THE DAILY CLIPS

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Residents take a peek at plans for Fifth Street's makeover

By T. Scott Batchelor
The Daily Reflector

Attendees at the C.M. Eppes Center on Tuesday night seemed pleased with the way a plan to revamp the look of West Fifth Street was shaping up.

As part of a multimillion-dollar revitalization plan, the city of Greenville has held several meetings to glean input from residents on how to improve the "streetscapes" along certain corridors, such as West Fifth, referred to as a "gateway" into west Greenville and the historic neighborhoods there.

The word "streetscape" refers to city street makeovers that enhance aesthetics and encourage use by pedestrians and bicyclists.

Meetings held in the past two years have helped city staff and consultants develop a master plan, which they went over with about 40 people who came out Tuesday night.

Now planners are getting down to the meat and potatoes of the plan, when decisions have to be made about what will actually make it into the final design, said Merrill Flood, head of community development.

He expects the project to be bid out by the summer, though he cautioned that work will proceed each year until the corridor from Memorial Drive to Cadillac Street is overhauled.

"It takes quite a lot of time," he told the audience.

See STREET, A11

STREET
Continued from A1

"No question, no answer, no idea is bad," Flood told the residents. "We want to hear what you have to say."

Plans include adding benches, trees and other vegetation, street and neighborhood signs, brick columns to mark the historic Riverdale and Eppes neighborhoods, installing decorative but functional street lamps, and relocating some overhead utilities.

Carl Rees, the city's urban development planner, said the area is "a walkable community: It's close-knit; it's tight."

He said attendees at past meetings said they wanted better lighting, wider sidewalks and more trees along West Fifth.

Plans also include elements of public art, specifically a memorial honoring Charles Montgomery Eppes, the first principal of the city's first black high school, which opened in 1903.

After presentations from representatives of the project team, attendees were invited to peruse displays highlighting the master plan and to talk with the experts on hand.

"I think it's a nice idea," Dawn Wainwright said of the proposed improvements. "I think it would enhance the community a whole lot, and I think the people need it."

make the people feel good about living here."

In particular she liked the plan to widen sidewalks and improve pedestrian lighting.

"I pretty much like how they're going to make space for people to walk back and forth, get it more well lit, make people feel safer in the community (and) more comfortable to walk up and down the street every day."

Tezra Blake attended the meeting with her son, Nicholas. "I love the design," Blake said. "The only thing I have a question about is, are all the things they're bringing together environmentally friendly."

While the state and region is undergoing a severe lack of rainfall, Blake's thoughts turned to what kind of vegetation will wind up in the ground along West Fifth.

"Since we're in a drought, I had concerns about the trees, grass, and stuff, and (officials) said they would get back to me on that point."

She sounded a theme stressed by organizers Tuesday, who urged people to provide input on the final design of the master plan for West Fifth Street.

"I think it's very important that all of us contribute to the community," Blake said.

A meeting is planned for 7 p.m. Thursday at Carver Library, 618 W. 14th Ave., to talk about opportunities for public art along the corridor.

Other streets slated to get new looks are Cotanche Street from East Fifth Street to Reade Circle; Dickinson Avenue from Reade Circle to Atlantic Street; and Evans Street from East Fifth Street to West 10th Street.

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Our Views

Reasoned steps

Task force urging campus safety

An April shooting at Virginia Tech killed 33 people and left a host of questions for campus administrators and public officials. North Carolina took the events of that terrible day as a warning and have used the time since to consider how to prevent a similar attack.

A statewide task force studying the tragedy issued a number of thoughtful security initiatives for universities and a call for lawmakers to close a gun-buying loophole exploited by the shooter at Virginia Tech. While nothing may stop a determined and suicidal gunman, implementing these recommendations would be a measured response to bolster safety.

Seung-Hui Cho was a deeply troubled senior considered disruptive and difficult by professors in the Virginia Tech English Department. But none could have predicted the carnage he would inflict on April 16 when he used two handguns to shoot 49 people at a residence hall and in several classrooms. Five professors and 27 students were killed before Cho ended his own life.

The setting for the attack, a college campus, magnified the horror of the attack. Universities are intended to be safe and open — a suitable atmosphere for learning — and this event forced many schools to ask if they were exhausting all avenues to protect students.

North Carolina formed a task force to study campus security and to consider an appropriate response to the Virginia Tech murders. Chaired by Attorney General Roy Cooper, the group released its report last week, outlining a number of strategies for schools to implement. Among these, the group urged universities to conduct threat assessments, draft emergency response plans and work with local law enforcement and first responders to ensure a rapid response.

