

Communicate with Us!

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MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

Youth Service Provider Meeting
at the ECWDB offices in New Bern
March 18, 2004, 10:00 am

SETA Conference
at the Grove Park Inn Resort in Asheville
April 4-7, 2004

Youth Council Meeting
at the ECWDB offices in New Bern
April 6, 2004, 6:00 pm

Adult & Dislocated Worker Provider Meeting
at the ECWDB offices in New Bern
April 8, 2004, 10:00 am

JobLink Chartering Committee
at the ECWDB offices in New Bern
April 8, 2004, 6:00 pm

WIA Oversight Committee
at the ECWDB offices in New Bern
April 15, 2004, 6:00 pm

Youth Summit
at the New Bern Riverfront Convention Center
April 20, 2004, 9:00 am—2:30 pm

NC WDB Association
at the North Raleigh Hilton
April 21, 2004, 10:00 am—1:00 pm

NC Employment & Training Association Conference
at the north Raleigh Hilton
April 21-23, 2004

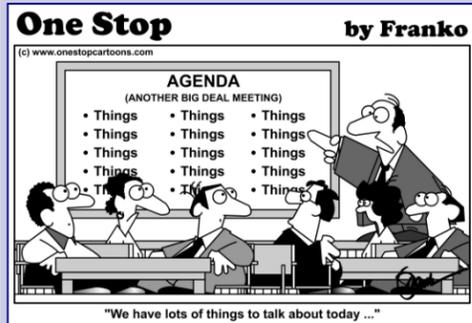
Executive Committee Meeting
at the ECWDB offices in New Bern
April 22, 2004, 6:00 pm

Workforce Consortium Meeting
at the ECWDB offices in New Bern
May 6, 2004, 2:00 pm

ECWDB Meeting
at the ECWDB offices in New Bern
May 13, 2004, 6:00 pm

ECWDPA Annual Appreciation Luncheon
at the New Bern Riverfront Convention Center
May 14, 2004, 10:00 am—1:00 pm

Third Annual Women's Empowerment Conference
at the New Bern Riverfront Convention Center
June 2, 2004



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Governor Easley Tours Cherry Point

Governor Mike Easley and Senator Scott Thomas toured Cherry Point on Monday, March 1, 2004. This visit came as legislatures prepare to take on a possible battle for the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process in 2005.

The military industry has an annual economic impact of \$18 billion in North Carolina, according to a recent study. At NADEP, 3,800 civilian jobs and 400 civilian contract jobs, filled by residents from four or five area counties, amount to \$270 million in annual payroll. All this could be lost in the 2005 BRAC.

"There is a real opportunity for us to grow with the

military," said Governor Easley, referring to the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure. "North Carolina is the most military friendly state in America, and we need to make sure those in Washington know that as well."

The state budget has already earmarked close to \$2 million for BRAC—related expenses, assisted by the inclusion of Senate Bill 870 last July. The bill, sponsored by State Senator Scott Thomas, of New Bern, set aside \$750,000 for the 2003-2004 fiscal year and \$750,000 for the 2004-2005 fiscal year to "provide funds to respond to the Base Realignment and Closure Commission to adequately protect the military and civilian jobs associated with military bases in our State."



Gov. Mike Easley talks with Col. John Gumbel, Commanding Officer of the Naval Air Depot, aboard Cherry Point in Havelock

Sources: Havenews.com and EncToday.com

WIA Reauthorization

Congress has the option of finalizing reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) during the 108th Congress. However, it is expected that Members of Congress will return home early this year and that the WIA reauthorization may not reach consideration. There is no sunset clause for the Workforce Investment Act, so

if the bill is not considered, the existing bill will continue.

The Act was first adopted in 1998 and was only fully operational as of program year 2000. During this time, local areas have worked hard to develop and implement programs that respond to the needs of workers and employers alike.

Source: NACo and NAWB

North Carolina TV Program to Focus on Jobs

A new television series will feature North Carolina residents voicing their opinions about economic development and jobs with NC's top officials and industry experts.

The series, called "NC Works," will begin airing in March on the OPEN/net television program. OPEN/net has produced weekly, live

statewide call-in programs for twenty years. The shows are created by the Agency for Public Telecommunications in the N.C. Department of Administration.

The purpose of the show is to help residents better understand the state of economic development in North Carolina. The show will also cover topics such as, how to find help in

getting a job, income assistance, job training, unemployment benefits and education options.

"NC Works" will air at 8:00 pm the first Tuesday of each month beginning March 2. The program will run through June 1, 2004. For more information on "NC Works," visit www.ncaptv

Source: Independent Tribune



VISION:

Our vision is a world class workforce meeting the demands of the 21st Century workplace.

MISSION:

Our mission is to develop a comprehensive workforce system throughout eastern North Carolina that results in a highly skilled, productive workforce.

VALUE ADDED:

We add economic value to our communities by ensuring that quality education, job training, and employment opportunities are available thereby improving the quality of life for our citizens throughout the region.

KEY STRATEGIES:

- Expand and promote the JobLink Career Center system across the region to insure access by all citizens
- Identify and implement effective employment and training strategies that results in employment opportunities for economically disadvantaged adults, youth, and dislocated workers
- Engage business and community leaders in addressing workforce issues and promote strategies to improve workplace skills
- Implement a community awareness plan that promotes the WDB and its services
- Support the efforts of other organizations and institutions through collaborative partnerships that further enhance the WDB's initiatives



"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

~Unknown

Director's Report

On February 14th, I celebrated my ten year anniversary working with the Eastern Carolina Workforce Development Board. Actually, I am amazed at just how fast those years have gone by. Ten years ago, my daughter was in the fourth grade, playing soccer, and taking piano lessons and my son was in the second grade, a cub scout, and playing little league baseball. Today, my daughter is completing her second year at Coastal Carolina Community College and my son is graduating from Northside High School in Jacksonville. Like the ole saying goes, "time flies, when you're having fun." And yes, the past ten years have been challenging, but I have had fun!

