

# N.C. Memorial takes to the skies; helicopter transport begins in July

By JEANIE MAMO  
Staff Writer

The cutting wind whips through a fluorescent orange wind sleeve that floats above the helipad at North Carolina Memorial Hospital. The concrete landing is emblazoned with a large white cross and a red "H."

And by July 1, a specially designed Carolina-blue helicopter will be transporting patients and landing at the Chapel Hill site. NCMH will then be part of a helicopter network with Charlotte Memorial Hospital, Memorial Mission Hospital in Asheville and N. C. Baptist Hospital in Winston Salem.

Robert Harrison, 33, is NCMH's aeromedical coordinator. "Our plan is to provide a 24-hour critical care and emergency transport system to serve as

an extension of the unique capabilities of this hospital," Harrison said.

His job includes ordering the aircraft's supplies and deciding where to place a fuel tank. "I do a lot of things that seem unrelated," he said. "Everything from trying to find a place to put a communications console, to trying work with other people in the hospital to develop good relations across the state."

Harrison said the helicopter could fly anywhere in North Carolina. The normal operating radius will be 120 miles with a maximum range of 150 miles.

He said the helicopter cost approximately \$1.5 million. Additional costs include leased pilots, a full-time mechanic and supplies. Patients' costs for helicopter transportation will be

about \$500 to \$600, depending on the distance travelled.

The helicopter will have three pilots who rotate shifts. "We expect that you'll be able to get it just as quickly at three in the morning as you would at three in the afternoon," Harrison said.

"This is a very, very big project," he added. "(It's) really something that's got to be seen as a major team effort."

Until Spring 1985, MAST (military assistance to safety and traffic) helicopters served NCMH. The service was stopped when federal funds were cut and Duke's "Life Flight" began operating. MAST helicopters are not allowed to serve an area already served by a private helicopter system.

The helipad has been beckoning for quite some time. The Division of Facility Services of N.C.'s Department of Human Resources denied the hospital's original application for helicopter service in late October based on questions of need.

"Then through a long and tedious process we were able to argue successfully in a formal reconsideration hearing that, in fact, our statement of need had not been exaggerated," Harrison said. Consideration of the hospital as a teaching institution and certain needs and capabilities were not evaluated in

the initial review of the application.

He said the concept of using helicopters to transport critically ill and injured patients started with the Korean War. It developed during the Vietnam War and then began to see civilian application.

"This is a fairly new area for hospitals," Harrison said. "The first hospital-based helicopter program was in 1977." Maryland was one of the first places where an effective program was organized. "The Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS) is one part of the University of Maryland medical system and that is the home of shock trauma," Harrison said. "They have five helicopter bases across the state utilizing nine aircraft and a series of designated hospitals for taking care of those

patients based on the degree of injury they have."

Elizabeth Lay is chief flight nurse at NCMH. She is recruiting for four additional nurses to work with five Orange County paramedics to comprise the transport team for adult patients.

"Combining nurses with paramedics for the flight team makes us unique in the state," Lay said. "We wanted to involve the paramedics because of their experience and expertise in on-site and emergency care."

The new team will work with the hospital's pediatric team. They have helped transport babies and children via helicopters for more than 10 years.

"Their experience will be invaluable for our new flight-team members," Lay said. "They'll continue to work with

pediatric patients, while the new team will work primarily with adult patients."

Each nurse-paramedic team will work 12-hour shifts at the hospital to provide 24-hour staffing for the helicopter. After the final selection, team members will attend an eight-to-10-week training session.

"Trainees will receive 80 hours of lecture, 30 hours of skills work, and about 200 hours of clinical training in areas outside their own expertise," Lay said.

"The most important consideration in all this is safety... absolutely the paramount consideration," Harrison said. "We want to be sure, very sure that we've done all our homework very carefully before we put anybody in that aircraft."

## Trustee to lease artifact-rich land to UNC anthropology department

By LINDA MONTANARI  
Staff Writer

Plans are under way in the anthropology department to expand excavation of a 20-acre Indian site on the Eno River in Hillsborough.

The land was recently purchased for \$120,000 by UNC Board of Trustees

member Richard Jenrette, an investment banker in New York. Jenrette took over a six-month option held by two Hillsborough preservation societies that was due to expire Feb. 28.

The sale alleviated fears that the land would be turned into a private residence and polo facility.

Jenrette will lease the land, believed by some to be the greatest stronghold of Ind. artifacts in the Southeast, to the University for continued study. UNC officials believe the site may be a pre-colonial Occaneechi tribe town.

"It is an ideal laboratory for the

University and for the National Geographic Society, which has been sponsoring excavation of the area," said John Kennedy, chairman of the Preservation Fund of Hillsborough Inc. and secretary of the University system.

Prior fund-raising efforts by the University to purchase the land had been unsuccessful.

"It's been just super, super significant to the University and to the department and lab," said Roy Dickens, director of the Research Laboratories. "It will give us a permanent lab... right here within 20 minutes of the University."

Since 1983, the anthropology department has sponsored six-credit field study programs of the site for students during the first summer session.

At least 15 undergraduates and 7 graduates participated in the study last year and the same number is expected this year, Dickens said. Most of them are anthropology students, but the program is open to anyone.

For the past two years, work at the site was done under a grant in conjunction with the National Geographic Society. The dig was to last five years. "Now that we own the property, we've been able to do the work just the way we want to," Dickens said.

The land is technically listed as a 100-year flood plain, and building restrictions are not as tight as they are for other flood plains, he said.

After they are studied, the artifacts will be permanently curated in the anthropology department and used for museum displays and Indian Heritage Week.

"We don't just study them once and put them away," he said. "Excavations are expected to continue into the next century."

The anthropology department offers several classes on North American Indians and North American archeology, he said.

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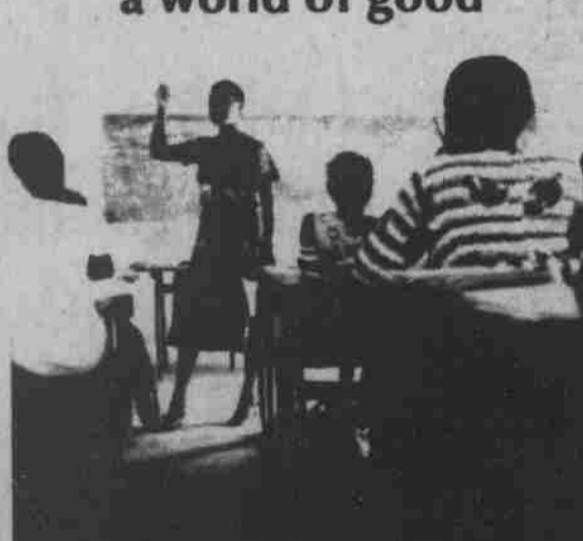
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