

DOW
13,596.02
+84.79

NASDAQ
3,136.00
+18.46

S&P 500
1,480.94
+8.31

Business

10-YR T-NOTE
1.83%
+0.01

CRUDE OIL
\$95.49
+1.25

GOLD
\$1,690.40
+7.70

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Briefly

Piedmont Natural Gas seeks rate cut of 7.5-9.5%

Charlotte-based Piedmont Natural Gas has asked regulators in both Carolinas to reduce its rates, saving residential customers \$8 to \$10 on their February bills.

The falling rates are due to dropping wholesale prices, the cost Piedmont pays for natural gas. New U.S. reserves are being tapped by hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling, sending more gas to markets.

The rate changes, if approved, would take effect Feb. 1 and lower residential rates by 7.5 to 9.5 percent.

Since 2008, Piedmont's residential rates in the Carolinas have dropped 30 to 40 percent. Assuming the latest rate change is approved, February bills will be \$45 to \$75 less for the same usage than in 2008.

Piedmont serves 1 million customers in parts of the Carolinas and Tennessee. — BRUCE HENDERSON

Jeld-Wen to expand plant in North Wilkesboro

A door manufacturing company that recently announced plans to locate its North American headquarters in Charlotte said Wednesday it will expand manufacturing facilities in Wilkes County.

Jeld-Wen Inc., now based in southern Oregon, said it will add to its facility in North Wilkesboro. The addition will create an estimated 49 new jobs and generate a capital investment of \$4.8 million in production equipment and facility improvements, according to a news release from the company.

Jeld-Wen, which has its global headquarters in Klamath Falls, Ore., announced last month that its new North American office would be in Charlotte, creating 142 new jobs.

Jeld-Wen employs about 20,000 people worldwide. — OBSERVER STAFF REPORTS

Energizer plans layoffs at Asheboro facilities

Battery maker Energizer is planning to lay off as many as 100 people from its manufacturing and packaging facilities in Asheboro.

The Missouri company notified the N.C. Department of Commerce and indicated the layoffs would take place between March 15 and Dec. 31 at three Asheboro facilities.

The layoffs are part of a global restructuring announced last fall that has been caused by a decline in battery sales, said Bonnie Renfro, president of the Randolph County Economic Development Corp.

Energizer currently employs about 650 people in Asheboro, Renfro said. The layoffs are expected to leave 550 to 570 Energizer workers, she said. — (RALEIGH) NEWS & OBSERVER

Housing, employment reports give stocks boost

U.S. stocks surged Thursday after strong reports on housing starts and unemployment claims made investors more optimistic about the U.S. economy.

The Dow Jones industrial average rose 84.79 points, or 0.8 percent, to 13,596.02. — ASSOCIATED PRESS

Duke to decide plant's fate

Rogers hopes to make call in early Feb.; analysts expect Crystal River to be retired

BY BRUCE HENDERSON
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Duke Energy hopes to decide by early February whether to repair or retire its crippled Crystal River nuclear plant in Florida, CEO Jim Rogers said Thursday.

said this week.

The fate of the plant, which Duke inherited in its 2012 merger with Progress Energy, will be a key decision for Duke this year. Duke now has 1.6 million customers in Florida, the second-largest of its six-state territory.

"We're targeting the first of February to make a decision in terms of the way forward," Rogers said in an interview Wednesday. He called that date

"an aspirational target" that could slip.

Rogers wouldn't say what decision he expects. Some financial analysts expect the plant to be retired.

Duke officials have previously said only that they expect a decision by summer. Further analysis of the repair risks detailed in an engineering report last fall was expected to be presented to Duke's senior managers in a week or two, a Progress Energy Florida official said Jan. 7.

Duke's board will make the final decision on the plant.

