



Friday

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## Monroe BOE buys land for schc

### BY CHUCK THOMPSON

The Monroe County Board of Education signed a contract Thursday morning to buy 37 acres for a elementary school on Ga. 83 about a mile north of Forsyth.

Assistant Superintendent Jackson Daniel said the sales price was \$27,500 per acre, for a total of The new school, which will be the county's third elementary school, is part of the board's five-year plan. The tract also is large enough to hold a new middle school, which would be next on the exp Daniel said money to purchase the land is available from sales tax revenue the board is now colle board will ask county residents to extend the education penny sales tax in a June 19 referendum, from that tax to be used to pay for the new school.

"If the referendum is approved, we hope to begin moving dirt by early 2008," Daniel said. The boa have the new school ready to open in fall 2009, he said.

The county's growth is requiring the school system to expand. Daniel said the system has averag growth (60 to 70 additional students a year) for the past 5 years. The system now has 3,800 stude A building near the board offices once used for pre-kindergarten is now being renovated to house system's ninth-graders, beginning this fall. That will free up space in the high school, he said.

Daniel said the board had been looking for appropriate property in the triangle between Ga. 83 an north of Forsyth for some time.

"The developer made this available, and we felt it fit our needs nicely," Daniel said.

The property is part of the 205-acre Green Dairy tract recently acquired by the Den-Ric Corp. of F rectangular tract borders Ga. 83 and Frank Bunn Drive. The school property will be in the southw bordering Ga. 83.

Development manager Larry Brown said the company wants to build Monroe County's first planne development on the tract, which would include various sized and priced single family homes, ranc townhouses. The homes would range in price from about \$175,000 to \$350,000.

The Monroe County Commission last month approved rezoning the property from agriculture to pl development, despite opposition by area residents who are concerned with traffic and other chang dense development would bring. But it cannot give final approval to the development until site pla environmental studies and other engineering work is completed and submitted.

The preliminary layout Brown submitted for the rezoning shows three pods of housing, plus room courts, a pond, a soccer field, a community center and open spaces. It projected 499 housing unit said Thursday that 75 to 100 of those home sites will have to be eliminated to make room for the :

"We're making some pretty good concessions to make this property available to the school board, they were looking in that area and we think (a school) will be a pretty good fit in our development," "People living there will be able to let their kids walk to school, the way we used to do when I was save the county some money transporting children."

Also part of the agreement is that Den-Ric will pay the costs of running sewer and water lines fron school property, something already planned to tie the development into the city systems.

Daniel said building plans for the school have not been made, because the board was waiting to f see if the sales tax funding will be approved by voters.

He said the board's current special purpose local option sales tax brings in \$3.7 million to \$3.8 mil new five-year SPLOST, if approved, would generate an estimated \$25 million, Daniel said.

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