

Views Differ on How to Fix State's Bond Rating

Easley wants legislature to approve lottery

By ELYSE ASHBURN
State & National Editor

Gov. Mike Easley lambasted the state legislature Tuesday, blaming it for North Carolina's lowered credit rating — and many lawmakers agree with his assessment.

Moody's Investors Service, one of three main credit rating agencies, announced Monday that it had dropped North Carolina's bond rating one spot from AAA to Aa1.

Easley charged the legislature with

expediting the appropriations process and passing a sound budget that doesn't devastate the state's reserves to regain its AAA standing.

Senate Majority Leader Tony Rand, D-Cumberland, said the bond rating drop is a disturbing development, the reversal of which is a priority among legislators.

"We will pay more," he said. "This will raise the cost of doing business for the state."

"It will be up to us to get (the bond rating) back up."

Danny Lineberry, press secretary for House Speaker Jim Black, D-Mecklenburg, echoed Rand's sentiment.

"Moody's action on the bond rating included a couple guide points to get back the AAA bond rating," he said. "It's up to the legislature whether to follow those and get the rating back or to explain the whys and wherefores to the people back home."

Rand said the legislature has several options for restoring the budget's stability and replenishing reserves — including approving the much-debated lottery referendum — but that partisan politics have thwarted legislators' efforts.

"The Republicans have voted against

everything we've tried to do to get out of this budget situation," he said. "If you read Moody's, they specifically mention the lottery as a way to garner revenue to get the (AAA) rating back."

But Rep. Frank Mitchell, R-Iredell, said passing a lottery referendum is not a viable way to generate more revenue for the state.

"The lottery is not the answer to the state's problems," he said.

Mitchell added that even if the state were to have a lottery, the money it produced would not be used to fill the \$2 billion budget hole projected for the 2002-03 fiscal year.

"The lottery that has been proposed

is to fund new programs," he said.

Mitchell emphasized that it is possible for the legislature to take other action to reclaim the AAA bond rating despite tough economic times.

Mitchell said lawmakers can budget responsibly and replenish reserves even when faced with a \$2 billion deficit.

"But that is not going to happen until people are ready to really trim the budget," he said.

Legislators need to stop adding provisions funding new programs like "the new government baby-sitting service — the More at Four," Mitchell added.

He said legislators could possibly restore the budget's health by raising

taxes but that doing so is unpopular.

Mitchell said none of the Republicans are going to vote to raise taxes — especially during an election year.

"Several of the Democrats are in tight races, and they won't vote for it either," he said. "Too much is at stake in both the House and the Senate."

Mitchell said he expects legislators to make the necessary cuts, but that they will avoid doing so until after elections — dragging the session out in the process.

"I think they'll make the cuts, but not until November."

The State & National Editor can be reached at stntdesk@unc.edu.

Campus Calendar

Today

7 p.m. — Sangam will hold its first general body meeting of the year in the Teague Residence Hall basement.

Thursday, Aug. 22

5:30 p.m. — The Asian Students Association is having its first meeting in the New Union Multipurpose Room 1505 until 7 p.m.

All UNC students are welcome to attend.

Monday, Aug. 26

7:30 p.m. — Women's Voices Chorus, the Triangle's only classical community-based women's chorus, will hold an open rehearsal at University United Methodist Church, 150 E. Franklin St. until 9:30 p.m.

For more information or to schedule a tryout call Mary Lycan at 932-5455.

For The Record

The Aug. 20 article "Grad Student Remissions in Jeopardy" inaccurately stated that resident assistants are eligible for out-of-state tuition remissions. Teaching assistants and research assistants are eligible for tuition remissions.

The Daily Tar Heel regrets the error.

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UNC Reveals Science Complex Plans

Phase I is scheduled to begin May 2003

By ROB LEICHER
Staff Writer

Project planners unveiled UNC's plans for a new science complex to about 50 spectators Monday in Venable Hall.

Venable itself is slated to be destroyed to make room for two new buildings and additions to Phillips and Sitterson halls as part of the decade-long project.

Three phases break up construction, with Phase I scheduled to begin in May 2003 and to finish by May 2006.

For Phase II of the project, officials are planning the building of a 400-car parking deck and a chiller plant, while Phase III plans include a new Venable and an addition to Sitterson. The whole complex is slated to be finished by 2008.