"I would welcome getting to finality," Charles Rehwinkel, deputy public counsel for Florida's utility-customer advocacy agency. "There are a lot of people waiting to learn what's going to happen—customers, employees, local government, economic development." — SEE DUKE, 3B



PHOTOS BY JEFF SINER - jsiner@charlotteobserver.com

Elliot Mann, president of Standard Pacific Homes' Carolinas Division, walks Thursday through a loft in a model home at Brightwalk, a mixed-income housing project on the site of the former Double Oaks housing complex in Charlotte.

New neighborhood could boost revitalization effort

Ambitious \$125M project along Statesville Avenue 'could be a new Dilworth'

BY KERRY SINGE
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About a mile north of the center city, a new neighborhood is taking shape that developers hope will become an anchor for an evolving Statesville Avenue corridor.

Developers say interest is strong and growing since the project opened for sales last year—reflecting recent housing reports that suggest the market is rebounding.

Buyers are even willing to plunk down a deposit for a home that hasn't been built, something that wasn't happening 18 months ago in the wake of the financial crisis and real estate meltdown that killed some projects and cost buyers.

Called Brightwalk, the neighborhood is an ambitious, \$125 million public-private partnership among Standard Pacific Homes, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Housing Partnership and others to create a mixed-income urban village at the site of what was once the crime-plagued Double Oaks apartments.



Brightwalk is a public-private partnership among Standard Pacific Homes, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Housing Partnership and others.

The old barracks-like buildings are gone. In their place are single-family homes, town houses and apartments. Office and commercial space is expected to follow.

Last month, the housing partnership applied for a rezoning that would allow for two new apartment complexes on the 98-acre site, one for families and one for seniors. Already, two apartment complexes and one senior housing project are on the site. The partnership's president, Pat Garrett, said plans call for potentially 150 new units. She also said the partnership

has made an offer to an operator to run a day care on the site.

Garrett said momentum has been building at the project, which she believes signals that the local economy and housing markets are improving.

"Double Oaks had a bad reputation," she said. "The fact the people are able to see beyond the reputation, the fact that things are moving, makes us feel good."

Elliot Mann, Standard Pacific's Carolinas division president, said he couldn't provide specifics on home prices. — SEE BRIGHTWALK, 3B

Muzak moving Fort Mill positions

After cuts in December, most of those left to be moved, ex-employee says

BY ELY PORTILLO
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Muzak, a subsidiary of Toronto-based Mood Media, is moving more jobs out of Fort Mill, S.C., as it continues a corporate reorganization.

A company spokesman wouldn't say how many jobs are being lost in Fort Mill, or which job groups are moving. Muzak is reorganizing many of its corporate functions and centralizing them in Atlanta and Austin, Texas.

Spokesman Sumter Cox said Muzak is not exiting the Charlotte area entirely. "We will continue to maintain a Charlotte presence, and the current plan includes remaining in this (Fort Mill) office," said Cox.

According to a former employee who spoke on the condition of anonymity, the company let about 150 employees go in an earlier round of job cuts last year and is relocating the majority of remaining jobs. "I would not say it's a majority of positions," said Cox. "It remains our goal." — SEE MUZAK, 3B

Hobby Lobby president asks for prayers

Company expects a long battle in court over federal contraceptives mandate

BY ELY PORTILLO
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The president of Hobby Lobby, which is fighting the government's requirement to cover all contraceptives, asked Charlotte business owners to pray for his company Thursday.

Steve Green was speaking at the inaugural meeting of the North Charlotte Christian Chamber, a group of religious businessmen and businesswomen.

Hobby Lobby, an arts and crafts retailer based in Oklahoma City, is in the midst of a lawsuit against the federal government over health care reform. The Affordable Care Act requires companies to include contraceptives, such as the morning-after pill, as part of health insurance.

Hobby Lobby maintains that some birth control products, such as the morning-after pill, are equivalent to abortion. The company has sued the government on religious freedom grounds. Hobby Lobby still potentially faces millions in fines for not following the mandate. — SEE HOBBY LOBBY, 3B

Wells executive receives Queens honor

Laura Schulte, a leader in Wachovia changeover, is BusinessWoman of Year

BY CELESTE SMITH
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Wells Fargo Eastern Bank President Laura Schulte has been named Queens University of Charlotte's 2012 Charlotte BusinessWoman of the Year.