There is this saying, "To love what you do and feel that it matters—how could anything be more fun." I agree. Some may ask how can workforce development be fun? But think about it in the terms of seeing a young person smile when they get their first paycheck, a mother who is now a college student and sees her first A on her report card, or a father who was laid off from work and now finds himself back at work after retraining. Hard times fall on all of us, but it's through those times that we learn to define fun!

When someone asks what kind of work that I do, I have to confess it is not always easy to answer. I simply respond that I am fortunate to work in a job that improves the quality of life for others. Of course, I then explain workforce development in a condensed summary version. Okay! For those of you who know me, you know just how long my condensed summary version may take (smile). But the truth is I have a real passion for our work, because I know that we do make a difference in improving the quality of life for others. Be it, that struggling high school student, a young person who dropped out of school, a single parent trying to improve their employment opportunities by going back to school, an ex-offender starting over in their community, a veteran beginning a new career, or a worker who was recently laid off from their job. Collectively, we provide better opportunities for brighter futures. How awesome!

Each year, we sponsor over 2,000 individuals in our Workforce Investment Act programs by providing resources so that people can earn their certificates, degrees, or diplomas and find meaningful employment earning good wages. During the first half of this program year, over 25,000 individuals visited our local JobLink Career Centers for employment and training assistance. Special events, such as local Job and Career Fairs, the Youth Summit, and the Women's Empowerment Conference are held to address the unique needs of those that we serve. Participating in community fund raisers to support other human service agencies such as the Coastal Women's Shelter reveals the heartbeat of what we do. The work of the Board, staff, JobLink partners, and WIA service providers often times may include evening meetings away from family, but all in the spirit of serving others in the communities in which we live. What an opportunity we have to make a difference!

I am blessed to work with elected officials who care about their community, a very dedicated Board of Directors who understand the challenges in workforce development, and a great team of caring professionals who give of themselves on a daily basis to make futures brighter for others.

Thank you for the opportunity to work in such a rewarding profession for the past ten years!

May God Richly Bless Each of You!

Tammy Childers, Executive Director

Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Training Activity

PY 2003-2004 Planned vs. Actual Enrollments {actual data as of 3-4-04}

WIA Service Provider	Program	Planned Enrollments	Actual Enrollments
Carteret Community College	Adult	50	50
Carteret County Schools	In-School Youth	61	50
Coastal Carolina Community College	Adult	88	85
Craven County Schools	In-School Youth	75	55
Dobbs School	In-School Youth	48	43
ECWDB Local Area	Incumbent Worker	NA	121
ESC	Adult	50	54
ESC	Hurricane Isabel	NA	18
ESC - Jacksonville	DW	44	46
ESC - Morehead City	DW	26	22
ESC - New Bern	DW	50	43
Greene County Schools	In-School Youth	30	18
Greene Lamp, Inc.	Out-of-School Youth	125	123
James Sprunt Community College	Adult	179	191
James Sprunt Community College	DW	165	168
James Sprunt Community College	Out-of-School Youth	32	26
Jones County Schools	In-School Youth	27	21
Lenoir Comm College	Adult	150	139
Lenoir Comm College	Out-of-School Youth	50	51
Lenoir Comm College	DW	291	271
Lenoir County Schools	In-School Youth	69	65
Pamlico Community College	Adult	81	69
Pamlico Community College	DW	22	17
Wayne Comm College	Adult	150	113
Wayne Comm College	DW	143	126
Wayne Comm College	Out-of-School Youth	99	99
TOTALS		2,105	2,084

Program	Planned Enrollments	Actual Enrollments	Program	Planned Enrollments	Actual Enrollment
Adult	748	701	Out-of-School Youth	306	299
DW	741	693	Incumbent Worker	NA	121
In-School Youth	310	252	Hurricane Isabel	NA	18

WIA: Program Year 2003 Exit Dates & Quarter Dates

The last exit date for PY2003 performance will be March 31, 2004—in just a few weeks!

The keying deadline for PY2003 performance will be July 30, 2004.

By that time, all supplemental data, credentials, skill attainments and diploma/equivalents must be keyed for our Local Area to receive credit on your PY2003 performance.

Provided by: Lisa Harvey, MIS Coordinator

"Excellence is the result of caring more than others think is wise, risking more than others think is safe, dreaming more than others think is practical, and expecting more than others think is possible."

~Unknown



Fiscal Monitoring Assistance

It is imperative that we receive all invoices in a timely manner for accurate reporting to the Department of Commerce's Division of Employment and Training (DET) and the United States Department of Labor (USDOL). In accordance with the terms of our contract, all budgets, invoices and reports must be submitted as required by the Eastern Carolina Workforce Development Board, Inc. (ECWDB). Instructions for submitting invoices are addressed in Issuance 2002-1 dated July 24, 2002. As stated in the issuance, monthly invoices and supporting documentation are due by the 15th of the month following the invoice period. This policy was discussed in detail at the Financial Management training session held in the ECWDB offices.

