

'Other' shopping centers

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the shopping center (to Smith Reynolds Airport)," he says. "We're right in the flight path."

Oliver purchased Jetmart in 1980.

"At the time the rent was low and I got a good deal out of the purchase," he said.

Both the Jetway and Jetmart were white-owned before Oliver purchased them. He attributes the quick sales and good prices to "white flight."

"During the 1970s, there were riots," he says. "The whites wanted to sell their land in the black community. If it was exposed (to the riots), they sold it."

Oliver says both of his shopping centers have "a lot to offer" shoppers and business people alike.

For instance, both centers have provided homes for new black businesses, he says, although Oliver says he must carefully screen the new ventures before they become tenants.

"Many black people come in attempting to start businesses and fail," he says. "I got to the point where I had to limit the number of new businesses I would rent space to. I looked for stable businesses to stabilize the shopping center."

Oliver says that each of the 16 businesses located in Jetway and the five located in Jetmart are stable and are doing well.

The construction of the East Winston Shopping Center on Claremont Avenue does not bother Oliver and he does not consider the larger center, whose centerpiece is a thriving Food Lion grocery store, competition. He calls it "an asset to the entire community."

"They (the tenants of the East Winston Shopping Center) have increased overall business in the area," he says. "Some of that business spills over into Jetway. It has a positive effect."

As you develop the area, it brings more and more people into the area to shop. The development increases the value of everyone's property."

Jetway's niche in the market is small businesses, Oliver says. "Many small businesses are looking for a place to move their business into," he says.

So many, in fact, that no retail or office space is available at present in either of Oliver's shopping centers.

When there is space to rent in his shopping centers, Oliver says, it's a hot commodity. So he's able to pick and choose the kind of tenant he wants, he says.

"I practice affirmative action," he says of potential tenants. "I don't discriminate and will rent to the white (business owner) if he's more qualified."

Oliver says the big advantage of renting at Jetway is the reasonable rates. "If I had to

build the same shopping center today, rents would double," he says. Businesses renting space in Jetway and Jetmart pay monthly rents ranging from \$150 to \$450. "I try to keep the rents very reasonable," says Oliver.

Oliver says the black community would grow more economically if more blacks would go into business.

"Not enough of our people are getting the necessary training to go into business," he says. "It's hard to find a good, qualified minority business person who does a good job and locates ... where we (blacks) can do business with him."

Many blacks lack business know-how and capital, Oliver says. "A lot of them (blacks) come up short with math skills," he says. "It's just a lack of knowledge."

Oliver suggests that minority businessmen have a good, sound education, know their trade -- possibly by serving an apprenticeship -- and accrue enough capital to keep a business running until it catches on. "These things are important," he says.

Oliver also says that black consumers should look at what minority businesses have to offer.

"I don't think many of our people patronize minority-owned businesses," he says. "They don't know what we have to offer. I think that if they came and looked, they'd be surprised."

Oliver says East Winston needs more blacks involved in all aspects of business.

"We need more of our people involved in all the trades and businesses," he says. "We need more people all around."

He says there is especially a need for a radio and television repair business, a burglar alarm installation business, more doctors and dentists, an appliance-repair business, a hardware store and a paint store.

"We need more blacks to learn about and go into business," he says. "That's just not happening."

Jim Conrad, owner and operator of Conrad's Hair Design, just north of Jetmart, and a tenant at Jetway for four years where he operates Beauty World, another hair salon, says Jetway is a good shopping center that may be coming of age.

"What we need is some support from the community," he says. "I'd like to see the community come in here and give more support. If the black community doesn't support the businesses in East Winston, nobody will."

Conrad says the major need in East Winston right now is not additional stores but support for the ones that are already there.

"The people need to support the businesses that are already

here," he says. "If that happens, other blacks (in business) will say, 'Hey, they're making it. We can, too.'"

Ed McCarter, owner and operator of Special Occasions Flowers and Gifts in the Jetway center, says he likes his location and that his business enjoys a steady clientele. He has been a Jetway tenant for two years.

"The community has been very receptive to my business," he says.

McCarter, who originally sold only black-oriented cards, recently expanded to flowers because "there is not a florist in the immediate area."

He says Jetway has not reached its full potential as a shopping center and offers a practical alternative. "It's more convenient to come here than to go to the East Winston Shopping Center," he says.

However, McCarter welcomes the business the East Winston Shopping Center brings to the black community. "Any business in the community is a benefit," he says. "It's a positive thing to have."

The construction of the WSSU students board buses en route to Black College Day held recently at Shaw University in Raleigh (photo by James Parker).

boon to Jetway, says McCarter. "There's going to be a lot of traffic generated by the YMCA," McCarter says. "People will come by to buy things."

Although McCarter believes

that, between the East Winston Shopping Center, Jetway and Jetmart, black shoppers have a variety of goods and services to choose from, he says there's still a need for more businesses.

"We need a hardware store, paint store, garden shop and drug store on this side of town," he says in partial agreement with his landlord. "That's what we need now."



College Daze

The construction of the WSSU students board buses en route to Black College Day held recently at Shaw University in Raleigh (photo by James Parker).

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