The bank's former West Coast president was tapped to be the first to relocate to Charlotte for the Wachovia changeover.

As president of Wells Fargo's Eastern Community Bank, Schulte leads 14 states, the District of Columbia and more than 2,700 banking sites.

"Laura Schulte is known for her visionary leadership in guiding the final phase of the largest retail bank conversion in U.S. history, among other initiatives at Wells Fargo," Pamela Davies, president of Queens, said in a statement Thursday. "Since relocating to Charlotte, she has been tirelessly dedicated to our community." She will be honored March 15 at a luncheon at Queens.



Schulte

Past winners include Charlotte Observer Publisher Ann Caulkins, Carol Hevey of Time Warner Cable and Cathy Bessant of Bank of America Corp.

In an interview last year with the Observer, Schulte said it was impor-

tant to take a measured approach to the changeover.

"It was really important not to let our egos get in the way and say, 'This is how we do things,'" Schulte said. Wells Fargo CEO John Stumpf described the conversion in an annual report as "on schedule and under budget."

Schulte has put down roots in Charlotte, with service on the boards of the Foundation for the Carolinas, Charlotte Center City Partners, the Bechtel Museum of Modern Art, the University of South Carolina. — SEE SCHULTE, 3B

Carolinas Inc.

COMPANIES WITH STRONG CAROLINAS CONNECTIONS

STOCK FOOTNOTES: If = late filing with SEC. n = New in past 52 weeks. pf = Preferred. rs = Stock has undergone a reverse stock split of at least 50 percent within the past year. rt = Right to buy security at a specified price. s = Stock has split by at least 20 percent within the last year. DIVIDEND FOOTNOTES: a = Extra dividends were paid, but are not included. e = Amount declared or paid in last 12 months. f = Current annual rate, which was increased by most recent dividend announcement. m = Current annual rate, which was decreased by most recent dividend announcement.

