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SPORTS PAGE 7



# NORTH RALEIGH NEWS

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## Meeting will focus on Airbnb

Advocates for online  
service will speak

By ANDREW KENNEY  
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**RALEIGH** Advocates for Airbnb, the online service that allows people to rent rooms in their homes, are mobilizing as the city of Raleigh considers challenges to the Internet company's legal ability to operate in the city.

Jeff Tippett, a local public-relations consultant, has organized a panel discussion on Monday featuring a cast largely friendly to the Internet service. It's scheduled for 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. at The Architect Bar & Social House at 108 ½ E. Hargett St., Raleigh. Participants must be 21 or older.

The issue arose late in November, when the city received an anonymous complaint about property owner Gregg Stebben, who was renting a room in Five Points. City staff say that Raleigh's rules largely forbid such "bed-and-breakfast" activity in most neighborhoods.

Now Stebben is set to star in the panel discussion. He'll be joined by Max Pomeranc, a senior spokesman for Airbnb; Justin Miller, an entrepreneur who faced his own trouble with city regulations; and Bill Spruill, a local investor and entrepreneur.

Airbnb neither requested nor paid for the meeting, Tippett said, but he acknowledged that

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## Wake wants charter schools

By T. KEUNG HUI  
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**RALEIGH** The Wake County school system wants the ability to approve its own charter schools to compete with the growing number of nontraditional public schools in the state.

School leaders say that they want to be able to open schools that share the same flexibility that charter schools have in areas such as funding, staffing and calendars. The school board made modifying state law to allow school systems to authorize their own charter schools one of the items for state lawmakers to consider when the General Assembly reconvenes in January.

"I would much rather approve the authority to establish charter schools under our auspices," school board member Bill Fletcher said at the December committee meeting where the legislative agenda was finalized. "Then we've got an opportunity to compete on the same playing field with the charter schools that are established through other mechanisms."

SEE CHARTERS, PAGE 4N



PHOTOS BY CASEY TOTH - newsobserver.com

Dave Bertelli, 40, of Wake Forest drops off his daughters at the Granite Falls Swim & Athletic Club in Rolesville on Dec. 11. Granite Falls has become one of the most popular neighborhoods in Rolesville, which has seen major growth.

## Rolesville's time to shine

NORTHERN WAKE COUNTY TOWN IS AMONG FASTEST GROWING IN NORTH CAROLINA

By MECHELLE HANKERSON  
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**ROLESVILLE** When Frank Eagles moved to town in 1986, Rolesville had one traffic light. There was one grocery store and one pharmacy to serve the town of about 500 people. Students had to travel outside of town to attend school.

But times have changed for Rolesville, a small town in northeastern Wake County that existed for years in the shadow of its larger neighbor, Wake Forest.

The population has grown to about 5,000, putting Rolesville on the map as one of the fastest-growing towns in North Carolina.

Signs of growth are everywhere. Houses are going up fast.

In 2013, Wake County opened Rolesville High, the county's largest and most expensive public high school.

Meanwhile, the state Department of Transportation is building a bypass that carries traffic around town on U.S. 401. The town's main



Built in 2013, Rolesville High School is the largest and most expensive high school in Wake County.

thoroughfare got quite busy over the years.

And as for traffic lights? There are lots of them, helping drivers get in and out of shopping plazas that have cropped up along the main roads.

"I've always envisioned Rolesville as a small town with a big community," said Eagles, who has been mayor for seven years. He previously served as a town commissioner for a decade. "It's now a growing town with a big community."

Last year, the town issued 321 building permits. That was more than the pre-recession record of 227 permits in 2007.

Many developers graded residential lots before the economic downturn but waited to build until conditions improved. Now, 4,000 lots in town are primed and ready for new homes to be built, said Town Manager Bryan Hicks.

Most homes in Rolesville are priced between \$200,000 and \$300,000. That falls in line with average home prices in the Triangle.

### Careful planning

Town leaders say Rolesville has grown so much partly because of careful planning.

They knew early on their town was set to grow. They also knew there was plenty of available land in the area.

So they put a lot of thought into how that growth should take shape.

Rolesville officials didn't want to

SEE ROLESVILLE, PAGE 4N

## A manly kind of bathroom, please



Designers Mark and Theresa Clement brainstorm with Brian McEwen, right, about ideas to renovate McEwen's master bathroom in his Wake Forest home.

### Wake Forest man wins national competition for renovation

By MECHELLE HANKERSON  
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**WAKE FOREST** When Brian McEwen comes home from work, he's greeted with his young daughters' favorite things: pink ponies, pink dresses and pink glitter.

