



Commission OKs shopping center; approves budget

East Lincoln County, fast-growing and under-retailed for years, is about to see big changes in its shopping patterns.

County Commissioners voted 4-1 Monday night to rezone a 16-acre parcel on Highway 73 for an 87,000 square foot shopping center that will have four outparcels for further development.

The shopping center, to be built on a site adjacent to where the new Wal-Mart Super Center will be constructed, is just one piece of a retail puzzle that is quickly taking shape in the once-rural area. Across the street, another developer plans a shopping center anchored by a Lowe's Home Improvement Warehouse, and next to it, a Huntersville company plans to build a "mini Birkdale" complete with shops and a movie theatre. Plans for that complex have not yet been presented to the county for approval, but are expected soon.

None of the new shopping com-

plexes will open until late next year, and even that hinges on Wal-Mart making road improvements - including adding a turn lane - from the Highway 16 bypass to the current Highway 16-73 intersection.

Commissioners approved the request of Aston Properties for its center with two conditions: 1) that it be responsible for any road improvements required by the state Department of Transportation (DOT); and 2) that it contribute \$75,000 to help pay for improvement the DOT plans to make at 16/73 once the Highway 73 improvements are completed.

Commissioner Marie Moore's motion to table Aston Properties' request for six months because of traffic and road improvement concerns was rejected by her colleagues.

Commission Chairman Tom Anderson said that he had assurances from the DOT that its

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Sending it home

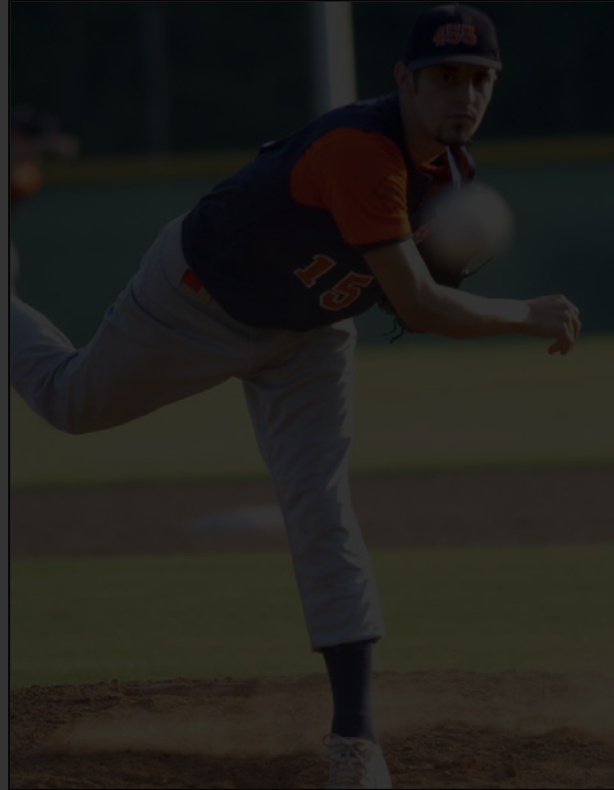


Photo by Joseph Brymer

Denver's TH Skidmore pitches one over the plate for American Legion Post 455. See story and photos on pages 20 and 21.

Big changes recommended for fire, EMS and rescue squads

A comprehensive, bold and blunt assessment of the county's fire and emergency services recommends sweeping changes in the way they operate.

Among the 30 recommendations presented in a report Monday night to County Commissioners:

- Evaluate the boundaries of fire districts and realign as necessary to reduce response time;
- Identify and clarify the roles of existing Rescue Squads; and
- Develop and implement contracts with fire departments and rescue squads that include performance requirements as a prerequisite to obtaining funding;
- At least one substation for the Denver Fire Department;
- At least one substation for the East Lincoln Fire Department;
- A new, full-service station for the Pumpkin Center Fire Department, south of its current location and more centralized in the district; and
- A new full-service station for the Alexis Fire Department inside Lincoln County, further up Highway 27.

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'B Honey' c

I'm an animal lover. Ken will tell you that our (my) dog, Little Bit or affectionately referred to as "B Honey" gets more attention in our house than he does. B Honey has cost us more than most of our children, with the exception of the ones who are or have been on the seven-year plan for a college education.

B Honey is a poodle, but he's not your average froo-froo poodle. At ten years old, "B" still chases jet skis as they fly across the lake in front of our house. And he'll wade out into the water if he thinks he can catch them. I'm not sure what he'd do if he did, but he keeps trying. He occasionally falls into the lake as he misses the end of the dock, but I really think that's part of his plan to cool off.

(Continued from page 1) planned improvements at Highways 16 and 73 (part of the state's Moving Ahead program) are funded and would be completed.

But Moore insisted that the area is dangerous and a safety hazard, and will be even more of one with the construction of stores and traffic lanes.

Anderson said that the area will be "unpleasant" to motorists for about a year, but once improvements are made, the roads will be safe and easier to navigate.

Dr. Wilson's new building with some of the medical expenses our (my) baby has had. From teeth extraction (due to a fall coming off the dock chasing those jet skis) to surgeries fol-

and wins his way into people's hearts

lowing two separate attacks by much larger dogs that B Honey thought he could take on, "B" has had his share of medical emergencies.

As he ages, I know he won't be around forever and that breaks my heart. Ken won't admit it to anyone, but I think he loves B Honey, too. But with his failing eyesight and a bad arthritic hip, B Honey has not slowed down one bit. He's everybody's friend - in fact he has his ritual to visit most of the homes on our street where he gets his special treats from the neighbors including the little girl at the end of the drive who thinks he's her dog.

Our (my) one dog is about all I can take care of. Even though I'd love to have more B Honeys I don't think Ken would go for

it. That's why I never stop at those Humane Society pet adoption places. I would probably bring home all the dogs.

There are special people in the world who take in dogs that are abandoned or homeless - at least until they are adopted. I'd get too attached, I'm afraid.

But my friend Kim Steiger has done just that by taking in Bodie (see story page 28). I'd adopt Bodie in a flash just because Kim says Bodie is so special. She rescued him from a sad situation and has worked with him to reestablish his love and trust in humans.

Someone will get a wonderful friend and companion when they take Bodie in as part of their family. Because of his history, however, Kim will not let

Bodie go to anyone. She wants him to have a wonderful life. His adoptive family will have to be special, too.

My cousin Becca is the same way. She has worked on rescuing pets that were Hurricane Katrina victims and now is trying to organize a weekly feature of pets from the animal shelters of Lincolnton and Lake Norman to help them find loving, permanent homes. There are plenty of pets out there waiting for adoption.

Pets can make a big difference in your life if you are willing to make the commitment and to show them love.

Maybe you, too, will find your own special B Honey and come to love him like our family does.