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Connector Choice Draws Varied Reactions

By NICOLE HATCH
News Staff Writer

The selection of the two southernmost routes proposed for a four-lane highway to connect Interstate 77 to U.S. 52 has created varied reactions from local groups of government and business officials with different interests in the connector.

On Tuesday, state officials announced that the alternative routes referred to as E-3 and W-3 were chosen as the routes on which the 10.7-mile connector would be built. The connector is estimated to cost some \$68 million and is planned to be completed by 1996.

The routes chosen begin south of

the Holly Springs Church Road area, cross U.S. 601 just north of the White Plains community and then N.C. 89 west of the Pine Ridge community. Five other alternatives were proposed as possible routes for the connector.

Mount Airy city officials are not happy with the route chosen. They were in favor of the E-1 alternative that would have been put the connector closer to Mount Airy just north of the U.S. 52-Business and U.S. 52-Bypass intersection.

"We were looking at it in terms of economic development and maintaining traffic. And we just felt like the E-1 route had more benefits to the Mount Airy community than E-3,"

said Mount Airy City Manager Jerry Cox.

Cox explained that the city was in favor of the W-3 route being used for the connector. However, the city endorsed E-1 for several reasons, including that it would bring traffic closer to Mount Airy and provide for economic development.

Jack Ward, the manager of the planning and research branch of the state Department of Transportation, explained today that the routes were chosen based on information provided by De Leuw, Cather and Co., a Cary-based firm that is working with the state on the connector project.

"They (De Leuw, Cather and Co.)

had not recommended anything. They did not make a formal recommendation. We (the DOT) asked them to provide us all the information," he said.

Ward said the connector decision was between two different routes, the E-3 and W-3 alternatives and the E-1 and W-3 options. He explained that the E-1/W-3 route is three-tenths of a mile longer than the chosen route, which would cost the traffic using the road an additional \$361,365 in annual road-user costs.

Cox said the cost of the connector should be more important than the expense of the three-tenths-of-a-mile difference between the E-1 and E-3

alternatives. "In connector built, when you look a picture.

"I was told by the minimum cost the routes would possibly \$10 million or \$5 million dollars a million dollars he said.

The estimated using the E-3 and \$68.6 million, would alternatives worth million, according

See CONNE



The Associated Press
Giants pitcher (left) is congratulated by Terry Kennedy after a one-hit shutout against the San Diego Padres Wednesday. See sports,

'Hate To See You Go'

Lamm Drug Closing Doors After 65 Years

By TERRY COLLINS
News Staff Writer

The story of Lamm Drug began 65 years ago with the hopes of two men. In 1925, Lewis M. Lamm and A.P. Turnmyre went into business together and opened a drugstore on the busy Main Street of Mount Airy. There was competition, but they soon forged a loyal base of customers.

Things went smoothly, and in 1933 Lamm chose to go into business for himself and bought out his partner's share of the store. Turnmyre, who enjoyed the drugstore game, promptly opened up his own pharmacy as well — two doors down from Lamm's.

But there were customers for all. Drugstores had plenty of clientele during this time because most of the Granite City's physicians were located on Main Street. Plus, during this pre-shopping center era, drugstores functioned as mini-department stores and eateries as well.

Lamm's became a popular hangout for Mount Airy High School teenagers, who kept the soda fountain attendant a blur of motion. The kids even spilled out onto the sidewalk in front of the business.

Decades passed. Wars were fought and the styles and manners of Mount Airy residents changed. Downtown changed as well, in ways no one could have imagined in the 1920s. Shopping trends spread from the streets to air-conditioned malls.

Ironically enough, in December 1967, Lamm and Turnmyre had decided to pool their resources and go back into business together only moments before Turnmyre was brutally murdered.

The elderly businessman had left Lamm Drug and walked around the

corner down Franklin Street, where he was shot five times by a man known as Jack Frost Timmons. The murder had no motive. Timmons was sent to prison.

