THE DAILY CLIPS

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Area police prepare for big night

8,000 to 12,000 revelers are expected in downtown Greenville tonight.

By Kathryn Kennedy
The Daily Reflector

Downtown Greenville has increasingly become a mecca for each Halloween’s costumed masses. But this year's estimated 8,000 to 12,000 celebrators may feel briefly like they’re waiting in line at the airport.

The Greenville Police Department is blocking off a large section of downtown spanning from Fourth Street south to Cotanche and Reade streets and from Evans Street east to Fifth Street beginning at 8 p.m. There will be four checkpoints where people can enter the area, each manned with approximately 20 officers running several lines to scan attendees with a metal detection wand and inspect personal belongings.

Lt. Earl Phipps asks that visitors have patience with these procedures.

“It will take some time to get through the lines,” he said. “We want to provide the safest environment we can.”

There will be additional officers on rooftops and live video feed coming in from recently mounted security cameras. Temporary lights will be installed throughout the area to improve visibility. If a person is injured in any way, they can report to the checkpoints’ triage stations to receive medical assistance.

Anything that remotely resembles a weapon or alcohol will not be permitted, Phipps said. Aside from real weapons, that means no hooks or daggers for pirates, no scythes with Grim Reaper costumes and no toy guns.

Phipps said officers are expecting voluntary compliance from those carrying alcohol legally, meaning they can return to their vehicle to stow the beverage rather than be charged or have it confiscated. Open containers are not permitted anywhere, so all

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drinking must occur inside bars and clubs.

Public information officer Cpl. Kip Gaskins stressed that the department will still be running their usual nightly patrols throughout the city, with all downtown activity consisting of additional officers, outside aid and bicycle and mounted patrols on duty until around 3 a.m.

“Think about it,” he said, shaking his head. “We’ve got all these armed robberies going on and now Halloween comes with a bunch of people in masks.”

“We’re preparing for the worst and hoping for the best,” Phipps added. “Every year’s a learning process.”

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Cpl. Kip Gaskins
Greenville Police Department spokesman

200 STRONG

Approximately 200 officers are patrolling Halloween night. Of those, 125 will be Greenville Police Department employees, Others will come from the following agencies:

- Pitt County Sheriff’s Office
- Wilson Police Department
- Ayden Police Department
- Goldsboro Police Department
- Jacksonville Police Department
- Pitt County Memorial Hospital Police Department
- East Carolina University Police Department

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Students wary of crime near campus

By Brock Letchworth
The Daily Reflector

Pari Sadeghi's late-night walks with her dog Bella have ended, and now she drives to the bars just a couple of blocks from her Jarvis Street home.

The East Carolina University junior says she feels like the changes keep her safer.

Since moving to the area five months ago, Sadeghi has heard stories of assaults, robberies and break-ins in the community near the university's campus. Just last week, a friend of Sadeghi's — 23-year-old Drew Daly — was a victim when seven men broke into his Jarvis Street house, robbing 12 people and shooting Daly twice.
“It’s making me paranoid,” Sadeghi said. “I was just driving my car yesterday and I saw somebody who looked suspicious and I was like ‘What if he is a killer?’”

“I hate it. I don’t like living in fear.”

Sadeghi is one of several students who say they will be even more safety-conscious tonight as they make their way around the neighborhood for Halloween partying. Greenville police say, but Sadeghi said she realizes those units can’t be everywhere at once.

Josh Swygart, 19, is also worried about what type of crimes may occur near his Jarvis Street home tonight.

“There will be a lot of intoxicated people walking around,” Swygart said. “With this much crime going on around here lately, there will probably be some people out trying to take advantage of those people I’m sure.”

Swygart is a victim of the recent crime spree. Less than a month ago, his home was broken into as he and his roommates slept. The East Carolina sophomore’s own experience coupled with the recent shooting have left him and several of his friends feeling uneasy about living in the neighborhood, he said.

“Everybody is kind of worried about going out at night or walking alone,” Swygart said. “It seems like every day we’re getting an e-mail at school about something happening in the area. My mom actually wants me to transfer.”

An alcohol-awareness and Halloween-safety event will be held at Wright Plaza today at 11:30 a.m. Several university organizations will be distributing information on East Carolina’s “Safe Ride” program for students living off campus while the university police will be on hand to talk to students about safety.

The university is also offering “Midnight Madness” at 9 p.m. in the Mendenhall Student Center and Student Recreation Center — an alternative from downtown partying that will feature dancing, bowling and a handful of other activities.

Some of the local bars are also trying to keep the community safe. Chelsy West, a manager at Christy’s Euro Pub on Jarvis Street, said the bar’s staff will make a concerted effort to ensure patrons are not walking home alone or putting themselves in dangerous situations tonight.

