

The Daily Tar Heel

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www.dailytarheel.com

Hospital OKs \$17.8 million for center

INCREASED CONSTRUCTION COSTS PUSH PROJECT TO \$200 MILLION

BY ROBBY MARSHALL
STAFF WRITER

Medical bills are not the only thing expensive about hospitals. UNC Health Care's board of directors recently approved the allocation of \$17.8 million to cover cost overrun in the construction of the N.C. Cancer Hospital — an endeavor bearing a

price tag that has grown to almost \$200 million.

The unexpected price inflation is linked to the urgent demand for resources needed to rebuild the Gulf Coast, coupled with China's newly acquired stronghold on much of the world's steel, said Bill Roper, CEO of the UNC Health Care System.

The \$17.8 million came from the hospital reserve, which is a pool of UNC Hospitals' annual earnings after expenses have been subtracted.

"What we've done is increased the budget," said Karen McCall, vice president of public affairs for the medical center.

The hospital, which broke ground in September, is one of many campus construction projects either in progress or on queue that are feeling the heat from growing construction costs.

Both materials and labor have skyrocketed in price, said Bruce Runberg, assistant vice chancellor for facilities construction and planning.

"Our projects in general on campus at the University ... have had significant inflationary issues," he said.

The rising cost of labor is also a problem, McCall said. "This is a supply and demand thing."

Growing labor costs are a product of the construction marketplace, which is in the midst of a growing glut of projects, Runberg said.

Contractors have more flexibility and freedom as projects are arising rapidly. This produces less competition per project, allowing contractors to require higher fees, Runberg said.

"We're lucky if we get three bids per project, whereas we were getting eight to 10 bids a few years ago."

Building materials, such as steel, concrete, glass and lumber, are a few of the products that have shot up in price recently, McCall said.

SEE OVERRUNS, PAGE 5



UNC health care CEO Bill Roper said other work will not take a hit.

BACK IN ACTION



DTH/JORDAN HARRELL

The Master Batters play The Flying Goochmen in an intramural softball game on Hooker Fields on Wednesday night. Hooker fields 3 and 4 reopened Monday covered with FieldTurf, an artificial grass that allows for all-weather play and low maintenance costs, after a semester off.

The fields, which host intramural and club sports Sunday through Thursday from 4 p.m. to 11 p.m., lie along South Road across from the Old Chapel Hill Cemetery. The artificial turf on Hooker fields 1 and 2 will be replaced later this year.

Group starts fee talk revision

Trustees predict smoother format

BY NATE HUBBARD
STAFF WRITER

The Board of Trustees opened the book on revising the way the campus develops student fee hikes Wednesday during a meeting of its audit and finance committee.

The group discussed an initiative designed to give trustees broader oversight throughout the process, which has come under fire from several student leaders in recent years after unpopular increases.

The trustees listened to a presentation detailing the history and process of establishing fees from John Adams, director of financial planning and budgets and a member of the

Trustees are considering making the fee process more similar to the way tuition is handled, which grants them more participation.

"I think the trustees need to be involved earlier so there is no misunderstanding," said Trustee John Ellison, vice chairman of the finance committee.

Currently, two trustees sit on the tuition advisory task force, but fee discussions, which are addressed by the chancellor's committee on student fees, involve no trustees.

Trustees do not participate in formal fee debate until it comes before them during one of their bi-monthly meetings.

Trustees did not take formal action on the issue Wednesday, but their discussion will spur several proposed changes that will be voted on during the trustees' May meeting.

Two possible amendments to the process were discussed Wednesday.

One idea would add at least one trustee to the chancellor's committee.

SEE FEES, PAGE 5

ONLINE POLLS:

Looking for a reason

Will March Madness fervor be the same on campus now that the men have lost?

Go to: www.dailytarheel.com

Looking for a reason

Should Mohammed Taheri-azar be considered a terrorist?

yes 76% no 24%
1,328 votes 414 votes

This poll is not scientific and reflects the opinions of only those who have chosen to participate. The results do not represent the opinions of Internet users in general, nor the public as a whole.

Town to span U.S. for manager

Will advertise in papers nationwide

BY TED STRONG
SENIOR WRITER

Not every organization has the moxie to advertise for a new employee in the executive classified section of the Sunday New York Times.

But the town of Chapel Hill sure does.

Tim Dempsey, one of the consultants helping the Town Council's manager search committee and a member of the Chapel Hill planning board, said at a Wednesday meeting of the group that a national push would have a simple aim.

Town Manager Cal Horton is retiring after 16 years in the position, effective Sept. 1.

"The more you advertise, the more applications you will get," Dempsey said, adding that the number of applications could spike dramatically.

The search committee also decided Wednesday to advertise in a number of local, professional and minority papers, at local graduate schools and on several Web sites.

