

Eastern Carolina WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD, INC.



Serving the North Carolina Counties of Carteret, Craven, Duplin, Greene, Jones, Lenoir, Onslow, Pamlico and Wayne

March, 2007

Inside this Issue:

NC Commission on Workforce Development Release Report	1
Board of Directors	2
Director's Corner	3
Message from Chairman	3
NC Career Readiness	4
How Job Profiling Can Make A Difference in Your Company	5
Local Job Fairs A Success	6
Onslow JobLink the "Go To" Place	7
NC Dropout Rate Increases	8
US Chamber Releases Report	9
Duplin Welcomes New Business	10
Jones County to Receive Grant	10
Defense Company to Create Jobs	10
WIA Program Produces Leaders	11
Dislocated Worker Program	11
Doing Business With the Base	11
ECWDB Staff	12
Mark Your Calendars	12

"Let us think of education as the means of developing our greatest abilities, because in each of us there is a private hope and dream which, fulfilled, can be translated into benefit for everyone and greater strength for our nation."

-John F. Kennedy

N.C. Commission on Workforce Development Releases State of the North Carolina Workforce: An Assessment of the State's Labor Force Demand and Supply, 2007-2017

Continued Focus on Education Deemed Crucial.

The N.C. Commission on Workforce Development and the N.C. Department of Commerce recently released their *State of the North Carolina Workforce: An Assessment of the State's Labor Force Demand and Supply, 2007-2017*, a lengthy analysis of the patterns and trends in state and regional economic and workforce development.

"Many of the report's findings are not new, but reinforce the need for state, regional and local partnerships to meet the challenges and opportunities presented by the new world economy in which we live," said Commerce Sec. Jim Fain. "We hope that policymakers at all levels will use this information to form strategies to build on our efforts to ensure that North Carolina remains a top quality place to work and live."

"The goal of the report," explained Workforce Commission Chairman Chris Rolfe, is to "identify the most critical policy challenges and opportunities for our state to compete successfully and to meet the continued challenges of our economic transformation." He noted that the report is not a prediction of the future because it is predicated on the assumptions that no policy actions take place to change the dynamics and there are no unforeseen major economic upheavals.

Some of the key findings of the report include:

- The State's economy is still

changing and more traditional manufacturing jobs likely will be lost.

- As the State's economy continues the transition to a more diverse, knowledge-based, service-oriented economy, it is losing "middle jobs" – jobs that paid a family-sustaining wage but required minimal formal education or training. The low-skill jobs that are replacing those lost "middle jobs" pay lower wages that cannot support a family.
- New high-skill, high-wage jobs are concentrated in the state's fast-growing urban centers while the jobs being created in many rural areas are heavily skewed toward lower-wage or temporary jobs. The result is that the metro areas are facing a labor shortage even though they are offering higher wages, while workers in some rural areas have to settle for underemployment, extended commuting or relocation.
- The future prosperity of all North Carolinians depends on achieving higher educational levels. Workers with no college training or post-secondary skill certification will find it increasingly difficult to compete for jobs in high-wage occupations.
- The impending retirement of the baby-boom generation,

which includes some of the state's most experienced workers, "has the potential to leave a gaping hole in the supply of workers during the next two decades." That is being partially offset by the migration of highly educated, highly skilled young adults, but the immigrants won't fill the entire gap.

- Low-skilled, in-migrants present both opportunities and challenges in meeting the state's workforce needs. These workers fill jobs in many industries such as agriculture, construction and food processing, but this population poses real challenges for the state's education, workforce and social service providers.

The Commission serves as the State's Workforce Investment Board for the federal Workforce Investment Act and is the State's workforce development policy board advising the Governor, General Assembly, state agencies, businesses, and citizens concerning workforce issues.

The report is available online at www.nccommerce.com/workforce/swr. For more information, please contact Beth Lucas at (919) 715-4298.