Name	Close	Chg	%Chg	YTD %Chg	Div	Name	Close	Chg	%Chg	YTD %Chg	Div	Name	Close	Chg	%Chg	YTD %Chg	Div
AVX Cp	10.97	+10	+1.8	...		FNB Unit	11.00	+16	+5.2	...		KewinSe	12.65	+27	+4.1	.40	
AlcatelLuc	1.69	+0.4	+21.6	...		FamilyDir	58.04	-31	-8.5	1.04f		KrispKrm	11.94	+29	+27.3	...	
Alleghch	30.07	+0.46	+1.0	.72		FifthThird	16.29	+7.4	+7.2	.40		LabCp	88.27	+7.6	+1.9	...	
BB&T Cp	30.89	+5.8	+6.8	.80		FTBcnc	12.71	+0.7	...	...		LincNat	27.98	+4.6	+8.0	.48f	
BabckWil	25.97	+0.7	...	...		FctzBA	172.02	+1.91	+5.2	1.20		Loves	37.00	+1.23	+4.2	.64	
BkofAm	11.28	-5.0	-2.8	.04		FcmtyBsh	16.09	+4.2	...	...		MartMM	97.95	+2.5	+3.9	1.60	
Carlisle	61.50	+37	+4.7	.80		FstFHid	13.41	-0.1	...	...		McClatchy	2.93	...	...	...
CarrollTRK	2.63	...	+12.4	...		FlexTrm	6.64	-0.1	...	...		NewBridgeB	5.04	+0.4	+8.9	...	
CatoCp	26.75	+0.1	...	2.51	0.0a	GUMobile	2.37	-0.1	+3.9	...		NewellRub	22.93	+4.6	+3.0	.60f	
ChelseAth	8.7	-0.4	+14.5	...		Hanesbrds	38.07	-2.2	+6.3	...		NwStng	43.72	-0.4	-1.1	1.82	
CocaBtl	66.47	+4.9	...	1.00		HarrisTrt	37.21	+4.9	-3.5	.60f		Nucor	46.64	+7.3	+8.1	1.47f	
Corning	12.30	-2.2	-2.5	.36f		HITMgmt	9.75	+2.4	+4.6	...		OldDomF	36.41	+9.6	+6.2	...	
Cree Inc	32.58	-0.3	-4.1	...		HighwdPrp	34.79	+1.9	+4.0	1.70		Orthx	36.43	-2.7	-7.4	...	
Club Inc	16.71	+3.6	+11.3	.12a		IngerRd	50.95	+1.48	+6.2	.84f		Pantry	12.14	-0.5	+1	...	
Delhaize	46.69	+4.16	+15.12	.24e		IngleMkts	17.03	+0.8	-1.3	.66a		ParkStrg	5.40	-0.6	+3.3	...	
DukeEnrs	66.02	+2.9	+3.5	3.0e		Insteel	13.60	+1.06	+9.0	.12a		PropNB	9.80	-0.1	+7.7	.08a	
EnPro	42.94	+5.4	+5.0	...		InvTtl	68.52	+1.12	+14.2	.32f		PlethNG	32.07	+6.0	+2.4	1.20	
EthanaI	28.54	+1.03	+11.0	.36a		JacobsEng	46.05	+6.7	+8.2	...		PikeElec	10.14	+2.5	+6.2	1.00e	
SpectraEn	27.28	-2.3	-4.1	1.22								PokerTek	1.19	+0.1	-9.3	...	
SpeedMI	17.34	-1.1	-2.8	.60								PolyPpe	41.60	-1.7	-10.5	...	
SunTrst	29.57	+3.4	+4.3	.20								RFMcd	4.91	+0.2	+9.6	...	
Synalloy	14.10	-0.8	-1.5	.25								RedHat	54.86	-0.4	+3.6	...	
TangerFac	34.97	-0.7	+2.3	.84								RegionsFn	7.45	+0.7	+4.5	.04	
3D Sys	63.15	+5.6	+18.4	...								RevolutnL	.70	+0.1	+10.9	...	
TW Cable	99.52	+6.7	+2.4	2.24								ReynAmer	42.44	+2.1	+2.4	2.36	
Timken	50.66	+1.05	+5.9	.92								RoyalBK g	62.36	+4.2	+3.4	2.40	
Tricon	17.27	+1.1	-4.2	1.00e								SCANA	45.84	-1.5	+4	1.98	
Tyson	21.23	+7.7	+9.4	.20f								SCBT Fncl	41.48	+1.5	+3.2	.72f	
US Airway	14.48	-1.5	+7.3	...								SPX Cp	70.93	+1.23	+1.1	1.00	
Unifi	12.81	+3.1	-1.5	...								Sapiens	4.27	+2.2	+6.8	...	
VF Cp	151.13	-1.77	+1.3	3.48f								ScanSource	33.64	+3.2	+5.9	...	
Well Fargo	35.03	-0.6	+2.5	.88								ShawGrp	47.05	+0.8	+9	...	
Weyerhe	30.79	+3.6	+10.7	.68f								SonicAut	22.88	+2.1	+9.5	.10	
WildAccep	72.99	-1.3	-2.1	...								Sonoscp	30.89	+3.7	+3.9	1.20	
YadkinVfn	2.96	-0.2	+7	...								SpanAm	18.82	-4.8	+5.0	.50a	

Police seize more than \$3M in drugs

Officers from Union, Moore counties confiscate pot, crystal meth in two raids

BY CAMERON STEELE
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Authorities have seized more than \$3 million worth of marijuana and nearly \$50,000 in crystal methamphetamine in a drug investigation spanning Union and Moore counties.

Union County deputies have arrested three men on felony drug trafficking charges and Moore County deputies have charged a fourth following a Wednesday night investigation of a meth and marijuana drug operation that crossed county lines, Union County officials said.