Lamm remained in business by himself until 1971, when his son William and another young man named Larry Good joined him behind the counter. The three-man team continued until the elder Lamm's death in 1977. He bequeathed the business to his son.

When Larry Good left, Lamm Drug became a family operated affair once more. The fountain and lunch counter was still maintained by such loyal employees as Becky McMillian and Virginia Worrell, but as the 1970s drew to a close and the 1980s began, the pace changed as well.

Downtown saw a period of decline as stores such as Advance Auto, Roses and J.C. Penney left for the greener pastures of shopping centers and malls. Most of the doctors had long ago established practices in locations far from the Main Street scene. And the ease of a drugstore that stayed open until 9 p.m. and took Master Card and Visa appealed to a busy working population.

"As a general trend, if the population goes out, then the stores will go out," stated William Lamm as he stood in front of the now-barren shelves of the drugstore's pharmacy earlier this week. "As far as the store is concerned, it's not in the best location for prescription business."

In a letter dated June 2, Lamm informed his customers of the merger with the 2,200-strong Rite Aid drugstore chain. Now, all existing accounts can be found at the Rite Aid on Rockford Street.

See LAMM, page 7



Staff photo by Judy Dickerson

Another longtime downtown business closes its doors. William D. Lamm, the owner of Lamm Drug on Main Street, busily packs up a box of the many old-time bottles and paraphernalia left remaining in the family store.

Downtown Program Working

This is the first examining downtown where it's going focuses on the Main

By NANCY NEWS

Earlier this month Lamm Drug, a downtown Mount Airy business, making among the operators district.

Thus, the question about downtown efforts — those that rejuvenating what Airy's prime shopping

Is the Main Street and what is the monies paid by downtown area order to finance

A recent survey merchants along aided support for those that have sprucing up to

And, officials Main Street project downtown-revitalization maintain that the and will continue future, provided the city government

The Main Street mented locally in nationwide effort downtowns. The cities with population and 50,000 and approach: organizational promotions development.

According to development cooperation with the Downtown Board of Directors

Lamm

Continued from page 1

"There are many problems with running your own drugstore now — it's not so much the long hours, but the responsibility," Lamm said. "If something happens to you, and you're the only pharmacist, you have to have a replacement or close the store."

Rising insurance costs and drug prices finally helped to make William Lamm's decision and he opted to bow out gracefully. As he put it, "The pharmacists are the ones caught in the middle. The rising expenses are what's killing your independents more than anything else."

Most of his prescriptions were being filled for men and women who had been with Lamm Drug since his father operated the business, and Lamm had been in the sad position of watching many of his loyal customers pass away as the years went by. The pharmacist finally decided that the reign of the small drugstore had seen an end, and he had to go with the

times.

"As far as the drugstore end of it, we've closed. I'm trying to keep the fountain open, but my employees are not obligated to stay past Saturday," Lamm said.

Lamm also said there had been some interest in preserving the lunch counter for downtown posterity, but right now plans are to clean the place out of all existing merchandise. The women who have run the fountain for the last two decades are still in a state of quiet shock about the closing of the drugstore.

"We haven't decided what we're going to do," said Becky McMillian. "It just depends. If he does decide to keep the fountain open, we'll all be here."

Lamm stated he had been observing industry trends for a period of years before he chose to sell. He sold all of his pharmacy files, drug inventory and merchandise in a process

similar to the closing and settlement in October 1989 of Randleman Drugs, which also was purchased by the Rite Aid chain.

"I'm going to work for Rite Aid for a time to stay in the practice of being a pharmacist," Lamm said. "I am looking forward to having more time with my family."

An elderly customer walked into the drugstore to discuss the transfer of her account to the new store. "I guess I've been coming here since you were born," she said to Lamm. Lamm, who is 52, smiled and thanked her for her years of loyal patronage.

"I hate to see you go," the woman added as she prepared to leave the drugstore for the final time. The thousands of customers who have frequented Lamm Drug over the last five decades would agree with her closing statement. People and files can be transferred — history and atmosphere can't.