Source: NC Commerce



Officers

Joseph Wiggins, *Chief Elected Official*
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Wayne Brackin, *Tideland EMC, Job Training and Safety Director*

Wayne County

Bonnie Carlton, *KAN SEEK, Owner*
Steve Hicks, *Wayne County Chamber of Commerce, President*

Vision

Our vision for the eastern counties of North Carolina is a highly skilled workforce with an educational attainment level that meets the needs of the 21st Century workplace, so that local firms can compete in a technologically advanced global economy.

Mission

Our mission is to ensure that our workforce development system is customer focused, demand-driven and accountable in preparing our current and future workforce to meet the changing needs of a highly-competitive global economy.

Value Added

We add economic value to our communities by ensuring that quality education, job training, and employment opportunities are available for job/training seekers and employers alike, thereby improving the quality of life for our citizens throughout eastern North Carolina.

Key Strategies

- Engage business and community leaders in addressing workforce issues and promote strategies to improve education levels & basic workplace skills.
- Strengthen alliances with economic development to identify and address the workforce needs of current and future industries.
- Implement a community awareness plan that promotes the WDB, JobLink Career Centers, and partner services.
- Identify and implement effective employment and training strategies that result in employment opportunities for all citizens.



Director's Corner

Dear Colleagues,

Recently, the U.S. Department of Labor announced a competition for a third generation of awards through the Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) Initiative. WIRED is designed to bring together universities, businesses, community colleges, workforce and economic development organizations to help equip regional workforces with the skills needed to succeed in the 21st century worldwide economy.

As with the previous WIRED call for proposals, this competition is open to all governors. Governors may submit up to two proposals for awards up to \$5 million each. The WIRED Initiative supports innovative approaches to workforce and economic development that go beyond traditional strategies preparing workers to compete and succeed.

During the past several weeks, several of us have been working on a WIRED application to represent Eastern North Carolina. I am proud to announce that the Eastern North Carolina Region WIRED application was one of the two applications chosen to be submitted by the Governor. The Eastern NC WIRED application was submitted by North Carolina's Eastern Region and the Eastern Carolina Workforce Development Board, Inc. on behalf of the workforce and economic development partners representing 21 counties.

If selected, the cornerstone of the WIRED initiative will be in support of furthering North Carolina's Career Readiness Certificate initiative through widespread implement of Work Keys assessments, training, and certification of adult workers and high school through college-age students in the 21-county region. The other key components consist of linking the WorkKeys strategy to three targeted industry clusters – Marine Trades, Healthcare, and Life Sciences, and developing specific strategies aimed at entrepreneurship and new business development in those clusters.

With the many workforce studies, and recent reports about the quality of North Carolina's education (some of which are featured in this newsletter), we view the Eastern North Carolina WIRED initiative as a pro-active opportunity for Innovation for Workforce Transformation and Regional Economic Growth.

I look forward to reporting to you a favorable response.

May God Continue to Bless Each of You!

Tammy Childers



save the date
you won't want to miss it!
2007 Vision East Retreat

May 4-5, 2007
New Bern Sheraton
New Bern, North Carolina



A Message from the Chairman

I would like to take this opportunity to encourage ALL of our Board of Directors to attend this year's Vision East Workforce Development Boards Retreat planned for May 4-5, 2007 at the New Bern Sheraton. This retreat will take place in lieu of the May 3rd Board meeting.

Mr. Wynn Montgomery from Atlanta, GA will be facilitating this year's planning retreat. With the Commission approved High Performing Workforce Board Standards going into effect for 2008, we will use this time to undergo a self-assessment of our Boards to determine areas where we need to focus on as we move forward in the coming year.

The self-assessment will allow us to gauge our effectiveness in how well we defined our local strategic planning processes as it relates to defining our labor market region, conducting a data-based assessment, defining our goals, and measuring our success.

To assist us with this endeavor, we will follow the Commission on Workforce Development's self-assessment tool that will soon be released. If you have not done so, please contact Pat Moss at 252-636-6901 or email her at pmoss@ecwdb.org to confirm your attendance.

D.T. Harris, Board Chairman



Don Harris, Board Chairman

North Carolina's Career Readiness Certificate Initiative

Helping to Ensure a Skilled Workforce.

