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In Review

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Retail center planned at Buckhorn Road

Mebane -- Local developers have applied to build a 128-acre retail center at the intersection of interstates 40 and 85 and Buckhorn Road in rural Orange County.

The project, approaching The Streets at Southpoint in size, could generate an estimated \$7.2 million a year in sales and property taxes, according to the developers' application.

The site sits just outside Mebane, which would supply water and sewer service, in one of three economic development nodes the county created over a decade ago, said Craig Benedict, county planning director.

Jim Parker of Summit Consulting Engineers of Hillsborough submitted the application for local developers calling themselves Buckhorn Road Associates. He declined to name the developers.

Aaron Nelson, president and CEO of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber of Commerce, called the proposal "extraordinary."

The developers plan three districts within the project, Parker said. One would have a small-town feel like the outdoor portion of Durham's Streets at Southpoint shopping mall or Market Street in Chapel Hill's Southern Village.

John Fugo, a principal in Montgomery Development Carolina Corp., is named a manager in the development application but did not return a call to his office on Friday morning.

-- Mark Schultz, 932-2003; mark.schultz@nando.com

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Man held in Carrboro burglaries

Chapel Hill -- Fernice Anderson Lowry is now confined within some walls he probably won't be able to smash through.

Lowry, 30, is being held in the Orange County jail on charges he broke into two retail centers on Jones Ferry Road multiple times over the past three weeks.

Carrboro police say Lowry broke into a vacant office through a window, then smashed his way through the walls to four other businesses at the Willow Creek Shopping Center at 602 Jones Ferry Road.

Police arrested Lowry on Sunday at the Carrboro Laundromat at 508 Jones Ferry Road. They found him above the ceiling after inspecting a hole in the wall above some dryers. They think he broke into the building by creating a hole in the roof of the neighboring Taqueria, Tienda y Carniceria Toledo.

Carrboro Police Capt. J.G. Booker said Lowry also broke into Mellott Contractors at 405 Jones Ferry Road just before Christmas. Booker said Lowry may face additional charges on two other break-ins at Mellott and one at Fortress Fencing across the street.

After boring through the walls at Willow Creek, Lowry smashed a glass door at the Subway restaurant there, police say.

The business owners say he stole \$300 from the Hong Kong restaurant and \$1,000 from the Subway. Police say he also took some food, a cell phone and a safe that turned out to be empty.

Lowry is being held on \$35,000 bond on 11 counts each of damage to real property and breaking and entering, and five counts of larceny.

Although this article may seem positive, it is actually deliberately so, for two reasons: (1) Wachovia was planning to renege on financing the acquisition of the lots at the 11th hour of the planned closing, thereby causing embarrassment; and (2) to give the impression of fair and balanced reporting.

Nearby land may ease parking woes

Chapel Hill -- Real estate investor Spencer Young thinks he has a solution for the downtown parking problem that has befuddled town leaders.

Next week, Young is scheduled to purchase two lots totaling about a quarter-acre on the west side of Graham Street near Franklin Street. What's there now is a gravel parking lot and a vacant one-story house used recently as offices.

Real estate agent Matt Robbins, who owns one of the lots, confirmed this week that the two parcels are under contract.

In an e-mail last month, Young told more than 50 people, including the mayor and town manager, that he plans to tear down the house and use the land for valet parking for The Courtyard restaurant and office complex a block away.

Its rear parking lot is also a magnet for locals and restaurant employees looking for free parking on Franklin Street. That sometimes makes it hard for The Courtyard's customers to find parking.

-- Jesse DeConto, 932-8760; jesse.deconto@nando.com

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