But Harris Stoker, a 21-

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year-old who lives on Summit Street, said he believes some students will continue to put themselves in dangerous situations anyway. Stoker said one of his friends was assaulted in the area recently but the friend continues to walk alone across campus and through the neighborhood late at night.

"Some people are just really stubborn," Stoker said. "But I guess you really can't predict what is going to happen. You just need to consider the risk in anything you do and make the best decision you can."

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MASN, Suddenlink in dispute over service

By Nathan Summers
The Daily Reflector

The Mid-Atlantic Sports Network still hopes that Suddenlink Communications will play ball in Greenville, but the cable provider is waiting for what it feels is a more reasonable offer to its customers.

A surge of protest from some Suddenlink cable television subscribers in Greenville, East Carolina University's athletic administration and others across North Carolina has been one result of the cable provider’s refusal to carry MASN on its basic cable roster.

But Suddenlink, formerly Cox Communications, contends adding channels like MASN to basic cable creates greater monthly expenses for all of its customers, giving rise to the current standoff between the two.

MASN offers both professional and college sports to viewers as far south as Charlotte and north to Harrisburg, Pa., as part of a seven-state coverage area. It has been the hope of the network — which this season is showing nine East Carolina's 12 regular season football games either live or on tape delay — that it would be expanded from satellite dish availability in Greenville to basic cable.

“There is a ton of NCAA college programming on MASN, which adds to the demand for it throughout North Carolina, which has a rich tradition in college sports,” said MASN spokesperson Todd Webster of the network which last summer banded together both the Baltimore Orioles and the Washington Nationals baseball teams to help lead its coverage. “The simplest resolution to this would be for the cable company to flip a switch and turn on MASN tomorrow, to do what four other cable providers (in North Carolina) are already doing. That is to provide MASN to them (on extended basic cable). It deserves carriage on the highest tier.”

According to Webster, neither Time-Warner nor Suddenlink have agreed to offer the network on basic cable in North Carolina, despite what Webster said was a 70 percent approval by surveyed fans in the state who felt MASN should be easier to access.

According to MASN, 20 other providers in the network’s

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territory do carry MASN.

But according to Suddenlink spokesman Pete Abel, it's not nearly as simple as flipping that switch. Because of what he said are sharp annual increases in the fees cable companies must pay channels in order to put them on the air, Suddenlink must be careful in what it asks its customers to pay for each month, and must consider its entire customer base, not just ECU fans.

"We are more than willing to carry MASN under conditions that are duly considerate to our customers," Abel said. "We offered to (MASN) that we will carry the network on a digital tier. There is only so much room as to what we can include on our expanded basic package. Right now, that is a general interest package."

Abel said the fees Suddenlink pays to networks — especially high demand ones like ESPN, MTV and Nickelodeon — have increased an average of 9 percent a year. Ultimately, he said, that expense funnels down to Suddenlink's customers.

He called the MASN situation a matter of cost and placement, saying that trying to create a balance between fans who want MASN on basic cable and the rest of Suddenlink's subscribers, all of whom bear the brunt of rising cable costs, is not easy.

While Webster points out that no other network in the country which provides Major League Baseball coverage is stuck on the more expensive digital tiers, Abel said the trend with all specialty channels — even sports networks like MASN — has been a movement into digital lineups where they can be grouped into like categories.

Abel also expressed concern for how many different networks now have their hands on the coverage of just one program, including ECU. Greenville residents would have needed ESPN, ESPNU, MASN, College Sports Television (CSTV) and local NBC affiliate WTIN-7 to see all of the Pirates' football games this year.

"How many different channels are people going to have to pay for to see all the games?" Abel said. "The bottom line is we're willing to work this out. There has to be a halfway point. Not everyone wants to pay for every channel."

The response to the current setup has included correspondence locally from ECU athletics director Terry Holland and Greenville mayor Don Parrott to both MASN and Suddenlink.

According to Webster, only 16 percent of fans polled in North Carolina felt there wasn't enough interest to have MASN available to all cable subscribers.

As part of MASN's effort to be broadcast in more households, the network enacted the playballnow.org to give fans voice in the argument by way of an online petition. Webster said the response in total from fans has exceeded 18,000 people who want both Suddenlink and Time Warner to add MASN to basic cable.

Abel used CSTV as an example of the shift for sports networks to more specialized, more expensive digital tiers. He said his company, then Cox, was able to negotiate a digital deal that is maintained to this day with CSTV.

But Webster argues the current lack of MASN availability locally reflects an effort by cable companies to intentionally steer such programming to digital tiers for the increased cost.

He used the example of the ill-fated Charlotte Bobcats network Charlotte Sports Entertainment Television (C-SET).

