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Friday, February 13, 2009

Table Talk

Green with envy? Mayor Pat shares a word of advice

Charlotte Business Journal - by Erik Spanberg

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Seeing green morphed from environmental concern to political fortune-telling at City Council's recent retreat.

During a conversation on LEED certification for buildings — an international standard for sustainable materials and practices — Mayor **Pat McCrory** wondered aloud whether any competition exists when it comes to securing a green stamp of approval.

Fellow Republican **John Lassiter** , touted by McCrory as his preferred candidate in the fall mayoral campaign, jabbed the current mayor with a quick retort. "There's an idea for you," Lassiter told McCrory, hinting at possible post-mayoral occupations.

McCrory never missed a beat, alluding to Lassiter's expected tight contest with Democrat and fellow councilman **Anthony Foxx** . "You might need an idea soon, too, big boy," the mayor told Lassiter.

As laughter subsided, Foxx delivered the knockout blow. "I'll take that as an endorsement," he said.

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Green redux: **UNC Charlotte**'s 49ers are green and gold — and they kicked off a campaign this week to find hefty helpings of both as the school attempts to raise $45 million to start a football team.

A celebratory press conference on-campus this week introduced a high-profile volunteer fund-raising team that includes honorary co-chairs **Mac Everett** and **Johnny Harris** . Athletic Director **Judy Rose** noted Everett's contributions on a first-name business while citing the work of Mr. Harris. "I always find it interesting — it's 'Mac' and 'Mr. Harris,' " Everett said. "That must be age."

Everett, interim CEO at the **United Way** and a longtime UNCC booster, was just getting started. He delighted in the absence of real estate exec Harris, his Wachovia Championship pal. After Harris offered remarks in a taped message and cited unavoidable business commitments for his absence, Everett went to work.

In a wry reference to the recent United Way controversies he inherited, Everett noted his newfound appreciation for "transparency" in all matters. He then went on to inform the assembled that Harris' business trip was, in fact, an annual date playing in the pro-am at Pebble Beach. "That's a business trip for Johnny," Everett said.

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Football, yes. Geithner, no. That was the word from **Bank of America** CFO **Joe Price** ,

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also a part of the fund-raising team for UNCC football.

He appeared at the Tuesday kickoff event just hours after the Treasury secretary weighed in with the government's revised bank bailout plan — and stayed focused on pigskins instead of politics.

"I can't imagine how much fun (football will be) on Saturday afternoons," Price told *TT* . Any thoughts on Geithner's Senate testimony? "I'm here in a football capacity, not banking."

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Citizens South CEO **Kim Price** found himself in the pages of *The Washington Post* this week, receiving some decidedly positive press from business columnist **Steven Pearlstein** . The Pulitzer winner lauded the bank's recent announcement on how it would use its $20.5 million in government capital.

The bank plans to make low-interest mortgage loans to consumers interested in purchasing houses or lots from builders and developers who are Citizen South customers and have extra inventory.

The builders and developers will pay the closing costs on the mortgages. Pearlstein suggested that the House Financial Services Committee would have learned more by inviting Price to testify to Congress this week instead of Bank of America CEO **Kenneth Lewis** and his big-bank bretheren.

"So here's a question the (committee) might put to the Titans of Finance," Pearlstein wrote. "How is it that Kim Price, a community banker with an undergraduate degree from Appalachian State University, a tiny executive staff and a pay package that you would consider insulting, somehow managed to come up with a more creative use for his government bailout money than any of you?"

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Grabbing some *Inc.* That's the story at **Carolina Pad**, the Charlotte school- and office-supply company profiled in the March issue of *Inc.* magazine.

In addition to chronicling the 64-year-old company's makeover in 2000, the magazine dedicates its editor's note to lessons company prez **Clay Presley** learned aboard US Airways' miracle on the Hudson flight last month.

Succession and other planning issues came to the fore for the company when it realized the potential turmoil with Presley and VP **Bill Nix** aboard the ditched plane. "There wasn't a succession plan before, but there is one in the works now, I can assure you of that," says Carolina Pad spokesman **April Whitlock** .

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A locally based theater producer is eyeing Broadway with the debut of *AmerWrecka* (pronounced "America") at the **Charlotte Art League** in South End.

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