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REGIONAL

Open for business

Atlantic Beach, S.C., one of the last black beach towns on the East Coast, is looking for investors. Page 10B.

Rock Hill expels more black students

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ROCK HILL, S.C. — Area black students are expelled for disciplinary problems twice as often as whites, and community leaders say something is terribly wrong. Two-thirds of expelled students in Rock Hill were black — or 133 of 201 total expulsions. Blacks make up about a third of the district's 14,000 students. Rock Hill school officials say they want to keep students in school and have launched several programs — for all races — to inter-

vene, but local black leaders say that may not be enough. "We're breeding criminals by kicking these kids out of school," said Ernest Brown, president of the Rock Hill branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. "What's a kid to do without education? What can you do?" Local schools have few black authority figures. And, Brown argues, blacks who enter school less prepared are made to feel dumb, and those feelings of infe-

riority turn to anger, rage and rebellion.

Rock Hill school officials say the expulsions are more closely related to poverty. In other words, poor students who get kicked out are victims of poor preparation, not racism. Their parents did not read to them, and they did not know colors or numbers when they reached school. The students then misbehaved in class from frustration and boredom. "Race is the easy answer, but it's

much deeper," said Terry Holliday, associate superintendent for Rock Hill schools. "We want kids to stay in school. We're more than willing to work with different churches and groups." Rock Hill's problems are not unusual, said Al-Tony Gilmore, senior program officer with the National Education Association. Districts across the nation report a disproportionate number of expulsions of blacks and other minorities, he said. In 1995-96, expulsion proceed-

ings were started for 6,565 South Carolina students for committing school crimes; 4,313 of them were blacks. Poverty is an issue, but communities should see red flags when middle-class black students are expelled in higher numbers, Gilmore said. "Let's look at those who made decisions about those getting expelled," he said. "It may have been a situation where it was easier to expel them rather than change them." Students relate better to some-

one in a position of authority who is of their own race, Gilmore said. In Rock Hill schools, though, 88 of the 863 teachers and administrators, or 10.2 percent, are black. The number of black principals, assistant principals and administrators can be counted on two hands. "That's a lack of sensitivity to black students," Brown said. "There's a subtle message being sent to the kids that they aren't good enough to be a teacher or principal."

Recalling glory days



PHOTO/PAUL WILLIAMS III

The Rev. W.T. Massey, a 1962 Friendship College graduate, remembers the Rock Hill school as a place where students could make a fresh start in life. Alumni will gather this week for a school reunion.

Friendship alumni rekindle spirit

By Gwendolyn Daniels
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

ROCK HILL, S.C. — The vacant lot on Allen Street doesn't begin to tell the story of Friendship College.

Many of the junior college's graduates, teachers and friends remember the school as a place of opportunity for education, camaraderie and preparation. Friendship closed its doors in 1982, but many hope this week's class reunion will spark a new commitment from alumni and the community to

build a new facility that will promote education and training.

The Rev. W.T. Massey, a 1962 Friendship graduate, remembers the college as a fresh start for local youth. He remembers participating in the sit-ins and civil rights demonstrations of the '60s.

"The thing I remember most was being a part of the Friendship 9 and the picketing and demonstration," Massey said. "Almost all the students would participate."

The feeling of community spirit and the personal commitment of the teachers and students made campus life enriching.

"I saw them (teachers) as friends. The teachers were accessible and easy to get along with," Massey said.

With limited educational and economic opportunities for blacks in the Rock Hill area, Friendship offered an affordable route to higher learning.

"It gave us an opportunity to move on and it wasn't too costly," Massey said. "Tuition was

very low and Friendship had a good relationship with S.C. State and Johnson C. Smith (universities) where students could transfer credit."

The Rev. Osbey Roddey, a Rock Hill City Council member and pastor, hopes the reunion will rekindle the fond and positive images of the college he graduated from in 1956.

"Friendship was a springboard that would enable us to take our places in the expanding world," he said. "It was a time of getting motivated."

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Food Lion pulls store out of Brookview

By Emmanuel Dolo
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

SALISBURY — The Brookview community has lost its supermarket.

Food Lion closed its store in the predominantly African American neighborhood last week. Food Lion communication director Chris Ahearn said the decision was based solely on business considerations, not socioeconomic reasons as suggested by some community members.

The store, located at the inter-

Closest locale is Innes Street Market

section of Innes and Boundary Streets, was closed along with another Food Lion at Avalanche Drives. Both stores were combined into a new store at Innes Street Market.

Letters were sent to pastors two weeks before closing the Brookview store, Ahearn said. Elder R. F. Russell, assistant pastor at United House of Prayer confirmed that his church received the letter. Ahearn said she also spoke

with Rev. Leman Brown, pastor of First Calvary Baptist Church, to get a feel for community response. Brown and other pastors were not available for comment.

