

LeBron James takes his game south to Miami

Michael Bubl  brings blue-eyed soul to Charlotte Saturday. **CLT**

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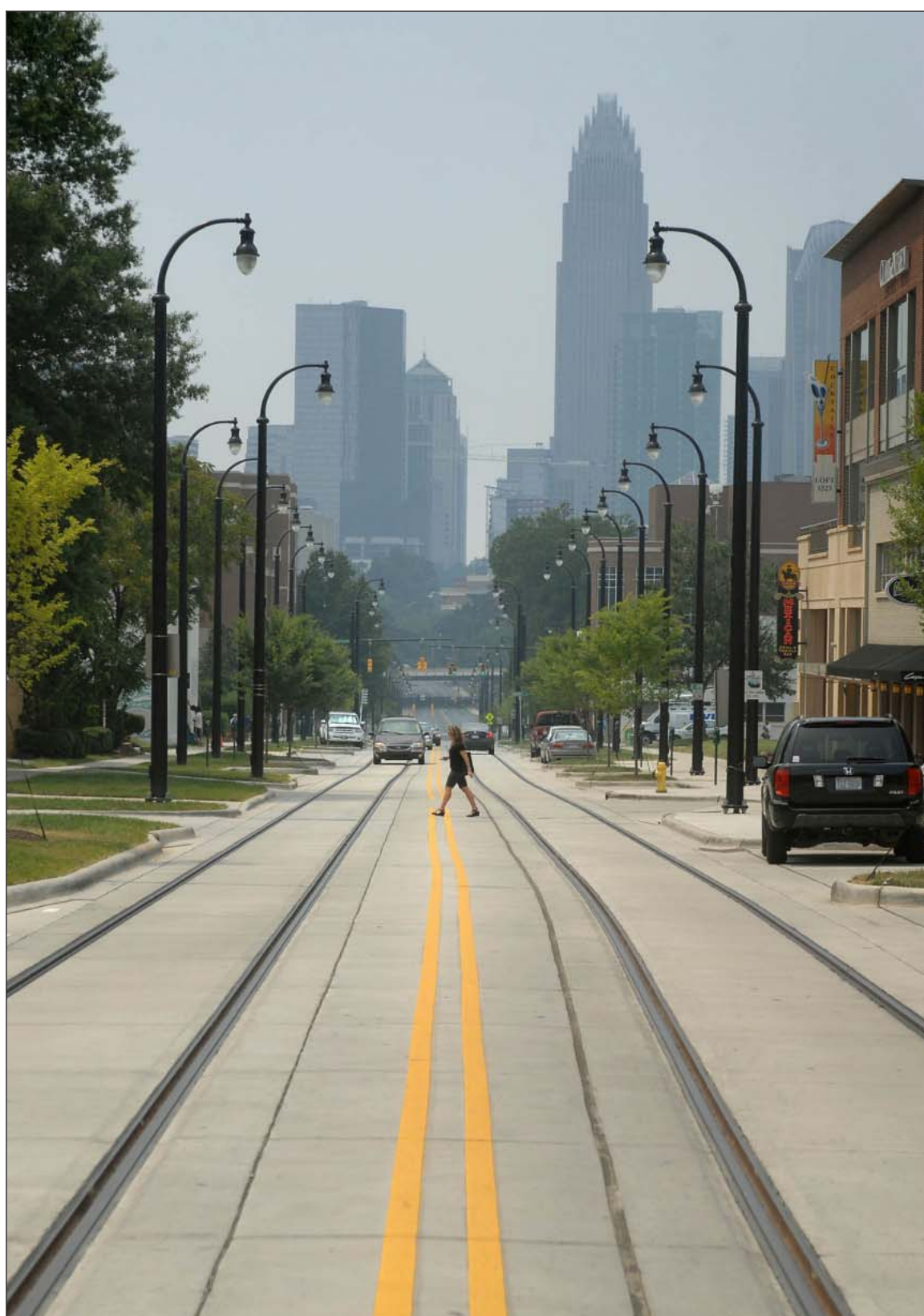
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City wins \$25M to build streetcar line

Federal grant will help complete planned system's first leg, from transit center uptown to Presbyterian Hospital



TODD SUMLIN - tsumlin@charlotteobserver.com

The Federal Transit Administration announced Thursday that Charlotte was one of six U.S. cities to get streetcar grants. One-half mile of track is already in place on Elizabeth Avenue near uptown.

BY STEVE HARRISON
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More than 70 years after streetcars last ran in Charlotte, the city learned Thursday it won a \$25 million federal grant that will bring them back by 2014.

The Federal Transit Administration grant will help build the planned streetcar line's first leg, which will connect Presbyterian Hospital with the main transit station near Time Warner Cable Arena.

Charlotte Mayor Anthony Foxx, who pushed to build the streetcar during the mayoral campaign in 2009, said the project will be a "catalyst" for new development and will provide "sorely needed jobs for Charlotte."

The total cost of the 1.5-mile line will be \$37 million. The city has set aside \$12 million to build the first

leg, but it hasn't yet identified a source for the roughly \$1.5 million needed to operate it each year.

The city eventually wants to build a 10-mile streetcar line from Beatties Ford Road to the site of the closed Eastland Mall. The entire project could cost \$500 million and would probably take at least two decades to build, assuming the line is built in small phases.

