

Freedom Drive regroups for the future

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there, but also car parts and the animal hospital. There are still restaurants and dry cleaners that are doing well. There really are some success stories — not all gloom and doom.

The area has been hit hard in recent years. The Lowe's and Target chains, pulled and left large empty stores that have been sitting idle. The Target closing was a particularly bitter pill to swallow. Hopper says she no longer shops at any of the locations.

"They don't seem to be community minded anymore," she said. "It's leaving really hurt the community."

Warshauer agrees. "There were a lot of hurt feelings. People miss Target. There were a lot of people who not only shopped, but worked there. It was a good store. Ironically, it's leaving may create bigger opportunities for other companies to come in a better serve the community. It's just taking a long time to find the right business to do that. It's not like the building

is sitting there with no interest. There's lots of interest."

Mecklenburg's Department of Social Services is moving temporarily into the abandoned Target building while renovations are made to its Billingsley Road headquarters. Central Piedmont Community College has opened a satellite campus across from CityView Shopping Center. A Blockbuster Video store is in the works.

To keep momentum going, FDTF hopes to join forces

with the Northwest Corridor CDC and the Wilkinson Boulevard area. Ike Heard, executive director of the Northwest Corridor will speak at a FDTF open house Sept. 24 at the Freedom Drive location of Goodwill.

"We think Ike is doing a real good job with the corridor," Hopper said. "All three areas should be working together, but the way the system is set up it makes us compete against each other."

"We still think there will be a retail future with Freedom drive," she said. "We have a viable future."

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Oakview revitalization



PHOTO/SUE ANN JOHNSON

Mattie Morris begins installation of windows on her new house in the Oakview Terrace community, off Brookshire Freeway, in west Charlotte. Habitat for Humanity will dedicate seven houses this weekend. The construction this week is part of an effort to help revitalize the troubled community. The Fighting Back Project has made the effort a major focus, says Cluster One coordinator Donnie Moore. Moore said the Saturday's activities will begin with a community-wide clean up, with the dedication of the new houses at 3 p.m. Volunteers for the clean up are welcome, he said.

Trash station unpopular with neighbors

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"It is really what we call environmental genocide," she said. "They are just dumping everything on this side."

Neighborhoods are calling on Thornton Baker "T.B." Haynes, a retired public health administrator who used to work for the N.C. Department of Health and Environmental Resources.

Haynes, who lives on Plumstead, will help coordinate the fight against the transfer station.

"Now, there are two waste transfer stations on the west side of town and it is the community's feeling — and it is documented — we have more environmental pollutants on the west side of town than any other sector of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County.

"Secondly, we in the University Park North area are concerned because this waste plant, proposed for Northpoint Industrial Park, is in close proximity to our residential community. The only thing separating us is a creek...it is about 200 yards from the site to a resi-

dential area.

"It causes devaluation in property value...the possibility of excess infestation of rodents and other animals.

"And we do not know the track record of this particular company," Haynes said. "Nations Waste is a new company...formed in November of 1995, Lexington, Ken. This same company had proposed to build a regional landfill in Chester County, S.C. Chester County officials turned them off... did not approve it.

"But the biggest problem we have is the majority of the environmental pollutants on the west side of town," Haynes said.

Chester County supervisor Carlisle Roddey said the county board refused to approve NationsWaste's offer to buy and close the county's landfill in two years and open another beside it.

He said the firm is actually a subsidiary of a New Jersey firm, Continental Waste.

"They wanted to take over our old landfill," Roddey said.

Chester County council members "just didn't feel comfort-

able," about NationsWaste's proposal, Roddey said.

He said NationsWaste had a small landfill in Columbia which it bought from a firm which operates a transfer station in Pineville, from which it was taking trash to Columbia.

"NationsWaste was a very new company and that worried some members of the county council," Roddey said.

Calls to NationsWaste executive vice president James Swistock were not returned by press time.

Banneker

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There remained some hope, however, that some of the items could be displayed at Banneker's Oella home site. Friedman said he planned to donate some of the items to a new African-American Civil War Foundation museum being planned in Washington. The museum would probably be willing to share the items with the Banneker museum, he said.

down. He was much stronger than I was then."

She recalls another incident, this time with a woman on cocaine, which ended with Wright's knee cap busted.

While trying to take the woman into custody on suspicion of driving under the influence, they crashed to the pavement, with both of their weights coming down on Wright's knee.

"I'll take on a man any day rather than a woman," Wright said. "Struggling with that woman was one of toughest struggles I've had. That was worse than when I had the gun pulled on me."

Wright's personal history is fodder for a good novel. Born in Augsburg, Germany, to a German mother and West Indian father, she was adopted by an African American GI.

The family settled in Long Creek when Wright was about 4 years old and she attended

north end schools. Her light skin and long hair caused her some problems when she started attending Long Creek Elementary in the fourth grade and later Alexander Junior High in Huntersville.

"I was too light for black folks and too dark for white folks," Wright said. "I got involved in fights. That's what taught me to be tougher, too."

She often found herself in leadership roles, like playing quarterback on the neighborhood football team. Her independence was aided by the death of her adopted mother when Wright was 12.

Entering high school, she became determined to work and even moved into an apartment with a friend.

"I knew if I am going to make I'm going to have to do it myself," Wright said. "I knew I had to work hard to make it happen."

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should try for the force.

She signed up in July 1986.

The rest is history. She moved quickly through the ranks, working patrol in the southeast, then a short time in crime prevention, where she made sergeant, and then for the past two years she's worked in the internal affairs bureau.

Her small size hasn't hindered her, though it has caused a few suspects to want to try her, usually to their detriment. Like the young man who pulled a gun on her and soon found himself slammed against the wall across the room.

"Once you are in the field you have to prove yourself...not so much with the officers, but the citizens. They will test you.

Throwing the young man with the gun across the room was "God and adrenaline flowing," Wright said. "This same young man, later in booking room, I not able to physically sit him