

IN CHARLOTTE
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Law school wants site near west side; Bryant Park project on Wilkinson Boulevard is the institution's choice

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News that **Charlotte School of Law** will make its home on Wilkinson Boulevard in west Charlotte has gotten an enthusiastic response from nearby businesses and neighborhoods.

"It's an amazing facility," said Tom Davis, a member of the Freedom Drive Development Association, after law school Dean Eugene Clark addressed the association at its recent monthly meeting.

"One person in my firm could have gone to any law school in the country, but she chose this school," said Davis, senior vice president for First Citizens Bank.

Frank Plemmons of the Westchester neighborhood, off Freedom Drive just north of Interstate 85, saw the future campus as a hopeful sign after decades of decline on the retail strip between I-85 and West Morehead Street.

"I think for this area, anything they can do will help," Plemmons said.

The law school announced in June that it will lease space in the first building to be erected in the new Bryant Park development on Wilkinson Boulevard at Suttle Avenue.

The former home of Radiator Specialty Co. is being redeveloped over the next decade into a multi-use project with up to one million square feet of commercial real estate in eight buildings, plus up to 2,000 residences.

The law school will lease three of four floors in the first building. The school plans to occupy its new quarters in August 2008.

The school enrolled its first class last year, choosing 85 students from among more than 1,000 applicants in 46 states, Clark said. The school hopes to have 450 or more students within five years, he added.

Clark said that one proponent for locating the law school on Charlotte's near west side was retired N.C. Superior Court Judge Shirley Fulton, chair of the law school's board of directors. Fulton also is a leader in the nearby Wesley Heights neighborhood.

"She thought it would be exciting to go where we could make a difference," Clark said. The Bryant Park site also is very close to uptown and has free parking, he said, important for a school that plans to draw students from both Carolinas.

While private businesses, including the owners of Radiator Specialty, are developing Bryant Park, Charlotte-Mecklenburg planners have been creating a land-use and streetscape guide for redeveloping about 300 acres between West Morehead Street and Wilkinson Boulevard.