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ROLLING OUT—Viking Freight System on International Drive is one of several trucking terminals in Morrisville. The town is attractive because of its proximity to major arteries and the Raleigh Dur-

ham International Airport. Viking changed its name last month from Spartan Express but some of its trucks still bear the old name.

Morrisville a mecca for trucking

But town leaders debate industry's economic, visual impact

By Ron Page

That 18-wheel tractor-trailer truck looming ahead of you on the road is an imposing sight and a heavy one as well. The truck and trailer alone may weigh as much as 30,000 pounds and, depending on what it's carrying, its gross weight may reach as much as 80,000 pounds.

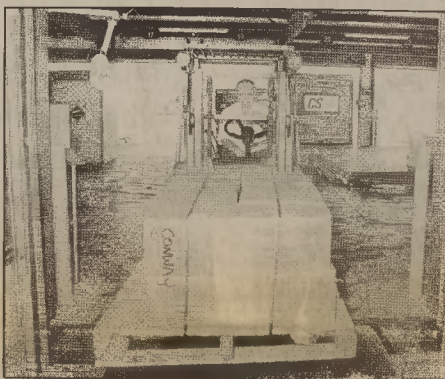
Multiply those weights by the dozens of such vehicles that use Morrisville roadways to and from home base and you understand why some town officials are giving serious thought to the continued expansion of the trucking industry. At the same time, others see trucking as a positive force because it provides jobs and broadens the tax base.

"In my opinion, trucking is generally o.k. provided it is in the right location," says Commissioner Billy Sauls, "but I don't want the town to be comprised only of trucks. We need other things as well. I'm not sure of the future. That will have to be worked on."

Commissioner Leavy Barbee, meanwhile, says he's made his feelings known.

"I think Morrisville has reached a point where I wouldn't like to see any more," he says. "We're small in space as everyone knows. They carry heavy loads, block streets, and damage streets. Trucking is not in my dreams for Morrisville."

More than two dozen firms now operate within the town limits, a major portion of them near Raleigh-Durham International Airport. The airport is a primary reason why many based their operations in Morrisville, as well as the major roadways which connect



LOADING UP—Jeff Dunn with Conway Southern Express moves freight into a waiting truck at the company's terminal on Triangle Parkway. The company handles general commodities and primarily offers next day or two-day services.

Morrisville to the rest of the Triangle as well as other areas of the state and country.

One of the most recent to locate in Morrisville is Conway Southern Express, which moved from Highway 70 to larger quarters at 1050 Triangle Parkway in December 1993. Service Manager Ronnie Hyatt, who lives in Garner, said the company outgrew its 24-door facility and now operates a building double that size on nine acres. "It enables us to be more flexible," Hyatt explains.

Conway is open 20 hours a day, with brief shutdowns between in-

bound and outbound truck movements. Hyatt says 53 employees are on the roster, 44 active, the others on what is called a casual list. Company trucks move general commodities—anything from a desk to a box of medicine, he explains, and most of the deliveries are primarily next day or two-day services.

The Morrisville site is one of 101 service centers operated by the parent company, Conway Transportation Services, in a core market that encompasses 13 states with 100 percent coverage and an overall 36 states and Puerto Rico. Its annual business exceeds \$5 billion.

"The selection of Morrisville as a site was because it is a good central location on a local level," Hyatt says.

Around the corner from Conway at 213 International Drive is the new 48-door terminal into which Spartan Express moved in November. A month later it changed its name to Viking Freight System, although trucks still bearing the old name can be seen moving in and out of the fenced grounds daily.

The company moved from a 23-door facility near Route 70 off Ebenezer Church Road it had occupied for about 15 years. The parent company is Roadway Regional Group, which has been in business since 1930.

Terminal Manager Caarle Donbins, a Connecticut native now living in Raleigh, has been with the company for 14 years. He said the move was made because of company growth and Morrisville's infrastructure. "The site we chose was convenient to major transportation, major arteries such as Routes 40, 85, 64, 1, and the beltline," he said. "And Morrisville officials also provided us with considerable help in looking for a site. We looked all over the Triangle and took into consideration future development. Morrisville's location midway between Cary and RTP was ideal."

Donbins said the company does mostly retail trucking, raw materials to manufacturers. "We do considerable business with the Revlon facility," he explained, "delivering consumer goods and bringing in raw goods to make cosmetics."

An overview of trucking in Morrisville shows three basic types of

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Town hires firm to develop plans for new police HQ

Site selected for facilities

By Ron Page

Morrisville commissioners moved along two fronts in public safety Monday night, selecting a 4.1-acre site at the northeast corner of McCrimmon Parkway and N.C. 54 for the town's proposed new fire station, while naming a Raleigh architectural and planning firm to map preliminary plans for a possible new police headquarters.

Location and accessibility were the reasons given for the land purchase. The property fronts on N.C. 54 and will be purchased from Charles and Nancy Zimmerli for \$230,000. Outgoing Town Manager Bill Cobey said the site was chosen for its geographical location in the northern part of town and its accessibility to N.C. 54.

"The property is more than enough for a fire station and lends itself to possible future needs by the town, such as a possible physical training site," he explained. He said the town was looking to have the fire station operative in about two years.

