

Chapel Hill Finds Areas to Improve

Chapel Hill officials have adopted a five-year plan to address town residents' areas of concern.

By O'HENTRICE LOVE
Staff Writer

Chapel Hill will soon have renovated public housing and better fire protection as a result of a program focused on making life better for town residents.

The town will receive a new fire station as part of the Town Council's five-year program to improve the environment, transportation, public safety and other areas of concern.

Every year local tax money is allocated to go toward the Capital Improvements Program, which is designed to assist in any improvements and renovations needed around town. Council member Lee Pavao said there were several improvement projects in progress.

"The improvements must be done," he said.

"If you have assets, you must take care of them. We are currently planning to build a new fire station that will cover 300 acres. It has been in the works for a long time."

The improvement program will take five years, but the board will re-evaluate its plans annually.

Every year, the council revises the budget and assesses capital and improvements, Pavao said.

Chapel Hill Town Manager Cal Horton provided recommendations for the council on what improvements should be approved.

This year about \$640,000 will go toward improvement projects. The projects will cost about \$15.8 million over the next five years.

"The federal government will help pay for some of the renovations," Horton said.

Chapel Hill Town Council member Edith Wiggins said she also was responsible for voting on what improvements and renovations would occur in the town.

"If you don't keep up with roads and infrastructure they will end up in great despair," Wiggins said. "This is an ongoing process."

The Town Council will decide what improvements to make after it receives recommendations from the town manager and holds a town hearing allowing citizens to voice their opinions on what improvements should be made.

"We take into consideration what the citizens have to say, but we really rely on what the town manager recommends," Wiggins said.

Other projects that have been approved by the board include drain replacements, public housing renovations and public works improvements.

In the past, the council has supported improvements in places like Homestead Park and Community Center.

UNC Introduces Center for Service

By COLLEEN JENKINS
Staff Writer

The University has a new way to tell N.C. residents the story of its commitment to public service.

The tale will begin at the Carolina Center for Public Service, officially introduced Sept. 24 at a tented ceremony on Polk Place.

This story is based on UNC's 200-year-old tradition of outreach to the state and country but ends with a new twist. The center now can provide N.C. residents with "one-stop shopping" for their public service needs.

Residents will be able to call one place at UNC for answers instead of muddling through numerous resources.

"The center will be a primary contact point for anyone who wants to know what kind of public services exist (at UNC) and how to find them," said Nicholas Didow, the center's inaugural director and an associate professor at the Kenan-Flagler Business School.

The idea for the center stemmed from the UNC Public Service Roundtable, established in 1991 to build the school's capacity for public service.

It was formally proposed to the General Administration in 1995 and took almost two years to get approval. Didow said the late Chancellor Michael

Hooker was a visionary for the center. And a \$1 million gift from an anonymous donor last year helped speed the formation process.

Right now, the center operates out of Didow's office at the business school and the trunk of his car. By mid-October, he plans to set up in the center's new home in the Bank of America complex on Franklin Street.

To get publicize its services, the center will soon publish articles featuring UNC individuals involved in service and will feature others on its Web site.

"The center seeks to celebrate the outstanding accomplishments of the students and faculty across campus," Didow said.

The center will work to identify holes in UNC's public services so additional programs can be created to meet rising needs, Provost Dick Richardson said.

"(The center) could stimulate students and faculty to work in new areas," Richardson said. "I can't think of anything in the state that we wouldn't be able to provide services to."

The center will not be just a resource

for the state, however, since many goals are school-oriented. Several schools, such as Brown University, Stanford University and the University of Michigan, boost public service centers that focus mainly on students.

"But this center is different," Didow said. "They don't have the balance of equal focus as we have on students, faculty and staff. We want to develop public service across this campus."

Richardson said the University's service courses, such as the a.p.p.l.e.s. program, would work through the center and benefit from its guidance.

To encourage innovative public service, the center will present public service awards and fellowships to students, faculty and staff beginning in the spring. Some grants have already been dealt

out during the past year, including one for a student project that put Goldilocks of "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" on trial to educate elementary-school children about the American legal system.

The center has begun its leadership work as well, responding to interim Chancellor Bill McCoy's request for it to direct UNC's part in the Hurricane Floyd recovery effort.

Didow assembled a task force last Wednesday to immediately address the hurricane victims' public health and environmental needs. "We'll keep the campus informed of emerging needs and get people with the right skills down there when needed," he said.

Didow said the center benefited from the visions of the University's past leaders who did not believe that UNC's boundaries ended at the old stone wall along Franklin Street but extended throughout the state and nation.

"The challenge to the center is to build on the proud 200-year tradition of significant public service that this University has provided."

"The center seeks to celebrate the outstanding accomplishments of the students and faculty across campus."

NICHOLAS DIDOW
Carolina Center for Public Service Director


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