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SERVING CABARRUS, ROWAN AND YORK COUNTIES

Communities align against trash station

Facility is another example of environmental racism, they say

By John Minter
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Eleven African American neighborhoods in northwest Charlotte have vowed to fight location of yet another garbage transfer station on the westside, this one in a business park on Hoskins Road.

"This is an issue of environmental health and economic justice," said Barbara Atwater, president of the University Park

North neighborhood association. The transfer station would be about 200 yards from homes on Plumstead Street in University Park North on a site westside communities thought would be offices.

The announcement surprised the neighborhoods and has added fuel to a debate about when and how communities should be notified about certain kinds of industrial developments in their areas — even

those not requiring rezoning for approval.

When the Hoskins Road area was rezoned for industrial use, the NorthPointe Business Park was developed there. Residents say they did not expect anything like a transfer station, despite the industrial zoning.

However, NationsWaste's plans to put the transfer station in the business park have been temporarily stymied in the Mecklenburg County bureaucracy and faces a new problem in the wake of Chester County, S.C. officials' refusal last week to sell the firm landfill space. The neighborhood group, coordi-

nated by Atwater and Aaron Orr, has formed a steering committee of representatives from each neighborhood called the Northwest Combined Neighborhoods Association.

Atwater said the group has talked with attorney Geraldine Sumpter. Her firm won a case, handled by then-partner Mel Watt, against Mecklenburg County blocking a county-run transfer station proposed for the LaSalle Street area.

Neighborhoods in the group and their representatives on the steering committee include: Dalebrook, Roscoe Johnson; Garden Park, Richard

McElrath; Hyde Park, Johnnie Collins; McCrory Heights, Isaac Heard; North Cross, Lois Meadows; Northwood Estates, Deloris Sanders; Northwood Hills Estates, Kevin Brooks; Northwood Park, Gwen Bryant; University Park, Eleanor Washington; University Park North, Henry McCown; Oaklawn Park, Anna

Hood.

Atwater said she and most others found out about the proposed transfer station about three weeks ago, when someone called and asked if they knew what was going on.

"We feel we are being dumped on," Atwater said. "They just opened a facility off Statesville Road and we had to fight one on Lasalle Street. Someone at the meeting had a map and it showed all the industrial things in the University Park area. There were so many and very few on the other side of town."

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PHOTO/SUE ANN JOHNSON

Cheryl Ray and her children prepare for dinner at their Fairview Homes apartment. Her children are (left to right) Stevie Massey, 3; Porchea Ray, 10; Twanquisha Ray, 6; and Rashavious Ray, 7.

Changing the welfare state

Federal legislation puts programs in local hands

By Jeri Young
THE CHARLOTTE POST

It is not often that public policy is radically reformed.

President Clinton did just that when he signed into law the Welfare Reform Bill, which promises to be a radical departure from the 61-year-old maze of federal regulation and administration that has come to represent the welfare system.

Citing the need to make welfare "what it was meant to be, a second chance, not a

way of life," Clinton's July 31 endorsement of the much debated and vetoed legislation brings to a rapid end federally mandated entitlements. The government, after Oct. 1, will no longer guarantee aid to poor families.

Eliminated is Aid For Families With Dependent Children, the preeminent source of cash welfare for the estimated 36 million Americans who currently receive means-based aid.

Stringent requirements have been placed on welfare

recipients, including a five-year lifetime limit on benefits. Teenage, unwed mothers would be required to attend school and live with an adult to receive benefits and women could lose up to 25 percent of their aid for refusing to identify the fathers of their children. Another \$24 billion will be cut out of the food stamp program and parents of disabled children would no longer be guaranteed aid.

Most striking is the movement of responsibility for the

administration of poverty relief programs from the federal government to states.

Under the new system, states would be issued block grants for administration and benefits dispersal annually by the government. States have until July 1, 1997 to submit their plans to the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program, the official title of the grant program that replaces AFDC. The amount of federal funding, which will

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THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BETHESDA, Md. — Supporters of the Benjamin Banneker Historical Park and Museum went into an auction of the black scientist's artifacts expecting to buy the rare items.

They were wrong.

The local group watched Sunday as a Virginia businessman bid \$55,250 for the antiques it had hoped to put on display at the museum under construction at the site of Banneker's home in Baltimore County. "We are very disappointed," said Ronald L. Sharps,

executive director of the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture and chairman of the Banneker Artifact Consortium.

Emanuel Friedman, an investment banker and chairman of Friedman, Billings and Ramsey in Rosslyn, Va., made winning bids of \$32,500 for a maple and pine drop-lead table, \$7,500 for documents and \$6,000 for two candlesticks. A ledger from the Ellicott & Co. general store noting purchases by Banneker went to Friedman for \$3,750.

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Wright continues climb to Charlotte police's upper ranks

By John Minter
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Nina Wright will be settling into her new position soon — top officer in the Charlie Two patrol district for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department.

Wright, 35, is only the second female African American captain in the Charlotte police force history. Andrea Huff held the position for several years in the 1980s before leaving the force.

Wright's promotion comes after a bitter lawsuit won by a group of white officers who said the city's affirmative action efforts hindered the advancement of white officers.

Wright was the top candidate emerging from qualifying exams

in August and takes to the position with relish.

As Wright sees it, she's been on the force 10 years and has 20 to go before she's eligible for full retirement. In that time, she figures she can move much higher in the department to "at least deputy chief."

Looking back at Wright's performance and determination to be the best she can in her position, such a promotion doesn't seem improbable.

"I came to this agency with aspirations of moving up the chain of command," said Wright. "I left a career (operating computers at a bank), because I was stifled. I realized this is not the career for Nina."

Wright considered police work as a child. She was always tomboyish, following her father

around their rural farm and playing quarterback when the neighborhood kids gathered for football games.

She grew up in Long Creek enjoying television shows such as "Adam 12" and "Dragnet."

But when you are only 5-feet, 2-inches and 108 pounds, the police force looks far away.

"I never grew up physically, so I pushed the idea out of my mind," Wright said. "What I saw was bigger males."

But one night a police officer she met while she was working a weekend night auditor shift at a local motel suggested police work to her. Then, he called in about a half dozen female officers. All had small builds and that convinced Wright she

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Charlotte Police Captain Nina Wright recorded the highest score among candidates for captain. Wright is the second African American woman to attain captain.