The action followed a closed session Monday night, capping a meeting that earlier focused on the future of police department facilities. By a 3-2 vote, commissioners approved hiring Smith Sinnett Associates, a Raleigh architectural and planning firm that designed Town Hall, to do preliminary studies, at a cost of \$7,500, on the need for new police facilities. Commissioners Leavy Barbee and Mark Silver-Smith voted against the measure.

Barbee questioned authorizing the money when the town really hadn't determined whether a new police department was even needed. Silver-Smith noted that Mayor Margaret Broadwell had earlier announced a task force of volunteers who had committed to study the subject and at no cost to

the town.

But Commissioner Billy Sauls said there was no doubt that a new police department building was needed, adding that he felt Morrisville was a town on the move and that it is part of the progress being made by the town. "We can do all these things with no added tax to the people," he said. "Let's not be negative. Let's be positive."

Commissioner C.T. Moore said he felt the study should be started now since planning costs continue to increase. He moved that Smith Sinnett be told to proceed with plans and that the town staff could help.

But Mayor Broadwell, who had appointed a Mayor's Task Force on Public Safety at the last meeting, asked Moore if he was deliberately bypassing that group. He said he was not, that it was his intention to save time.

Later Mrs. Broadwell said she planned to continue with the committee "if they still wish to serve." She had named Eli Zablud, president of Adams Properties; Vinod Goel, president of NFE Technologies Inc.; Mitch Adams, project manager of the Southport Business Park; former commissioner Dolores Scott; former Planning and Zoning Board member Randy Mundi; and Franklin Upchurch Jr., whose father is chairman of the Half Century Club.

The mayor had said the group would have a six-month window of time to come up with a feasibility study concerning police needs. She said she hopes for interviews with people such as the police chief and other town staff members in order to determine the size and scope of the project.

"We have land and enough for two more nice buildings on the seven-acre parcel where Town Hall stands," she explained.

Commissioners table mayor's office request

By Ron Page

Morrisville Mayor Margaret Broadwell will still work at home where she has a typewriter and other office equipment. Town commissioners Monday night declined to approve a request for a mayor's office at Town Hall.

Commissioners voted 3-2 to table the issue.

The issue of a mayor's office came to a head late last year when commissioners voted to convert the mayor's office in Town Hall to a conference room. The action, which followed Mrs. Broadwell's election, resulted in petitions signed by more than 150 people in support of the mayor.

Mrs. Broadwell had sent letters to each of the commissioners, telling them she wanted to establish regular times for visiting with citizens and others wishing to see the mayor. She said her private residence was not always suitable for such meetings. "Unlike my

predecessors," she said, "I handle my own office-related duties and keep my own files of everything which crosses my desk."

When the issue came up on the meeting agenda, Commissioner C.T. Moore immediately moved to table it without discussion, adding he thought the commissioners should handle the matter privately. Commissioner Phyllis Newnam seconded the motion. Mrs. Newnam previously had said she favored the commissioners sharing such an office.

But Commissioner Leavy Barbee said he supported Mrs. Broadwell's request, calling her a full-time mayor and admitting he had been wrong in not backing her request earlier.

"I don't think we need to table this issue at all. I think we should provide something immediately so the mayor can represent Morrisville well," he said.

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Not a stranger to town hall, Hodgkins likes returning role

By Ron Page

What a difference three and one-half years make.

David Hodgkins spent his first day on the job as Morrisville's new town manager last Wednesday getting reacquainted with the town he knew so well when he served as community development director and later as assistant town manager. He and outgoing manager Bill Cobey spent the better part of the day driving around town and Hodgkins says he found plenty of changes.

"We looked at the Perimeter Park pumping station, the Community Center which was privately owned when I was here, and we visited the site where the new theater is to be built," he said. The drive included looking over proposed road alignments, such as where Southport Drive will eventually hook up to Triangle Parkway, and the realignment of Morrisville-Carpenter Road to meet Aviation Parkway in a totally new and modernized intersection.

"We spent about five and one-half hours on the road getting me up to speed," said the 35-year-old Franklin County resident, who left a management analyst job with the

City of Raleigh the day before to take over the Morrisville position at a salary of \$60,000. "We looked and talked about the town boundaries, including the northern part of Davis Drive at Research Triangle Park. He (Cobey) mentioned the possibility of the area someday being used for luxury townhomes and high-end residential housing."

Of the changes he saw, the new residential sections impressed him most. "The Preston and Huntington developments weren't here when I left," he said. "The town staff members in my years here were concerned about not enough rooftops. They talked about population in the daytime, not nighttime. I found things then being developed on the drawing board have now taken place."

Hodgkins said he's noticed less aircraft noise than he remembered. "Airport noise was definitely a problem," he said. "People used to say they felt the noise was too great to live here. There was a perception by many that Morrisville was one of the noisiest places." Hodgkins asked Cobey while they were driving around whether there were quieter places or just less of them. "He seemed to feel there was not as



DAVID HODGKINS

...Morrisville's new town manager

much air traffic since American Airlines left," Hodgkins said.

Hodgkins left Morrisville after four and one-half years to become Franklin County manager in October 1992. He remained there until August of last year when he moved to the Raleigh position. His experience also includes being community development director for

the Town of Clayton from 1985 to February, 1988, when he became community development director in Morrisville.

The agreement with the Town of Cary for providing water and sewer has to be considered important, he said. Commenting on a feeling that the agreement could cause an ex-

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