An undercover drug investigation in Moore County led detectives to Union County Wednesday night to

arrest suspect Amador Villa Flores on felony meth trafficking charges. Based on information from Moore County deputies, Union County deputies began to investigate two homes in Marshville and Monroe that police believed were linked to the Moore County investigation.

Late Wednesday night, Marshville police and deputies searched a residence at 1120 Unarco Drive, where they found more than one pound of crystal meth, worth about \$46,000, as well as \$8,975 in cash, three handguns and a rifle. Two men, 29-year-old



Flores



Greene



Lopez



Villa

Antonio Gaytan Lopez and 26-year-old Octavio Valdez Villa, were arrested on felony drug trafficking charges.

Later that night, police obtained a search warrant for a home at 6215 E. Lawyers Road north of Marshville. Officers confiscated 745 pounds of packaged marijuana and four firearms.

Deputies said the street value of the marijuana is \$3,278,000. They arrested resident Alton Devonne Greene, 60, after discovering the drugs and guns.

Greene was in the Union County

Jail Thursday charged with trafficking marijuana by possession, maintaining a dwelling for keeping or selling controlled substances and possession of controlled substances. His bond is set at \$500,000.

Lopez and Villa were also in the jail Thursday; Lopez is charged with conspiracy to traffic in methamphetamine, trafficking in methamphetamine by sale and trafficking in methamphetamine by delivery. His bond is set at \$500,500.

Villa faces the same charges as Lopez and is additionally charged with possession of drug paraphernalia with a bond set at \$500,000.

In Moore County, Flores was in jail on \$100,000 bond and charged with trafficking methamphetamine by possession, transport, deliver and sale, conspiracy to traffic methamphetamine, felony possession of

methamphetamine, maintaining a vehicle for sale or possession of a controlled substance and resist, delay and obstructing an officer.

"We appreciate the diligence of the Moore County Sheriff's Office in uncovering this criminal enterprise, and we are grateful that they passed the information to us and provided assistance that led to these arrests and seizures," Union County Sheriff Eddie Cathey said.

"Likewise, we appreciate the assistance from the Marshville and Monroe police departments. Criminals don't recognize jurisdictional lines, and it makes me proud that officers from four separate agencies can mobilize on short notice to bring down a major distribution operation like this."

Steele: 704-358-5067

DUKE

from 2B

velopers."

The 35-year-old nuclear plant has been shut down since 2009 because of separating layers of concrete in its thick-walled reactor containment structure after a repair went wrong.

Repairs are estimated to cost \$1.5 billion, according to an analysis by Charlotte engineering firm Zapata Inc. that Duke released in October. But if un-

foreseen problems arise, the analysis said, Duke could be looking at an eight-year repair that costs \$3.4 billion.

Duke has said it will repair the plant only if it has high confidence the repairs can be completed on time and under budget. That is an open question with Crystal River.

An initial concrete separation, called a delamination, had been repaired in the containment structure when two more delaminations were found in 2011. Risks now include whether more concrete could be

damaged during repairs, the Zapata review said.

Because repairs didn't begin by the end of 2012, Duke will owe \$100 million in refunds to Florida customers in 2015 and 2016 under the terms of a settlement reached early last year. Progress Energy Florida recorded a \$100 million charge against its third-quarter earnings last fall to cover the refunds.

Rogers said he's been personally involved in mediation with Crystal River's insurer, which paid most of an initial

claim but has refused to pay two further claims.

Progress Energy Florida's costs of buying replacement power while the plant was shut down already have exceeded the \$490 million in insurance coverage. The property damage limits are \$2.25 billion.

Two mediation sessions have been held with Nuclear Electric Insurance Ltd., utility officials said last week, and efforts will continue.

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HOBBY LOBBY

from 2B

mandate. With 13,000 employees and a proposed fine of \$100 per employee per day, that would equate to \$1.3 million in daily fines.

