

**NEWS BRIEFS**

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**JOBLESS BENEFITS INCREASE**

Ann Q. Duncan, chairman of the Employment Security Commission of North Carolina, announced recently an increase in the maximum weekly unemployment insurance benefit effective Aug. 1. Unemployed North Carolinians who qualify on or after that date will be eligible for a maximum of \$267 a week up from \$258 a week. The higher benefit will affect only those people who file a new unemployment insurance claim on or after Aug. 1.

**AUTOMAKERS ARE RECRUITED**

Gov. Jim Martin has unveiled the state's strategic marketing plan targeting new and existing automotive parts manufacturers. "We've been working hard to get automotive related companies to move to North Carolina," said Martin. "This plan is designed to enhance our current economic development efforts and strengthen the automotive industry in the state." BMW's recent announcement has attracted a lot of positive attention to this region and has sparked even more interest in the Carolinas, Martin said. "That's why we're going to intensify our recruitment efforts."

**NAACP ROUNDUP**

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server, who asked not to be identified, told this writer that "already more than 50 people have applied."

Hooks assailed critics for saying the NAACP has no programs, pointing to the large number of its legislative victories, including the passage of the 1991 Civil Rights Bill. He also noted the women's economic empowerment programs as embodied, for example, in Women in the NAACP, headed by Ms. Hooks; the successful prison, religious and youth programs such as the Afro-American Cultural and Technological Scientific Olympics. The NAACP Economic Fair Share program alone has generated \$45 billion in jobs, contracts and services for minority people, Hooks proudly points out. He cited NAACP leadership in supporting South African demonstrations that resulted in U.S.-imposed sanctions, and its strong support of Haitian boat people. This will lead to a mass march on the White House Sept. 9, Hooks revealed.

**WILL BLACKS**

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done in years past. The Democratic Party is now trying to find a way to woo those people that were ready to support the campaign of Texas billionaire Ross Perot to now support Clinton. Perot said he decided, in part, to



To add a crispy coating to cookies, sprinkle a mixture of flour and sugar on the pastry board before rolling out the dough.

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end his quest for the presidency because of the changes he saw in the Democratic party during the national convention.

While Perot did not attract black voters in significant numbers, his D.C. campaign organization was headed by an African-American, Gloria Borland, and the Washington spokesman was a black, James Polk.

Pennsylvania State Rep. David Richardson, a former president of the National Black Caucus of State Legislators, was one of the only blacks to openly disagree with the Clinton/Gore love fest.

"A lot of people are going to feel that they have to leave out of this convention supporting Clinton and Gore... our concern is that urban policy questions and concerns that deal specifically with the African-American community are not being addressed and we do not believe that Gore and Clinton have that understanding. Everybody didn't come here to party. Some of us came here for a reason," Richardson said.

While the party's organizational leaders and delegates have lined up behind the Clinton/Gore ticket, there are no assurances that the black man and woman on the street will do likewise.

The Republican Party will hold its political convention in Houston during mid-August to re-nominate President George Bush and Vice President Dan Quayle.

Secretary of State James Baker is expected to take up a White House post and lead the president's campaign effort from there. Few, if any, efforts have been made by the Republicans to woo blacks for votes, or for significant African-American participation in the organizational structure.

**FRIENDS**

(Continued from page 1)

ick K. Heineman, Assistant City Manager Lawrence Wray and others paid special tribute to her.

Before the day was through, an estimated 350 people took part in the celebration, listening to music, inspirational talks, and enjoying the free refreshments and each

**Southeast Raleigh Residents Express Views On Proposed \$95 Million Civic Center Here**

BY CASH MICHAELS  
 Staff Writer

When the new Raleigh Civic and Convention Center is finally completed in either late 1995 or early 1996, it will greatly expand the current exhibition, lobby and meeting room space, thus allowing larger conventions and functions to finally consider Raleigh in their plans.

It may cost \$95 million. Some of the proposed features of this new facility include a connecting tunnel between the renovated structure and the new center, a kitchen and ballroom addition, and a high-tech conference center with state of the art audio-visual and telecommunications capabilities, making the new center attractive for educational and business uses.

And according to a respected accounting firm, the economic impact of the proposed new civic and convention center will increase annual spending in the region (Raleigh and surrounding areas) by nearly \$53 million. The increase of annual tax revenue to the city, county and state is projected to be almost \$3 million. Events attendance at the center will increase by 34 percent, bringing in bigger revenues than ever before.