At East Carolina University, administrators reacted swiftly after the Virginia Tech attack and have already employed many of the group’s recommendations. In addition to sending expressions of compassion and financial assistance, East Carolina reviewed its own security situation and implemented numerous changes to better protect students, faculty and staff. The administration should be commended for its proactive response, and other colleges should act with similar urgency.

Lawmakers also have responsibilities, according to the task force. North Carolina does not prohibit the involuntarily committed from buying and owning guns. Cho, who was ordered by a judge to seek psychological treatment, would not have been allowed to buy a gun in Virginia without that loophole. That state’s legislature has already acted in response, and North Carolina should follow.

Students who come to school at East Carolina have a reasonable expectation of safety, and this community and this state are obligated to provide it. These recommendations challenge officials to do more to protect college campuses and the general public, and should be readily embraced.
PCMH looks back on '07, first year of new leaders

By Jimmy Ryals
The Daily Reflector

Pitt County Memorial Hospital officials looked back Tuesday on the hospital's first year under new leadership.

The year featured successful installation of HealthSpan, a $24 million patient records system; uneven financial performance, and a renewed focus on patient safety, according to presentations by PCMH President Steve Lawler and others at the Pitt Memorial Board of Trustees' February meeting.

Lawler replaced Deborah Davis as hospital president in January 2007. The restructuring also made Diane Poole PCMH executive vice president and elevated Mary Chatman to the chief nursing officer's post. Trustees approved their reappointments to those posts Tuesday.

At the time of those changes, the hospital was midway through six months of poor financial performance, a swoon it reversed with a robust spring and summer. PCMH closed its fiscal year in October with a $25 million surplus.

The last third of 2007 brought another downward swing. Since Oct. 1, 2007, expenses have outpaced revenue by $39,006, according to hospital documents. PCMH officials had expected a $1.3 million surplus. Pitt Memorial leaders are working to reverse the slide, said Dave McRae, CEO of University Health Systems of Eastern Carolina, which owns the hospital.

PCMH had a good 2007, Lawler said, and it will keep moving forward in 2008.

"We understand that doing things the same is not going to get us any better results," Lawler said.

Lawler listed some 2007 highlights for the board. Among them was a sharp reduction in sentinel and critical events — incidents that kill or harm patients, or risk doing so. They fell by a third at PCMH in 2007.

The hospital stepped up patient safety efforts after federal authorities threatened to withdraw Medicare funding in December 2006. The threat resulted from a February 2006 incident where an elderly woman received a bad blood transfusion and died.

In other news from the board meeting:

- Dr. Anand Tewari, an anesthesiologist with East Carolina Anesthesia Associates, supplanted Dr. Walter Pofahl as chief of the hospital's medical staff. A native of India, Tewari studied at the University of Manitoba and Stanford University. He's been practicing in Greenville since 2001.

Tewari, who will lead the hospital's medical staff for one year, said improving doctor-hospital relations will be a priority. The chief of staff position alternates between private and East Carolina University physicians.

- Board members reappointed the officers who've led them for the last year. Larry Seigler, Phil Flowers and Janice Faulkner will return as chairman, vice chairman and secretary, respectively.

- David Womack, currently the board treasurer, will switch places with Assistant Treasurer Horace Tripp. Keeping the two in their current posts would have violated the board's bylaws, which bar members committee chairmen from serving more than three straight years. The treasurer is chairman of the board finance committee.

Trustees met Tuesday in joint session with the University Health Systems of Eastern Carolina Board of Directors. Though legally separate entities, the same people compose the two bodies.

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ECU forum, part of series, focuses on race relations

By Jimmy Ryals  
The Daily Reflector

The recent appearance of a noose on campus loomed over a diversity forum Tuesday at East Carolina University.

While he wouldn't discuss the incident in detail, Chancellor Steve Ballard said university police are doggedly investigating a report of a noose found last Friday.

The investigation "will uncover all the facts that we can possibly discover about this incident so that we can deal with it effectively," Ballard told more than 150 ECU students, administrators, faculty and local civil rights leaders at Mendenhall Student Center.

The forum, the first in a series, was part of an ongoing look at diversity and race relations on campus. It followed a survey last spring of attitudes about the campus climate. Tuesday night's topic was race relations. The noose incident "made this conversation more immediate and more urgent than it might have been otherwise," Ballard said.

"I think ECU is at a tipping point," he said. "The struggle for fairness is always difficult. We have an opportunity to turn that point ... to be on the positive side. Hatred has no place on this campus or in this community. Let us all work to ensure that we put an end to it as quickly as we possibly can."