"I could never have imagined we'd be where we are," Green said.

Founded and privately held by the Green family, Hobby Lobby is committed to operate according to biblical, Christian principles. Although Green said he couldn't discuss the lawsuit, he said he expects a long slog through the court system.

"I just say there's going to be an extensive court discussion

and battle," he said in response to an audience question. "In the meantime, all I know to ask for is prayers."

But Green said that with much about the law and regulations unknown, it's unclear how much in fines the company could owe.

"It's not fully known what the fine is," he said.

The company has said it is exempt from fines for a few months because it has extended its 2012 health care plan, delaying the effective date of the 2013 mandate.

After his talk at the North Charlotte Christian Chamber, Green told the Observer his family's company didn't want trouble. "The struggle, the battle, is coming to us. We weren't

North Charlotte Christian Chamber

The group, which had its first meeting Thursday, is an extension of the existing Charlotte Christian Chamber, which meets in south Charlotte. More than 100 people attended the meeting Thursday. For more information, visit www.charlottechristianchamber.org.

looking for this fight," Green said. "We're in a period now where we feel you're going to have to stand your ground."

The company has 525 stores nationwide, including one on University City Boulevard. Green said the company has more than \$3 billion in sales.

The Green family is behind a number of Christian initiatives, including the Passages Bible exhibit currently on display in

Charlotte.

Green told the audience at the meeting that he views his work as a platform for spreading the Gospel.

"That makes it exciting to go to work and say I want to get to 1,000 stores as quick as I can, because there's more ministry to do," he said.

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On Twitter @ESPortillo

BORDERS

from 1B

perfect DNA profile," she said, but there was no match.

For years, Kirby-Turner said the case "languished" and by late 2009 was "deemed to be a cold case."

But that same year, two Shelby police officers were assigned to the case and began working it "vigorously," Kirby-Turner said. They concluded a DNA sample was needed from Borders. She told the jury they would hear testimony about how the Shelby officers got the DNA sample from a cigarette with the help of a Gaston County police officer.

A lab developed a DNA profile and it matched the sperm in Tessneer's body, Kirby-Turner said.

At that point, officers got a search warrant and swabbed Borders' cheek, she said. A second DNA profile also matched.

Kirby-Turner said testimony about the cause of death would come from retired Chief Med-

ical Examiner John Butts. Testimony would also come from officers involved in the investigation and from Tessneer's family.

When a photo of Tessneer lying in bed the morning of Sept. 20, 2003, was shown in court as an exhibit, a family member lowered her head and cried.

Defense attorney David Teddy told the jury that they will have to decide what happened on Railroad Avenue in 2003 - whether there was a break-in, a rape and homicide.

When what he called "the finger of suspicion" was pointed at Borders in 2009, "what happened afterwards, I contend, will shock you," he said.

Teddy said the "alleged crime scene" was contaminated by a number of people, including officers.

"From the very moment the investigation began we have problems on Railroad Avenue," he said.

Also, he said testimony will show the DNA testing also was contaminated, along with the

medical examiner's opinion about the cause of death.

In 2003, the cause of Tessneer's death was undetermined, Teddy said, noting that the official autopsy and death certificate don't list the death as a homicide.

The medical examiner and Gastonia doctor who performed the autopsy couldn't decide on the cause of death, Teddy said.

"Now, as we start (this) trial, an opinion has started to formulate," Teddy said.

"If you believe the case against Borders and this trial are tainted, then your verdict will be not guilty."

Earlier, Teddy contended pretrial publicity tainted the jury pool and made it impossible for Borders to get a fair trial in Cleveland County. His motion for a change of venue was denied by Superior Court Judge Richard Boner.

When testimony began Thursday, defense witness Sgt. Victor Haynes with the Shelby Police Department described how he was the first officer to

Tessneer's home on Sept. 20, 2003.

In a bedroom, he found her lying on the bed with her feet on the floor. Her eyes and mouth were open. Haynes said she wore a light-colored nightgown over undergarments.

