

# The Charlotte Post

VOLUME 19, No. 11

THURSDAY OCTOBER 21, 1993

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## Charlotte wins 1996 NAACP convention

By Herbert L. White  
THE CHARLOTTE POST

What started out as an attempt to test the waters for black-oriented convention business has brought the 1996 NAACP national convention to Charlotte.

The nation's oldest civil rights organization Monday awarded the convention to Charlotte, ending a year of

campaigning by local civic, business and NAACP leaders. Charlotte beat out Cleveland, Detroit and Louisville, Ky. for the convention, one of the largest in America.

"I'm still kind of floating on air," said Charlotte Convention & Visitors Bureau President Melvin Tennant. "This is huge for the city."

The 1996 convention is expected to attract between 18-20,000 people, said Kelly Alexander, president of the N.C. NAACP and a member of the organization's national board.

With a presidential campaign brewing that year, major candidates are expected to appear, which also brings accompanying media attention to the host city.

"It's a great coup as far as the city's concerned," Alexander said. "This was our first time out trying to get the convention, so it says a lot

for the team that put it together."

The Charlotte effort reads like a Who's Who of civic leaders. In addition to Tennant, others who

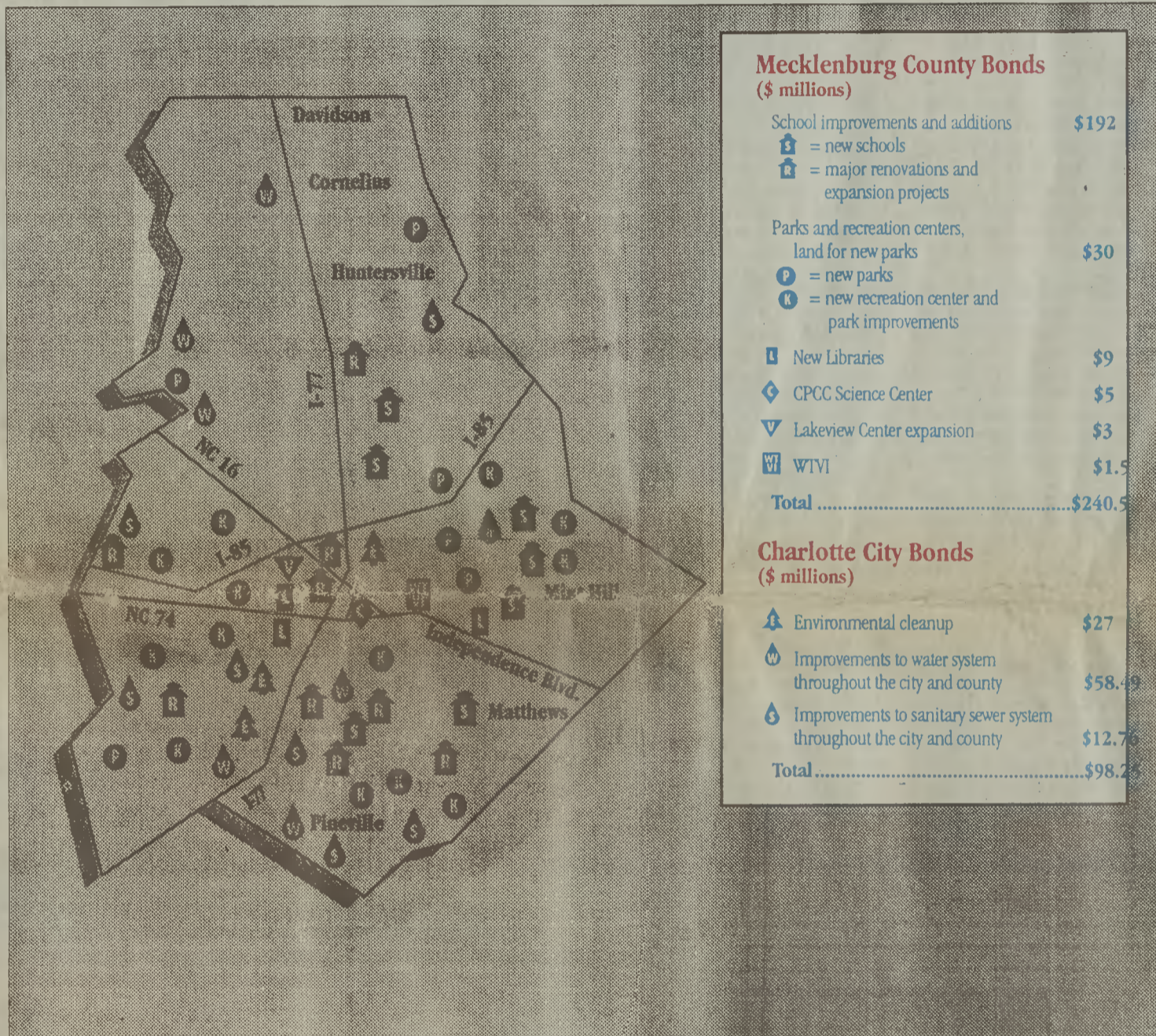
helped sell the city included Lenny Springs, a First Union National Bank executive and member of the NAACP na-

tional board; city council member Ella Scarborough; former mayor Harvey Gantt and Alfred Alexander, president of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg NAACP. The corporate community also played a major role in supporting the effort.