The committee considered but

SEE SEARCH, PAGE 4

Budget discussions surge forward

Council listens to myriad fund needs

BY BRIANNA BISHOP
CITY EDITOR

Chapel Hill Town Council member Bill Thorpe perhaps best summed up the town's budget process when he addressed a group of public works employees in the audience at a Wednesday meeting.

"We're all in this together," he said.

The Town Council held a public forum Wednesday to garner feedback on issues relating to the budget for fiscal year 2006-07, capital improvement priorities and various grants and proposals.

About eight community members commented on what the town's spending habits for the

coming year should be.

Requests ranged from funding for increased HAZMAT training for law enforcement officials and firefighters to money to create a position for a nonprofit manager.

Town finance director Kay Johnson and deputy town manager Flo Miller reiterated that at this point, all proposals are preliminary — the manager's recommended budget will be presented April 24.

The next budget work session is slated for April 5, and an agenda has not been set for that meeting. The budget will take effect July 1.

Contact the City Editor at citydesk@unc.edu.

PRELIMINARY BUDGET

Town staff is considering several key national and local issues in drafting a 2006-07 budget, including an anticipated slowing of the economy, increased fuel costs and the downtown redevelopment initiative.

The budget's estimated base expenditure is \$46 million for the general fund, and base revenues are estimated at \$47.3 million. A shortfall of about \$122,000 is projected between total costs and total available revenues.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The 15-year capital improvement program prioritizes capital and maintenance work needed in the town.

Early projections estimate a budget of about \$1.7 million for improvements. High-priority items included in the budget are repairs to town-owned buildings including Town Hall and the Inter-Faith Council homeless shelter.

SEE REQUESTS, PAGE 4

Comedy festival here all weekend

BY MARGARET HAIR
SENIOR WRITER

Whatever makes you laugh — a stand-up comic's caustic wit, a novelist's wry humor, an improviser's uncontrollable energy — the organizers of the Carolina Comedy Festival do their best to provide it.

Now in its second year, the festival, sponsored by the Carolina Union Activities Board, started Tuesday and runs through Saturday.

In addition to the return of

Lewis Black & Friends as the marquee event, this year the festival has a new eye-catching name on the bill: Author Nick Hornby — of "High Fidelity," "Fever Pitch" and "About a Boy" fame — will speak on campus.

Jonathon Benson, CUAB president and festival organizer, said he wanted to bring a fiction author to provide another point of entry into the festival for students who might not be stand-up or improvised comedy fans.

"A lot of people still read fiction novels, and he's arguably one of the better, well-known fiction writers out there," Benson said.

Black, who graduated from UNC in 1970, was more blunt in expressing his excitement for Hornby's participation.

"If people don't come out to see him, they're ... idiots," he said. "You know, I'm excited he's coming."

SEE COMEDY, PAGE 4

Carolina comedy festival events schedule

For more information about the festival events, check out www.unc.edu/cuab.

TODAY

Student Comedy Showdown at 7pm, Cabaret

FRIDAY, MARCH 24

Nick Hornby Workshop at 1pm, Class of 2000 Lounge

Improv / Performance Workshop at 2pm, Union 3209

Women in Comedy Close-up panel at 3pm, Union 2518B

Bryan Tucker Close Up at 4pm, Union 3209

Class with Lewis Black at 5pm, Union Auditorium

NICK HORNBY

at 7pm, Great Hall

Carolina Comedy Club 9pm, Cabaret

SATURDAY, MARCH 25

"The Daily Show" Close-up at 1pm, Class of 2000 Lounge

Lewis Black & Friends at 8pm, Memorial Hall

For Love of the Laugh: NY Comedy Club Scene at 2pm, Class of 2000 Lounge

Class with Lewis Black at 3pm, Union Auditorium

Stand-up / Performance Panel at 4pm, Union Auditorium

Comic Writers' Close-up at 5pm, Class of 2000 Lounge

Lewis Black & Friends at 8pm, Memorial Hall

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weather

ARTS DESK Reactions to the new DTH crossword service, which some find easier

OPINION DESK More discussion of the process used in editing letters to the editor

UNIVERSITY DESK Transcripts of the executive branch nomination hearings

WHERE THE HEART IS

Homelessness-focused group discusses public forums and preliminary data on the area's homeless, some of whom attended the meeting.

THE BIG QUIZ

The Beatles, Simpsons and Meg Ryan converge in this annual sampling of pop culture trivia. Try your hand at the Trivial Pursuit-style game.

MARCH SWEEPS

The Tar Heel baseball team sweeps Towson, finishing the Tigers off 11-3 Wednesday. Josh Horton matched a career high with four hits.

MARCH 23, 1983 ...

Only 9 percent of the student body votes on a referendum to raise the student activity fee. The ballots are never counted.

Partly Cloudy
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