

Special Session Provides Much-Needed Flood Aid

By GAVIN OFF
Staff Writer

Despite \$836 million in flood relief allocated during the recent special session of the N.C. General Assembly, state leaders say more money is needed to aid the recovery of damaged areas.

Gov. Jim Hunt called the special session, which was held in mid-December, to ratify a relief bill that would provide aid to damaged areas. Hunt's proposal sailed through the legislature relatively unscathed in less than 48 hours.

The recovery plan provided more than \$100 million in funds to match Federal Emergency Management Agency disaster assistance programs. The bill also provided more than \$152 million for farmers and fishermen.

The majority of the money will come from trimming the state budget, including the budget of the UNC system. This could impede UNC officials' requests to improve infrastructure on UNC-system campuses and raise faculty salaries.

Danny Lineberry, House communications director, said the bill aimed to give fast monetary assistance to farmers. "The plan was to get relief to the victims as quickly as possible," Lineberry said. "Hopefully this will help the farmers get a little money to put some seeds in the ground for the next year."

Rob Lamme, spokesman for Senate Speaker Pro Tem Marc Basnight, said the bill provided relief for many families, but additional state and federal aid was still needed. "There is a good deal

of aid for people who lost their homes, for small businesses and for farmers," he said. "We provided a really good down payment for hurricane relief for the people of eastern North Carolina."

The approved bill also allowed for more than \$27 million in public health and environmental assistance. Some of the money will be used to clean up hazardous and solid waste as well as monitor the quality of drinking water.

Rep. Edith Warren, D-Edgecombe, whose county was among the hardest hit by Floyd's floods, said the bill gave much-needed relief to many families.

"(The bill) will help everyone who is a victim of the flood," Warren said. "This is not going to make everything perfect, but things are looking brighter."

But Warren said more federal assistance was necessary to rebuild damaged infrastructure.

"We only got part of the assistance we requested from Congress," she said. "The assistance will send us on the path to recovery. It alone won't get us there, but it is certainly a start for relief."

Lamme also said the federal government must take further action to ensure victims a fast recovery.

"It's obviously not going to take care of everyone's problems, but it's a good first step on the road to recovery," he said. "It's safe to say that relief for Hurricane Floyd will be with us for several years, but this was the beginning."

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AOL, Time Warner Merger Sparks Debate

America Online's merger with the world's largest entertainment company has some analysts worried.

Staff & Wire Reports

NEW YORK — Analysts have differing opinions regarding the implications of the merger of Time Warner, the world's largest media and entertainment company, and America Online.

Time-Warner is being acquired by America Online for about \$166 billion in what would be the biggest corporate merger ever.

The merger that was announced Monday marks the biggest bet yet that the Internet will be one of the most dominant features in the media landscape of the future.

"This merger will launch the next Internet revolution," chairman and chief executive for America Online, Steve Case, said at a news conference.

"This really completes the digital transformation of Time Warner," Time Warner's chairman, Gerald Levin, said Monday morning. "These two companies are a natural fit."

At a time when traditional media companies are struggling to reinvent their Internet strategies, the merger would give Time Warner a huge platform for reaching people online. AOL is the nation's largest online company with 20 million subscribers.

The deal also gives AOL a key tool for distributing its services: access to Time Warner's large cable network sys-

tem, the nation's second largest after AT&T with 13 million cable subscribers.

"It makes a lot of sense," said Tom Wolzien, a media analyst at Sanford C. Bernstein & Co. "AOL provides a huge platform for all of Time Warner's content, and Time Warner's cable systems provide a good network for AOL's online services."

Time Warner's large list of media properties includes CNN, HBO, Time, People and Sports Illustrated magazines, and the Warner Bros. movie, television and music properties.

The deal also raises the stakes in the consolidation scramble in the media industry.

"Media concentration is predicted in every medium and leads to less interesting choices for the consumer," said UNC assistant clinical Professor Paul Jones.

"The greater the amount of concentration, the less consumer choice."

He said the federal government's response to this action would be interesting to observe.

"If (the merger) delivers competition at a higher level, then it is good," Jones said.

"I don't think that could happen." Jones said Time Warner hoped to obtain Internet expertise and AOL's objective was to receive high quality traditional content.

But Jones feared that instead of gaining benefits from each other, the companies will adopt the negative aspects of the other corporation.

He said AOL has a tradition of censorship and control, which might affect Time Warner.

Jones also said Time Warner's failed attempts to conquer the Internet might take a toll on AOL.

"The question is whether Time Warner and AOL will constrain the choices of the Internet," he said. "The government will challenge it — whether it will go through or not will remain to

be seen."

UNC economics Professor Boone Turchi was also worried about the implications of the powerful AOL and Time Warner Corporation. He said he hoped the justice department would give the merger a careful look.

"I would be very nervous about it."



The Orange County Board of Commissioners is recruiting for citizen volunteers for the advisory boards and commissions which assist in the operation of county government. These boards and commissions on a variety of matters. Citizens of Orange County are encouraged to volunteer for the following:

COMMUNITY COLLEGE TASK FORCE—This Task Force will study and make recommendations to the Orange County Board of Commissioners on the feasibility of developing a satellite campus of Durham Technical Community College in Orange County. Meeting times and location to be determined. **Two at-large vacancies.**

C&D (CONSTRUCTION AND DEMOLITION) RECYCLING TASK FORCE—This Task Force will promote and encourage the "3Rs" hierarchy—reduce, reuse, recycle—for C&D waste management. The Task Force will investigate and evaluate construction and demolition recycling or other waste reduction options, and develop recommendations regarding best practices for C&D recycling that should be considered for implementation in Orange County. Meeting times and location to be determined. **Three at-large vacancies; two environmental group vacancies; one C&D large-scale generator vacancy.**

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION—The Commission is charged with undertaking and managing an inventory of properties of historical, prehistorical, architectural and/or cultural significance. It also recommends areas to be designated or removed, as well as, reviews and acts upon proposals for alterations, demolition and/or new construction. Members must have demonstrated interest, competence or knowledge in historic preservation, architecture, planning or archeology or related disciplines. Applicants must reside in the unincorporated areas of Orange County. This group meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month at 7:30pm. **Four at-large positions.**

INNOVATION AND EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE—This Committee will examine various opportunities for efficiency improvement in the operation of County government and will deliver a recommendation to the County Manager prior to his submission of the annual budget. Meeting times and location to be determined. **Thirteen at-large vacancies.**

NORTHERN HUMAN SERVICES CENTER TASK FORCE—This Task Force will develop a long-range plan for the Orange County Northern Human Services Center to include a plan for the property surrounding and adjacent to the Center that the County owns. It is estimated that the Task Force will meet three to five times. **Citizens are needed from the Cedar Grove community to serve on this Task Force.**

SOCCER SYMPOSIUM TASK FORCE—This Task Force is charged with promoting soccer and soccer facilities in Orange County. The Task Force will host a Soccer Symposium at which all interested parties may express their needs and concerns. The Task Force will summarize the presentations and report these findings to the local governments within the County. Meeting times and location to be determined. **Five at-large vacancies.**

If you are interested in serving on one of these Advisory Boards/Commissions, please contact the office of the Clerk to the Board at 245-2125 or 245-2130, or send an email to www.nmartin@co.orange.nc.us.

If you would like to complete an application online, or download one in Adobe® pdf format, please visit the County's web site, <http://www.co.orat.ge.nc.us> and click on the "Volunteer Boards" icon.

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