Provided by: Jessie Bode, Fiscal Monitor



EASTERN CAROLINA JOBLINK CAREER CENTER ACTIVITY

Period of July 1, 2003—February 29, 2004

	TOTAL	Carteret	Craven	Duplin	Greene	Jones	Lenoir	Onslow	Pamlico	Wayne	A Wayne
NUMBER OF "VISITS"	59,810	10,448	20,753	398	1,176	367	3,904	2,296	353	3,915	16,200
NEW	59,753	10,448	20,753	398	1,155	361	3,880	2,295	353	3,914	16,196
RETURNING	57	0	0	0	21	6	24	1	0	1	4
SERVICES											
Assessment/Testing	1,435	87	281	1	39	6	401	203	82	27	308
Assessment Interview	2,214	190	128	5	42	1	71	11	91	43	1,632
Assigned Case Manager (WIA)	114		1		5	1	28		77		2
Career Counseling	683	1	149	4	16	10	223	226	52		2
Career Information	1,657		746	10	33	12	125	675	54		2
Career Search	670		14	2	10	7	401	205	26	1	4
Counseling - Group Session	265		6		86		155		4		14
Counseling - Individual	1,476	4	256	4	91	144	743	49	62	1	122
Dislocated to Non-Dislocated Worker	1	1									
Interviewing Skills	549		484		2	3	16	30	14		
Job Development Contacts	1,941	306	762	35	8	3	25	115	1	218	468
Job Listings	1,330			1	238	40	468	581	2		
Job Seeking Skills Workshop	596	7	93			2	459	35			
JobLink Registration	4,600	1,096	1,164	34	386	34	512	13	124	270	967
JobLink Visit	11,332	1,683	3,897	40	645	136	1,870	12	213	203	2,633
Non-Dislocated to Dislocated Worker	21				3		18				
Obtained Employment	1,982	374	895		1	2	9			69	632
Placed in a Job	4,386	655	1,732	15	5	2	4		1	1,061	911
Placed in Training (Federal, State or Local)	304	1	26	6	60		185	22	1		3
Placed in Training (WIA)	218	3	40		10	2	18		138		7
Provide Labor Market Information	21,616	2,056	13,120	109	19	7	13	63	14	1,782	4,433
Referred from Community Colleges	717	1			1	6	8	693	8		
Referred from DSS	130		7	1	22	15	22	52	11		
Referred from ESC	526		449	1		51	8	11	6		
Referred from Other	368		2		1	7	5	352	1		
Referred from VR	5						1	3	1		
Referred from WIA	26	1			1		21	2	1		
Referred to a Job	56,823	13,139	20,004	349	250	49	330	425	7	3,934	18,336
Referred to Community Colleges	728	2	215		124	36	230	103	18		
Referred to DSS	32		11		1	10	4	2	4		
Referred to ESC	201				90	23	48	39	1		
Referred to Job Corps	33	9	2	1	1	1	16				3
Referred to Other	419	6	238		7	61	65	29	13		
Referred to Other Educational Services	156	7	80	12	1	19	31	5	1		
Referred to Other Federal, State or Local Training	1009	4	984	8	1		11		1		
Referred to Veterans Services	229	2	227								
Referred to VR	31	3	8		4	1	9	2	4		
Referred to WIA	309	63	1		31	5	113	3	93		
Resume Preparation Assistance	823	52	104	16	20	8	206	135	6	11	265
OUTCOMES											
Completed Training	259				20	7	129	89	14		
Finished School	1				1						
Got a Job	6,700	1,006	2,536	15	20	19	133	300	23	1,124	1,524
Incarcerated	3	1						2			
Moved	48							48			
Other	220		1		1		58	157	3		
Refused to Continue	32						3	28	1		

Based on data from NC JobLink MIS: 25,464 "Individuals" served during this period.

NC Unemployment Rates Shows a Slight Decrease in January

According to the Employment Security Commission (ESC), North Carolina's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in January was 5.8 percent, down from 6.2 percent in December.

"This is the lowest the state rate has been since August 2001—when it was 5.7 percent," said ESC Chairman Harry E. Payne, Jr. "The seasonally adjusted civilian labor force decreased over the month by 47,000, reflecting the drop in

seasonal retail trade employment by students and others who were earning extra money for the holidays. However, over the year, our state gained approximately 20,000 jobs."

Total seasonally adjusted household employment was 3,960,145 in January, which was a decrease of 25,489 since December. Total seasonally adjusted unemployment was 243,102, a decrease of 21,981 over the month.

Professional and Business Services

declined by 4,000 over the month, followed by Government, which saw the loss of 3,600 jobs. Manufacturing industries employment also decreased, shedding 500 jobs since December.

The U.S. unemployment rate was 5.6 percent in January, which was a slight decrease from December's unemployment rate of 5.7 percent.

Source: Employment Security Commission of North Carolina

Unemployment Rates as of December 2003

Source: Employment Security Commission LMI

County	Labor Force December 2002	Unemployment Rate December 2002	Labor Force December 2003	Unemployment Rate December 2003
Carteret	28,531	6.9%	28,789	6.5%
Craven	36,149	5.2%	36,419	4.7%
Duplin	23,134	7.7%	23,359	6.1%
Greene	9,006	5.3%	9096	4.9%
Jones	4,697	5.6%	4,669	3.7%
Lenoir	28,551	6.9%	28,342	5.3%
Onslow	50,270	6.0%	49,831	5.1%
Pamlico	5,479	4.2%	5,594	4.9%
Wayne	50,992	5.6%	51,868	5.1%
Eastern Carolina Local Area	236,809	6.1%	238,057	5.3%
State of NC—not seasonally adjusted	4,112,755	6.4%	4,150,013	5.8%
State of NC—seasonally adjusted	4,150,237	6.7%	4,187,534	6.1%
National—not seasonally adjusted	144,807,000	5.7%	146,501,000	5.4%
National-seasonally adjusted	145,157,000	6.0%	146,878,000	5.7%

December Unemployment Rates Fall in 74 Counties

Unemployment rates fell in seventy-four North Carolina counties in December, according to the state's Employment Security Commission. Rates rose in twenty-two counties and were unchanged in four.

"Since December 2002, employment increased by 58,000 and unemployment decreased by 21,000," said ESC Chairman Harry E. Payne, Jr. "This indicates that trend is reversing and that more people are finding work."

For the second consecutive month, Vance County has had the state's highest unemployment rate at 12.5 percent in December, compared with 13.6 percent the previous month. Part of the gain was attributed to layoffs in the textile industry. For the third consecutive month, Watauga County had the state's lowest unemployment rate at 2.2 percent, up 0.1 of a percentage point from November.

The largest increase in unemployment rates in December occurred again in Swain

County, with the rate rising to 10.4 percent from 7.8 percent in November, primarily due to layoffs in the Services and Trade industries.