Brookview resident J.B. Harris said he and his neighbors knew about the store's closure. "Most people walk to the store, and moving it will be difficult for them," he said. "We have some handicapped people who live here, and they often

send some residents to get groceries for them. Now, they will have to pay for bus fare."

Ahearn said Food Lion checked with the Salisbury Transit Authority to ensure that public transportation was available for Brookview and surrounding neighborhoods. Moreover, the Innes Street Market store is less than a mile away, and one of the new larger stores being built by Food Lion around the country. It offers a wider variety of items for shoppers, including an ethnic food section.

Durham groups pledge racial cooperation

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DURHAM — Agreeing that people are tired of bickering over race, two of Durham's most powerful political organizations have pledged to work together to help the city reshape its image.

Leaders of the Friends of Durham and the Durham Committee on the Affairs of Black People signed a "memorandum of understanding" last week that they hope will improve race relations in Durham.

The two groups have often benefited from the use of racial politics in the past.

The three-page document labels race as the dominant feature of Durham's social and political landscape and says racial animosity has held the community back.

"We feel this is an historic occasion," said Kenneth Spaulding, chairman of the Durham Committee. "... Many of our citizens are tired of us fussing and fighting over race."

Spaulding was joined by David Smith, chairman of the Friends of Durham.

"I think conservatives are often hesitant to deal with race," Smith said. "But if we can get together on this, then everyone can get together on this."

Within the next month, both organizations plan to schedule forums on issues such as health, education, housing, crime, mass media and religion to discuss how race places a role in each area.

The agreement between the political organizations could get an early test with city elections this fall, in which it seems likely that two leading contenders for mayor will be a white man and a black man. In addition, the city is searching for a police chief, a job that has often been a focal point for racial concerns in the past.

The choice of a white candidate for school superintendent last winter led to accusations of racism by some blacks.

New principal at North Rowan Middle School

By Emmanuel Dolo
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

SALISBURY — Lamont Foster was appointed principal of North Rowan Middle School Monday. Foster, who is African American, replaces Jerome Heggins, also African American, who was earlier transferred to Isenberg Elementary.

Heggins' removal provoked protests by African American supporters, who said the school board's decision was racially motivated.

Foster has 15 years of experience in education. He was assistant principal for administration at North Rowan High School. Previously, he worked for the city of Hartford, Conn. as an account analyst, and later for a vocational evaluator.

Foster is a graduate of Appalachian State University, where he completed his doctorate in education. He has two master's degrees from North Carolina Central University in Durham, where he studied agency and school counseling respectively. His undergraduate education was

completed at the University of Connecticut, where he earned a bachelor's degree in business administration.

Foster, who is divorced, is the father of two: Rashida, 19, and Lamont Jr., 14. For two years, he served as the Director of Livingstone Academy, a program organized primarily to help inner city youth improve their math, communication and science skills. He is also an active member of Shiloh Baptist Church in Mocksville.

During the term of his two-year contract, Foster said his primary goal would be to "reestablish and strengthen the partnership between administrations, faculty and parents at North Rowan Middle School, by building a bridge which induces strong communication between the various partners named."

His first meeting, Foster said, will be held with the school's two assistant principals. He will meet with the faculty and staff, including students and their parents. "I want to be a role model to the fac-

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Eldridge Williams encourages teens to reach out for their goals

By Malcolm Plummer
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

SALISBURY — Viewed as one of Rowan County's outspoken activists, Eldridge Williams recently spoke to an audience of teenage workers. He praised their efforts, gave encouragement, and advice.

The Salisbury Youth Corps, a summer program designed to help teens achieve in education and work experience, was the focus of his talk.

"This summer was a lesson," Williams said at Salisbury's Cone Center. "You may not realize it but the work that you have been doing this summer was really an

opportunity for you to help out yourself as well as your community.

"Your contribution," said Williams, "will not go unnoticed."

A member of the Rowan school board as well as assistant to Livingstone College President Burnette Joiner, Williams gave the youth encouragement: "There

is a saying: no man is an island. I want you to think about that. Let's say that you become a lawyer or a doctor or whatever you aspire to be, remember to put something back into the community, it's not going to be easy but you have to keep on."

More than 25 teenagers and counselors listened to Williams'

recommendations. "The first thing you need to think about is making good grades in school," he said. "In the Rowan County school system, we have what we call a 1999 plan. The overall objective of this plan is simple: higher standards for our children. If you can't do certain things, such as science and math, we're

not going to pass you. In fact, it is our job to make sure that you know how to do something and you can become a productive member of society.

"A company like IBM not only wants to know what you took in school but also how well you did in those subjects. If you don't

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