

News

Controversy continues over FedEx hub

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STAFF WRITER

The FedEx hub. Friends claim it will bring good jobs and economic growth to the Triad. Foes claim it will bring noise, air, and water pollution.

Both agree it has brought controversy since construction of the one million square foot regional sorting facility, along with a third runway, was proposed in April 1998.

While the community counts the costs in human, economic, and environmental terms, the final decision rests with two agencies: the Airport Authority and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

The Airport Authority, created by the N.C. General Assembly in 1941, is an independent body designed to promote the develop-

ment of the Piedmont Triad International Airport (PTI). The cities of Greensboro, High Point, and Winston-Salem, along with Guilford and Forsyth counties, appoint representatives to the seven-member group.

The agency governs the airport with many of the same rights as a city or county. Since the master plan for PTI, dating back to the 1960s, has included construction of a third runway, the FedEx hub meshes with the agency's stated goal of enhancing the airport.

In the end, it is the FAA that would grant approval of the project because the airport applies to the FAA to fund construction of the new runway and other improvements. The final environmental impact study, originally scheduled for completion this fall,

has been delayed until the spring.

Guilford College trustee Stanley Frank served on the Airport Authority from 1962-97 as the Guilford County appointee, taking a three-year break from 1991-94. As chairperson for over twenty years, Frank recruited businesses to the airport.

In 1973, when the Guilford County Board of Commissioners faced a request to rezone land adjacent to the airport from agricultural to residential use, Frank

cautioned against it. "It was pretty well established that the airport authority would build a parallel runway," Frank said. Yet the board voted three to two in favor of rezoning.

In the 25 years that followed, the area sprouted hundreds of new homes in neighborhoods such as The Cardinal, Oak Bend, River Hills, and Edinburgh. Now, those residents argue that the proposed changes to the airport would make their homes intolerable. They have founded the Piedmont Quality of Life Coalition (PQLC) to oppose construction of the hub.

For those opposed, the equation is simple. The Triad is already thriving with a healthy job growth rate and unemployment at half the national average. The potential benefits of added jobs do not outweigh the risks to the environment and disruption of lives.

For proponents of the hub, the equation is also simple. While recognizing that there will "certainly be some intrusion," Frank said, "people would like no growth, but without growth, you will not expand the economy."

Frank is not alone. Ten of the eleven Guilford County Commissioners favor construction of the hub. County Commissioner, Jeff Thigpen, also an Assistant Director of Admission at Guilford College, said, "This

is a struggle to weigh the needs and concerns of a particular part of our community along with the needs of the region."

The data abounds, both for and against a FedEx hub, but for some members of the Guilford College community, the debate raises

questions about attitudes. English Instructor Carol Hoppe, after living in Europe for many years, questions whether, "whatever is onward and upward is positive."

Europeans know, she said, that "beauty and quality of life are worth preserving because there is not so much space available."

Hoppe's husband, Michael, a member of PQLC, fears what will happen if the Triad becomes a manufacturing-transportation-distribution cluster with FedEx as the lead anchor. "In North Carolina, Charlotte is known as the financial center and the Triangle is known for research and higher education. The Triad will become known as the armpit of North Carolina," he said.

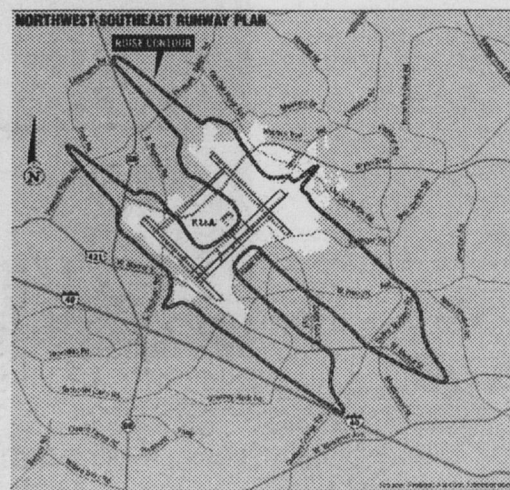
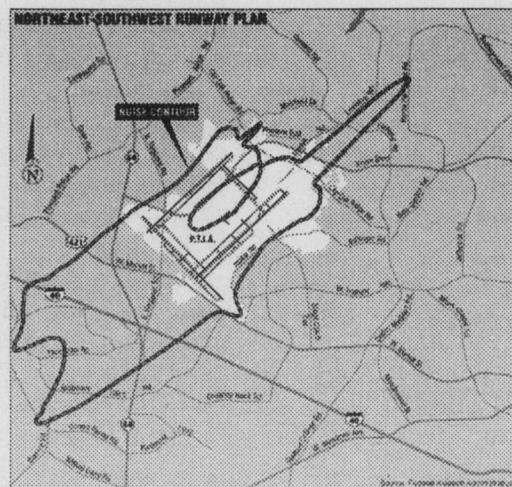
Concern about FedEx is not

limited to permanent residents of the area. Senior and Forever Green Co-president Alissa Fogg petitioned against the hub in her sophomore year and continues to oppose it. She

urges first-year students to stay informed and involved even though they will graduate before the new facility opens.

"Our concerns are for Greensboro and its long-term environmental costs. The water shortage and noise pollution are our biggest worries," she said.

For more information, visit the News & Record website dealing with the FedEx issue. www.news-record.com/news/indepth/fedex/. The website includes links to related organizations.



The Week at Guilford

Friday Sept 29

Women's Soccer v. Hollins 4pm

Union Movie "Heathers"

8:30pm-12am The Underground

Saturday Sept 30

Football v. Davidson 1pm

Campus Sidekicks Meeting 2:30-4:30pm

Boren Union Pool Party 9pm Ragan Brown Field House

Sunday Oct 1

Campus Meeting for Worship 1-2pm The Hut

Men's Soccer v. Savannah College of Art & Design 1pm

Avanti Reunion 6-7:30pm Commons and Gallery

Monday Oct 2

Guilfordian Meeting 7:30-8:30pm Commons

Old Time String Band meeting 6-9pm Boren

Tuesday Oct 3

Bible Study Group 8-9:30pm Commons

Wednesday Oct 4

Senate Meeting 3:30-5pm Boren

Phillip Harnden on "The Spiritual Pilgrimage of Fritz Eichenberg" 7:30pm Art Gallery

Thursday Oct 5

Union sponsors Pumpkin Chuckin' 4pm Lake

Scrabble Club 7pm-12am Boren

Christian Fellowship 8-11pm Commons

Student Activities presents Laura Fuentes in concert 9pm Underground

Union sponsors Off Pool at Breaktime w/Guilford I.D. 10pm-1am