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WEEK OF JULY 26-AUGUST 1, 2007

A new day for Double Oaks

City funds boost community's development

By Herbert L. White
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Change is coming to the Double Oaks neighborhood.

A \$120 million redevelopment project is moving forward after Charlotte City Council approved a \$25 million package for the distressed neighborhood off Statesville Avenue. The project continues a long-term revitalization of the Statesville Avenue area with mixed-use housing.

"The city understood this is an opportunity they might not get otherwise, and they put it on a fast track," said Pat Garrett, president of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Housing Partnership, which is leading the redevelopment.

The city package includes \$15 million in loans, with the remainder in grants and a right of way used by Duke Energy.

When the project gets under way, 576 one-story homes will be razed and replaced with 940 townhomes, condominiums and apartments. About 330 residents will be relocated for the demolition.

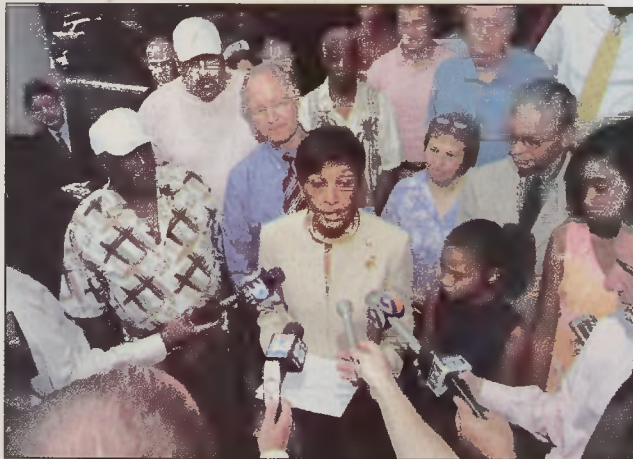
"That'll be a year process," Garrett said. "We'll give them up to three options of where they want to go."

The partnership is committed to building 300 rental units at Double Oaks for low-income and elderly residents who qualify. The remaining construction includes condos, homes and commercial space.

"We're hoping we can start at the Kohler Avenue end and work our way to LaSalle Street," Garrett said.

Full redevelopment is expected to take 10 years, Garrett said, but initial results won't take that long.

"We say it's a 10-year project, but I think in the next two or three years you'll see some progress with people moving in," she said.



PHOTO/CALVIN FERGUSON

N.C. Rep. Beverly Earle (center) met with reporters last week after announcing her bid to run for Charlotte mayor. The Democrat faces no opposition in the party primary.

Mission: Impossible?

Veteran lawmaker Earle faces challenges in mayoral campaign

By Cheris F. Hodges
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Can the Teflon Mayor be beaten? N.C. Rep. Beverly Earle is the lone Democrat looking to unseat Charlotte Mayor Pat McCrory this fall, though McCrory faces a Republican challenger in Charlotte-Mecklenburg school board member Ken Gjersten.

But does Earle have what it takes to unseat the six-term mayor?

It'll be difficult, says UNC-Charlotte political science professor Ted Arrington.

"Earle is one of the best local officials. She would be missed in the legislature if she should win. Having said that, she is unlikely to defeat McCrory unless he does something terribly stupid in the next few months," he wrote in an e-mail.

Arrington added that McCrory is not known for making mis-

See CHALLENGER/2A

It's been a long time since anyone other than Pat McCrory has been Charlotte's mayor. Over the last 20 years, Charlotte has had three mayors—Republicans McCrory (1995-present) Richard Vinroot (1991-95) and Sue Myrick (1987-91). The last Democrat to hold the office was Harvey Ganitt (1983-87) Charlotte's first—and only—African American mayor.



Ganitt



Myrick

CMS list spreads gains and pain

School board plan aims to generate widest support for Nov. bond referendum

By Herbert L. White
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Charlotte-Mecklenburg's school board voted to spread projects from a proposed \$516 million bond referendum across the county.

But will it pass muster with Mecklenburg County commissioners before going to a November referendum?

