

Developer plans hotel for Pembroke area

August 06, 2008

By Venita Jenkins
Staff writer
The Fayetteville Observer

PEMBROKE — A Charlotte-based development group plans to build a \$4.8 million hotel outside Pembroke.

John Tyler, a financial officer with the First American Hotel Group, announced at the Pembroke Town Council meeting Monday night that the company plans to build a Holiday Inn Express off Redmond Road west of Pembroke near the Interstate 73-74 interchange. The project would have 63 rooms and a conference facility that could accommodate 125 people.

It would be the first hotel for the town.

The hotel, which would create 36 jobs, is scheduled to open in August 2009, said Councilman Greg Cummings, who also serves as director of economic development for Robeson County.

Cummings said Tuesday that the hotel has been part of a strategic economic development plan that was created in the early 1990s by the University of North Carolina at Pembroke, the Pembroke Chamber of Commerce and the Committee of 100.

At least seven investors over the past 10 years have presented proposals for a hotel, but nothing came to fruition, Cummings said.

“The vision has never died,” he said. “We have been playing with the hotel for the past 12 to 13 years. This project is most definitely going to be an asset to our tax base, and we are very thankful for the 36 jobs.”

There has been interest by a major chain to build another hotel near the same location, Cummings said. He declined to comment further.

University officials have supported the idea of a hotel for several years. Visitors must now stay at hotels in Lumberton and Laurinburg.

“We have been encouraging various people to get engaged in providing a hotel in Pembroke,” said Neil Hawk, the vice chancellor of business at UNCP. “We are really excited about it finally happening. We know that it will be supported by the university.”

Chancellor Allen Meadors said prospective students, alumni, sport teams and patrons of events at the Givens Performing Arts Center would benefit from the hotel.

“This is very positive for the university and the community,” Meadors said. “I just hope the next piece would be a couple of restaurants and a movie theater.”

Staff writer Venita Jenkins can be reached at jenkinsv@fayobserver.com or (910) 738-9158.