



The two towers of the Greenbridge project rise over West Rosemary Street in Chapel Hill. At the start, people in the Pine Knolls and Northside neighborhoods expected to be trained and hired, but the economy has made jobs scarce.

STAFF PHOTOS BY HARRY LYNCH

A vision for jobs clouds over

Accused of forgoing a promise, Greenbridge finds itself under pressure

By **JESSE JAMES DECONTO**
STAFF WRITER

CHAPEL HILL — Back in February 2007, the construction business was still booming, and the eco-developers at Greenbridge anticipated offering dozens of jobs to neighborhood residents at their \$50 million construction project.

Two years later, with the concrete skeletons of two condo towers rising between the Northside and Pine Knolls communities, Greenbridge is under pressure to deliver on that offer. But there aren't many jobs to be had.

"Most contractors are doing the best they can to keep their core people employed, and everybody's had to lay off some folks for the first time in many years," Greenbridge partner Frank Phoenix said. "In some cases ... they've got their employees doing things they normally wouldn't do just to keep them busy."

So far, Greenbridge's concrete contractor has been able to fill eight out of about 50 jobs with neighborhood residents. Phoenix also has asked its masonry contractor to try



A crew works on concrete flooring in the \$50 million Greenbridge project Thursday. Some say Greenbridge developers had planned to hire locally.

ABOUT GREENBRIDGE

Greenbridge will be a sustainably designed mixed-use complex with a central plaza, ground-floor retail, offices and restaurants and 98 residential condos in side-by-side seven- and 10-story towers. It is on Rosemary Street near the Carrboro town line. The Southern Environmental Law Center will occupy 8,500 square feet of offices there. Designed by leading green architect William McDonough + Partners, the project will feature 40 different floor plans, highly efficient utilities and roof-top gardens. Prices range from about \$260,000 to \$1.4 million.

SEE **JOBS**, PAGE 2B

in to watch the children. With all these changes, school officials are asking parents to be patient. But that's not sitting well with some people who are upset by how quickly the decision was made to adopt the new schedule. "I feel all these decisions were made without keeping the parents in mind," said Robin Stewart, whose children attend Joyner Elementary School in Raleigh. "Parents have a lot on their plates, and now they're adding on this thing."

keung.hui@newsobserver.com
or 919-829-4534

ED: DATE IN A UNIQUE SON PROGRAM



ark Shopping Center, 6015 Glenwood Ave.
OW Raleigh • www.mauspiano.com

Mike or Dan 919.782.8391

D REFINISHING PAIRS, DOORS, TRIM

Unlike typical wood refinishing, the NHance revolutionary system allows you a dust free house within 24 hours, no mess. Our customer and environmentally friendly results will WOW you. Customer Satisfaction Guarantee.

ance
ood Renewal™

Triangle Area
eno for before/after photos!

t Windows

nyl Window Made!

\$185*

ANY SIZE INSTALLED

*PREMIUM WHITE VINYL DOUBLE HUNG FOUR WINDOW MINIMUM. STANDARD INSTALLATION INCLUDES WOOD WINDOW REMOVAL.

on his body, and Barnes said he was scheduled to undergo skin graft surgery late Monday.

"The family is doing pretty well, and he's doing good physically, but he's kind of taking it hard," she said.

The July 4 fireworks show on Ocracoke is a long-standing tra-

dition he was on the ground," Barnes said.

The U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives concluded that the explosion was an accident and turned the investigation over to North Carolina's labor department. A department spokeswoman said

JOB

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1B

to fill 20 laborer positions with local workers.

"We will give Pine Knolls and Northside folks first opportunity," masonry contractor Calvin Brodie said in e-mail to Phoenix.

Tim Toben, another Greenbridge partner, forwarded that message to Mayor Kevin Foy, underscoring the political tension surrounding the project.

Local black pastors, the NAACP and the student group United with the Northside Community Now have criticized Greenbridge as a rich, white enclave in a historically black neighborhood of modest means.

In response, town leaders are trying to recruit minority members to a task force advising how Chapel Hill should grow over the next 10 years.

And Greenbridge's developers continue to predict that retail jobs will sprout both inside and outside the complex, thereby employing local people.

"People living downtown now will be spending money and seeking services that they otherwise wouldn't," Phoenix said. "That's probably the most significant impact that Greenbridge will have on the economy, is bringing 98 families to live downtown."

Promises disputed

UNC-Now spokesman Rob Stephens said the potential masonry laborer jobs are encouraging but wishes higher-skilled mason jobs were also available. Phoenix says Brodie's 10 masons are all he needs.

"Many people ... were told that the project would bring training and employment for local youth in the Northside and Pine Knolls communities,"

adding that Melrose is a reputable company.

"You're just not going to send out brand new, untrained workers," she said. "That doesn't happen."

jay.price@newsobserver.com
or 919-829-4526

Stephens said. "The promises made ... for better paying jobs than the day laborer still have not come to fruition."

Phoenix said he and his partners never promised to train local workers, and no such stipulation appears in the Greenbridge development permit. The developers had suggested an alternative affordable-housing program that would have trained young people to install energy-saving materials in existing single-family homes, but the Town Council demanded 15 affordable units within the Greenbridge complex instead.

"People heard that, and they forgot that the town rejected that plan, and that's just been one of the misconceptions out there," Phoenix said. "We abandoned those ideas when the town told us to put the affordable units in Greenbridge."

jesse.deconto@newsobserver.com
or 919-932-8760

You or your loved one may be eligible for participation in a new investigational drug study for **Alzheimer's disease** if you:



- Are age 50 or older and have been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease
- Have a caregiver who can accompany you to clinic visits
- Currently not on any treatment for your memory

Qualified participants will receive:

- Study-related psychiatric evaluations
- Study-related physical and laboratory tests
- Transportation allowance
- Study drug at no cost



Duke Medicine

For more information, call
Hala Husn at 919-684-5929

WORK WITH THE FINANCIAL ADVISORS
WHO FOCUS ONLY ON THE
ACADEMIC COMMUNITY.