

Town Crier

Chamber develops long-range plan

Long-range planning will be a key part of the Morrisville Chamber of Commerce's program of work for the chamber year that started Nov. 1.

Ray Lech, president of the chamber, said a five-year plan will be developed covering chamber finances, personnel, offices, equipment and organization.

In addition, a one-day session will be held during the year to develop plans and strategies for the following year.

Chamber operations, programs and services will be assessed, as will the chamber's future direction. Participation in the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's accreditation program will be considered.

Lech also said several projects will get top priority in 1996-97. These include reviewing options for a new chamber building, developing a stronger working relationship with the town, getting more members involved, and evaluating and enhancing present chamber programs and projects.

Another goal for the new year is to reach the 500 mark in membership. Chamber membership doubled last year and now exceeds 400.

The chamber plans to distribute 6,000 copies of its 1997 membership directory and economic data book.

Copies will be made available to residents and businesses in Morrisville as well as to residents and businesses of Cary areas that border Morrisville. The directory is expected to be in the mail by mid-January.

In other news, the next Business After Hours will be Dec. 17 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Dillard Paper Co. The final Adopt-A-Highway cleanup will take place Dec. 14 starting at 9 a.m. at The Deli Box. The chamber office will be closed Nov. 28 through Dec. 1 for Thanksgiving, and Dec. 21 through Jan. 1 for Christmas and New Year's Day.

Morrisville company move means more jobs

By Robbie Robertson

A Morrisville research company plans to move to Cary, in an expansion that should mean about 200 more jobs for Triangle residents, according to Joe Colatuno, vice president for the Americas, ClinTrials, Inc.

The move from Airport Boulevard to Harrison Avenue was merely a matter of space, Colatuno said, and will not be completed before early 1998.

"If there was more space in The Concourse, we probably wouldn't be having this conversation," Colatuno said.

The new 180,000-square-foot location should house at least 200 more jobs. The current location is

only 90,000 square feet.

"We're at about 440 (employees) right now," Colatuno said.

The new facility should be able to handle a total of 800 workers, he added.

Despite the increase in employment, the facility will be missed by officials in Morrisville.

"We hate to have them leave," said Ray Lech, president of the Morrisville Chamber of Commerce. "I wish we could have found some space for them. They've become a fast-growing company."

The company's growth is a primary reason for the location, Colatuno added.

"The industry and our company is growing extensively, over 35-

percent a year," Colatuno said.

Pharmaceutical companies are downsizing, and farming out many research projects, according to Colatuno, which is ClinTrials business.

"We service all the major biotechnical and pharmaceutical companies worldwide," Colatuno said.

The company researches new drugs in four phases, he added.

Phase I consists of moving the drug from discovery to research.

Phase II consists of giving the drug to small groups and recording the results.

Phase III includes large trials, similar to Phase II.

Phase IV consists of marketing

the finished, approved product.

The four phases of research are possible because of the Aug. 7 acquisition of Bio-Research Laboratories, Ltd., a Montreal firm who deals in pre-clinical trials and Phase I testing.

The acquisition completes the last piece of the puzzle, Colatuno said.

ClinTrials had no previous experience in Phase I testing before the acquisition.

In August, ClinTrials floated 2.6 millions shares of stock to pay for the acquisition. The \$85 million

raised provided the firm with enough cash to pay for the transaction.

While Colatuno could not discuss individual products because of confidentiality, he said the company contracts with major firms like Glaxo Wellcome, SmithKline Beecham, Baxter International and Sandoz.

ClinTrials, which is based in Nashville, Tenn., has offices worldwide, in Lexington, Ky., as well as England, Belgium, Australia and Israel.

Workplace drug program offered

A new program designed to eliminate drug abuse in the workplace is now available to local businesses.

The program endorsed by the Morrisville Chamber of Commerce for its members and also recommended for non-members, is operated by the Center for a Drug-Free Workplace, a non-profit organization based in Durham.

Established in 1994, the center now serves more than 140 companies in 29 North Carolina counties and eight states, offering drug testing and educational and training services.

In announcing the program, chamber officials said drug testing and substance abuse education in the workplace enhance productivity, morale and safety.

"It's astounding what it will do,"

said chamber board chairman Scott Beeman, owner of The Deli Box. "You're going to have a better environment and less people out of work."

The cost for businesses to enroll in the Center for a Drug-Free Workplace program is \$200 for chamber members and \$250 for non-members. Participating businesses receive hands-on assistance with substance abuse policy/procedure development, individualized training for supervisors and employees, discounts on drug testing and Medical Review Officer services.

Businesses also have the opportunity to take part in network group meetings and will receive newsletters covering information issues and topics related to the substance abuse field.

Cammie Walston, who works as marketing coordinator with the center, said businesses that join the program are assisting employees, not punishing them.

"We want to emphasize that this isn't done to be punitive," Walston said. "It's to raise awareness and enable a person to be assisted. It's not a witch hunt."

"The program can also provide monetary benefits for a business," she added. "It helps keep a business safe and directly affects the bottom line."

Officials said an average of 10 to 15 percent of workers in any given company are abusing drugs.

For more information about the program, call the chamber at 380-9026 or the center at 493-0614.

Woman killed while crossing I-40

A woman was killed Nov. 15 when she attempted to cross Interstate 40 near Airport Boulevard in Morrisville.

Valerie Munden, 36, was carrying a backpack and walking across the eastbound lanes of the highway at about 7:30 p.m. when she was hit in the center lane by a Honda Accord driven by David Kirk Arrington of Durham. She fell into the right lane where she was then struck by other cars.

Trooper C.P. Genaudeau of the state Highway Patrol, who responded to the call, said last week he had little information about the victim.

Sgt. J.C. Williams said the victim was identified through fingerprinting. Her last known address was in Kill Devil Hills, but Williams said the investigation indicated that she was homeless, and probably passing through the area on her way to Asheville. The Highway Patrol was

able to contact her family.

Two passengers in Arrington's car, his wife, Xinia, and a woman traveling in the back seat, Amparo Figuerola, sustained minor injuries in the accident. They were treated at Duke University Medical Center and released.

No citations were issued in the accident, which caused several minor wrecks and closed off traffic in the eastbound lane of I-40 for more than an hour.

Board moves ahead with sidewalk plan

Residents living along Morrisville Parkway will one day have sidewalks on both sides of the street.

The Morrisville Board of Commissioners signed an agreement earlier this month with the state Department of Transportation to begin a \$30,000 project to fill in gaps along vacant lots and areas built up before the town required private developers to install sidewalk.

The state, back in October of '96, awarded the town a \$10,000 enhancement grant to pay for a third of the project cost. But it took until this fall to formalize an agreement.

The work will be bid out by the DOT and the town will reimburse the department for the construction cost.

"We knew the majority of the land had been developed. And that private developers had put in as much as they were required," said Mike Allway, community development director.

"The area is getting more and more dense, so we felt the project was needed," he said.

The south side of the street has sidewalk. But there are areas on the north side that don't.

Allway said the sidewalk would be built in phases:

• A first stretch would be paved on the north side of the street from Davis Drive to Lumley Park.

• A second stretch would be installed from Huntington Apartments to the Park Grove subdivision.

• A third would extend from the end of Park Grove to an area adjacent to the Huntington subdivision.

• A fourth section would extend from the end of Huntington to the railroad at Crabtree Crossing.

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