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Winthrop and American Legion Reach Land Accord

Winthrop University

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Winthrop and American Legion Reach Land Accord

Quick Facts

- Winthrop has purchased 15 acres of property from American Legion as part of the plan to expand the 120-year-old institution.



President Anthony DiGiorgio

ROCK HILL, S.C. - Winthrop University has reached agreement with its **American Legion** neighbors to acquire approximately 15 acres of **Legion** property for the future growth of the 120-year-old institution.

The long-awaited announcement came this morning from Winthrop President Anthony J. DiGiorgio during his annual address to faculty and staff who gather to mark the opening of each new academic year at Winthrop.

"For as long as I can remember, both Winthrop and the Legion have seen community service as a value we have in common," **DiGiorgio** told the audience. Over the years, he said the two organizations have "talked about how someday, it would be good to see the Legion property begin to be conveyed to Winthrop, so that this institution's growth path will be assured for the future. Well, I'm pleased to tell you that 'someday' is here."

DiGiorgio reported that the Legion membership on August 7 voted to sell the 15-acre portion of about 21 acres it owns adjacent to the university, following discussions that stretched back years, but came to a conclusion over the summer. Subject to state approvals required from Columbia, Winthrop will pay just over \$156,000 per acre – funds that the Legion intends to use in part to build a new post home on the part of the parcel it is retaining.

University and **Legion** officials also agreed that the York County Fair, which is a project of the American Legion, will continue on the property through 2007.

Calling the fact that the Legion and Winthrop will continue to be neighbors "one of the nicest aspects of all this," **DiGiorgio** thanked the trustees of the Legion "for their vision and sense of purpose" in bringing the matter to the membership for a vote.

Gary Mitchell, chairman of American Legion Post 34's Board of Trustees, noted, "Ever since its founding, this post has taken its public service responsibilities very seriously and we've worked with Winthrop and other organizations in that way. We're proud to help the university and our post move forward for the future good of all."

Winthrop having the property for future growth also plays a key role in the City of Rock Hill's urban core economic development strategy, which focuses on creating more of a "college town" atmosphere around the campus. A **2003 master plan** for the area between Winthrop and downtown Rock Hill, known as the Textile Corridor, designated the **Legion** property for Winthrop growth, and indicated that doing so over time can help the city attract an estimated \$210 million in private investment to the surrounding area.

Winthrop is working with the City and owner-developers of **The Bleachery** former textile mill property to explore ways to fulfill that goal, with an emphasis on mixed-use development.

DiGiorgio said research indicates Baby Boomer retirees tend to be attracted to communities that offer a lifestyle that is active both physically and intellectually and "college towns" rank high in that regard. That's led the Winthrop Board of Trustees to ask **DiGiorgio** to spend some time during the

autumn with on-site consultations with "college town" communities that already are working on such projects and report back to them. **DiGiorgio** said he will use focus his visits on gaining "a sense of both lessons learned and emerging national best practices" that can be put to work in Rock Hill, with an emphasis on "how the arts are being infused into these communities to increase their livability." He will report his findings to the Winthrop board during its annual planning retreat in February.

For more information, contact Rebecca Masters, assistant to the president for public affairs, at 803/323-2225, or Mitchell at 803/517-5213.

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