Note: The rates in this release are not seasonally adjusted.

Source: Employment Security Commission of North Carolina

Oscar Herring, Chief Elected Official Receives Regional Leadership Award



Thank you for your outstanding leadership and dedication to the citizens of Eastern Carolina.

On December 11, 2003, the Eastern Carolina Council of Governments, held its annual Leadership Awards Banquet at the New Bern Riverfront Convention Center. Oscar Herring received the 2003 Regional Leadership Award based on his regional leadership skills to implement the provisions of HB 381 and to improve the services associated with the four-county Eastpointe Human Services Board (formerly mental health) and for his leadership in serving as Chairman of the Eastern Carolina Job Training Consortium that is associated with the nine-county Eastern Carolina Workforce Development Board, Inc.

Source: *Kinston Free Press*

Wayne County Chamber Hires Steve Hicks as New Executive Director



The Wayne County Chamber of Commerce has hired Steve Hicks as the new Executive Director. Mr. Hicks served on the Eastern Carolina Workforce Development Board of Directors for six years. Mr. Hicks was committed to the mission of the Board in building a skilled workforce. The Board wishes Mr. Hicks continued success in his new role in Wayne County.

Craven County Career Fair

The seventh annual Craven County Career Fair was held at the New Bern Riverfront Convention Center on Saturday, February 19, 2004. The event, "Soar into a New Career," was designed to give visitors a glimpse into a field that they may not have explored.

There were 42 vendors at the event, including employers in the manufacturing, finance, sales, communications, hospitality/food services and health care sector. There were also representatives from government agencies and the armed forces. The vendors were met by 368 jobseekers.

Sponsors for the event included Coastal Community Action, Craven Community College, Craven County Department of Social Services, Craven County Health Department, Craven County Schools, Craven County JobLink Career Center, Eastern Carolina Workforce Development Board, Employment Security Commission, Greene Lamp and Vocational Rehabilitation Services.



Submitted by: *Rebecca Thomas-Suchenski, ECWDB*

Alside Windows Expands

The Lenoir County Board of Commissioners passed a resolution approving an economic development grant in the amount of \$91,500 for the expansion of Alside Windows. Alside, a producer of vinyl windows in Kinston, is one of Lenoir County's largest manufacturing firms. The expansion will boost the company's competitiveness, while increasing the capacity of Lenoir County.

As part of the grant agreement, Alside will purchase capital equipment with an estimated ad valorem tax value in excess of \$750,000. Alside Windows is one of Lenoir County's largest manufacturing firms. The company currently employs 390 people, and with the addition of 210 jobs, Alside will be the employer of 600 workers.

Source: *Oscar Herring, Lenoir County Board of Commissioners*

Manufacturing Program

The Bush administration has reversed a previous decision, which would have eliminated a manufacturing assistance program. The decision to support the continuation of the Manufacturing Extension Partnership was one of a series of recommendations in a long awaited 88-page report. This report represents the administration's strategy for strengthening the manufacturing sector, which has seen the loss of 2.8 million factory jobs over the past 3 1/2 years. Commerce Secretary Donald Evans unveiled the report, "Manufacturing in America: A Comprehensive Strategy to Address the Challenges to U.S. Manufacturers," during a visit to an Ohio Factory.

"This is our strategy to remove the barriers that are holding back American manufactures and costing jobs," said Evans. "This report is a single step in an ongoing process—ensuring that American companies are competitive in every part of the world."

The report includes input from over 20 manufacturing public roundtables held last year by the Commerce Department to identify the challenges facing the American manufacturing sector.

Jerry Jasinoski, head of the National Association of Manufacturers, said that he believed the recommendations being put forward, if implemented, would help deal with the higher costs American manufacturers face because of burdensome regulations, excessive litigation, taxes, health care and rising energy costs. He also said that American manufacturers carry a cost burden associated with these areas that is 22% higher than America's nine biggest trading partners. To review the full report and four-page summary, visit: www.manufacturing.gov

Source: *jsonline.com and www.commerce.gov*

Trade Adjustment Assistance

U.S. Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao announced allocations of over \$50.2 million to ensure that states are able to fund Fiscal Year 2004 training programs under the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Act.

The TAA program is available to assist individuals who have become unemployed as a result of increased imports from, or shifts in productions to, foreign countries.

"The President and I want to do everything we can to get help as quickly as possible to workers who have been displaced because of trade-related reasons," said Chao. "This \$50.2 million in trade adjustment assistance funding provides eligible workers with up to 104 weeks of training."

The funding comes under the Continuing Resolution, signed by President Bush, for trade related training activities through January 31, 2004.

Source: *ETA News Release, 1/16/04*

A Sea of Concerns

President Bush's proposed budget leaves beach nourishment advocates feeling very troubled. Bush's proposed budget calls for record low funding for sand and the government's drastically reduced role in long-term beach maintenance.

Currently, when the federal government joins a state, city or town in a beach nourishment project, which are typically called 50-year projects, it pays for sixty-five percent of the studies, beach construction and periodic replenishment of hot spots, leaving the local governments to pay the remaining thirty-five percent.

Under the new proposal, the same federal-local split would only be used the first time a beach is rebuilt. Local governments would have to assume the subsequent costs of any sand pumped. Leaders in Onslow and Carteret beach towns say this could cost the area millions.

Source: *ENCToday.com*

FYI...

New ESC Online Services

Two new applications that allow individuals claimants to view their personal unemployment insurance benefit claim information have been added to the North Carolina Employment Security Commission website. Both services are located on the "Individual Services" section of the website at: www.ncesc.com

Source: *ESC of North Carolina*

Free Local Government Toolkit

The International City/County Management Association (ICMA) has produced a toolkit that includes resources on Brownfields, smart growth, military base reuse and other environmental issues. *The Local Government Environmental Toolkit*, available on CD-ROM, contains publications, fact sheets, and other resources that ICMA has produced to help local government officials meet their environmental and economic development challenges.

