

It's **St. Patrick's Day**, and since everyone loves a party, be sure to come downtown later for **Burlington's first-ever St. Patty's Day Bash**. Check **D1** in **ACCENT** for details.

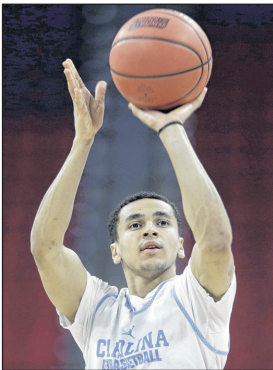


NATION

Rescue teams have temporarily called off the search for a car that plunged from a bridge into the **Ohio River**. **A3**

REGION

Testimony got underway Wednesday in the murder trial of **Brandon Malone**, as witnesses recounted the details of a drug deal gone horribly wrong. **B1**



Catch up with **North Carolina and Duke** on the eve of the teams' first-round **NCAA** matchups. **SPORTS, C1**

Weather: Partly sunny 76
Details/Page B3 45

DAMIAN WROBLEWSKI Grade 1
The Burlington School

>> ABSS

Big school zone changes being considered

Proposed map on display at district office

By Isaac Groves
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A proposal to turn the Alamance-Burlington School System into a five-high school dis-

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trict would mean major changes to school zones, building a new high school and expansion of several existing high schools. The proposal ABSS Superintendent Bill Harrison brought to the Alamance-Burlington Board of Education would have zones for Williams, Western Alamance, Eastern Alamance and Southern Alamance high schools, and

a new high school in Hawfields. They would all meet in downtown Burlington and Graham. The map is on display at the district office at 1212 Vaughn Road, Burlington. Once plans get more solid, Harrison said, he would hold public hearings in April or May. "So this is phase one of whatever plan to start a conversation?" board member Patsy Simpson asked. Harrison said it was a work in

progress. Williams High School's zone would meet Southern's at Huffman Mill Road, follow Interstate 40/85 to Tucker Street and Mebane Street at its eastern tip, and then follow West Webb Avenue and the railroad tracks west through Elon on the north side, where it meets the Western zone. The Western zone's boundary with Eastern would be along Union Ridge Road north of Burlington, and it would run back

down to Main Street in Graham at its eastern and southernmost point. The Eastern zone's border with the new high school would run along U.S. 70 and turn south on Gibson Road until it reaches Interstate 40/85, which it would follow to Orange County. The new high school's zone would border Southern's down N.C. 87 South out of Graham, See **SCHOOL ZONE** / Page A2



Alamance Community College's automotive systems technology shop opened back up this week after being displaced by a fire in January 2015. Picture above is one of the main garage bays; below is a new reception area for faculty, staff and students who bring in their cars for service.

Photos by Sam Roberts / Times-News

ACC auto shop reopens after fire

Classes held in interim at old Cox Toyota dealership

By Isaac Groves
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GRAHAM — Many of the students in Alamance Community College's automotive program have never been in the shop building on campus. "We're just moving back

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in. It will be pretty nice once we get in," said Navy Hla, a first-year student in the automotive systems technology program. The shop caught fire January 2015, and class-



es have been in the old Cox Toyota dealership on U.S. 70/North Church Street in Burlington. Insurance paid for extensive repairs and a lease at the dealership while the work was going on. Now, the work is done, and students came back to the main campus after spring break.

Teachers and students will spend most of the week getting everything moved in and organized, said department head Marc Hunter, which he said should be a good lesson for them. It's especially tricky because this building is smaller than

See **AUTO SHOP** / Page A2

>> CRIME

Local funeral director headed to federal prison

Faiger Blackwell gets two years for tax, bankruptcy fraud

By Michael D. Abernethy
and Anna Johnson
Times-News

A Burlington funeral home director was sentenced to two years in federal prison Wednesday for bankruptcy fraud and tax fraud. Faiger Blackwell, 59, owner of Blackwell Funeral Home and several other businesses, also must pay nearly \$405,000 in restitution to the Internal Revenue Service, according to a release from the U.S. Department of Justice. Blackwell filed for bankruptcy in 2007 after accumulating " \$300,000 in outstanding federal taxes and more than \$1 million in other debts," the release said. The U.S. Department of Justice charged him with hiding income from federal bankruptcy court and setting up a shell business and bank accounts to divert funds and avoid an IRS levy. Blackwell didn't report income from rental properties to the bankruptcy court in 2007. He used that money to pay for business and personal expenses. "I don't have any comment at this time, and things are still being resolved," Blackwell said Wednesday afternoon. Concerning the funeral home, "We will not close, and we will operate as usual," he said. "... This will not affect that business at all." In July 2009, after the IRS levied one of Blackwell's business bank accounts, he set up another company and bank accounts "in order to divert funds and circumvent the levy," according to the release. Blackwell used those diverted funds to pay for a cruise, among other business and personal expenses.

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>> SUPREME COURT

With Garland nomination, Obama challenges Senate GOP to act

By Josh Lederman
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — By nominating an uncontroversial 63-year-old judge, President Barack Obama handed Republicans an unwelcome election-year proposition: Give in or risk letting Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump pick a Supreme Court justice the GOP might like even less. Obama's selection of appel-

NEWS ANALYSIS

late judge Merrick Garland landed with a bang the morning after primaries in Florida, Ohio and other key states made clear that Clinton and Trump will be their parties' presidential candidates, barring extraordinary circumstances. Obama described Garland as an evenhanded

consensus-builder, all but daring Republicans to block him and face uncertain consequences from voters. Republican leaders dug in on their insistence that the next president get to choose the replacement for the late Antonin Scalia, the influential conservative and high court's most provocative member. See **SUPREME COURT** / Page A2



Federal appeals court judge Merrick Garland, center, speaks as President Barack Obama, right, and Vice President Joe Biden listen Wednesday after he was introduced as Obama's nominee for the Supreme Court during an announcement in the Rose Garden of the White House in Washington. The Associated Press