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# THE CHRONICLE

Volume 43, Number 30 WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. THURSDAY, March 30, 2017

EXCLUSIVE

## Blue: Special election will happen

BY CASH MICHAELS FOR THE CHRONICLE

The state Senate minority leader says he is "confident" that the U.S. Supreme Court will affirm a federal three-judge panel's ruling last August that North Carolina's 2011 redistricting maps were unconstitutional because of racial gerrymandering, and that there will be a new map drawn, and special elections held this year.

State Sen. Daniel T. Blue Jr. [D-Wake] made that observation during a town hall meeting he conducted in Raleigh March 23. What made the Democrat Senate leader's remarks pertinent was that that

three-judge panel ruled last year prior to the 2016 elections, further ordering that the NC General Assembly redrawn the 2011 maps by March 15, and special elections be held by this November, with primaries in late August, early September.

But U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts temporarily blocked that order in January after Republican state lawmakers petitioned for an emergency stay. Subsequently, nothing has been heard from the High Court since then, leaving



Sen. Blue

both state Democrats and Republicans anxious.

Republican legislative leaders say the 2011 redistricting maps are legal and constitutional, therefore there should be no redo, and special elections are not needed before the regularly scheduled 2018 NC legislative elections.

"[We] ... are grateful the U.S. Supreme Court has quashed judicial activism and rejected an attempt to hullyfy the votes of North Carolinians in the 2016 legislative elections," said Senate President Pro tem Phil Berger (R-Rockingham) and House

Speaker Tim Moore (R-Cleveland) in a joint statement then.

Democrats, however, disagree. They say the three-judge federal panel found that 28 of North Carolina's House and Senate districts around Winston-Salem, Charlotte, Greensboro, Durham, Raleigh and Fayetteville, along with rural areas in eastern North Carolina, were drawn in violation of the U.S. Constitution, which prohibits the use of race as a primary factor in redistricting. Democrats further claim that the Republican legislative majority deliberately "stacked-and-packed" black

