

Price talk hones in on education Town hears budget requests

BY KAVITA PILLAI
STAFF WRITER

RALEIGH — U.S. Rep. David Price, D-N.C., presented local residents with plans Wednesday night to reform the economy and make higher education a top priority.

Price, who is up for re-election in November, named the renewal of the Higher Education Act as a major issue in this congressional session.

He added that he will push for a national program similar to the N.C. Teaching Fellows Program, which provides scholarship money to students pursuing a career in teaching. In return the students must agree to work for four years in a N.C. public school or a U.S. government school within the state.

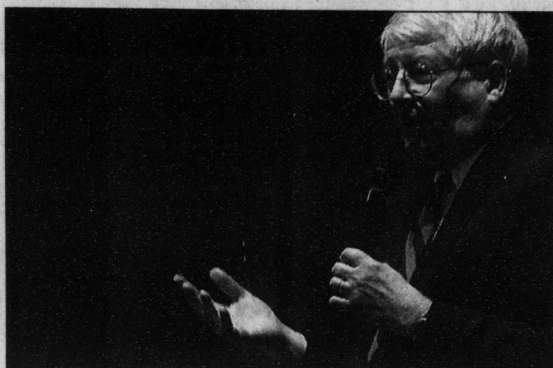
A national program, Price said, would still be state-based but would receive federal support.

"Nothing we want to do in education can happen without a first-rate teaching force," he said.

Price said he will try to tack a national teaching fellows program onto the Higher Education Act to give it a better chance at success.

"(The Higher Education Act) is a train that's leaving the station," he said.

Price also expressed concern over the current budget situation and the looming deficit. He named the 2000 tax cuts as one of the primary reasons for record-breaking deficit spending.



DTH/JOHN DUDLEY

U.S. Rep. David Price, D-N.C., responds to questions at a town hall meeting Wednesday night at Leesville Road High School in Raleigh.

He also noted that existing tax cuts with built-in expiration dates must be allowed to expire.

"If the tax cuts are allowed to expire, the deficit would improve over about 10 years," Price said.

"But if the president gets his way and the tax cuts become permanent, we're going to continue running a huge deficit."

And while the economy shows signs of improvement, Price was hesitant to express too much optimism.

"It's been a slow, difficult, sluggish recovery and it's been a jobless recovery," he said. "We're in the worst third year of recovery since the '50s."

On foreign policy, Price said he supports handing over power in Iraq to the Iraqi people as soon as possible, but stresses the need for the United States to finish what it started.

"It would be a disaster for this country for Iraq to revert back to chaos or tyranny," he said. "The bottom line is we cannot simply walk away from the issue."

Price also wants the country to renew its presence in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He said a new plan for peace needs to be put on the table.

"It is a situation that just seems to get worse and worse," he said. "The best hope right now is a renewed American initiative."

BY SHANNAN BOWEN
ASSISTANT CITY EDITOR

Seven commissions vying for town funds for the 2004-05 fiscal year gave their requests Wednesday to the Chapel Hill Town Council in hopes of providing more services, personnel and opportunities for the town.

The council will study the progress and proposed projects for the upcoming fiscal year and will allocate funds accordingly.

Each year, town organizations and departments are given the opportunity to discuss their budget needs with council members through a series of budget work sessions.

The Greenways Commission presented plans for new Bolin Creek trails, Booker Creek Park and Battle Creek, which includes a trail shared by the University.

Commission Chairman Peter Calingaert said the commission would like to begin the design of new Bolin Creek trails as soon as funds are allocated. He said the cost could be as much as \$200,000.

"It would help a lot to go ahead

and select the design firm," he said. Calingaert said the commission already has received a grant from Orange County to help, but he said the county has been slow in handing out the funds.

"Money now is a lot more valuable than money later," he said.

The Parks and Recreation Commission listed the renovation of the Chapel Hill Community Center as its top priority for the upcoming year.

The project, which will cost an estimated \$1.4 million, will help repair the basketball court, walls, pool tiles and shower facilities.

Pamela Hemminger, chairwoman of the commission, said the renovation is necessary to accommodate the increasing number of people using the center for recreation and meeting purposes.

Hemminger also requested \$150,000 to pay for signage, water facilities and field repairs in small parks.

The Human Services Advisory Board did not suggest a funding amount, but Chairman Lew Borman said its budget depends

on the number of nonprofit agencies it supports each year.

"We don't see it getting brighter for nonprofits," he said. "We want the opportunity to serve as many nonprofit agencies as we can."

Council member Bill Strom recognized the work of nonprofit agencies. "I'm committed, and I wish we could expand (nonprofit funding)," he said.

George Cianciolo, chairman of the Transportation Board, requested funds for a downtown transfer center, a park-and-ride along U.S. 15-501, new software to collect and update data for the transit system and to increase service and frequency of the transit system.

The Technology Committee, Community Design Commission and Chapel Hill Public Arts Commission also presented budget requests.

The council will hold six more budget work sessions and a budget hearing before deciding the commissions' budgets in June.

Contact the City Editor at citydesk@unc.edu.

Union exhibits 'green' benefits

BY RAND ROBINS
STAFF WRITER

Going green is a growing trend in the Triangle, as evidenced by a new exhibit on the ground level of the Student Union and new measures being taken in campus planning.

The basement exhibit, inspired by the recently completed Environmental Protection Agency campus in Research Triangle Park, examines both environmental and financial benefits of erecting sustainable buildings.

Using resources such as water, energy and land more efficiently, green buildings benefit employers

and educators by creating a more productive workplace environment than traditional structures, said UNC Sustainability Coordinator Cynthia Shea.

"The biggest savings of all come if you design buildings with more natural light, improved indoor air quality and better ventilation," Shea said. "Then you increase employee productivity and attendance."

According to the EPA, Americans spend 90 percent of their time indoors, and the concentration of airborne pollutants can be 100 times greater indoors.

Because of concerns like these, UNC recently made plans requiring all new construction projects to meet the stringent standards of sustainability drafted by the U.S. Green Building Council.

By improving indoor environments, Shea said, employees and students are more likely to stay healthy and productive.

While potential financial gains make sustainable projects attractive to investors, the major objective of green buildings is not a bigger profit margin, but protecting the environment with responsible waste

and energy management practices.

Green structures meeting minimum USGBC standards, the same standards being applied to University construction projects, experience average efficiency gains of 25 percent to 30 percent over traditional buildings, according to the study.

Environmental precautions, already in place in buildings like the recently renovated Murphey Hall, could soon reach residence halls. The planned renovation of Morrison Residence Hall could include a "sustainability floor," that includes solar panels for energy production, said Charlie Anderson, chairman of Student Congress' Renewable Energy Special Project Committee.

With \$185,000 due next year in RESPC's bank account, the influence of renewable energy and sustainability is growing.

"We hope to look back in 10 years and see tangible change to the University, as well as a domino effect throughout the southeast."

Contact the University Editor at udesk@unc.edu.

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