For more information, visit: www.lgean.org/html/whatsnew.cfm?id=651

Source: *www.southern.org*

Rural America

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service recently published *Rural America at a Glance*, which is a six-page brochure that highlights economic and social conditions in the nation's rural areas. The publication is designed to help public and private decision makers as they develop policies and programs to strengthen rural communities.

Source: *www.southern.org*

On-Line Library for Workforce Development Practitioners

Workforce Learning Strategies, a research and consulting firm, has created an on-line library of resources for workforce development practitioners. The library has links to more than 2,100 tools and materials gathered from hundreds of organizations. It is organized into 11 major workforce development functions, with topics and subtopics within each function. For more information, visit: www.workforceusa.net

Source: *Southern Compass*

Technology Opportunities Program Grants Available

The U.S. Commerce Department's Technology Opportunities Program (TOP) will award about \$13 million in technology grants for fiscal year 2004. TOP funds demonstration projects on how new telecommunications and information technologies can provide educational, health care, or public information in the non profit and public sectors. The Application Kit for the grants, including the announcement and guidelines is available at: www.ntia.doc.gov/top/whatsnew.htm

Source: *Southern Compass*

Local Women Honored

Twelve women were honored as "Intriguing African American Women" at the third annual Black History Program, sponsored by the Northeast Community Development Corporation on February 7, 2004. The event was held at the Jacksonville Country Club where these women, who were from Onslow, Jones, Duplin and Craven counties, were recognized for the contributions that they have made to their communities.

The honorees included: **Thelma Simmons**, an Eastern Carolina Workforce Development Board member and a DSS Director in Jones County; Carol Jones, a District Court Judge; Mary Barnwell, a community leader from Craven County; Eva Brown, Richlands town clerk; Helen Dobson, a retired educator from Duplin County; and Vanessa Erwin, a women's advocate at Carobell. Also honored were Avril Pender, assistant finance director for the City of Jacksonville; Ethel Sampson, a Craven County community leader; Willie Saunders, a community leader in Onslow County; Gloria Taylor, account executive for KISS 102 radio station; Sonja Williams, Jacksonville Commons Middle School music teacher; and Zettie Williams, a retired educator from Duplin County. These women were nominated and chosen based on volunteerism and their involvement in business, education, government and politics.

Source: *Jacksonville Daily News*

2004 Tier Rankings

County tier designations have changed for nineteen North Carolina counties in the 2004 rankings. Tier rankings are required to be calculated annually under the William S. Lee Quality Jobs and Business Expansion Act, using a formula established by statute. Tier designations determine a variety of economic development opportunities available to each county, such as the available amount of tax credits for job creation, worker training and investment in machinery and equipment under the William S. Lee Act. Businesses locating or expanding in counties that are more economically distressed receive greater tax credits than those that locate in more prosperous areas.

"The tier designations help ensure that our less prosperous counties have the tools they need to attract and retain companies," said N.C. Commerce Secretary Jim Fain. "At a time when our state's economy is challenged by an ongoing restructuring and the effects of a global economy, it's more important than ever that we give every community in our state the resources they need to succeed."

In the 2004 evaluations, Burke, Caldwell, Caswell, Catawba, Cleveland, Harnett, Pender, Stokes, Surry and Yancey counties moved down one level to a more-distressed ranking. Beaufort, Cumberland, Duplin, Lenoir, Martin, Onslow, Vance and Wilson counties all moved up one tier level to a less-distressed ranking. Hertford County moved up two tiers and all other counties remained at 2003 tier levels.

Source: NC Department of Commerce

Joint Select Committee

The Joint Select Committee met on February 23, 2004 to discuss economic growth and development. At the meeting, the Committee heard from Mark Vitner (Wachovia, Senior Economist) that NC could shed another 110,000 jobs in the textile and apparel industries by 2012. The only answer is quick retraining of those workers. Many questions were raised about the difficulty of retraining, since education levels are so low with most of these workers.

At the March 4 meeting, the NC Electronics and Information Technology Association recommended the following to create jobs: expand the school of science and math to other parts of the State, a job training credit, "incubator" for technology, fund technology in grades k-12, a new research and development tax credit, and efforts to retain "innovators" as they graduate from college.

Also at that meeting, Dave Rizzo, President and CEO of MCNC, proposed the creation of the NC Innovation Institute. It would function like an incubator to bridge the gap between innovation and the creation of jobs. The final presentation concerned capturing more of the \$30 billion the federal government spends each year on research.

Source: Jennie Dorsett, North Carolina WDB Association

Biotechnology in NC

On February 11, 2004, the North Carolina Biotechnology Center presented Governor Easley a strategic plan with fifty-four recommendations for growing the state's biotechnology industry and creating high-paying jobs.

"This strategic plan will help guide our state's biotechnology future as we focus on bringing high-quality jobs to benefit all North Carolinians," said Easley. "I appreciate all the hard work and effort that have gone into developing this thorough plan. With these recommendations, our state will build on its national leadership in biotechnology."

The plan, New Jobs Across North Carolina: A Strategic Plan for Growing the Economy Statewide through Biotechnology, targets three immediate priorities for state investment:

- Recruitment and expansion of biomanufacturing companies
- Creation and attraction of biotechnology start-up companies
- Development of biotechnology throughout the state

Many of the fifty-four strategies will require state investment over several years, while others will require commitment and action by partners in the state's biotechnology community.

"Biotechnology is another major investment area," said Governor Easley. "North Carolina currently ranks fifth in the nation in this rapidly expanding arena. Experts says biomanufacturing jobs will more than quadruple in the next three to five years. As a result of this growth, we can create between 78,000 and 100,000 jobs if we are bold and aggressive."

For more information, you may visit: www.ncbiotech.org/strategicplan

Source: ncbiotech.org

Innovation in NC

The North Carolina Board of Science and Technology believes more can be done to boost the state's high-tech economy. In its report, *Tracking Innovation: North Carolina Innovation Index for 2003*, the Science Board highlights North Carolina's performance in attracting high tech industry, but also suggest that the state needs more investment "to train its citizens for the new-knowledge based economy..."

