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THE PENDULUM

ELON, NORTH CAROLINA | WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4, 2009 | VOLUME 35, EDITION 7

www.elon.edu/pendulum

North Carolina nonprofits suffer in recession

Margeaux Corby
News Editor

While North Carolina commercial businesses continue to flail against the unrelenting waves of economic decline, nonprofit and volunteer agencies have become the newest victims of the statewide recession tide.

The state's revenue records are the worst they have been since the 1950s when records started being kept. Gov. Bev Perdue has announced she will most likely cut more than \$3 billion from the budget recommendations for the next fiscal year. Many nonprofits fear a slash of this severity will not only limit but eliminate nonprofits funded by the state.

"I think that a lot of people don't understand that with these cuts, they will affect what we now consider pretty core services in our community," said Pam Kiser, human services professor and board member of Family Abuse Services. "These are not fluff services."

Kopper Top Life Learning Center, which is a local nonprofit that uses a nonclinical atmosphere and techniques such as therapeutic horseback riding and horticulture for those with disabilities, is supported by several agencies which are funded by the state government. Even for those nonprofits not directly financed by the state, budget cuts could still be a blow to the organization.

"They'd be hurting the clientele and participants in the program, which would be lower income people with disabilities," said Deborah Meridith, director of Kopper Top. "It would be devastating, not just to our program, but to participants we serve and to our animals. We're not just a program that just has four walls but also animals and mouths to feed."

In response to this potential financial threat, more than 60 state nonprofits formed "Together N.C.," a group hoping to persuade legislators

to leave nonprofit budgets intact. Despite the group's various efforts, which included a press conference and delivering letters to lawmakers last week, getting out of the red is the legislature's main focus.

"Obviously the number one priority is simply balancing the budget," said Andrew Dugan, legislative research assistant to Senator Linda Gerou, co-chair of the North Carolina appropriations and budget committee.

While Dugan made it clear the specific nature of budget cuts — whether it be the amount or departments affected, is still being determined — he emphasized state-funded programs need to be practical.

"We're still in the very preliminary stages of the budget," Dugan said. "If you're receiving funds from the state, you need to be realistic about it and modify your expectations about it."

According to Kiser, nonprofits not only have to contend with the possibility of state cuts but the reality of decreasing individual donations.

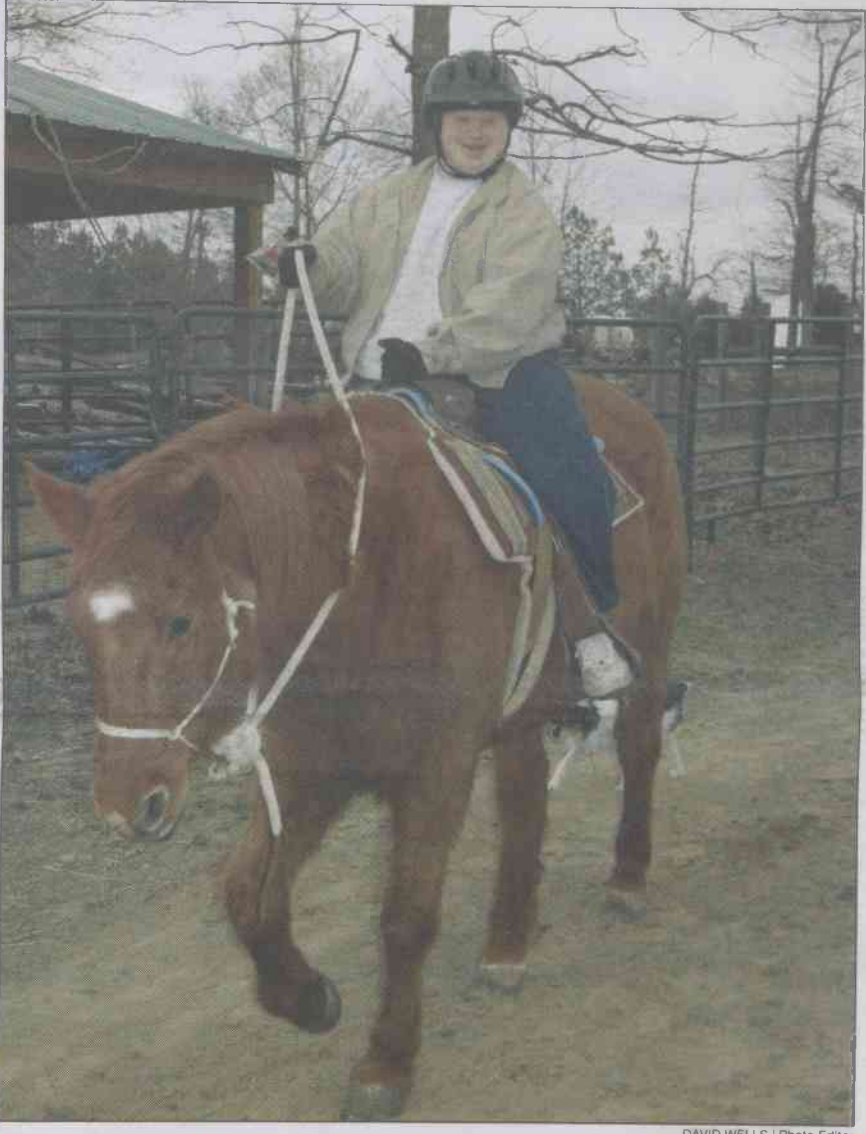
"If people are losing their jobs, and with just the general economic downturn, the general public does not have (money) to spend and support causes," Kiser said. "The nonprofits are really getting it from both ends. It sort of leaves us with nowhere to turn."

