

North Raleigh NEWS

FREE TIME



Westing is hot: And so is Billy Edwards, a senior at Leesville Road High School who holds a 45-1 record. **PAGE 6N**

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MARKET PLACE

Something new: New ownership will mean changes for Restaurant Savannah at North Hills shopping center. **PAGE 4N**

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Mini celebrities: Heritage music teacher helps students produce a CD to raise funds. **PAGE 5N**



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Hotel set to break ground

North Hills site aims to be upscale

By SAM LAGRONE
STAFF WRITER

After more than two years of waiting, construction on the final component of North Hills will start this month.

The Renaissance Raleigh Hotel, originally announced in the summer of 2004, recently secured its building loan and will begin construction within the next week.

The hotel is a joint venture with Kane Realty and Raleigh-based hotelier Concord Hospitality Enterprises Co. Concord will oversee the hotel's construction.

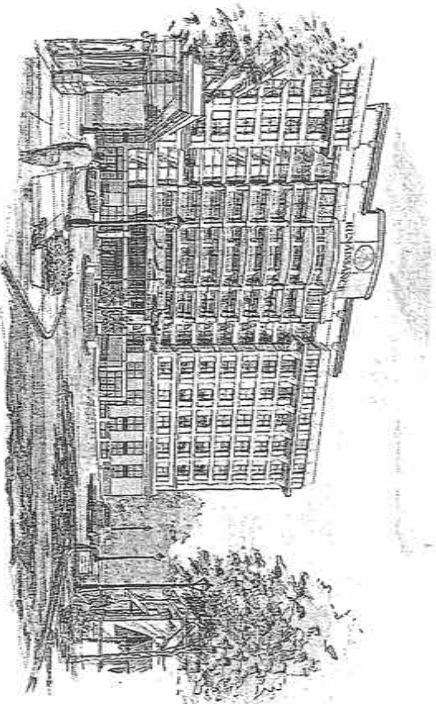
"I'm happy to tell you we are underway," said Mark Laport, the chief executive officer for Concord. Originally slated for a late 2005 completion date, the Renaissance Raleigh hit several snags in the lead up to construction, Laport said.

Among them was a territory issue with Raleigh Marriott Crabtree Valley. Both hotels are under the Marriott brand.

"We had to work issues out between our group and the Marriott group and the owner [of the Raleigh Marriott Crabtree Valley]," Laport said.

Concord also had to wait for the approval of a construction loan, which was secured from RBC Centura last month.

Laport declined to state the amount of the loan, but according to building permits filed by Kane Realty and Concord last summer,



An artist's rendering shows what the Renaissance Raleigh Hotel will look like. PHOTO COURTESY OF CONCORD HOSPITALITY

HOTEL

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mixed-use development by plywood barriers.

The hotel will partner with the neighboring Gold's Gym which will allow hotel guests to use its facilities. The Natural Body Spa & Shoppe, also adja-

cent to the site, will have a similar arrangement with the hotel.

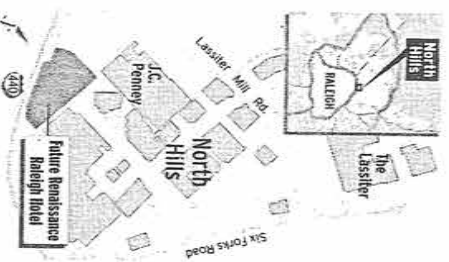
When announced, the Renaissance Raleigh entered into a three-way race with The Umstead in Cary, and the Westin on the site of the proposed Soliel Center to be the first four- or five-star hotel in Wake County. Currently, there are no hotels that score higher than three

stars in Raleigh.

Two and a half years later, only The Umstead is ready for occupants, with an opening scheduled for later this month.

Laport is now hoping the Renaissance will be the first hotel in Raleigh to earn at least a four-star title.

"Our goal is to build the most upscale hotel in Raleigh with



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the most luxurious accommodations that will be seen in this market," he said. Concord Hospitality operates 46 hotels across the country and Canada. The company relocated to Raleigh in 2004.

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