

City Page

NEWS & INFORMATION FROM THE CITY OF CHARLOTTE

Get Involved!

Spring is here and the City of Charlotte will be out and about in the community conducting numerous activities over the next month.

Earth Day Charlotte

Earth Day Charlotte will celebrate the earth-friendly practices by individuals and organizations in Charlotte-Mecklenburg. The event will feature live music, theater, storytelling as well as hands-on activities and demonstrations that will help Charlotte area residents take personal action in protecting our natural resources such as used oil and antifreeze disposal drop-offs, gas cap check replacement, and low-flow shower replacement.

Saturday, April 29, 10 am – 4 pm
Marshall Park, corner of 3rd and McDowell Streets

For more information, call 704.336.3631 or visit earthday.charmeck.org.

It's Your Community. It's Your Decision.

You're invited to a public meeting about the proposed **Northeast Corridor Light Rail Project**. Staff will present project alternatives and receive public input. All stations will be discussed; however, specific topics include: Sugar Creek, UNC-Charlotte and I-485/North Tryon.

Monday, May 1, 6–8 pm
University Hilton, Fountainview Room
8629 JM Keynes Drive

Tuesday, May 2, 6–8 pm
Sugaw Creek Presbyterian Church, Fellowship Hall
101 West Sugar Creek Road

For more information, call Adrienne Boone, Northeast Corridor Community Relations Specialist, at 704.336.3547 or e-mail her at aboone@ci.charlotte.nc.us.

Link Up At LYNX Open House

Hear the latest progress on Charlotte's first light rail line in the **South Corridor**. More than 700 workers are orchestrating work on the light rail and supporting infrastructure such as roads, sidewalks and water lines. Come out for an Open House for the LYNX Blue Line and Infrastructure Projects:

Thursday, April 27, 3:30 – 7:30 pm
South Corridor Construction & Information Center
4035 South Boulevard

For more information, call 311 or visit charlottefuture.com.

Neighborhood Matching Grants Available

Does your neighborhood need a playground? A park? An after-school center? If your neighborhood organization has a plan for making your neighborhood a better place to live, work and play, you may qualify for a Neighborhood Matching Grant of up to \$25,000. Applying neighborhoods must have a median household income of less than \$61,151. To apply, neighborhood organizations must send a representative to one of the following pre-application workshops:

May 2, 6-8:30 pm; Belmont Center, 700 Parkwood Ave.
May 10, 6-8:30 pm; Beatties Ford Library, 2412 Beatties Ford Rd.

For more information on Neighborhood Matching Grants, visit neighborhoods.charmeck.org or call 704.336.2349. The next application deadline is June 15, 2006.

Discriminatory housing practices become subtle, sophisticated

Imagine applying for an apartment after a complex advertises a vacancy only to be told politely by the property manager the ad was an error, but yet you continue to see the same ad week after week. Or during your house hunt, a real estate agent attempts to steer you to one part of town that "may be more suitable for you," even though you desire another area.

Each scenario could be a violation of the Federal Housing Act and the City's Fair Housing Ordinance. Both protect all people based on seven protected classes: race, color, national origin, religion, familial status (having children in your custody), sex and disability.

While both the city and nation have made great strides, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Community Relations Committee (CRC), the investigation authority for housing discrimination allegations, receives 40 to 50 complaints a year with more than half being valid cases of discriminatory practices.

"Unfortunately, discrimination in housing still does exist," said Willie Ratchford, CRC Director. "A lot of people don't think it happens because people engage in 'have a nice day racism.'" In these cases, the discrimination is more subtle and sophisticated than in years past. Applicants are treated respectfully and are allowed to complete applications; however in the very end, they are informed housing is not available.

Most complaints involve racial discrimination and the growing influx of Hispanics to the area has added to that number. Recently, the CRC received a \$208,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to reach out and educate the Hispanic community of their rights.

Everyone has the right to seek assistance if they believe their fair housing rights have been violated. For more information, contact CRC's Fair Housing Program at 704.336.5160.



A Job Well Done

Natalie English, Vice President for Public Policy for the Charlotte Chamber (center), poses with City of Charlotte Employee of the Year William Haas (right) and Runner-Up Vincent "Bud" Cesena (left). The Charlotte Chamber recognized the two public servants' superior performance during the April 10 City Council meeting. Haas, a senior engineer for Engineering & Property Management, served as project manager for the construction of the Charlotte Bobcats Arena, bringing the project in on time and on budget. Cesena, a police sergeant for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department, supervised the design and coordination of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Command Center, which came in under budget due to the officer's innovative ideas.