mary's PS looks
forward to a new era
at school - Page 16**



CHRISTKINDL LIGHTS UP DOWNPATRICK . . . Emma Hamill was in a festive mood at the Christkindl celebrations and the switching on of the Christmas lights in Downpatrick on Thursday night. See full coverage on Pages 44 and 45. (Photo: Chris Halpin)

McGrath narrowly misses out on Stormont post

A DOWNPATRICK councillor narrowly missed out in the race to become Margaret Ritchie's replacement as MLA for South Down.

Councillor Colin McGrath was pipped to the post in the race by a mere 17 votes.

The SDLP politician narrowly lost out to his party colleague, Newry and Mourne Councillor Sean Rogers, at the party's selection convention in Newcastle on Sunday.

The casting votes were made by delegates from the 11 branches across South Down.

A total of 239 votes were cast which saw the Mourne man secure the seat with 128 votes to McGrath's 111.

He replaces Margaret Ritchie, who had earlier decided to stand down as MLA and SDLP leader, to focus on her role as South Down MP.

Commenting on his narrow defeat he said: "I am delighted so many people supported my role to represent the Down District area in the Assembly."

Congratulating Mr Rogers, Cllr McGrath added: "I will continue to act as a representative for all of Down District and any matter important to local people."

Decisions, decisions?

PSNI CONFIRM CLOSURE PLANS

A SENIOR PSNI commander has admitted that "tough decisions" will have to be taken regarding the future of local police stations.

Chief Superintendent Nigel Grimshaw

made his comments this week in the wake of official confirmations that Down District could be stripped of four stations by 2015. The proposals first emerged last month in a leaked document.

If the plans to shut Ballynahinch, Crossgar, Saintfield and Killyleagh proceed it will mean Downpatrick will be

the only station open to the public around the clock.

Newcastle station is open 12 hours a day.

Speaking after a Policing Board meeting, when full details of the closure proposals were outlined, Mr Grimshaw took steps to assure residents that the

(to page 12)

ireland's
appliance centre
The Harbour
NEWCASTLE
Tel. 4372 4717

**Sales with
Service**



SPECIAL OFFERS

**32in LCD Television with Full HD,
Full Digital, RTE and Freeview,
Free 5 Year Warranty**

£299

Electric Heaters from.....£14.99

Electric Blankets from.....£19.99

Tumble Dryers from.....£135.00

Washing Machines from ...£179.00

FREE DELIVERY