"Absolutely," school board member George Dunlap said.

Two new schools and a slate of renovations were pared from the final priority list approved by the school board Tuesday by a 7-2 vote. Kaye McGarry and Larry Gauvreau—who represent districts in the northern and southern ends of the county—voted against the request.

"It's always great to get a 9-0 vote," Mecklenburg commissioners Chair Jennifer Roberts said, "but I don't remember (CMS board member) Larry Gauvreau ever voting for anything."

"The vote was a reflection that there are some people in our community who are out of touch," Dunlap said of the dissenters.

Please see BOARD/3A



Roberts

Festival brings African culture to Queen City

By Herbert L. White
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The Garden City will meet the Queen City Saturday.

The second annual Taste of Ghana at the Afro-American Cultural Center will highlight culture and art from Kumasi, Ghana, Charlotte's African sister city. For native-born Americans, it's an opportunity to get closer to African culture.

"You get a taste of Ghana," said Anita Alers-Williams, former chair of the Kumasi Committee. "You get a taste of the fashion, a taste of the cuisine."

Four segments will highlight the event from 12-6 p.m.: wood carvings and clothing from the Volta Region of Ghana, fashions by Kumasi designer Judith F. Osei Tutu, an education session by Ghana native Vincent Nyanor and cuisine from the Motherland.

Kumasi, founded in the early 19th century by King Osei Tutu, is Ghana's second-largest city with 2.5 million residents spanning a 20-mile radius. It became Charlotte's sister city in 1996 and is home to Nana Opoku-Ware, king of Ghana's Asanti region.

For information on Taste of Ghana, call Anita Alers-Williams at (704) 336-3924.



FILE PHOTO/CALVIN FERGUSON
BEST IN THE WEST? J.C. Smith football coach Daryl McNeill prepares Golden Bulls for a run at the CIAA Division title. Page 1C

N.C. black colleges face more changes

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

RALEIGH - Despite an influx of money and students, North Carolina's historically black public universities still face weak graduation rates and several financial problems.

State lawmakers and voters have allocated nearly half a billion dollars since 2000 to build new buildings at the five schools and to beef up recruiting and marketing operations. The efforts helped boost the number of students at the universities by about 12,000, or 52 percent, since the beginning of the decade.

Yet the universities - Elizabeth

City State, Fayetteville State, North Carolina A&T State, North Carolina Central and Winston-Salem State - have graduation rates lagging behind the overall University of North Carolina system. Fewer than half of the students at the historically black schools make it to graduation within six years, compared to a UNC system rate of 59 percent.

Four of the schools are getting new leadership within a month, and two of them face financial scrutiny.

Stanley Battle became the new chancellor at North Carolina A&T after the interim chancellor

uncovered financial abuse and administrative chaos. At Fayetteville State, chancellor T.J. Bryan abruptly announced her resignation last week amid a financial audit.

UNC President Erskine Bowles vowed that problems unearthed at North Carolina A&T and Fayetteville State will be corrected, and he called on the new chancellors to lead the way.

"I want leaders who are capable

See UNC SYSTEM/2A



Bowles

Volunteer state: Service merits a national award



PHOTO COURTESY OF SUE GORMAN

Members of Leadership Charlotte Class 28 were recognized by the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation for their work in the Washington Heights community. Historic Washington Heights Neighborhood President Mattie Marshall (fourth from left) nominated the group.

By Herbert L. White
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Good deeds is more than its own reward. Members of Leadership Charlotte Class 28 earned national and local honors for their volunteer efforts in the past year in the Washington Heights neighborhood.

Ten Leadership Charlotte project team members earned the President's Volunteer Services Award from the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation. They were nominated by Historic Washington Heights Neighborhood President Mattie Marshall. Team members received letters from President Bush, a presidential Call to Service Award certificate, and an award service pin.

The volunteers were awarded the Community Organization Award at the second annual Community Philanthropy Awards luncheon. The Northwest Corridor See VOLUNTEERS/2A



Home improvement company grows into a family affair/6C

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