Dugan said many agencies have developed various savings techniques unique to their organizations but the bottom line is that nonprofits need to have a reasonable view of their finances.

"You just have to know your own budget," Dugan said.

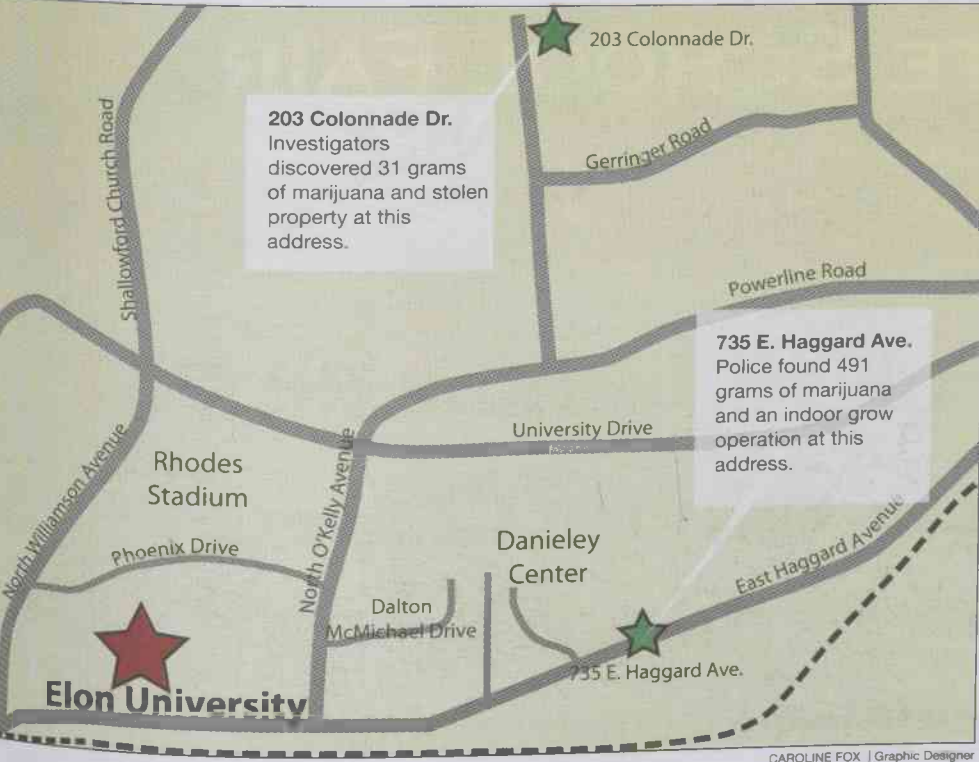
According to Kiser, for nonprofits to know their budget means knowing there is no money to spare.

"We're vigilant about controlling cost and we'll try as hard as we can but there is not a lot of wiggle room there," she said. "These are the types of organizations that are already operating on a shoe string."



DAVID WELLS | Photo Editor
Matt Evans, diagnosed with down syndrome when he was a baby, has been a participant at Kopper Top Life Learning Center for more than 18 years. Evans and his twin brother, John, have benefited from the services at Kopper Top, including the HOOVES program, which involves therapeutic horseback riding. Now, the brothers help out on the farm whenever they get a chance.

Students charged with marijuana possession, stolen property



203 Colonnade Dr.
Investigators discovered 31 grams of marijuana and stolen property at this address.

735 E. Haggard Ave.
Police found 491 grams of marijuana and an indoor grow operation at this address.

Laura Smith
News Editor

Eight Elon University students were charged with possession of marijuana Feb. 26 after two search warrants led several local police departments to ultimately discover 552 grams of marijuana, an indoor grow operation, paraphernalia and stolen property, the Town of Elon Police Department said Friday in a press release.

In an article released Monday in the Times-News, a few students, who remained unnamed, have withdrawn from school.

The Gibsonville Police Department, Graham Police Department and Alamance County Sheriff's Department, in association with the Town of Elon Police, executed the warrants that led them to the students.

Sophomores Dylan Barbash, Ryan Fletcher, Emily Gauthier, Tyler Hegamy, Andrew Mayo-Smith, Sean Smith,

Nicholas Wilt and Anna Zavala were all arrested, but under various counts of possession. Sophomore Lewis Hoss was also issued a citation for possession of a fraudulent identification card at the time.

The charges are as follows: Gauthier was charged with aggravated possession of marijuana, possession with intent to sell and deliver, maintaining a dwelling, possession of a schedule II drug, possession of drug paraphernalia and two counts of possession of stolen property. She was placed under a \$45,000 secure bond.

Wilt was charged with aggravated possession of marijuana, possession with intent to sell and deliver, maintaining a dwelling, possession of a schedule II drug and possession of drug paraphernalia. He was placed under a \$45,000 secure bond and \$6,000 secure bond from Gibsonville Police for breaking

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