"But what will Southeast Raleigh get out of the deal? And by the way, this project could cost more than \$95 million!"

Those were the two overriding concerns expressed by some southeast residents at Chavis Park Recreation Center Monday night, during a public information session on a \$95 million bond referendum to build a new convention center downtown. The referendum will be on the ballot for city voters this November 3, and city officials have put on the full-court press to get voters to approve it.

At the first of four information sessions sponsored by the city's planning department, officials offered those in attendance a bread-and-butter project summary, giving a history of the current civic center, justifying the need for an improved facility, and outlining how it is going to be paid for.

Residents were most interested in who was going to pay for it.

"Enabling legislation passed by the General Assembly in 1991 allows Wake County to charge a 6

percent hotel/motel occupancy tax (in effect since Jan. 1), and a 1 percent prepared meals tax which goes into effect Jan. 1, 1993," said Dave Betts, assistant director of planning.

"Conventioners and people from outside the county will be paying the hotel and motel tax for the most part....," said District C City Councilman Ralph Campbell Jr., "...but the 1 percent tax on prepared meals, like the kind you get at restaurants, will be paid by all."

Campbell said that the probable inflated cost of construction has already been figured into the \$95 million price tag (the final design still has not been determined, though two alternative plans are pending), and the cost will be spread out over 25 years. But residents were concerned that there is still approximately \$6 million yet to be paid on the current civic center, which was built in 1977 at a cost of \$18 million.

Betts said that is already accounted for in the long-range budget, and will be paid off by 1997.

Still, Southeast residents like J.J. Allen, director of marketing for Reynolds and Associates, were concerned that \$95 million could be earmarked for a civic center project, but dollars to help rebuild Southeast are hard to come by.

"How much of that \$95 million will we get, how much work from that \$95 million will black contractors get? And why can't black contractors get more of the projects already happening in Southeast? Why are we being locked out of projects in our own community?" Allen asked.

"We're building this convention center for other folks to come in and have a good time, but what does Southeast get out of it?" Campbell assured residents that at least 10 percent of the contracted construction work should go to minority businesses, and the economic impact of the center includes jobs and small business opportunities.

But even after the meeting, the questions persisted, as did the doubts. There will be public hearings on the civic center project August 4-12 at 7 p.m. in the City Council chambers of the Municipal Building at 222 W. Hargett St.

**Judge Places Rodney King's Suit On Hold**

LOS ANGELES, Calif. (AP)—A federal judge placed Rodney King's civil suit on hold last week pending completion of all court cases stemming from the motorist's videotaped beating by police officers.

But an attorney for the city of Los Angeles said negotiations are continuing in an effort to settle the civil suit before it reaches trial.

King is seeking \$83 million in damages. The City Attorney reportedly proposed a settlement of \$6 million earlier this month, but the City Council declined to approve it and discussions continued.

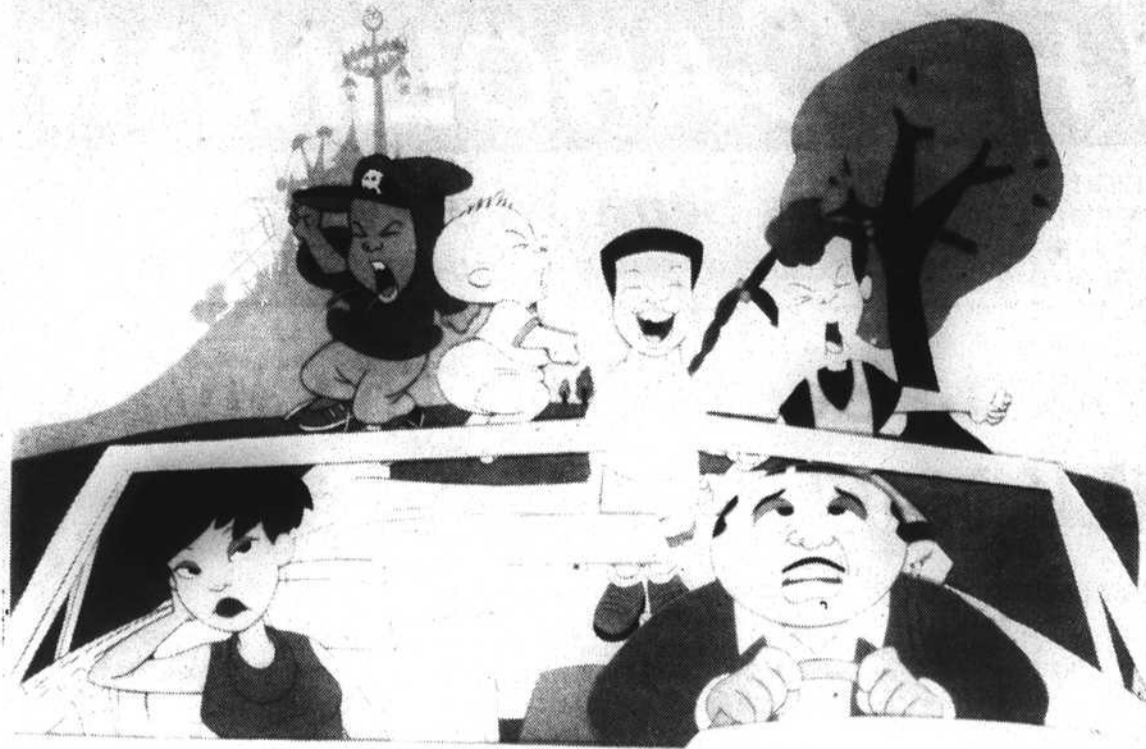
Emerging from an early morning meeting in the chambers of U.S. District Judge John G. Davies, Senior Assistant City Attorney Thomas Hokinson said Davies agreed to "put the civil case on hold" until other cases are resolved.

