Charlotte eclipses Triangle in loop race

By Chris Baysden

RALEIGH – Despite winning accolades as the fastest growing metro in the country, the Triangle lags behind Charlotte when it comes to the number of miles of funded highway loop projects.

An analysis of North Carolina’s urban loop funding program shows that Raleigh and Durham trail longtime rival Charlotte, which has received almost all of the money it needs to complete a major highway loop.

North Carolina Department of Transportation data provided by the Regional Transportation Alliance, a Triangle-based transportation advocacy group, show that 68 miles of Charlotte’s 74 miles of urban loops – or 93 percent – have been funded to date.

Of the nine other metropolitan areas that are eligible to receive loop money, only Raleigh, Greensboro and Wilmington have had any loop miles funded. Durham hasn’t received any loop money although it has nearly 27 eligible miles.

Almost 44 miles of Raleigh’s 71 eligible miles of 1-540 urban loop – or 62 percent – have received

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Patriot Square to own area

By Lee"
The Arc of North Carolina

chris EGAN

- telling how the Arc helped one person finally get a measure of freedom by having his own apartment, or how the organization assisted another individual in obtaining eye surgery so he would be able to see.

“I do this because it’s important to do,” says Egan. “It only makes sense to recognize everybody has value.”

Egan first moved to the Triangle as a kid in 1977 when his dad came to work at IBM’s local operations. Egan attended Cardinal Gibbons High School before going on to earn undergraduate and graduate degrees in social work from East Carolina University in Greenville.

The Arc employs about 500 people around the state, with about half of those being part-timers. The organization, which receives state and federal funding in addition to revenue from donations, has an annual budget of about $20 million. It serves more than 4,000 people directly, in addition to those who are impacted by the fruits of its lobbying efforts.

The Arc has local affiliates all over North Carolina, and it works with a similar national organization called the Arc of the United States to lobby at the federal level. The organization’s name originally was derived from the initials of Association for Retarded Children, which was later changed to Association for Retarded Citizens. But that acronym was problematic due to the word “retarded,” which is considered offensive by some people. The organization has kept the name “Arc” but the letters no longer stand for any words and are lowercased.

Arc Executive Director Dave Richard lauds Egan for his willingness to work as hard for the nonprofit as Egan does at his daytime job at UNC-Chapel Hill, where he serves as the assistant director of the Developmental Disabilities Training Institute.

“You never call Chris and he says, ‘no,’” Richard says. “His dedication and commitment (are) pretty tough to match up to.”

Richard is particularly impressed with Egan’s service with the Arc because he has so much else going on in his life. Egan and wife Lauren have 8-year-old twins – Cameron and Joshua – and Egan also is active with his church and homeowner’s association.

RALEIGH – A simple, but powerful, philosophy drives Chris Egan in his volunteer work for The Arc of North Carolina.

“Everybody has something to offer,” says the 44-year-old Durham resident. “We want to foster opportunity.”

The Arc is a Raleigh-based organization that advocates for the rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities – including people with autism, Down syndrome and cerebral palsy. People with those types of disabilities often face ridicule, exclusion or worse. The Arc works to help those folks fit into society and find a way to contribute to it.

Egan has volunteered with The Arc for 15 years and recently concluded a two-year term as president of the organization’s board. He still serves on the board even though his tenure as its leader expired in September.

The nonprofit’s advocacy runs the gamut from lobbying the North Carolina General Assembly to working one-on-one with individuals, whether it be as a case manager or even as a guardian. Egan can relay stories that tug at your heart strings

Among those helped by Chris Egan, right, is Thomas Vincent.

By Chris Baysden

Details

- CITY: Durham
- VOLUNTEERISM: Raleigh-based Arc of North Carolina
- FAMILY: Wife, Lauren; daughter, Cameron (8), and son, Joshua (8)
- PROUDEST MOMENT: The fact that The Arc pushes the envelope to make more housing, jobs and recognition available for the people it helps.