The report is available at the Science Board's website and includes several specific recommendations. For more information, visit: www.ncscienceandtechnology.com/Reports.htm

Source: State News, North Carolina

NC Low on Tax Chart

A recent industry-funded study by Ernst and Young, "Total State and Local Business Taxes," finds that North Carolina's business tax burden ranks between 47th and 49th in the nation. This detailed state-by-state analysis of total state and local business taxes was released in January 2004.

"These rankings clearly show why North Carolina has been ranked #1 in the country for business climate three years in a row," said Governor Mike Easley. "Our overall tax burden keeps business costs low in our state. Companies looking to expand or relocate know that North Carolina is a great place to do business."

North Carolina ranked 49th in the nation in business taxes per dollar of private sector economic activity, 48th in business taxes per dollar of capital income and 47th in business taxes per employee. For more information, please visit www.statetax.org.

Source: N.C. Office of the Governor

NC Business Closings

In January 2004, there were 88 reported closings affecting 2,858 people and 17 layoffs affecting 873 people. This data is derived from a statewide survey of newspaper accounts of business closings and permanent layoffs, and from information supplied to the Employment Security Commission (ESC) of North Carolina by the employing units experiencing the closings/layoffs. These numbers represent only those workers experiencing layoffs as reported by the above stated sources and should not be considered comprehensive data.

Source: NC Employment Security Commission

NC Workforce Tools

Governor Mike Easley, in a recent press release, discussed steps that are being taken to strengthen North Carolina's economy. Governor Easley stated that an educated, highly trained workforce remains imperative and that key investments have been made to educate and train the workforce for high-skilled job opportunities. Targeted recruiting tools are being used to bring in companies, such as GE, Merck, Infineon, RH Donnelley, General Dynamics and others.

"We have to make ourselves even more competitive in this worldwide playing field," said Easley. "Our recruitment tools are becoming more flexible to target investment and sustainable jobs."

Governor Easley stated that a good example of this approach is the Job Development Investment Grant (JDIG) program. Since its launch in 2003, JDIG has brought 1,780 jobs and more than \$75 million in investment to N.C. Another key recruitment tool is the One North Carolina Fund. This fund has helped to create 12,800 jobs over the past three years and total investments exceeding \$1.6 billion.

Source: N.C. Office of the Governor

TRI Expansion in Greene County

Tile Restoration Inc. (TRI) is expanding its operation to bring 100 new jobs and \$800,000 in investment to Greene County. TRI is a subsidiary of the Albritton Co. specializing in tile restoration products and services. The expansion will provide the 100 new jobs with an average salary of \$22,800 a year. Tile Restoration Inc. received \$100,000 in One N.C. competitive fund money to be used for new equipment, machinery and infrastructure improvements.

The N.C. Department of Commerce, Greene County Board of Commissioners, Golden LEAF, Lenoir Community College, the N.C. Community College System and N.C.'s Eastern Regional Partnership worked together on the TRI expansion in Hookerton.

Source: Governor's Press Office

MYSTERY SHOPPERS

During the period September – December 2003, Lengel Vocational Services of West Columbia, South Carolina collected information from Mystery Shoppers who visited and contacted JobLink Career Centers in the Eastern Carolina Local Area.

The purpose of the Mystery Shopper program was to generate insights about how customers react to programs and services available at the JobLink Career Centers and identify opportunities for continuous improvement of the JobLink system. Conducted in a mystery shopping environment, the review was performed from the perspective of real customers. People from local communities, who reflected a broad cross-section of the population served and represented both job seekers and local area employers, were used to visit and call the JobLinks.

Five (5) primary areas, all of which impact customer service and perceptions, were reviewed: 1) Center – how customers view the center itself. It includes variables such as signage (both outside and inside, parking, and accessibility issues). 2) Staff and Partners – how customers view, respond, and react to center staff and partners. It includes variables like whether they were greeted, if the staff was friendly and helpful, if the staff was easy to distinguish from customers, if there was a strong presence of partners in the JobLink and the referral system to partners, and other related issues. 3) Resources – how customers view the resources in the JobLink. It includes the availability and usefulness of the resources, as well as some accessibility issues. 4) Use of the Telephone – how customers react to the customer service telephone practices of the JobLink's staff and partners. It includes many of the commonly accepted customer service procedures across industries, as well as the friendliness and helpfulness of the staff and partners. 5) Internet – how customers react to the JobLink's primary website, focusing on how helpful it is to both area employers and job seekers. It includes ease of use and usefulness of the information from a customer and employer's perspective.

Information from the report will be used by the JobLink Career Centers to: 1) help better understand how the centers, staff and partners, and services are seen through the eyes of a customer; 2) monitor the impact of previously implemented improvement processes; 3) validate improvement opportunities previously known by staff and partners; and 4) identify new improvement opportunities that were not previously known to the staff and partners.

Submitted by Bob Kehres, Assistant Director, ECWDB

NOW Program's First Recipient

Sandra West is the first recipient for benefits of the "New Opportunities for Workers" (NOW) program at Lenoir Community College. The NOW Program is a pilot program developed through The Rural Center to help dislocated manufacturing workers secure opportunities for self-employment. Through the NOW Program, displaced workers with sound business ideas are identified and linked with business training programs. They are then assisted with the development of business plans and provided with low-interest loans so that they may start their own business.

This plan involves the Small Business Center, North Carolina Department of Commerce, Employment Security Commission, Workforce Development Commission, JobLink Career Centers and NC REAL. Fifteen counties have been selected to pilot this initiative; including Lenoir, Greene and Jones counties. Dislocated manufacturing workers living in these counties may qualify for the program. More information is available at the Lenoir County JobLink Career Center.