An unnamed person found the small noose hanging from a mirror inside a car Friday afternoon. The car was parked outside Building 172, a campus facility on 14th Street. It came less than four months after students reported finding a noose hanging in a basement in Best Residence Hall. Police investigated that sighting and were unable to confirm whether rope bound in the basement was actually a noose.

The Rev. William J. Barber II, state chapter president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, applauded Ballard for taking the latest incident seriously.

"I have been on other campuses where the first thing that came out of people's mouth, who were in authority, were, 'Well, that's just a prank,'" said Barber, the forum's keynote speaker. "A noose is not just a prank."

Barber called on Ballard and the state itself to suspend or fire anyone who hangs a noose, an act of "domestic terrorism." He and others expressed support for Ballard's commitment to diversity, citing the campus climate survey and the administration's response to the noose.

"We have things starting at this university that we've never had before," said Rufus Huggins, president of the Pitt County chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

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Dorrance did no wrong?

To read about the settlement in the sexual harassment suit against UNC-Chapel Hill women's soccer coach Anson Dorrance, it's easy to get the impression Anson Dorrance did nothing wrong.

This from Dorrance himself, from UNC-CH chancellor James Moeser and from athletic director Dick Baddour.

This, the same day the university agreed to pay $385,000 to a former soccer player who says the coach harassed her and others.

This, on the same day Dorrance issued a letter of apology (albeit mealy-mouthed) for his behavior.

This, four years after paying $70,000 to another former player, with Dorrance agreeing to attend sensitivity training, not for six months, but for eight years.

In all, the university has agreed to pay nearly half a million dollars (and conduct a comprehensive review of its sex harassment policies) for what Dorrance didn't do.

All to keep the case from going to trial, where the embarrassing details of Dorrance's alleged behavior might make it awfully hard to keep up the mantra: Anson Dorrance did nothing wrong.

What exactly is the soccer coach accused of doing?

According to the lawsuit, he queried his players incessantly about their sex lives, made graphic remarks about their imagined sexual exploits and made comments about their players' female attributes. In one scenario described in the suit, a player was sitting knee to knee with Dorrance in his hotel room — she 17, he 45 — when the coach asked whom she

suffice to say that judges on one of the most conservative appeals courts in the nation issued a ruling that Dorrance's harassment was "sufficiently severe or pervasive to create a hostile (or abusive) environment."

As the ruling noted: Dorrance professed to be a father figure. In reality, though, he asked players questions no father would ask.

The judges took pains to clarify that this was not just off-color language.

What made the situation particularly troubling was that the players were so young, away from home for the first time, and the coach was so incredibly powerful.

Remember, Dorrance is not just any soccer coach. He was and is the most successful soccer coach in U.S. college history.

The judges wrote: "As such, he had tremendous power and influence over a player's opportunity for achievement in the soccer world, both at UNC and beyond."

That's what makes the announcement that the captains of Dorrance's current team support him wholeheartedly so stunning.

(Not.)

When I talked Tuesday evening with Dorrance, he urged me to talk to the many former players who say they never felt harassed or witnessed such behavior on his team.

But then why sign a letter of apology in 1998 to the father of one of the women who filed the suit? Why write the lame apology attached to the settlement this week? To that he gave no answer.

Dorrance had long claimed he wanted the chance to clear his name at trial. In a statement issued Monday, he said he understood the university's desire to have the case end here.

That is, to keep the ugly details under wraps.

Moeser backed up the coach, saying he never believed the case had any merit. Again: Anson Dorrance did nothing wrong.

With the settlement, conveniently, we'll never really know.
BRIEFS
FROM STAFF REPORTS

DURHAM COUNTY

Duke Divinity gets $14 million grant

DURHAM — Duke University's Divinity School has received a $14 million grant from Lilly Endowment for a new program that helps develop Christian leaders.

The initiative aims to help leaders combine theological insight with sound business practices to meet challenges.

The school will teach, coach and provide resources for leaders of key Christian institutions that support congregations and pastors. A Web site will be developed to help leaders of Christian institutions share resources and ideas.
Broad to lead education group

Former UNC President Molly Broad on Tuesday was named president of the American Council on Education, the major higher education association in the United States. Broad, a professor in the School of Government at UNC-Chapel Hill, will become the 12th president and first woman to lead ACE. The organization is the unifying voice in American higher education, representing 1,800 colleges and universities, organizations, associations and corporations. It is a major lobbying group for higher education in Washington.

Broad’s new position comes at a time of increased scrutiny and calls for accountability in higher education. In the past few years, higher education leaders have, at times, been on the defensive about escalating tuition, students’ learning outcomes and conflicts of interest related to the student loan industry and study abroad programs.

