

CIAA, city focus on growth

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Central and Preferred — to discuss what could make parking more successful.

"There are several things that we're looking at. One is to help decrease some of the demand and offer multi-day passes for some of the real close parking lots. Then also just communicate better, because as the commissioner said, we've got an aerial photograph of parking next to the Blake (hotel) on Friday and it was empty," McMillan said.

The local organizing committee, now led by businessman Ray Kennedy, will hold its first meeting to discuss the 2007 tournament.

CIAA Commissioner Leon Kerry said this year's tournament was the best ever for the league. He said some fans told him they didn't think the tournament could succeed here, but he never doubted the move away from longtime host Raleigh.

"The major comment I've gotten from the CIAA fans was how great the police were and how helpful they were," Kerry said at a Wednesday press conference unveiling the 2007 tournament logo.

Kerry said fans at this year's tournament took their experiences home, which he

expects will attract more people in 2007.

"Charlotte is on fire," he said.

The league, which also signed Kellogg's and Aittel as sponsors, has already sold out its allotment of tickets at its Hampton, Va., office, Kerry said. Upper level tickets will be less expensive to offset an increase in the lower bowl.

"I expect the tournament to sell out early this year," he said. "I think the main thing about Charlotte as opposed to other places that we've been is that we're an event. There's no major event like the CIAA tournament."

CIAA and Charlotte officials hope the tournament's success here will translate to football. The Pioneer Bowl, which was moved to Charlotte last year from Mobile, Ala., following Hurricane Katrina, will be here through 2008. The post-season game pits a team from the CIAA against the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.

"(The Pioneer Bowl) just needs to land somewhere for three years. We know we have a fan base in Charlotte," Kerry said. "Because we do it with another conference they want to have it in Atlanta or they want to have it (someplace else) and I'm trying to have it here. We're close to

the fan base here and we know you need to have it in one place for at least three years and develop your fans."

It might help if CIAA teams win a few more Pioneer

Bowls. Since 1997, only — Winston-Salem State University in 1999 and Shaw University in 2004 — have won the game. WSSU is moving to Division I this year.



Newman



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Hope for Liberia

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an abandoned building and renovated it in 2003. In that building they house a school where the kids are able to eat for free. Already he has designated a site and broken ground for the recreation center where he hopes to hold leadership development programs, Christian education, and non-violent programs, in addition to games the kids can play. However, the organization is just at the ground level of raising funds for the 1.5 million dollar project, and they need donations. Mattaldi has been on the show FrontPage w/ Bea Thompson, and has reached out to community leaders here, but has not heard back from anyone. "I reached out to the Bobcats...and the team's most valuable player Emeka Okafor, who is originally from Africa, and still have gotten no response," said Mattaldi.

"Should we wait until something bad happens on the continent before there is a response?"

He has mentioned speaking to churches about helping, but is always told they already have a program in Africa. "When the Pastor goes for about four days, that is not a mission," said Mattaldi. "This is a unique time to take a look at the problems and get involved. We must do something before someone else takes over." The native Liberian commented on activists and musician Bono's, involvement in helping in Africa. "I don't want it to be a situation where white folks do more for us than we do."

He is asking members of the community to donate whatever they can, be it \$100 or \$1. "People need food, students need books," said Mattaldi. The organization will also accept books, computers and clothes, but it all boils down to needing money to ship the materials to Africa.

"We need people with kind hearts who want to help," said Mattaldi.

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Hope for Liberia
www.hopeforliberia.org.

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