Employers are increasingly concerned with ensuring that both potential and incumbent employees have the skills necessary to thrive in today's workplace.

More than 80 percent of all jobs are projected to require skills beyond those earned in high school by 2010. For an executive contemplating moving a business to North Carolina, expanding an existing company, or even just sustaining operations in a fiercely competitive environment, the skill level of the available workforce is often a deciding factor.

As a result, both job seekers and incumbent workers are increasingly called upon to demonstrate a more advanced set of skills – or at least the ability to develop those skills through on-the-job training.

North Carolina's Career Readiness Certification (CRC) is designed to meet the needs of both employers and job seekers in this transitioning economy.

For employers, the CRC offers a reliable means of determining whether a potential employee has the necessary literacy, numeracy and problem solving skills to be "job ready."

For Job Seekers, obtaining a Career Readiness Certificate allows them to show prospective employers that they possess the basic skills employers are looking for. Even if the job-seeker has a high school diploma (or GED) or a post-secondary degree, the CRC further verifies that they can handle the kinds of tasks – finding information, reading instructions and directions, and working with figures – that are common in today's workplace.

North Carolina's multi-level approach to career readiness credentialing allows individuals to improve skill levels over time through work experience or additional training, which may be industry or occupation specific.

North Carolina's Career Readiness Certificate has three levels: *Bronze*, *Silver* and *Gold*. The three levels allow an individual to advance his or her reading, applied math, and locating information skill levels in order to qualify for more jobs.

- **Bronze Level** - An individual achieving this level of certification possesses core workplace skills for approximately 30% of the jobs profiled by *WorkKeys®* in these skill areas.
- **Silver Level** - An individual achieving this level of certification possesses core employability skills for approximately 65% of the jobs profiled by *WorkKeys®* in these skill areas.
- **Gold Level** - An individual achieving this level of certification possesses core employability skills for approximately 85% of the jobs profiled by *WorkKeys®* in these skill areas.

To earn a Career Readiness Certificate, an individual must take the three *WorkKeys* assessments. The three assessments used are Reading for Information, Applied Math, and Locating Information.

As a result of the testing, individuals will either earn a Career Readiness Certificate for a specified skill level and/or be provided with information that identifies areas in which they need further training to obtain a certificate.

The CRC initiative is underway

across the region with pilot sites now seeing results at Craven Community College, Lenoir Community College, Pitt Community College, and Wilson Tech, with many other CRC initiatives in the early stages of development at Carteret Community College, Coastal Carolina Community College, James Sprunt Community College, and Wayne Community College. Additionally, the CRC initiative is currently underway at the Fleet Readiness Center East, Cherry Point, with plans to introduce the CRC initiative on the remaining military installations in the region targeting military spouses and exiting military and civilian personnel.

The NC Career Readiness Certificate Initiative went live on June 19, 2006 with the Web Site www.crcnc.org and a Statewide Database. As certificate holders are entered, the database will provide an up-to-the minute snapshot of North Carolina's skilled workforce searchable by several different parameters for geographic location, such as County, Community College service area, zip code, and Workforce Development Board area.

As of March 29, 2007, 3,466 North Carolinians have taken the 3 required assessments and achieved a score which entitles them to various certificates, 864 Bronze, 1938 Silver and 741 Gold. Within North Carolina's Eastern Region, 512 of those individuals have achieved a score which entitles them to various certificates, 127 Bronze, 305 Silver and 96 Gold.

Source: crcnc.org

Wilson Tech Launches NC's first CRC Marketing Billboard



How Job Profiling Can Make a Difference in Your Company.

Find the Right Candidates with the Right Skills for the Right Job.

Job Profiling is available for businesses to help identify the skill sets and skill levels employees must have to perform a specific job efficiently and effectively, such as reading for information, listening, applied math, applied technology, writing, locating information, teamwork, and observation. From this analysis, employers can make reliable decisions about hiring, training, and program development needs.