But there has never been a more crucial time for higher education, Broad said, as the United States experiences seismic economic shifts and powerful forces of globalization, along with an aging and diversifying population. "Institutions of higher education will be increasingly important to the welfare of our country," she said in a conference call with reporters.

She will leave her faculty position at UNC-Ch but said she hopes to return someday. She will spend most of her time in Washington but will keep a home in Chapel Hill.

Broad was president of the UNC system from 1997 to 2006 during a period of explosive growth, higher tuition and a $3.1 billion construction makeover of the state’s public colleges and universities.

Pittenger off and running

State Sen. Robert Pittenger kicked off his campaign for lieutenant governor this week.

The Charlotte Republican pledged to use the bully pulpit of a statewide office to promote budget-cutting proposals he has repeatedly proposed since taking office in 2003.

"State government has become too big, spends too much and taxes too much from taxpayers for the services they get," he said in a speech at the state Republican Party headquarters.

Pittenger said he wants to reform medical malpractice lawsuits, eliminate duplicate spending, cut taxes and put more money and technology into classrooms.

Etheridge goes west


Etheridge, a Lillington Democrat, joined a congressional delegation for a 12-day visit to Hawaii, Guam, Vietnam, Australia and New Zealand.

The group received a briefing from military leaders at the U.S. military’s Pacific Command in Hawaii. In Guam, they looked at infrastructure in place to receive 8,000 Marines being moved there from Okinawa, Japan.

In Vietnam, Australia and New Zealand, Etheridge met with prime ministers and foreign ministers to discuss economic development and agricultural trade issues.

The group returned Friday.

McIntyre goes east

U.S. Rep. Mike McIntyre, a Lumberton Democrat, joined other members of the House Armed Services Committee on a trip last week to the United Kingdom, one of the United States’ closest allies in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

During three days of meetings overseas, the group met with officials with the U.K. Ministry of Defence and with military committee members in the House of Commons.

The group also traveled to Scotland to meet with military officials there. McIntyre returned Saturday.

Edwards has sex appeal

Could it be his universal health-care plan? His anti-poverty proposals? Or how he looks in blue jeans?

For whatever reason, a new poll of South Carolinians has found John Edwards as the sexiest presidential candidate.

Edwards received 16 percent of the sexy vote, well ahead of Mitt Romney and Hillary Clinton, who each received 11 percent, according to a survey by Public Policy Polling of Raleigh. Barack Obama was close behind with 10 percent.

Some of the other candidates didn’t do so well: John McCain (4 percent), Fred Thompson (3 percent), Mike Huckabee (2 percent) and Rudy Giuliani (1 percent).

Among Democratic voters, there was virtually a three-way tie among Edwards, Clinton and Obama. Edwards led overall because of crossover appeal among Republican women.

Romney was regarded as the sexiest candidate by Republican voters.

The majority of those surveyed, though, said none of the presidential hopefuls were sexy.

The survey of 1,279 likely primary voters was conducted Jan. 11-12 and had a margin of error of plus or minus 2.7 percentage points.

By staff writers Jane Stancill, Barbara Barrett and Rob Christensen.

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Cancer research gets boost

Millionaire’s $450,000 may advance doctor’s device

BY TIM SIMMONS
STAFF WRITER

As a respected doctor with a bright future at Duke University, David Kirsch has some bold ideas about cancer research.

But it takes more than a good idea for a 37-year-old researcher to win a big government grant. In this case, the hunt for money led to a California multimillionaire with his own ideas about paying for cancer research.

Kirsch was one of three people named Tuesday to each receive a $450,000 cancer research grant from the Damon Runyon-Rachleff Innovation Award Program.

One of the first to receive the award, Kirsch hopes to build a small device that can identify microscopic residue from a single cancer cell during surgery.

If he’s successful, doctors will know when they have fully removed cancerous tumors, and patients will be spared unnecessary radiation therapy.

It could fundamentally change post-surgical cancer treatments — or it could be a complete bust.

Either way, it’s not the kind of project that government agencies such as the National Institutes of Health are likely to fund.

And it’s not the kind of idea older researchers are likely to propose, said venture capitalist Andy Rachleff.

A partner in the Silicon Valley venture firm

SEE CANCER, PAGE 3D

CANCER
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1D

Benchmark Capital, Rachleff has made millions over the past two decades establishing information technology companies.

In the process, he became convinced that the best innovations come from younger researchers.

“I believe the same is true in life sciences,” he said. “When you look at Nobel laureates, the ideas they pursued were ideas developed before the age of 40.”