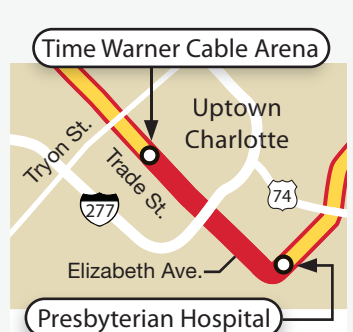
Construction on the 1.5-mile first leg must begin within 18 months, according to the FTA, or the city will lose the money. Chicago, St. Louis, Cincinnati and Dallas and Fort Worth also received money for streetcars. A total of 65 cities applied.

A consultant, URS Corp., is doing engineering work on how to build the line. The major question mark is what utilities are under the

SEE STREETCAR, 4A

Streetcar's first segment

The federal government Thursday awarded the city of Charlotte a \$25 million grant to help build a 1.5-mile streetcar line.



DAVID PUCKETT - STAFF MAP

LONG-TERM PLANS

A closer look at the proposed eventual streetcar route from Beatties Ford Road to the closed Eastland Mall, 4A

U.S. and Russian spies are swapped

10 plead guilty in N.Y. courtroom drama and agree never to return to the United States. Russia will release four prisoners.

BY LARRY NEUMEISTER AND TOM HAYS
Associated Press

NEW YORK — In the biggest spy swap since the Cold War, 10 confessed Russian agents who infiltrated suburban America were deported Thursday in exchange for four people convicted of betraying Moscow to the West.

The agents, many speaking in heavy Russian accents despite having spent years posing as U.S. citizens, pleaded guilty to conspiracy in a Manhattan courtroom, were sentenced to time served and ordered out of the country.

U.S. and Russian officials said they would be exchanged for four Russian citizens convicted of spying for the West.

The swap carries significant consequences for efforts between Washington and Moscow to repair ties chilled by a deepening atmosphere of suspicion.

The 10 U.S. defendants, captured last week in suburban homes across the Northeast, were accused of embedding themselves in ordinary American life for more than a decade while leading double lives complete with false passports, fake names, invisible ink and encrypted radio.

One worked for an accounting firm, another was a real estate agent, another a col-

SEE SPY SWAP, 14A

12-year-old charged with stabbing and robbing clerk

Police say the motive for the 'rare, but sickening' crime was the two mobile phones snatched from an east Charlotte store.

BY ELY PORTILLO
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A 12-year-old boy is charged in the stabbing of a store clerk during a robbery at an east Charlotte cell phone store in what police called a "sickening" crime.

The boy made off with two cell phones Thursday, police said, and was chased by a passerby to his apartment two blocks away. He was arrested there about 20 minutes after the robbery.

"He could have killed this woman, a woman trying to make an honest living," said police spokesman Rob Tufano. "It's a sad state of affairs to have a 12-year-old carry out such savagery."

"Cases like these are rare, but sickening." Because of his age, police could not release the boy's name or say whether he has a criminal record.

He's charged with armed robbery and assault with a deadly weapon with intent

SEE ROBBERY, 4A



T. ORTEGA GAINES - ogaines@charlotteobserver.com

Coach Dorothy Crosson congratulates her team after it won the junior division of the Bible Bowl competition.

A LIVELY TEST OF BIBLE KNOWLEDGE

Youth from the Church of God in Christ, the country's largest Pentecostal denomination, test their knowledge in a rousing Bible Bowl competition — part of a convention that has brought 10,000 delegates to uptown. 1B

Bill to reform ABC boards now heads to Perdue

N.C. lawmakers gave final approval Thursday to a bill meant to reform the state's ABC boards. The bill was prompted in part by news of lavish dinners by board members in Charlotte. 1B

Cab driver who was shot might lose his eyesight

A Charlotte cab driver who was shot Wednesday is expected to survive but might lose his sight, family members said. Three men have been charged. 1B

Presbyterian leaders agree to allow gay clergy

Leaders of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) voted Thursday to allow non-celibate gays and lesbians in committed relationships to serve as clergy, deacons and elders. But the change could only be implemented if a majority of the church's 173 U.S. presbyteries approve. 3A



TODAY'S MUST-READ

View from the flag shop: Long-time southwest Charlotte flag store took a hit in the recession — but customer loyalty is the silver lining. 10A

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CHARLOTTE OBSERVER FILE PHOTO - JEFF SINGER

John Forlines Jr., longtime head of Bank of Granite, was its chairman until his 88th birthday.

'Dean' of N.C. banking dies

Forlines brought fame to Bank of Granite, which he rescued 56 years ago.

BY CHRISTINA REXRODE
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John Forlines Jr. is on a short list of people who put North Carolina on the banking map. But unlike the bankers who grew their companies into national powerhouses, he remained a community banker his entire life.

As other small banks sold out to big conglomerates, his Bank of Granite

remained independent and was once praised by investment guru Warren Buffett as one of the best-run banks in the country.

Forlines, who led Bank of Granite in tiny Granite Falls for more than 50 years, died this week at 92. Friends say he never really retired, though he relinquished his chairman's title on his 88th birthday.

The bank's investors had tapped him to run the bank in 1954, when he was 36, and tasked him with rescuing a one-branch, four-employee institution that had barely survived the

Great Depression and two world wars. Since he left, the bank has struggled under heavy loan losses, but Forlines had expressed optimism about its future.

Thad Woodard, chief executive of the N.C. Bankers Association, called Forlines "the dean of banking in North Carolina."

"There likely won't be another quite like him," Woodard said.

Forlines stayed involved with industry gatherings and kept close tabs on his old bank even into his 90s. He

SEE FORLINES, 9A