"The purpose of Phase I is to build enough space so we can tear down Venable," facility architect Peter Krawchuk said. "We plan to build 270,000 square feet of additional buildings."

One of the new buildings will be located near Dey Hall, and the fencing already has been erected in preparation for the construction. This building will house modernized chemistry laboratories, the Department of Chemistry and a nuclear magnetic resonance suite.

An addition to Phillips Hall also is planned for Phase I. It will contain an astronomy observation deck and low vibration research space, which officials say is important for the marine sciences.

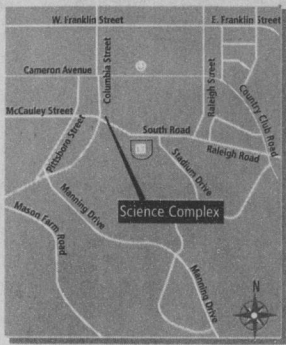
"What will go on here is laboratories that are modern," said Royce Murray, Kenan professor of chemistry. "It is remarkable the quality of science teaching that goes on here now despite the lack of modern facilities, but that will change."

The change, which will cost about \$200 million, will be funded mainly by University grants and private donors and in part by money from the \$3.1 billion N.C. Higher Education Bond, which was passed in 2000. Fund raising is under way for Phases II and III, and organizers are confident that the project will stay on track.

A core committee — consisting of the chairmen of the affected departments and headed by Murray — made most of the plans. Departments involved are chemistry, physics, astronomy, mathematics, computer science and marine science.

"The chairs of the science departments have really shown their leadership," Murray said. "There is a closeness between the science departments that wasn't there before."

The architects from William Wilson Associated Architects Inc. and the contractors from Centex Construction also have been involved from the beginning. Frank Santoro, the project manager from Centex, said he will do his best to



DTH/STAFF

keep the construction quiet, but some things are unavoidable.

"There will be some noise and there will be some dust," Santoro said. "We are going to have to blast rock while we are excavating."

Krawchuk emphasized the importance of safety, saying people should heed notices for temporarily closed sidewalks and parking lots. If the situation becomes unbearable for University students, faculty or staff, he said, he will do his best to either fix the problem or explain why it is necessary.

"Do not feel that this is a one-time-only meeting and you just have to deal with this construction for the next two years," Krawchuk said. "We want to hear your opinions."

The University Editor can be reached at udesk@unc.edu.

Thrift Store Opens To Benefit Patients

By JON DOUGHERTY
City Editor

The Club Nova Thrift Store won't just have inexpensive merchandise to sell to patrons.

It is also a place where people with mental illnesses can find a job.

The store, located at 103-D W. Main St. in Carrboro, opens today with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at noon.

Club Nova, founded in 1987, is a nonprofit group that works for the benefit of mentally ill patients in Orange County. Nova operates on a "club-house" basis, which affords members not just a place to stay while they deal with their illnesses but a place to return should they need more assistance.

Melanie Hobden, a staff member of Club Nova, said the idea for the thrift shop is not new, just modified.

"We've had a variation of the thrift shop for years, but it was only open to members of the club," Hobden said. "The store is now open to the general public."

Hobden said the general public thrift store was conceived after the success of several yard sales hosted by the club.

"We started the yard sales back in '95," she said. "The club possesses two facilities, the main area and then what is now the thrift store. We just needed to

use that space for something."

Rep. David Price, D-Orange, is slated to attend today's ceremony. Hobden said Price actually helped the thrift shop make it to its grand opening day.

"We received a \$250,000 grant that would not have been possible without David Price," she said.

Club Nova allows mental health patients to live and work within their system. The work force is divided into units, and each new member to the club must select a unit to join upon arrival. Club Nova houses offices, a kitchen and a dining/meeting room, as well as 11 apartments for members.

Club staff assist members in finding work and adjusting to life in the outside world when the residents are ready to move on.

"We have our own transitional work program," Hobden said. "We're very supportive when someone can't work. We're like a stepping stone."

Hobden said there is no standard Club Nova member — people with all types of mental illness seek refuge there.

"We generally see people when they're nearly well," she said. "In terms of employment, we have a lot of people on all levels of disability."

The City Editor can be reached at citydesk@unc.edu.

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