But NIH grants are not focused on younger researchers. Instead, more than 90 percent of the money goes to researchers who have received at least one NIH grant.

The average age of those getting money for the first time is 42.

Rachleff echoes a sentiment that the government approach to funding encourages incremental progress instead of breakthroughs.

“For many NIH-type awards, you need enough preliminary data to show the idea is going to work or at least where things are headed. But for this kind of a project, you need a big investment of capital just to get started.”

DAVID KIRSCH, DUKE RESEARCHER

That’s why he and his wife, Debra, are targeting the projects of younger investigators. They plan to spend at least $6.5 million on 18 projects over the next few years.

The program will be administered through the Damon Runyon Cancer Research Foundation in New York. The foundation also helped assemble a team of doctors to review more than 400 applications.

If one of the projects funded over the next few years is a home run — as venture capitalists call a huge success — Rachleff expects that patients and researchers will be better off worldwide.

He hopes it will encourage others to funnel money toward riskier ideas.

Kirsch did not offer to step into the debate about how research is funded. He knew, however, that his chances for an NIH grant to fund this idea were small.

“For many NIH-type awards, you need enough preliminary data to show the idea is going to work, or at least where things are headed,” Kirsch said. “But for this kind of a project, you need a big investment of capital just to get started.”

Kirsch will work with researchers at MIT to develop the technology to build the imaging device. He hopes to use it on mice by the time the three-year grant expires.

Unlike a typical venture capitalist in a deal, Rachleff won’t make money if Kirsch succeeds.

Having watched family and friends struggle with cancer, his goal is much broader.

“Rachleff said he wants to change people’s minds about who should get research money.”

He knows he might fail. He knows what will happen if he doesn’t try.

“Nothing ventured,” he said, “nothing gained.”

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Thieves steal band’s thunder

N.C. Central needs instruments for Battle of Bands

BY ERIC FERRERI
STAFF WRITER

DURHAM — With its biggest performance of the year fast approaching, N.C. Central University's marching band has been crippled by the theft of at least two dozen instruments.

Fourteen sousaphones and a selection of other instruments were stolen from the band room in at least two thefts stretching back to November, said Jorim Reid, NCCU's band director. The instruments were taken from locked rooms, and the thieves left the sousaphone cases, so it wasn't immediately apparent that the instruments were missing, Reid said.

Now, with the high-profile, annual Battle of the Bands showcase set to start Jan. 26 in Atlanta, Reid is trying to patch his band back together. The loss of sousaphones, in particular, is a blow to a 180-member band that relies heavily on the large brass instruments. There are 16 sousaphone players in the band.

"I really don't know what we're going to do," Reid said. "It's kind of like driving a four-wheel car with three wheels. You won't go very far. It's like heavy metal with no lead guitar."

Along with the sousaphones, thieves took trumpets, trombones, flutes and piccolos, some of which police have already recovered from area pawnshops, Reid said. NCCU police detectives could not be reached Tuesday, and Reid said he doesn't know how thieves accessed the locked band rooms at least twice.

The sousaphones and some of the other instruments are university property, but some of the smaller ones were owned by students, said Reid, who spent part of Tuesday on the phone trying to find instruments to borrow for the coming band showcase. The stolen sousaphones are valued at $3,000 each; buying them new could run as much as $7,000, Reid said.

Sousaphones are large big-bellied tubas that wrap around the body. They are most often purchased by schools, music groups and churches,

SEE SOUSAPHONE, PAGE 4B

SOUSAPHONE
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1B

but there is also a market for individual instruments, particularly on the Internet, said John Simonetti, who works at The Tuba Exchange, a tuba sales and repair shop in Durham.

Still, unloading 14 stolen sousaphones may not be easy, Simonetti said.

"It's not like stealing a television or stereo or something everyone has in their household," he said.

The Battle of the Bands showcase will be held at Atlanta's Georgia Dome. It is a popular event for historically black colleges and universities. NCCU's band is one of 10 invited to the event this year, and one of two from North Carolina; Winston-Salem State University will also be represented.

The band's booster club and alumni base will travel to Atlanta as well, said Norma Petway, NCCU's director of alumni relations. The booster club has raised money in the past for band uniforms and may be called on now to raise money for new instruments, she said.

"There is a sense of pride [in the band]," she said. "When it's time to get band uniforms, the alums get together. They're very loyal."

Anyone with information about the thefts is asked to call NCCU Detective A.J. Carter at 560-5397, NCCU Detective Billy Boyd at 560-7365 or CrimeStoppers at 683-1200. CrimeStoppers pays cash rewards for information leading to arrests in felony cases and callers never have to identify themselves.