



Downtown Durham on verge of boom

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DURHAM, N.C. (WNCN) – A new condominium complex is promising to bring people to the heart of Durham.

The condos come as hundreds of other residential units are opening in downtown Durham.

Ashley Lemons not only lives downtown but also started a craft beer store, Beer Durham.

“We thought about the things we love and Durham and beer are high on the list,” Lemons said.

“When we decided to come to this particular location, part of it was the idea that downtown is continuing to grow and also we are getting more residential properties, so we’re looking forward to welcoming new people to downtown and meeting new people here.”

Her business will soon get hundreds of new neighbors. A project is underway to put retail and 250 apartments near Central Park. Just across the street, No. 539 Foster was just announced – a six-story building with 92 condos and six three-story terrace homes.

Geoff Durham, president and CEO of Downtown Durham Inc., said, “There’s residential popping up everywhere.”

Durham said 700 units have opened in the past year and another 800 are in the works.

In that same time frame, another 800 have opened on Ninth Street, not far from downtown.

Geoff Durham said the census predicts 75,000 people will move to Durham in the next 15 years. In the short term, once all the currently planned units are complete, about 5,000 people will call downtown Durham home.

That’s up from 2,000 before the recent boom.

More stores, he said, will be needed downtown.

“It’s going to really dramatically change the way downtown looks and functions,” Durham said.

He said the new condos offer something all the other recent rental additions do not.

“We’ve been getting a lot of in calls and inquiries about ownership opportunities. People want to invest in the downtown,” he said.

Lemon is one of them.

“It is a great place to be, so I’m not surprised that there is a demand for more places to live,” she said.