See Election on A8

## Founder Pitt says he's selling *The Chronicle*

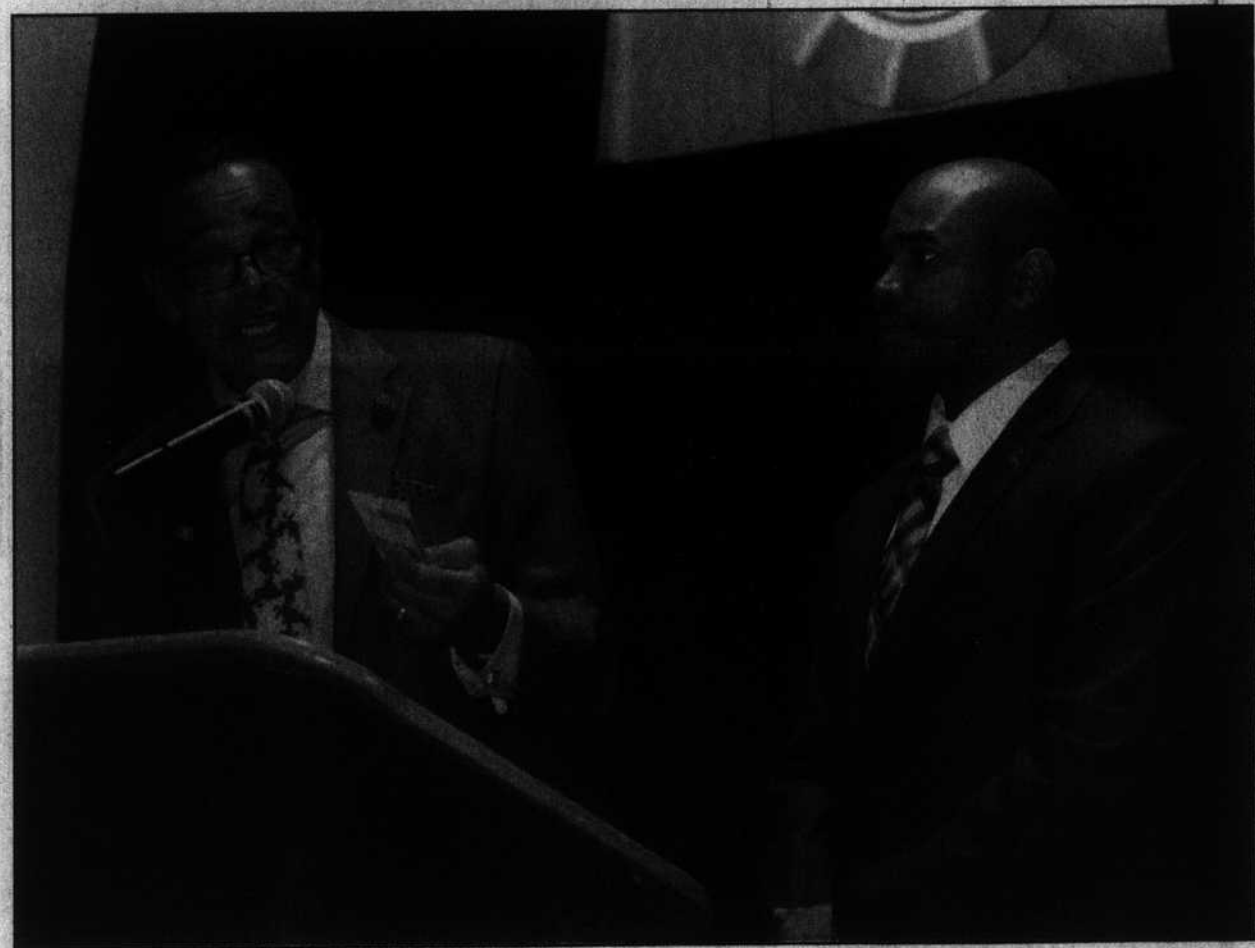


Photo by Todd Luck

Owner and Publisher Emeritus Ernie Pitt symbolically hands over the reins of *The Chronicle* to James Taylor Jr. at *The Chronicle's* Community Awards Gala on Saturday, March 25.

### New ownership coming to the city's oldest community newspaper

BY TEVIN STINSON THE CHRONICLE

While standing in front of nearly 500 people during *The Chronicle's* annual Community Awards Gala last weekend, longtime owner and Publisher Emeritus Ernie Pitt announced the sale of the city's oldest community newspaper.

"Besides my family, it has been

this newspaper. But it has become time at 71 years old that I give up the reins," he said.

Pitt started the weekly newspaper in 1974 after earning his degree in journalism from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. In an editorial dated Sept. 6, 2015, Pitt said on his days off while working at the Greensboro News and Record he would travel to Forsyth County to lay the groundwork for what would become the Winston-Salem Chronicle Publishing Company.

Today, the weekly paper reaches a circulation of 7,000 and focuses on positive news, and issues that may be overlooked in and around Winston-

Salem.

*The Chronicle* also hosts several community events, including the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day Prayer Breakfast, Lash/Chronicle Junior Varsity Basketball Tournament and the Community Awards Gala. *The Chronicle* is also responsible for the monthly magazine For Seniors Only, which caters to senior citizens in the area.

The new pending owners, The Chronicle Media Group, LLC, is headed by City Council Members James Taylor Jr., who represents the Southeast Ward, and Derwin

See Chronicle on A2



Photo by Todd Luck

Charlene Ward-Fleming gives her opinion on proposed Trans-AID rate hikes at a meeting held last week.

## Handicap bus riders frown on proposed rate increase

BY TODD LUCK THE CHRONICLE

There was no shortage of comments and concerns during the first meeting held on Winston-Salem Transit Authority's proposed Trans-AID rate hike last week.

The public comment meeting at the Carver School Branch Library on Friday, March 24, was well attended with more than 20 participants, many using walkers or wheelchairs, trying to fit into a small conference room.

Trans-AID gives on-demand rides to qualified handicap riders. Currently, WSTA is considering raising rates from 50 cents to \$1 and eliminating the Medicaid exemption that lets most riders use it for free. Medicaid would continue to fully cover rides for medical purposes.

Even raised to a dollar, the fee would still be lower than other cities of similar size to Winston-Salem and no where near the \$18 it costs WSTA per trip.

After the public hearings, comments will be given to the WSTA board and City Council for a final decision. The WSTA is facing a projected \$1.8 million budget deficit for next fiscal year.

Several riders said that while they're thankful for the service, a dollar is a lot on a fixed income. Judy Webster said that the current rate is small enough that she can pay

See Riders on A2



WINSTON-SALEM TRANSIT AUTHORITY

## School board recognizes Carver hospitality students

BY TEVIN STINSON THE CHRONICLE

When principal Travis Taylor arrived at Carver High School in 2014, the school's Academy of Hospitality and Tourism (AOHT) was nothing to brag about.

With only a handful of students enrolled and

even fewer incoming students showing interest in the program, many believed the program had run its course.

"I think the program only had about 27 students enrolled when I first got here. You could say it was on life support," Taylor said.

Fast forward to 2017: The program once thought to be nearly dead is one of the most pop-

ular programs at the school. According to Taylor, the program designed to teach life lessons in areas outside the classroom and expose students to a variety of opportunities and career paths is currently full, and has a waiting list of 75 students.

Along with building a strong foundation in core courses like social studies and language arts,

See Students on A2

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