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McCrory won't seek eighth term

Charlotte Business Journal - by [Erik Spanberg](#) Senior Staff Writer

For Mayor Pat McCrory, eight is too much.

The Charlotte mayor said Thursday he will not seek re-election next November, ending a record seven-term run as the city's top political leader. McCrory made it clear he plans to run for elected office again, at either the state or federal level. In the meantime, he plans to take a private-sector job, though he has yet to make a decision on what that will be.

"My heart wants to stay in this position forever," McCrory said, his voice cracking with emotion. "But my soul knows it's time to move on. Thus, I will not seek an eighth term."

He plans to devote his final year in office to improving the economy, adding jobs, limiting public spending, expanding transit and encouraging the state to overhaul the criminal-justice system.

McCrory all but endorsed fellow Republican and current City Councilman John Lassiter to be his successor. Lassiter has yet to decide on a mayoral bid, but McCrory said he called Lassiter last January to let him know he would not run for mayor in 2009. At the time, McCrory had just decided to run for governor, a race he lost to Democrat Bev Perdue last month.

Of Lassiter, the mayor said: "I don't think there's anyone who comes close" to his qualifications. Democrat Anthony Foxx, also a council member, said in October he will run for mayor next year.

McCrory left little doubt his political career will resume in the not-too-distant future.

"Although I will not seek re-election as mayor, this will hopefully not be my last position in an elected office," he said. McCrory confirmed his interest in Republican Sue Myrick's Congressional seat should it come open and kept alive the possibility of making another gubernatorial bid.

He cited Charlotte's growth and clean government record as hallmarks of his mayoral tenure. McCrory believes his biggest mistake came in the wake of the half-cent transit tax passed by voters in 1998. After it passed and work began on high-profile projects such as the \$463 million light-rail line, the mayor and the city failed to communicate with the public, McCrory said.

That led to a lengthy and controversial attempt to repeal the transit tax. Voters ultimately kept the tax and defeated the repeal effort in 2007.

McCrory, 52, left his job at Charlotte-based **Duke Energy Corp.** (NYSE:DUK) to run for governor. He must now find work while mulling his political future.

Still, the mayor emphasized his commitment to finishing his seventh term on a strong note.

"I have a year to go," he said. "This is not my going-away party here."

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