The process calls for an ACT [formerly known as the American College Testing Program]-trained Job Profiler to work collaboratively with groups of employees to complete each job profile. Initially, the profiler obtains background information about the job to be profiled from the company contact person and a tour of the job site. Using ACT's proprietary software, the profiler develops an initial list of the tasks most relevant to the job.

The profiler then meets with subject matter experts (SMEs)—incumbent workers of the job being studied—who review and revise the list of tasks, adding, deleting, consolidating, or changing the wording of each task to make sure that the list accurately represents the job as it is performed in their company. The SMEs rate each task according to two dimensions: importance and relative time spent.

The resulting final task list establishes which tasks are the most critical to performing the job. Profilers present detailed descriptions of each of the WorkKeys skills to the SMEs. These descriptions include examples of problems or situations employees must deal with at each level. The SMEs decide, as a group, which WorkKeys skills are relevant to the job and which skill levels are necessary for entry into the job and effective performance of the job.

The profiler then documents the results in a customized Job Profile Report containing a list of the tasks most critical to performance of the job and information on the WorkKeys skills and skill levels required for entry into the job and effective performance of the job.

This report establishes the link between the tasks of the job and the WorkKeys skills.

The profile results provide individuals with a clear picture of the skill levels they need to qualify for and be successful in the jobs they want. Combined with individual WorkKeys assessment results, individuals can compare their skills with the skill requirements of thousands of profiled occupations currently available in the WorkKeys Profile Database.

This comparison allows individuals to make informed decisions about jobs, their education and career goals. WorkKeys job profiles help employers identify the levels of skills current and prospective employees need in order to be successful on the job. By matching the job profile information with individual scores on the WorkKeys assessments, employers can make reliable decisions about hiring, training, and program development needs.

WorkKeys job profiles are developed in accordance with the content validity standards described in the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) Uniform Guidelines and meet ADA guidelines. Therefore, WorkKeys job profiles - coupled with WorkKeys assessments - can be used to make hiring and promotion decisions, as well as for employee training and instructional program development.

Among the private sector, there is growing concern about the gap that exists between those skills required on the job and those exhibited by potential and incumbent workers. As global competition is impacting local economies, employers are experiencing significant challenges, such as identifying potential applicants who have basic workplace skills and are therefore trainable for specific jobs.

The challenge for Eastern North Carolina is to address these concerns with a workforce strategy, such as the CRC initiative that can identify the skill gaps and address them through training. Many companies in Eastern North Carolina are now exploring the use of the Career Readiness Certificate initiative using the

WorkKeys® skill assessments, job profiles, and training evaluations to assess skill needs and measure progress. Within the Eastern Carolina Area, the following companies have participated in Job Profiling activities:

ASMO

BSH Home Appliances Corp.

Butterball

Caswell Center

Chatsworth Products Inc.

Cherry Point, Fleet Readiness Center East, Production Control Division, Training and Development Division, and Machinist Apprentices

Chick-Fil-A'

Dole Fresh Vegetables

Dopaco

DSM Pharmaceuticals

ECU

Guilford Mills

Lenoir Memorial Hospital

Moen Incorporated

NAACO

NWL in Snow Hill

Prettl Appliance Systems

Tandemloc Incorporated

Urethane Innovators Inc.

West Pharmaceuticals

Additional information about ACT and Job Profiling is available at <http://www.act.org/workkeys/analysis/>

“If money is your hope for independence you will never have it. The only real security that a man will have in this world is a reserve of knowledge, experience, and ability.”

-Henry Ford

Local Job Fairs A Success

Carteret, Craven, and Lenoir County JobLink Partners Hold Job Fairs.

Carteret County

In Carteret County, the 2007 Eastern North Carolina Career Fair was held on March 22 at the Crystal Coast Civic Center in Morehead City. This was the county's seventh annual Career Fair and is a result of a partnership between local Workforce Agencies and businesses.

JobLink Partners that planned this event include Carteret Community College; Employment Security Commission; Vocational Rehabilitation; Carteret County Public Schools; and the Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the Carteret County News-Times.

