

Thinking Outside the Box: *TCC Explores Solution to School Overcrowding at Recent Lunch and Learn-August 23, 2005*

Dr. Ronald Utt, of the Heritage Foundation, told a packed room of Triangle opinion leaders, business executives, citizens and elected officials that it's time to change the way we think about building and financing schools.



Melanie Wilson, Wake Co. Planning Director (m) chats with Wendell Bullard of DAR & Vince Carey, RRAR President (far right)

About 70 people---including a host of elected leaders from across the region--- attended the TCC's August 23, 2005 Lunch and Learn, which also featured a lively and frank panel discussion among key regional elected leaders including Wake County Board of Commissioner former Chair Ken Gardner, Wake County Board of Education Chair Patti Head, and Ralph Thompson of Turner Construction.

Dr. Utt framed the discussion by informing the audience that local governments must meet the growing demand for school buildings and facilities by exploring alternatives to building and funding school infrastructure. Utt focused on the use of public-private partnerships to build schools, and shared his most recent research on the matter with the audience.

"Public-private partnerships that harness the talents and resources of private entrepreneurs offer the prospect of satisfying more community needs and building less expensive schools in shorter periods of time than is current possible with traditional public management and funding," said Utt.

Dr. Utt also shared highlights from his most recent white paper on the issue, *Public-Private Partnerships Offer Innovative Opportunities for School Facilities*. The alternatives he mentioned to audience members included public-private municipal and capital leases for school funding, and community development districts to help pay for school infrastructure.



Dr. Ronald Utt of
The Heritage Foundation



TCC's Chris Sinclair Moderates Panel Seated (L to R) Commissioner Ken Gardner, Utt, Wake BOE Chair Patti Head & Ralph Thompson of Turner Construction

"Through public-private partnerships the school system can focus strictly on the core business of education while for-profit developers focus on delivering much needed community facilities. When implemented to its fullest, such a system of partnerships could yield better buildings, better education, and better communities," remarked Utt during his presentation before important opinion

and community leaders.



*Seated l to r, Apex Commissioner Brian Gossage
Wake County V. Chair Tony Gurley*

Following Dr Utt's presentation, the panel participated in a discussion with the audience about the various ideas presented, what Triangle local governments are doing, and what might be worth consideration in the future. Chairman Patti Head mentioned the possibility of exploring and submitting legislation to allow public- private partnerships in Wake County.

This event will air on Durham Cable Channel 8 and Raleigh's CTV. Please call 919-654-5418 for more information or a copy of the taped event.

About TCC's Lunch and Learn Events:

Each year the TCC hosts four Lunch & Learn events designed to educate Triangle-area residents and community leaders on growth-related issues and empower them to influence their elected officials to make wise decisions on these issues. This event was sponsored by a grant from the National Association of REALTORS® and the Raleigh Regional Association of REALTORS®, and Wakefield Development. Past events have featured local, regional and national experts on growth issues and policies. Lunch & Learn events are open to the public, elected officials and TCC members. For more information on the Triangle Community Coalition visit <http://www.tricc.org> or call 919-654-5418.