

# FROM ROADS TO RICHES, KNIGHTDALE REAPS



Plumber Chris Thompson checks the plans as he installs the pipes for a Lone Star Steakhouse at the intersection of I-540 and U.S. 64 Business in Knightdale, a town whose population is expected to explode.

STAFF PHOTOS BY CHRIS SEWARD

## *U.S. 64 Bypass and now I-540 bring crop of shops, restaurants and houses*

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### KNIGHTDALE

If there were such a thing as the highway lottery, the eastern Wake town of Knightdale would be the jackpot winner.

A new arc of Interstate 540 is expected to open this month — the second new six-lane highway to cross through the town in 18 months. The nine-mile extension will carry traffic from Capital Boulevard in Raleigh to the U.S. 64/264 Bypass, a 13-mile thoroughfare that in July 2005 connected Interstate 440 to U.S. 64 just west of Wendell.

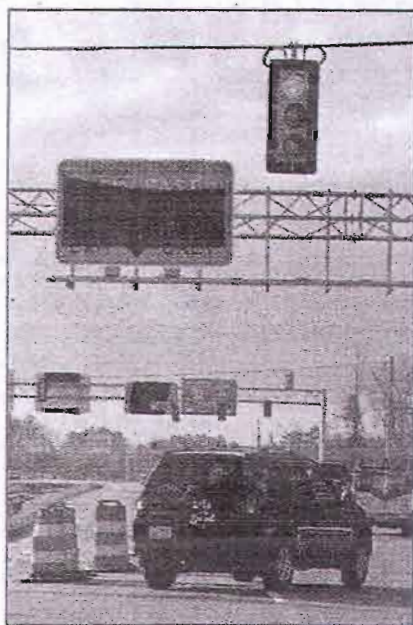
The interstates are turning what once was a sleepy bedroom community into a regional shopping mecca comparable to northwest Raleigh's Brier Creek. Eastern Wake's supply of shops could double in the next five years — mostly because of Knightdale.

Lots of neighborhoods have benefited from the arrival of I-540, but Knightdale (pop. 8,372) is turning out to be uniquely attractive to developers. With large, undisturbed tracts around the new highways and few natural or political boundaries to prohibit growth, Knightdale is the closest thing to a clean slate that developers are likely to

find in Wake County.

"There are big chunks of land and a lot of them," said David Ravin, a senior vice president at Crosland, a Charlotte company building homes and shops in Knightdale. "The land just goes on and on and on for miles."

In the township that includes Knightdale, there are 87 tracts that are 50 acres or larger, according to the Wake County Revenue Department. That's three times the number of 50-plus-acre tracts in the town-



The cloth covering the sign to I-540 from U.S. 64 Business is coming down soon one way or another.

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