Source: EncToday.com

Southern Growth Launches Survey

Southern Growth has launched its annual on-line survey to poll Southerners on their attitudes about global trade and immigration and their effect on the region. The annual survey is used to gather regional views for inclusion in Southern Growth's annual report, "The Report on the Future of the South." The 2004 edition of the report will focus on states' and communities' responses to globalization.

The survey includes ten questions on trade, immigration and states' and communities' roles in responding to globalization. Participants can also view the responses of other Southerners who have taken the survey. Results will be announced at the Globally Positioning the South conference on June 13-15, 2004 in Oklahoma City. To participate in this survey, visit: <http://www.southern.org/survey.shtml>

Source: Southern Growth

New Bern Is "Dream Town USA"

New Bern has been selected as the North Carolina town for "America Dream Towns USA, 2004" national and worldwide distribution. The selection process began months ago with a nomination by the American Dream Town Advisory Board. New Bern will be featured in the color book, "American Dream Town USA, 2004" and in many regional and national press releases.

Locally, this prestigious award can be credited largely to the efforts of Sandy Richardson and the Tourism and Development Authority in promoting New Bern area as a destination.

Source: New Bern Chamber of Commerce

New Technical Assistance & Grant Opportunities for WIBs

The U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (CFBCI) launched "Touching Lives and Communities" in collaboration with the National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB). This technical assistance project provides a number of resources to help Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) and One-Stop Career Centers foster relationships with Faith-Based and Community Organization (FBCOs). For more information, visit www.nawb.org.

Source: NAWB

Tool Kits for Community Resource

The Southern Growth Policies Board has released a tool kit designed for communities looking to chart their place in the international economy. The kits are intended for use in public meetings of at least 20 people and include a moderator's guide, discussion guides, and a series of fact sheets. For more information, visit: www.southern.org

Source: NAWB

Resource for Ex-Offenders Seeking Employment

The National Hire Network newsletter provides resources for helping ex-offenders secure employment. The publication offers strategies for serving this population as well as information about funding opportunities, technical assistance materials, and more. For more information, visit: www.hirenetwork.org

Source: NAWB

2003-2004 Youth Summit

The third annual Eastern Carolina Youth Council Summit, sponsored by the Eastern Carolina Workforce Development Board, Inc. will be held on Tuesday, April 20, 2004 at the New Bern Riverfront Convention Center from 9:00 a.m. until 2:30 p.m.

The theme of this year's summit is "Knowledge Creates Success." Youth from our nine county region will be in attendance. Education workshops as well as motivational speakers will be provided. Representatives from community colleges, JobLink Career Centers and military recruiters will be on-hand to provide information on programs and services they provide.

Submitted by: Joe McCarthy, Youth Coordinator, ECWDB

Greene Lamp Youth Volunteer

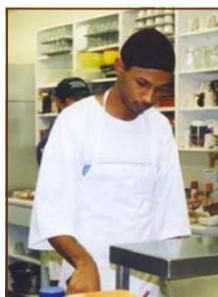
On December 29 & 30, 2003, several Greene Lamp WIA Carteret County out-of-school youth volunteered at Hope Mission in Morehead City, NC.

The Mission is a community funded non-profit outreach center. Lunch is served daily from 11:00 am-1:00 pm and dinner is served on designated holidays.

Both days the youth helped serve over 80 individuals their much appreciated lunches. They arrived there about 9:45 am to help set up tables, chairs and put out donated perishables, such as bread and vegetables. By 10:45 am, there was already a line of hungry customers that wrapped around the small building.

At 11:00 am the doors were unlocked and for the next two hours the youth experienced what could only be described as organized chaos. Drinks were poured, trays of food served and dishes were washed. All the while the participants hurried about the room with smiles on their faces and a spring in their step.

After the last person left, the doors were locked and everything was put away, the youth had a chance to just sit back, relax and reflect on the events of the day. Everyone enjoyed the time they spent at the soup kitchen. There was a great sense of personal satisfaction felt by all involved. The participants reveled in the fact that in the short time they spent at Hope Mission, they helped make a huge difference in the life of a complete stranger.



(left to right)
Jennifer Lamb, Jennifer Palazzo and Phillip Hunt, Jr.

Submitted by: Kathryn Wilkes, WIA Case Manager, Carteret County

West Craven WIA Successes

Since joining the WIA Program at West Craven High School, I have had the privilege to work with some very bright and dedicated students. Each of these students have proven how serious they are about their education and their career pursuits. A couple of students that have shined this past semester are Monica Lovick and Britney Fisher.

Monica is an outstanding student who has been on the West Craven Honor Roll during the Fall 2003 Semester, and more recently, Spring 2004 Semester. Monica has received high praise from every one of her teachers and deservedly so. Monica intends to continue her education in the Nursing Program at Craven Community College, and completing her education at ECU. She has managed to balance school, a part time job as a CNA during the evening, and family life into her daily schedule. Moreover, Monica's fantastic personality, coupled with her genuineness, makes her a joy to work with.

Britney Fisher is another student who is to be commended for her academic progress. She is very dedicated to her studies and is extremely serious about her career goals. Upon graduation, she is considering Fayetteville State University as the place she would like to continue her education as a Computer Programming/Business major. Britney always has an upbeat and humorous spirit about her whenever she stops by the Career Center. I can count on Britney not only to do well in school, but to also provide me with a good laugh whenever we meet.

Overall, I believe the students in the WIA Program here at West Craven have potential just like Monica and Britney. Hopefully, I'll be able to share more success stories like Monica and Britney in the near future.

Submitted by: Tony Lievanos, WIA Coordinator, West Craven High School

Youth Program Training Materials

School & Main, Inc. (SMI) published a 12—module training packet as part of its Youth Program Initiative for workforce investment boards in Texas. These materials are available at the Texas Workforce Commission website at: www.twc.state.tx.us/customers/bnp/bnp.html

Source: www.nawb.org

"The average human heart beats 100,000 times a day. Make those beats count."
~Unknown

"Communicate everything to your associates. The more they know, they more they care. Once they care, there is no stopping them."
~Sam Walton, Founder of Wal-Mart

"Changing of Guards" at James Sprunt

James Sprunt Community College's Basic Skills Department and WIA Youth Program have recently undergone a "changing of the guards." Rebecca Oliver, Basic Skills Coordinator and WIA Program Supervisor, retired in January and Renita D. Allen, former HRD Instructor/Recruiter in the JSCC Human Services Programs Department was named as Ms. Oliver's replacement.