King's attorney, Steven Lerman, told reporters after the meeting that a settlement would "greatly benefit the healing process" in the city. But he said the next move was up to the city.

"It's not up to me," said Lerman. "It's up to the City Council."

One police officer, Laurence Powell, faces a retrial Oct. 19 on assault charges which were not resolved by a jury which acquitted three other officers on all counts in a Simi Valley trial. The verdicts in that case sparked Los Angeles' deadly riots.

A federal grand jury also is investigating possible federal civil rights violations by those involved in the March 3, 1991, beating.



**BEBE'S KIDS**—Animation with an attitude. Robin Harris' first date with Jamika is foiled when she insists that her well-mannered son and her neighbor Bebe's three irrepressible kids accompany them on a trip to an

amusement park. The Paramount animated musical comedy is based on characters created by the late comedian Robin Harris and will play in area theaters.

**"Bebe's Kids" Bringing Mischief, Street Smarts To Animated Screen**

*Bebe's Kids*, an animated musical comedy based on characters created by the late comedian Robin Harris, is being produced in Hollywood.

The first animated theatrical film with exclusively African-American characters as principals, *Bebe's Kids* features the voices of Faizon Love, Nell Carter, Myra J. Vanessa Bell Calloway, Tone Loc, Wayne Collins, Jonell Green, and Marques Houston in the presentation of the Motion Picture Group of Paramount Pictures.

In the film, Robin's first date with a beautiful woman is foiled when she insists that her well-mannered son and her neighbor Bebe's three irrepressible kids accompany them, turning their trip to an amusement park into a nightmare. With the signature line, "We don't die, we multiply," Bebe's kids bring a mix of inner-

city mischief, cunning, intelligence, and street smarts to their quest for recognition.

The idea for *Bebe's Kids* began as the spontaneous invention of Robin Harris, who was performing his routine in an Oakland, Calif. comedy club. "A woman in the audience started to heckle Robin and he started calling her one of Bebe's Kids," recalls Harris' widow, Exetta. "The kids were fictional, but they were based on his experience and the people he knew who had misbehaving kids."

The "Bebe's Kids" routine became Harris' most popular as his career started to take flight. He headlined at comedy clubs and appeared in the Hudlin Bros.' *House Party* and as Sweet Dick Willy in Spike Lee's *Do the Right Thing*.

"After we finished *House Party*, we were interested in doing a live-action film about Bebe's kids with

Robin," says Reginald Hudlin. Then, tragedy struck as Harris, only 35 years old, died of a heart attack while performing his standup comedy act in Chicago.

"We didn't want the vision of Robin Harris to pass away," says Reginald, "but we couldn't imagine anyone playing the part of him in a movie."

The solution was animation. Paramount gave the green light to make *Bebe's Kids* as part of its animation deal with Hyperion Entertainment.

With *Bebe's Kids*, the filmmakers sought to include elements of African-American culture and musical influences into their movie. As an example, an effort was made to utilize color schemes and designs inspired by Kenyan textiles, African tribal art and the Harlem Renaissance period of African-American art.

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