"(Bobcats owner) Bob Johnson tried to set up an independent sports network for local programming, a way for fans to be able to watch Bobcats games," Webster said. "He wanted to get the network on basic cable, but Time-Warner put it on the digital tier saying there wasn't enough interest. C-SET folded, went bankrupt. Who should end up snapping up the rights to this programming but Time-Warner, which now carries the Bobcats, and on a basic tier."

Still, Abel contends Suddenlink is willing to meet MASN halfway on the digital tier.

"If they were willing to follow the CSTV model at a reasonable price, we're right there at the table," Abel said.

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Obama is likely to jam NCCU

More than 2,000 expected at event

BY ERIC FERRERI STAFF WRITER

DURHAM — A Thursday event at N.C. Central University featuring Democratic presidential hopeful Barack Obama has proven popular enough that it is being moved to the campus football stadium.

One problem: All those folks may have trouble finding parking.

The NCCU campus, which gets congested even on slow days, promises to be particularly jammed Thursday when more than 2,000 Obama fans fight for space with faculty, staff and students. Originally scheduled for the Walker Physical Education Complex — which holds about 2,000 people — Obama’s Countdown to Change fundraising event sold enough tickets to force the move to the adjacent O’Kelly-Riddick Stadium.

University officials say the Obama camp is in charge of all logistics.

“People are going to have to park where they can find a parking space,” said Roger Gregory, special assistant to NCCU Chancellor Charlie Nelms. “You know, there’s a parking problem here. No parking has been set aside.”

Ben LaBolt, Obama’s spokesman, said Tuesday afternoon that he didn’t know specifics of a parking plan but expected the logistics would be worked out.

“I would talk to the school about that,” he said.

NCCU officials have largely ceded event planning and responsibility to Obama’s team, which is paying $8,284.18 — a standard rate — to rent the space for the day, Gregory said.

Admission is $25, or $15 for students, and paying to attend amounts to a campaign contribution.

“I think it’s a great thing for our students to be exposed to the political arena,” Gregory said.

Locally, Obama supporters exclaimed Tuesday at the news that ticket sales were so brisk.

“That’s a lot of people!” said Paulette Hill, communications director for Triangle for Obama, which is helping drum up local support for the Illinois senator.

“I take it as a great sign.”

Stadium gates will open at 3 p.m. The event starts at 5 p.m.

Obama will spend just a few hours in the Triangle. After the NCCU event, he will attend a higher-end fundraiser at the Raleigh home of Mary Laurie and Joe Cee. Obama supporters there will pay $500 for a general reception, or $2,300 — the maximum an individual can contribute — for a more intimate reception.

Organizers would not say Tuesday how much money they hope to raise while in the Triangle. Nationally, Obama has raised more than $79 million, trailing only Hillary Rodham Clinton among all presidential candidates.
Misclassifying vehicles as antiques can cost the state tax revenue. Kinlaw, for example, paid an additional $1,300 in taxes when his truck was reclassified as a custom-built vehicle.

**UNC-CH chancellor search**

The opinions were as diverse as the speakers at a hearing Tuesday afternoon on the qualities desired in the next chancellor at UNC-Chapel Hill. At a four-hour open mic session at the Carolina Inn, the chancellor search committee heard from scientists, liberal arts professors, groundskeepers, office managers, students and graduate students.

They all had ideas about what UNC-CH needs in the next chancellor. Among the suggestions:

- Someone who won't let the university grow too big.
- Someone with Tar Heel roots, or at least a familiarity with North Carolina history and culture.
- Someone who understands the importance of humanities and social sciences, not just a chancellor of "big science."
- Someone who will make Carolina a "green campus."
- Someone who will advocate for better staff salaries and benefits.
- Someone who values diversity in all of its forms — race, gender, religion, ethnicity and sexual orientation/expression.
- Someone who respects the student honor code and other governing bodies.
- Someone who embraces the state's demographic changes growing Latino population.
- Someone who won't compromise academic freedom.
- Someone who appreciates the role of public higher education and the university's service to North Carolina.
- Someone who will keep doors open to low-income students.
- Someone who isn't necessarily white and male, as all other chancellors have been.

The forum was videotaped and will be posted at www.unc.edu/chan/search/.

Nelson Schwab, chairman of the panel, said he had received about 30 nominations of people both inside and outside the university. Another forum is scheduled for Nov. 15.

**The right 'cue**

Fred Smith may be the next Bob Garner. While touring the state as part of a 100-county tour for his gubernatorial campaign, the state senator has taken pains to serve the local style of barbecue — Eastern or Western — at each stop, The Charlotte Observer reported.

At a barbecue at Mallard Creek, Smith served Western style.

"We serve in the style of the county," he said. "I'm becoming an expert on barbecue."

Garner is the always-traveling expert on North Carolina 'cue.

Staff writers Dan Kane, Jane Stancill and Ryan Teague Beckwith contributed to this report.

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