Ms. Oliver retired January 1 after nearly eight years as Adult Basic Skills Coordinator and WIA Program Supervisor. Ms. Oliver has been a lifelong teacher after earning a bachelor's in mathematics from Meredith College. She spent two years teaching in Fayetteville, before marrying and moving to Connecticut and, later, Virginia, where she also taught. While in Virginia, she earned a master's in Education/Administration, Curriculum Development and Supervision from George Mason University.

After returning to North Carolina in 1988, Ms. Oliver spent about a year as a substitute teacher and math teacher at B. F. Grady School. She joined JSCC in 1990 and spent five years as a part-time Basic Education instructor and coordinator of the Huskins program. Since taking the job of Basic Skills Coordinator, Ms. Oliver said the job and the program have changed. "We didn't have the Adult High School program, which has helped a lot of people who wanted to go into the service," Ms. Oliver explained. "And we've been seeing a large increase in the number of younger students, 16 and 17 year-olds, coming into the program."

Other changes that have come under Ms. Oliver's watch include the addition of an English as a Second Language class at Carolina Turkey, the introduction of GED classes online, the acquisition of a Workforce Investment Act grant to help prepare youth for employment and the introduction of a program that makes sure Basic Skills students have at least a basic knowledge of computers.

Though she is retiring, Ms. Oliver said she eventually may return to teaching part-time. In the meantime, though, she plans to expand her Mary Kay Cosmetics business and spend more time with her children and grandchildren, who live out-of-state.

Ms. Oliver said retirement is bitter/sweet. But she is confident about what she leaves behind. "I'm pleased with what we've accomplished over the years," she said. "I'm leaving behind a lot of veterans who know and care about what they're doing."



Submitted by: JSCC Public Information

Report on Special Education Standards

Education Week has posted its eighth annual "Quality Counts" state-by-state report card on public education. The 2004 report, "Count Me In: Special Education in an Era of Standards," focuses on what the states are doing to include special education students in their accountability systems, finding that many states are struggling to meet federal requirements on academic proficiency. The report examines how states test special education students, hold schools accountable for their performance, prepare teachers to educate students with disabilities, and pay for special education services.

"Quality Counts 2004" also updates Education Week's annual state report cards on a wide range of education policies. To access the complete report, go to: www.edweek.org/sreports/qc04/

Also, the U.S. Department of Education has released new rules for testing special education students with cognitive disabilities. For more information, visit: www.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/finrule/2003-4/120903a.html

Source: www.southern.org

"The best prize life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing."
~Unknown

Education, Occupation and Earnings Website

The Employment Policy Foundation (EPF), a business-oriented policy research organization, launched EducationPays.org. This website is an education outreach program designed to show students the economic advantages of continuing their education.

The centerpiece of the website is the Education Pays Calculator. The calculator allows students to select an occupation and education level. It provides earnings potential as well as their labor market vitality.

In December 2003, the unemployment rate for people ages 25 and older with at least a bachelor's degree was 3.0 percent, compared to 5.5 percent for those with only a high school diploma and 8.1 percent for those who did not complete high school.

For more information, you may visit EPF's website at: www.epf.org or www.EducationPays.org

Source: www.southern.org



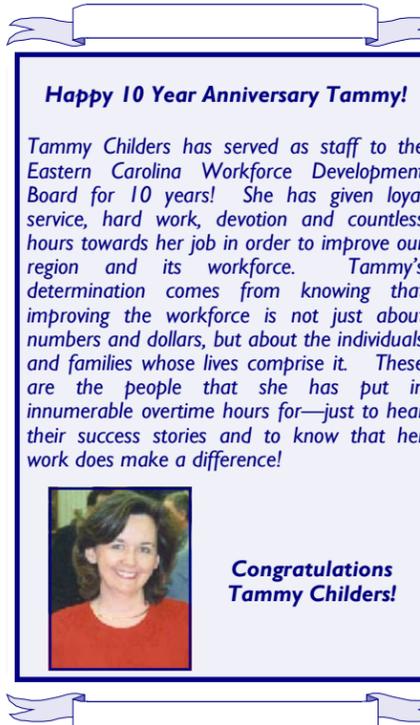
ECWDPA Membership

The Eastern Carolina Workforce Development Professionals Association (ECWDPA) is a local organization that focuses on strategies for workforce development in the Eastern Carolina Workforce Development Board service area.

The ECWDPA serves as a means of growth and networking for professionals in the workforce development field. The meetings are bi-monthly and includes "mini" training sessions specific to workforce development professionals. In depth training workshops are also offered, as needs arise, outside the bi-monthly meetings.

Membership is open to any employee of an agency or organization operating and/or administering state, federal, or local workforce training programs and human service agencies in North Carolina. The membership dues are currently \$10 for the remainder of the year (through August 31, 2004). The Association is organized and operated exclusively for charitable and educational purposes.

If you are interested in becoming a member or would like to learn more about the ECWDPA, please contact Wanda Glosson at (252) 726-7151.



Happy 10 Year Anniversary Tammy!

Tammy Childers has served as staff to the Eastern Carolina Workforce Development Board for 10 years! She has given loyal service, hard work, devotion and countless hours towards her job in order to improve our region and its workforce. Tammy's determination comes from knowing that improving the workforce is not just about numbers and dollars, but about the individuals and families whose lives comprise it. These are the people that she has put in innumerable overtime hours for—just to hear their success stories and to know that her work does make a difference!



Congratulations Tammy Childers!