It's hard for McEwen to escape all things pink in his house, and that's not likely to change any time soon. His wife, Adriana, is pregnant with their third girl.

McEwen, who lives in Wake Forest, wanted a place in their home to call his own. So he entered a national contest in hopes of winning

\$30,000 to remodel his master bathroom.

He wrote to Dove, a personal care company that hosted the contest, about how he needed a get-away from princesses and dolls.

"I dreamt of sports softly playing in the background of my behind-the-mirror TV in my cave of cleanliness," McEwen wrote.

Dove selected him as the winner out of 20,000 applicants. He received a bathroom design consultation, Dove men's products and the \$30,000.

Professional home experts Theresa and Mark Clement went to the McEwen home to check things out. The Clements are regulars on the DIY television network and

SEE BATHROOM, PAGE 4N

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# CHARTERS

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anisms.”  
At least one key state lawmaker and the head of an industry group that lobbies for charter schools said they'd both support giving school systems the same flexibility as charters.

State Rep. Paul Stam of Apex, the House speaker pro tem, said he has spoken with Wake Superintendent Jim Merrill about the flexibility the district needs to improve student achievement. Stam, a Republican, said the legislature needs to have further discussions on the ability to authorize charter schools.

“We should work to provide districts with the same flexibility that charter schools have and hold them accountable for the results,” Stam said. “Parents deserve the opportunity to choose the school that best meets their child’s needs regardless of address or income.”

Eddie Goodall, executive director of the N.C. Public Charter Schools Association, said allowing school systems to approve their own charters might be a welcome idea at a time when a state advisory board recommended only 11 new charter schools open in 2015.

“If we’re going to argue that competition makes the schools better, then we might extend that to the authorizers as well,” Goodall said.

Before state law was changed in 2013, local

# Wake’s 2015 legislative agenda

In addition to changing state law to let school boards authorize their own charter schools, the Wake County school system’s legislative agenda includes:

- Increase state funding for teacher pay, teacher assistants, pre-kindergarten and school technology.
- Restore state funding for driver’s education.
- Restore the state practice of funding schools based on projected enrollment growth.
- Abolish the new A through F grading system that will give each school a letter grade based on its test scores.
- Modify laws that prohibit or curtail the use of aerial drones by students.

Go to [bit.ly/1vGJbYi](http://bit.ly/1vGJbYi) to view the full legislative agenda.

school boards could give initial approval to new charters. But this option was rarely exercised. School districts have also been reluctant to exercise another piece of state law that allows a traditional public school to convert to a charter school.

North Carolina has seen rapid growth in charter schools since the legislature lifted the state’s 100-school cap in 2011. There are now 148 charter schools statewide, including 19 in Wake County.

Charter schools are taxpayer-funded public schools that are exempt from some of the regulations that traditional public schools must follow. They’re also independent of local school districts.

Merrill told school board members that operating their own charter schools would allow Wake to have flexibility about when to start the school year, the length of the school year and how many teachers need to be certified.

“That’s the shiny part of the opportunity for a public

school system to finally get some of the same latitude that charters have that right now we’re restricted from,” Merrill said. “What you put inside, what the curriculum program is, you can do some special things there as well.”

Wake is still saying that whatever charter schools it would authorize would operate under an independent governing board as now required by state law. But Merrill said that Wake school staff can still help design the new charter schools to meet the district’s needs.

School board member Keith Sutton, the chairman of the board’s government relations committee, told his colleagues that this could be an opportunity for Wake to become a leader in charter school partnerships.

“Charters are here to say,” Sutton said. “They aren’t going anywhere. I think the days of sort of bury your head in the sand and say ‘rue the charters’ is long gone.”

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# BATHROOM

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were designers on the Food Network’s “Save My Bakery” last year.

McEwen said he normally doesn’t mind his wife and daughters taking over the house.

“I love my girls, and I love my family,” he said. “If they wanted to put pink polka dots all over the bathroom, I’d probably give in.”

But Mark Clement said that’s exactly what they wanted to avoid – McEwen defaulting to what his wife and daughters like rather than examining what he

wanted.

“Men tend to edge ourselves out,” Clement said. “(All of a sudden), everything’s pink and you’re like, ‘Where did I go?’”

After digging for some of McEwen’s preferences – his favorite color, favorite band and hobbies – the Clements decided on a nautical theme for the bathroom.