He found no pulse. Outside on the north side of the house under the front window, Haynes found two blocks "that appeared to be stacked." Also, the phone line looked like it had been ripped out.

Up to that point, other officers and emergency personnel had been in the house. But Haines said after he noted the suspicious activity, the house was treated as a crime scene.

Under cross examination by Teddy, Haines said six people had entered the house before it became a crime scene. Teddy called these people "potential destroyers of evidence."

Because of inclement weather, court could be canceled Friday. If so, the trial would continue at 9:30 a.m. Tuesday.

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PEWTER ROSE

from 1B

closing "a perfect storm."

Browder said the cost of the damage will be borne by an insurance company ("whose, no one knows") but noted the restaurant's sales were off, "as are many of the restaurants in the city." Add equipment problems, and "it's too many things."

Pewter Rose is the only tenant that has been in the building since he and Steve Harris bought it in the early '80s, he said. "Susie's had a long, long ride.... It breaks my heart to lose her."

The restaurant's history is a bit complex.

Helen Scruggs opened the original Pewter Rose in Spirit Square in 1978. She served lunches of New England clam chowder laced with sherry, bleu cheese burgers and chocolate rum cake, and for eight years charmed uptown diners seeking a bit of French-country-inn flavor, a rarity in those days in Charlotte. In 1986, she closed the place, saying she

needed a break, and went to Europe, to cooking school. She returned two years later and became one of the partners creating a new Rose.

The food was innovative for Charlotte - fettuccine à la Rose with smoked salmon and caviar, grilled chicken with artichoke hearts, grapefruit sorbet, chocolate cranberry torte. Peck, as operating partner, filled the airy space with flea-market finds and fanciful frills: a winged Mercury over the bar, a rose in stained glass, a dancing mobile of circus acts. Her husband, photographer Dustin Peck, helped place the things she found, and she credits Walter Rushton, who worked at Pewter Rose more than 10 years before opening his own Foskoskies, with an "incredible" decorating eye. "He would take my stuff and rearrange a corner, and we'd have a whole new spot."

A redesign in 2007 focused on the brick walls, wood floors and paned windows, though faux ficus trees and lighting still evoke a bit of forests and fairytales.

When Scruggs left after a

few years, chef Blake Dewey, with Bragg as sous chef, continued what eventually would be dubbed New American cooking, with dishes such as black-tea-smoked duckling and whiskey crayfish gumbo. He stayed some 15 years. Chefs Brent Martin and Bragg (now at Plaza Midwood's Peculiar Rabbit) also had formative stints at the restaurant.

It is a place that encouraged idiosyncrasy. All sorts of it.

"I applied there because I looked at the menu and saw they were pushing the envelope," Bragg said. "Susie had a lot of vision for Charlotte. Tutto Mondo (the tapas restaurant/bar she opened in 1998)? No one was doing that kind of thing then."

For a time, Bragg says, "I didn't know anybody who hadn't worked there. It was like you had to do a shift at the Pewter Rose if you were in the restaurant business in Charlotte."

Betsy Boyd worked for Peck for 10 years. Now co-owner of Terra in Myers Park, Boyd said Peck was experimenting with food just before last weekend. "She had (a new) sweet pea

hummus for us to try. She still has her creativity.

"I'm sad for the community. (Pewter Rose) was like your living room.... I think (its closing) is going to hit a lot of people."

Cathy Coulter, owner of 300 East, worked with Peck at the East Boulevard White Horse in the mid-1970s, and opened her own place in the Pewter Rose. "They opened right after we did," Coulter said. "It makes you think."

In every city, Peck thinks, there are great old spaces, "truly beauties onto themselves. We were lucky enough to find this. I'm proud of the fact it's so comfortable. That's what complete strangers still say."

She said she had hoped her daughter, Madelon, who works at the restaurant (so does son Cody), might continue it.

