

On the wire: national and world news

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Microsoft buys Skype in the company's largest merger

SEATTLE (MCT) — Microsoft Corp. is buying Internet phone company Skype Technologies SA for \$8.5 billion.

The cash acquisition, announced Tuesday morning, will give Microsoft a significant consumer brand online, access to 170 million people who use Skype for free or cheap calls, and Skype's phone and video calling software, which runs on the Web and Internet-connected devices.

Microsoft said the acquisition will expand its product offerings, including unified communication software Lync, email software Outlook, instant messaging software Messenger, free Web email Hotmail and online video game

network Xbox Live.

The acquisition is the largest in Microsoft's history and signals a more aggressive business approach from Microsoft as it expands into cloud computing and tries to get some traction with mobile phones and tablets.

Microsoft said Skype will run on its fledgling mobile operating system Windows Phone, Xbox, Kinect and other "Windows devices," without being more specific. Microsoft is expected to show a new version of Windows that will run on tablets this fall.

Skype, based in Luxembourg, is privately owned by an investor group led by Silver Lake. The company was started in 2003, and the service has become popular for its free or low-cost voice and video calls.

U.S. says Afghan war not over after bin Laden's death

WASHINGTON, D.C. (MCT) — Osama bin Laden's death hasn't changed the U.S. military mission in Afghanistan, and it must continue, the U.S. commander in charge of the eastern Afghanistan said Tuesday.

"One man does not make the war on terror," Maj. Gen. John Campbell told reporters via video-conference from Bagram Airbase in Afghanistan.

Instead, Campbell said, the demise of al-Qaida's leader in a U.S. raid in Pakistan could help pave the way for insurgent groups, including the Taliban, to reconcile with U.S.-led coalition forces and the Afghan government.



MCT/MOHANNAD SABRY
An Egyptian man shouts his support for Osama bin Laden at a rally outside the Nour Mosque in Cairo, Egypt, on Friday, May 6, 2011.

Ackland art store opens its doors

By Britton Alexander
Staff Writer

After four months of construction, the Ackland Museum Store finally opened its doors May 5 on the corner of Franklin and Columbia streets.

The property, which was empty for more than seven years, has been converted from a bank space to a gift shop and gallery.

The project is funded in part by a November 2009 grant of \$150,000 from UNC's Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost. Originally meant to open in November, construction and contractor negotiations forced the Ackland to delay the store's opening.

Emily Bowles, director of communication for the museum, said the store functions as a gateway from Franklin Street to the Ackland Art Museum.

"I think the store being anchored right there at the epicenter is really important," she said.

"We want to make sure people are aware of the museum."

Store merchandise ranges from jewelry and architectural books to home decor and children's toys.

"The vast majority of the products are things you can not find in this area," Bowles said.

Gallery space inside the store will contain original artwork from regional and local artists, store manager Alice Southwick said. In addition to the store selection, visitors will be able to purchase gallery pieces after they have been



Alice Southwick, store manager at the Ackland Museum Store, assists customers on Friday. An extension of the gallery on Franklin Street, the store opened May 5. A gallery event is set to establish in the store's presence.

on display for a set time.

During the upcoming 2ndFriday Artwalk the store's first gallery exhibition, entitled "Nothing is Impossible," will highlight seven North Carolina artists' works.

While the purpose of the store is geared toward promoting museum awareness, Southwick said she is optimistic that the store will generate profits that will directly benefit the museum's educational programs and projects.

"We have current show mate-

rial, membership material and program material," Southwick said. "Our mission is to support all that the museum does."

The store has prompted a favorable response from members of the community.

"I think this will bring more people to the museum, as well as those who are traveling in Chapel Hill and may not know that the museum is half a block down from Franklin Street," said Sam Rosman, 60, a museum patron since 1978.

Bowles said she is enthusiastic about the store's potential. Southwick added that the store has received plenty of positive feedback from the public.

"I have to say that for the museum, and me personally, it is just a really exciting time," she said. "The reception that people have given us has warmed the cockles of my heart."

Contact the Arts Editor
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School systems ask county to maintain funds

By Steven Norton
Staff Writer

As legislators discuss how tightly to draw state and federal purse strings, the Orange County Board of Commissioners awaits the magnitude of funding cuts the county's two school systems will face.

Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools and Orange County Schools presented their recommended budgets to the commissioners on April 26. Both entities took into account cuts projected at the state and federal levels but asked the board to maintain its previous levels of funding.

County Manager Frank Clifton will present a county budget proposal to commissioners Tuesday. After a series of work sessions and public hearings, the board will approve an operating budget in June that will include fund allocations to schools.

"We're trying to make sure we provide schools with an adequate source of funding that we have historically produced," commissioner Earl McKee said.

Orange County Schools

Orange County Schools projects a \$6.4 million shortfall for the 2011-12 school year, including more than \$3.5 million in state funding reductions.

With budget work sessions and public hearings on the horizon, Donna Coffey, Orange County Board of Education vice chairwoman, said the system will focus on ensuring that direct services to students are not harmed.

"We're trying to preserve as many of the classroom positions as we can," she said. "As far as I'm concerned, that's my number one priority."

To offset current and projected

K-12 BUDGET CUTS

\$3.5 million

projected state funding reduction for Orange County Schools

\$7.8 million

projected state funding reduction for Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools

8.8 percent

N.C. House proposed cuts to K-12 education in the state

cuts, the district plans to redirect money from its fund balance, reduce its operating budget by about \$1.2 million and redirect lottery proceeds.

Operating budget reductions include about \$340,000 in cuts to curriculum and instruction, as well as cuts to transportation and maintenance.

Chapel Hill-Carrboro

An estimated loss of about \$7.8 million in state funding faces Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools in the coming school year.

"We can try to read through these state budget cuts calmly, but the reality is these are huge, unprecedented numbers that threaten the quality of education in the state and in this county," system Superintendent Neil Pedersen said at the budget presentation.

The system plans to appropriate \$2.1 million from its fund balance and cut more than \$2 million in expenses to help balance its budget.

Contact the City Editor
at city@dailytarheel.com.

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