



Photo by Paul Collins
 Dennis Watts (seated), security guard, and Mike Beckman, the director of employee health and safety, pose in the lobby of City Hall South.

City implementing improved security measures at City Hall

BY PAUL COLLINS
 THE CHRONICLE

New security measures are being implemented this month at City Hall South to improve customer service and better protect city employees and the public, said Mike Beckman, the director of employee health and safety.

"We've been thinking about improving safety and security for City Hall South for some time" — since before 9/11, Beckman said. "We've not had any real security threats. We want to be a little proactive just in case."

For example, the human resources department is located in City Hall South, and one potential security threat could be a disgruntled employee or employees, though that has not been a problem so far.

Recently, the city began posting a security guard in the lobby. The guard's duty is to assist customers as well as provide increased security for the building, Beckman said.

"A major part of his duty is to help people get to where they

need to go so they can conduct their business as efficiently as possible," Beckman said. "We've had too many people wandering through City Hall who are in the wrong place. The guard can help people find (the) inspections (department), if that's where they need to go, or (the) planning (department) or wherever."

Later this month, city employees will be issued badges that will identify them as city employees to members of the public. Also, people doing business in City Hall South will be asked to sign in and wear visitors badges. People coming in to pay bills at the revenue office on the first floor will not have to get a badge.

"We want to know who is in the building in case there is an emergency and we need to get people out of the building," Beckman said. "It is also so we can get people to where they need to go. If someone is wandering who is not an employee, you can recognize them by their visitor badge and help them. It will allow us to be more proactive from a customer-service

standpoint. And the public will be able to tell who is a city employee in order to ask for help."

What has the reaction been so far to having a security guard at City Hall South? Dennis Watts, security guard, said, "So far, everything has been positive. A lot of the (people), especially the women working the building, feel more comfortable by my being here. Everybody likes it I've talked to so far."

"Everybody here has been so helpful about helping me learn the building and learn to put faces and places, that sort of thing. So far, so good," Watts said.

Asked if he is searching visitors who enter the building, Watts said, "At this point, we're still in the process of developing some procedures and that sort of thing....As far as any all-out searches, probably not. I've been in law enforcement, this is my 11th year....You know when and when not to (search). ... Dec. 26 was my first day, (and) I've not seen one I even felt like having to do searchwise."

Juvenile Justice Council Council and F.A.C.T.S. monthly meeting

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Join the Forsyth County Juvenile Justice Council at its meeting on Jan. 17 at noon in the assembly room at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 520 Summit Street. The program topic is "In the Expressed Interest of the Child When Your Client(s) is Denied Services" and will be presented by Lewis Pitts of the Advo-

cates for Children's Services Unit at Legal Services of North Carolina.

Join the Forsyth County Juvenile Justice Council for its F.A.C.T.S. (Family and Children Treatment Systems) meeting on Jan. 23 at noon at Exchange/SCAN, 500 Northwest Blvd., as the Department of Social Services, Center-Point Human Services and

Family Services present "The Effects of Domestic Abuse, Substance Abuse & Child Abuse on the Family System." This program will highlight domestic violence, child abuse and substance abuse warning signs that every professional needs to know in order to help families avoid being caught in the middle of abuse and violence.

Bulb Blitz II postponed, rescheduled for Jan. 19

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Bulb Blitz II, the day for planting thousands of flower bulbs donated to the city, has been postponed until Jan. 19 because of inclement weather. It had been scheduled for Jan. 5 but snowfall and low temperatures have forced the move.

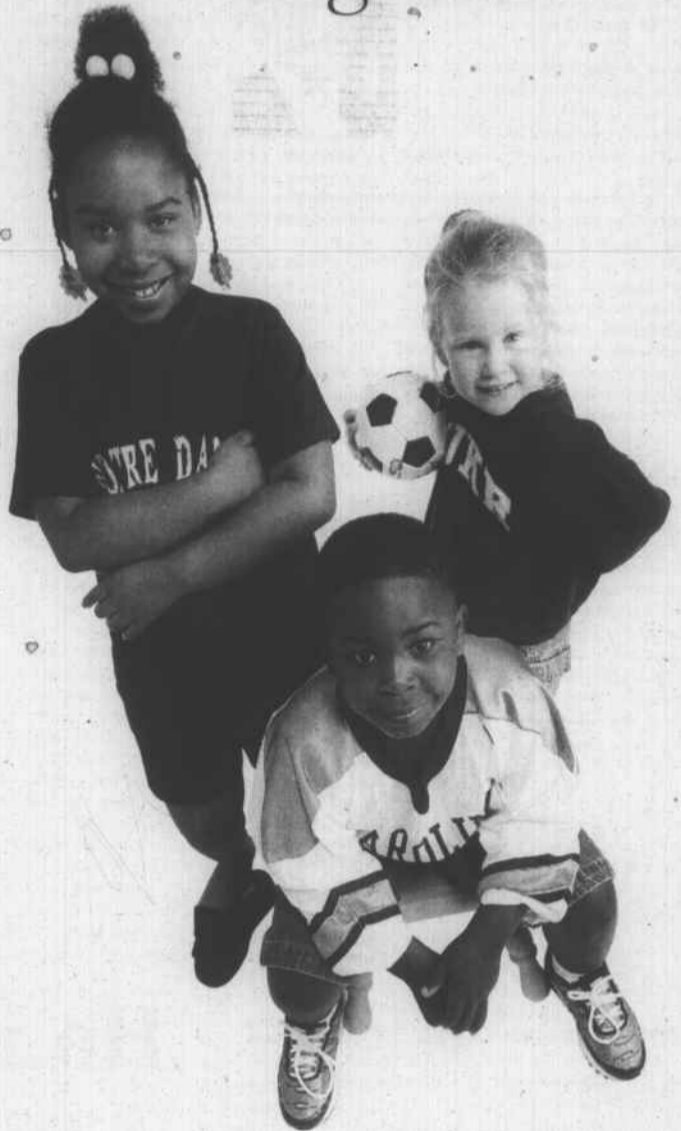
Keep Winston-Salem Beautiful and the city's Roadway Appearance Division will coordinate planting of the bulbs in city parks, road medians and other city-owned

property.

Garden clubs, school and professional service organizations, neighborhood associations, youth groups and

church groups that are interested in participating in the Bulb Blitz should call Keep Winston-Salem Beautiful at 727-8013.

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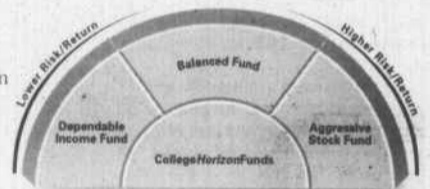
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