They suggested using elements of natural wood for decorations. They also said a new shower and vanity would completely change the look of the small room.

While the project was all about Brian, his wife was pleased with the suggestions.

“We have similar style, but the kids have taken over our life and now we have no style,” Adriana told the Clements during the consultation.

The Clements left the couple with examples of fabrics, colors and decorations.

Now it’s up to the McEwens to create a nautical-themed oasis.

Brian knows the effort will pay off.

“I have an uncle who has three girls and he told me, ‘Brian, the only way you’re going to survive is with your own bathroom.’”

Hankerson: 919-829-4802



PHOTOS BY CASEY TOTH - newsobserver.com

Traffic stands still on the southbound side of Louisburg Road in Rolesville as commuters make their way toward Raleigh on Dec. 11.

# ROLESVILLE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1N

see a lot of apartments, said Jacky Wilson, a real-estate agent who has served on the town’s planning board and Board of Commissioners. Instead, they pushed for single-family homes, although more apartments and townhomes have since gone up.

“We had the land and we had the right frame of mind,” said Wilson, who helped develop one of the town’s most popular neighborhoods, Granite Falls. “Elected officials knew what they wanted and stuck by their guns. They wanted controlled growth, growth that wouldn’t stifle our intersections, and they wanted subdivisions that wouldn’t turn into slums in five to 10 years.”

Officials are still carefully considering how their town should grow.

The 6-mile Rolesville Bypass, a \$25 million project, is expected to be completed next spring.

Eagles hopes the bypass will attract commercial development, including a large shopping center.

“Now that we’ve got a lot of big subdivisions, we’re hoping soon to expand our restaurants and more commercial (development),” he said.

## New high school

As it has grown, Rolesville has maintained its sense of community, Eagles said. He points to the town’s high school as a symbol of community.

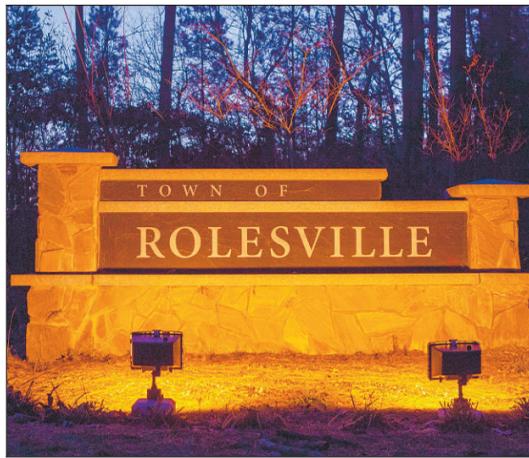
Until Rolesville High opened, students in town attended Wake Forest-Rolesville High School in Wake Forest.

Rolesville was often seen as a sort of extension of Wake Forest, a town of nearly 40,000 people.

“The high school is an anchor,” Eagles said. “When ...



Two shacks serve as a background for the beginning stages of road construction on Louisburg Road.



Rolesville has grown to about 5,000 residents over the years.

‘We had the land and we had the right frame of mind.’

**JACKY WILSON**  
FORMER ROLESVILLE COMMISSIONER

people see you’ve got these quality schools, then people are going to come here.”  
The 349,000-square-foot

Rolesville High cost \$75 million. It is four stories, with room for 2,200 students.

The Wake County school system planned to build a new high school in the northern stretches of Raleigh to serve students in the area, but Eagles pushed for it to be built in Rolesville.

“We’ve attracted some very good people,” the mayor said. “It’s been a nice experience, and it still is.”

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# AIRBNB

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he is advocating for the service. Like Stebben, he sees the issue as a litmus test: Will Raleigh’s government change its rules to foster a new Internet-enabled economy?

“We’ve done so much to advance in the innovation space,” he said. “When I saw this come up ... I knew this was a big issue because the implications are larger than just Airbnb. This is about innovation and about the

shared economy.”

The panel will not include any owners of traditional bed-and-breakfasts, who often criticize Airbnb as an unregulated and unfair threat to their business. Neighbors of some Airbnb rentals in Raleigh also have complained about unfamiliar guests taking parking spaces, among other issues.

However, audience members may ask questions of the panel, Tippet said. The Raleigh City Council also has just invited. Councilman Russ Stephenson, who has

expressed concern about the service, plans to attend, Tippet said.

The city council, meanwhile, likely will discuss Airbnb again late in January. The city has officially notified Stebben that his rental is breaking city zoning rules, but it’s holding off on fines until the council considers its next step, which could include an amendment to city ordinances.

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