

CIAA seeks vendors

Continued from page 6A

There's no shortage of customers at the CIAA tournament. Fans annually flock to the host city to take in four days of hoops, packing arenas in the process. Winston-Salem's Joel Coliseum, which

seats 14,000 for basketball, will host the tournament through 1999, beating out three other cities, including Charlotte. The pavilion gives minority- and women-run businesses another avenue to make money.

"One of the issues people raise is the role of black- and female-headed businesses and their participation in the tournament," Evans said. "We want to have more of a presence for black organizations other than the schools involved."

Budget battles over?

Continued from page 1A

agree on," Myrick said. "We are working with the president's staff, the White House and coming up with proposals that they are agreeable to and we can pass here in the House and move parts of the budget forward."

"There were specifics on welfare reform. I don't know how that is going to come down. We are agreeable to the tax credit and the 'one strike and you are out' for people who use drugs and live in public housing. That's something we can agree on."

"The main thing he said was the 'era of big government' is over," Myrick said. "We want to look for ways to do that. There will be no furlough. The continuing resolution is to the 15th of March. I don't anticipate another shutdown."

Congress passed and President Clinton signed on Friday a bill that would continue government operations until March 15, with reduced funding in most cases. Many programs will be funded at 75 percent of 1995 levels, but the bill essentially maintains the status quo in several key areas of dispute between the Republicans and the Democratic president.

The essence of the debate has been the Republicans insistence the President Clinton agree to balance the federal budget within seven years and sign a budget bill that would begin that process.

The Republicans, based on their so-called Contract with America, would make deep cuts in the rise in spending for Medicare and Medicaid and other social welfare programs.

At the core of the Republican plan is the end of federal control over these programs. Instead, federal funds, in reduced amounts, would be sent to the states as block grants.

The Republicans would however, approved a \$270 billion tax cut, which, according to Democrats, would largely benefit those with incomes over \$100,000 per year.

UNCC professor Vicki Crawford said she's "guardedly cautious" about President Clinton's budget plan, but opposes the Republican plan outright.

"It is clear that no matter which budget is approved, there will be drastic cuts in these programs," Crawford said. "These programs are going to be severely restricted."

Crawford said she also worries about turning over money for social programs to states in block grants.

"States like Mississippi and Georgia, these states have a history. I don't trust the states to do a good job with the money. In states like Mississippi there have been gross abuses of black families receiving benefits. The welfare system in Mississippi today is not much better than in the 1960s."

"I think we need to become very politically astute. My opposition to Republicans is not necessarily support for the Democratic program."

Democratic representative Mel Watt said the Republican plans would be devastating.

"It's hard to imagine a worse set of priorities for our country than those set by the House and Senate in the Budget Reconciliation Bill," Watt

said.

Watt, of N.C.'s 12th district, said the Republicans would make health care more expensive, less accessible and lower quality for everyone, especially the young, elderly and the poor.

There would be less commitment to education, higher taxes on working people, less nutrition, less immunization, less protection and more poverty for our children, he said.

Eventually, local and state taxes will increase, and the gap between the rich and the poor would widen, Watt said.

"Over seven years, N.C. citizens will lose \$6.75 billion in Medicare benefits and N.C. hospitals will lose \$2.17 billion in Medicare payments, endangering the existence of many of these hospitals or forcing them to transfer these costs to other patients," Watt said.

"The cumulative loss of federal funds to North Carolina and its citizens over the seven-year budget period is projected to be over \$17 billion," Watt said. "This includes \$6.75 billion in Medicare cuts, \$7.72 billion in Medicaid cuts and over \$2.6 billion in other cuts to federal aid."

Crawford said African Americans must become politically active in the upcoming election. "In this country, in the aftermath of the Million Man March and mobilization, I certainly think this next election will be critical. Black people need to mobilize and get out the vote. If things continue the way we are going, I'm not very optimistic."

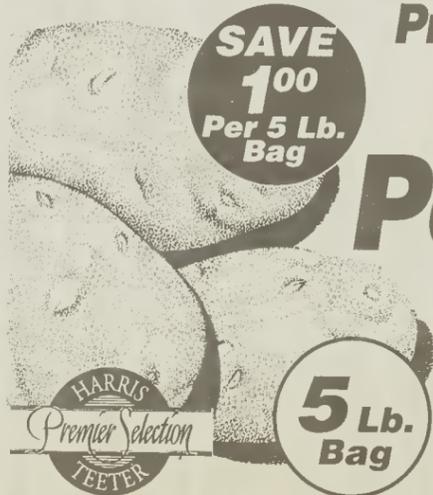
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UNC center's director

continued from page 8A

Dean Smith, coach of UNC's men's basketball team; are leading the effort. Another committee of students, faculty, staff, alumni and community members is working to garner grassroots support.

Horne says he's ready to roll up his sleeves and start soliciting donations, too. First he plans to continue building support on campus, then move further afield.

"One of the things I'd like to do to begin with is to reach out across the campus to make sure that the stakeholders are aware of what we're seeking to do and that they will support what we're seeking to do," he says. "Hopefully, they will share with us some ideas about what we could and should do. Solidifying the base is step one."

Horne, an expert on Africa and 20th-century Afro-

American history, as well as the film industry, envisions the center taking the lead in hosting conferences and symposia on topical subjects of interest to the black community.

The current strained climate of race relations across the nation, as well as the state's history, make the role of programs like the Stone Center even more compelling, according to Horne.

Pupil assignment plan passed

Continued from page 1A

planned at the site near the University Research Park.

The board voted Monday to assign more students from nearby University City-area neighborhoods to the school. That altered the number of inner city children who could enroll.

"I don't believe they are

assigned there," Davis said of inner-city children. "They can come, if they get transportation."

Davis said he's also concerned about what's happening at Billingsville Elementary.

"When it becomes a Montessori (magnet), neighborhood children will be bused

out," Davis said. "(School board member) John Tate said any child in the community should be able to go, but they are going to bus them to Cotswold."

The Billingsville students used to be paired with southeast Charlotte schools Matthews and McKee elementary schools.

Labor seek shorter work weeks

Continued from page 7A

Labor Ministry to delay its plan to move to a 40-hour workweek beginning in April 1997. The reason? The bottom line.

Fewer hours usually means companies end up paying workers more overtime, and "it is difficult for small and medium-sized companies to absorb the costs," the business

groups said in a joint statement in December.

But in much of Europe, there is a growing sense that 40 hours a week plus overtime is simply too much - and life's pleasures too fleeting. In Denmark, for example, workers put in 37.5 hours a week and take a minimum five weeks to get away from it all.

"No one ever said on his deathbed, 'I wish I spent more

time at the office," said Marc Delacroix, a French railroad welder who joined a 3 1/2-week-long strike that paralyzed France until just before Christmas.

Germany is blazing the trail to a shorter workweek and a longer vacation, now a minimum six weeks. Most Germans work 35 hours a week, though not necessarily because they want to.

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