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TROSA expands to Triad, breaks ground in Forsyth County

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BY TEVIN STINSON
THE CHRONICLE

Last week Triangle Residential Options for Substance Abusers (TROSA), a Durham-based nonprofit residential recovery program, took a step closer to expanding services to the Triad when they broke ground for their new facility on Union Cross Road.

TROSA has been serving the Triangle area since 1994 when founder Kevin McDonald set out to help addicts in the area lead healthy, productive lives. Since its inception, TROSA has helped more than 9,000 people from across the state become productive citizens by providing comprehensive treatment and vocational training. Many of the participants in the program work with TROSA's moving crew or lawn care crew while they complete the program.

Keith Artin, president and CEO, said the program has a 90% success rate and almost everyone who finishes the program finds employment. "Almost 100% find jobs upon completion of our program. Over 90% stay sober and I avoid any kind of criminal convictions in the years following," said Artin during the groundbreaking ceremony.

TROSA began talks about expansion in 2018, when it was reported they were looking to open a facility in the Triad. Artin said at a place in time when the opioid epidemic is getting worse and more people than ever are in



Photo by Tevin Stinson

Representatives with TROSA, local elected officials and others break ground on TROSA's new facility on Union Cross Road.

need, there needs to be more recovery options. "People used to always say we need more programs like TROSA and we agreed," he continued.

"Our state and our nation has been struggling with this epidemic and we need more options for recovery ... We know the need is out there and the need is here in Forsyth County and throughout the state. We're very fortunate to be able to expand our work so that we can empower even more North Carolinians who are trying to rebuild their lives, reconnect with their families, and reclaim their futures."

Initially, TROSA planned to move its facility to 16 acres of land

off Old Greensboro Road. They intended to convert The Commons of Forsyth County, which is located on Felicity Circle and Felicity Lane, into a facility that would serve 250 people. But during a meeting in 2019, the Winston-Salem City Council voted 7-1 to deny rezoning in favor of TROSA. Before voting, several council members encouraged TROSA officials to consider opening the facility in a location with the zoning they needed already in place.

TROSA's new campus will be located at 1931 Union Cross Road and it is expected to be up and running by 2022. The facility will begin with 100 beds and expand to 200

in the future. TROSA's expansion is made possible by the North Carolina General Assembly, the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina, and Peter J. and Prudence E. Meehan. Additional generous support is provided by the following foundations: Golden LEAF Foundation, Truist Charitable Fund, Hanley Family Foundation, and The Winston-Salem Foundation.

During the groundbreaking ceremony on Friday, April 30, several elected officials spoke in support of TROSA's move to Forsyth County. Senator Joyce Krawiec said the groundbreaking ceremony

was a culmination of a lot of hard work from a lot of different people who were all focused on one goal: helping citizens in need rebuild their lives.

"I know the City Council, the Commission, the Forsyth delegation, all my colleagues in the House and Senate, we are ready and able to do all that we can to make sure that this becomes a complete reality."

When asked about TROSA's move to the area, Winston-Salem City Councilmember James Taylor, who is publisher of The Chronicle, said, "There are citizens in our city that have had to deal with the drug epidemic and the COVID-19

pandemic all at the same time. We're excited to have a program like TROSA in the Southeast Ward to provide more recovery options for residents in our community. I'm thankful that TROSA didn't give up on Winston-Salem; because we are better as a city by having them as our new neighbors."

N.C. House Representative Donny Lambeth said, "TROSA Triad will be a great addition to the community." Lambeth, who represents District 75, said independent research shows TROSA saves taxpayers millions of dollars in court costs, incarceration, emergency medical care, and other services.

"We know that when people with substance use disorder enter and stay in recovery, lots of good things happen. Individuals throw off the burden of addiction and rejoin society as productive, healthy citizens," Lambeth continued. "But it's not just the residents and their families that benefit when someone receives treatment and stays in recovery; in fact, our entire community and our state benefits. ... As public officials, we have a responsibility to ensure that the taxpayers' money is spent wisely and with TROSA Triad, we know the return on investment will be substantial."

For more information about TROSA and the nonprofit's expansion, visit www.trosainc.org.

Ronnie Long suing City of Concord for suppressing evidence

BY TEVIN STINSON
THE CHRONICLE

Ronnie Long, the N.C. man who spent 44 years in prison for a crime he didn't commit, is taking the City of Concord and every detective that worked on his case to court. Earlier this week, Long's lawyers filed a lawsuit alleging that the defendants in the case knowingly kept Long in prison for nearly 50 years, despite having

evidence that proved he was innocent.

When he was only 19 years old, Long, who is Black, was charged with the assault and rape of a white woman in her home on April 25, 1976. According to police reports, the victim was the widow of a top executive at Cannon Mills, a major textile company and employer in the area. The victim described her attacker as a "yellow-looking African American," wearing a leather jacket, a toboggan, and gloves. She told police her attacker came through an open window before pressing a knife against her neck and ripping her clothes off.

After she was unable to pick her attacker out of a lineup, two weeks after the assault, investigators with the Concord Police Department took the victim



submitted photo

Ronnie Long, the N.C. man who spent 44 years in prison for a crime he didn't commit has filed a lawsuit against the City of Concord.

to the courthouse and told her that her attacker may or may not be in the courtroom, and asked her to identify anyone who looked "familiar."

Long was in the courtroom to settle a minor

trespassing charge, but as soon as he stood up wearing a leather jacket, the victim identified him as her attacker. She later picked Long's photo out of a lineup where he was the only person wearing a

leather jacket.

Despite having an alibi that placed him elsewhere at the time of the assault and no physical evidence connecting him to the crime, on Oct. 1, 1976, Long was sentenced to

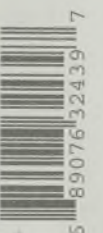
serve 80 years in prison.

After spending his entire adult life in prison, following a ruling from the U.S. Court of Appeals, Long was released last September and in December, Gov. Roy Cooper officially pardoned Long. For his time spent in prison, Long received \$750,000 from the state.

In addition to the City of Concord and everyone who worked on his case in 1976, the lawsuit also names the current and former chiefs of the Concord Police Department.

The Chronicle began following Long's fight for freedom in 2019 and we followed his journey until he was freed last year. To learn more about Long and his fight for freedom, visit <https://wschronicle.com/tag/ronnie-long/>.

Happy Mother's Day



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