"The national NAACP convention is one of the largest of its type in this country, so

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## Money Well Spent?



## Bond drive still divides along school lines

By Herbert L. White  
THE CHARLOTTE POST

The 1993 Charlotte-Mecklenburg bond referendum is in good shape, Carla DuPuy believes.

Bob Davis isn't that enthusiastic.

With less than two weeks remaining before election day, the fate of Charlotte-Mecklenburg bonds is up in the air. At stake is millions of dollars to be allocated for everything from parks and schools to libraries and a television station.

Supporters say voter education has removed much of the fear and apathy stirred by the \$338.75 million

package, \$192 million of it earmarked for county schools. DuPuy, co-chairperson of the committee pushing the bonds, said education is working.

"I feel like it is. We've had many, many educational visits," she said. "Once people receive the information, they become supporters."

Others aren't so sure about that, especially in the African American community.

"The bonds are in trouble and if they are to pass, they'll need black support," said Davis, chairman of the Black Political Caucus (BPC).

At the heart of the contro-

versy is school bond package, which has brought howls of protest from diametrically opposed groups — the politically conservative Citizens

For Effective Government (CFEG) and African Americans, who feel their votes have been exploited for the benefit of others in the past.

"We've seen the broken promises," Davis said.

CFEG has voiced its offi-

cial opposition to the package, while BPC members will decide Sunday at First Baptist Church-West. The meeting starts at 7:30 p.m.

Black concerns include the placement of new schools and the hiring and promotion of African American professionals. If the school system decides to open new high schools, there's concern that West

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## Closings stir protest in Rutherford County

By Vera Witherspoon  
THE CHARLOTTE POST

The Rutherford County School Board was reckless to shut down four schools in Forest City's African American neighborhoods, critics say.

The local NAACP is concerned the closings will adversely affect property values in those communities, which are about 60 miles west of Charlotte.

"In our first reports to the board, the board said a funding investigation of the architect reports that several of the schools were ill-constructed and the architect report recommended that they go the way they are going," said Stinson

Thompson, chairman of a group appointed by the NAACP to investigate the closings.

"We asked for and received the architect report and there was nothing in the architect report that indicated they close schools or transfer to other schools. These are things that are being questioned right now."

Black residents and parents who have children who attend the targeted schools are in an uproar. They say the board made its decision without their input, especially when blacks supported a bond referendum that included the renovation of Dunbar Elementary, one of the casualties.

"The community residents are very

disturbed about the closings of the black schools in the black areas," Thompson said.

School Board Chairman Bob England said the closings were based on education and economics, not race.

"Never — during the building program, during the bond issue, during the extremely agonizing soul-searching — never has there been any decision made in which anyone pointed to a school as being a black school or being a white school," he told The (Forest City) Daily Courier.

With fewer schools in black neighborhoods, more black students will

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## Trade pact likely to hurt

Black workers would feel sting of NAFTA

By William Reed  
NATIONAL NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

While Congress is split in its support of the Clinton administration's North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the majority of African American labor and political leaders say such a pact will severely harm black workers and communities.

President Bill Clinton is pushing NAFTA, an agreement developed by the U.S., Canada and Mexico to allow free trade across their borders. The agreement has the approval of all five of America's living former presidents. But even the Democratic majority leader and whip in the House of Representatives are opposing the pact, and national polls show that more Americans oppose NAFTA than support it.

The main reason supporters say that NAFTA is good is because it will increase export opportunities, thereby increasing domestic production. Opponents fear that the pact will take away manufacturing jobs and undercut the wages of American workers.

Although Canada is a party to the trade agreement, the majority of concern among Americans regards Mexico. Canada has a higher standard of living than America and is ranked by the Human Development Index (HDI) as being ahead of the U.S. in life expectancy, educational level and basic purchasing power. Mexico, on the other hand, is a poor country and its market is small, only 4 percent of that of the United States. The Mexico market is about equal to the aggregate purchasing power of the African American community, or nearly \$300 billion. Critics of NAFTA complain that Mexico is not a large market for exports, but a plentiful supply of low-cost, high quality labor.

Opposition to NAFTA has created strange bedfellows. Ross Perot, Patrick Buchanan and most black political leaders are against it. "The real motive behind NAFTA is the lure of cheap labor for U.S. investors," black labor leader William Lucy said. "NAFTA is a massive gamble with Americans' economic future. For African Americans, the odds are overwhelmingly stacked against us."

The majority of the 40 members of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) are also fearful that NAFTA will move production jobs to Mexico and depress manufacturing wages and undercut wages in other sectors of the U.S. Reports say the Americans most likely to suffer would be those who live in the inner cities and poor rural areas, and have annual family incomes of less than \$36,000.