Now, she's preparing for the next few days: regular hours and, probably, "some old faces I haven't seen in awhile.... We'll serve through Sunday dinner. "One last Sunday brunch."

Schwab: 704-358-5250

SCHULTE

from 2B

North Carolina at Charlotte, the Executive Advisory Board for Envision Charlotte and the Strategic Advisory Board for the Charlotte Freedom School Partners. She is also the executive adviser for Wells Fargo's Women's Team Member Network.

"When I moved to Charlotte after the Wells Fargo/Wachovia merger was announced four years ago, it

was my responsibility to demonstrate through action that Wells Fargo would carry on the legacy of civic and community leadership built by Wachovia," Schulte said in a statement.

"I was also very focused on supporting my new Eastern team members during a period of tremendous change for them. This honor is especially meaningful to me because it recognizes (their) fortitude and commitment."

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MUZAK

from 2B

second-largest office in North America."

Three years ago, Muzak had about 500 employees in Fort Mill. The company currently has about 350 employees at the site, Cox said.

The Muzak name could also soon be gone. Former employees have told the Observer that Mood Media is rebranding the business. Cox didn't confirm that Thursday.

"Muzak LLC and DMX Inc. are subsidiaries of Mood Media. We continue to operate under the three different names," he said.

Founded in 1934, Muzak pioneered and became synonymous with piped-in music. In recent years, the company was pressured by the increas-

ing dominance of the Internet and cheaper alternatives to its integrated music systems.

Muzak moved to Fort Mill from Seattle in 1999. The firm was bought in 2011 by Mood Media, after exiting Chapter 11 bankruptcy. Mood Media is also a commercial music provider.

Since then, Mood Media has acquired several more U.S. music and marketing companies, including Austin, Texas-based DMX Holdings.

The company also eliminated jobs in Fort Mill at the end of last year. John Cullen, the CEO of DMX Holdings, assumed the role as head of Muzak after Muzak's president left the company during last year's reorganization.

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BRIGHTWALK

from 2B

sales because, as a public company, Standard Pacific is in a quiet period before releasing earnings. But a chart in the sales office shows about three dozen homes have been sold.

Home prices start in the \$120,000s and reach into the \$300,000s.

Local home sale on rise

Charlotte-area home sales and prices have been rising. The amount of homes for sale, meanwhile, has been shrinking. Mann said the area's shrinking inventory of homes and lack of lots near uptown are driving potential buyers to the project.

Mann also said buyers have been surprised to find that they've been able to get mortgages more easily than they expected.

Developers and city boosters see Brightwalk as the key to what they call the north corridor, an evolving arts and cultural hub near the N.C. Music Factory and stretching to nearby neighborhoods such as NoDa. The housing partnership, a private nonprofit that creates affordable housing, acquired the site from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The partnership spent about \$6 million of a HUD loan to improve Statesville Avenue, which was turned into a three-lane road to slow traffic.

Challenges remain. The area lacks services, including

a grocery store. The corridor also is still heavily industrial.

But Charlotte-based real estate consultant Emma Littlejohn, who is working on the project, said that is changing.

For example, she said, the Arts and Science Council, which is working with an N.C. State University professor, will soon select sites around Brightwalk, the corridor and along the Greenway in which to place public art.

Littlejohn said Brightwalk is expected to grow and evolve during the next three to five years. She estimates that by the end of 2013, about 100 homes will either be sold or under construction.

'Really another ward'

Homes include 1,200-square-foot town houses and 2,800-square-foot single-family homes.

They feature garages and open floor plans with the kitchen at the heart of the action. The single-family homes resemble bungalows with stone columns on the porch. The interiors are filled with sunlight.

"A neighborhood near the center city with some elbow room is very valuable," Littlejohn said. "It could be a new Dilworth. It's really another ward."

On a rainy Thursday, two women chatted with an agent in the sales office.

"Have you bought a home yet?" Littlejohn asked.

"Not yet," one woman replied. "I'm working on it."

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