There were more than 60 employers represented at this year's event, with over 500 job seekers attending. The event began with a lunch and learn session for businesses participating in the Career Fair. A seminar, "Generational Marketing," was conducted by Emily Ballance. Approximately 80 business representatives attended the session.

Other events included a Dress for Success fashion show sponsored by Carteret County Schools. The students were chosen to represent their high schools and the WIA program. The fashion show offered job seekers advice

on the proper attire to get the job. Employers and job seekers were surveyed and preliminary results indicate they were well pleased with the event.



Carteret County Schools Students Dress for Success

Source: Dan Williams, Carteret JobLink

Craven County

In Craven County, nearly 500 job seekers attended this year's 10th Annual Career Fair, with 67 businesses, nonprofit groups and government employers participating in this event. "This was the first year to have monetary sponsorship from the private employers", said Cindy Smith, Vocational Rehabilitation. Corporate sponsors included: BSH Home Appliances, PCS Phosphate, Monte Printing, Bear Radio, and New Bern and Havelock Chambers of Commerce.

Employers commented that there were many qualified job candidates. Stacy Harwood, ARC's recruiter, greeted around 150-200 participants, and took applications and resumes for the few open positions. "I've talked to a lot of people

who appear well qualified," said Harwood. Larry Johnson, of BSH Home Appliances, said the quality of those seeking jobs surprised him. Representing one of the area's largest employers, he was taking applications and resumes for several openings and some that will come through temporary employment and training opportunities later.

John Underwood, the regional director for Tands, Inc./Bojangles, which operates 36 locations in 33 eastern North Carolina counties, employing 50 to 70 individuals each, stated they were taking applications for hourly jobs and resumes for career opportunities. That was good news for career fair attendees. "This year's event

was a tremendous success," said Mary Brown, JobLink/ESC Manager, "and we look forward to many people going to work as a result of this collaborative effort."



Source: Mary Brown, Craven JobLink

Lenoir County

Lenoir Community College and the JobLink Career Centers in Lenoir, Greene and Jones counties hosted Job Fair 2007 on Wednesday, March 21. Held on the LCC campus in the Student Center gymnasium, this year's job fair was one of the largest and the best attended in the college's history.

Over 100 employers from as far away as Wilmington and Durham recruited for jobs within their companies and shared career information with students and the community. The Job Fair attracted more

than 500 job seekers to the four-hour event. Employers and job seekers alike were highly complimentary of this year's event, saying it was the best-organized Job Fair they had ever attended in this area.

The planning committee for the Job Fair, co-chaired by Frances Gaskins and Diane Ivey, consisted of staff members from the JobLink Centers in the tri-county area. The committee is already looking ahead to next year and invites any employer who is interested in attending in 2008 to contact Diane Ivey at 527-6223,

ext. 104.



Source: Diane Ivey, Lenoir JobLink

JobLink is Known as the “Go To” Place in Onslow County

Serving Veterans is our Business! Just ask Kelley Hamilton, Disabled Veteran Outreach Specialist.

JobLink is known as the “Go To” place in Onslow County. While many think that JobLink is basically a career center, the JobLink staff goes far beyond the ordinary to serve their clients. Sometimes they can’t do it alone and have to draw upon other community resources and local employers to provide assistance to their clients.

The Onslow County JobLink is fortunate to have Kelley Hamilton, a Disabled Veteran Outreach Specialist with the Employment Security Commission on staff. Kelley’s job as a DVOS is to provide intensive employment skills to veterans experiencing barriers to employment through a case management approach of building community partnerships. Many times she will go the extra mile for a veteran in need and many times, she can count on a local employer to go above and beyond what would be expected to help the local veterans.

Case in point, Kelley had a blind, disabled veteran suffering from chronic diabetes that was having a difficult time finding a place to stay. He was finally able to secure an apartment but the place was filthy. Kelley, seeing the problem and a critical need, contacted Merry Maids who immediately offered to clean the apartment free of charge for the disabled veteran. It took Kelley and two employees from Merry Maids a day to clean the apartment.

“Merry Maids did not hesitate about helping a veteran in need.” said Hamilton. “Services were performed as if he was a paying customer. The veteran and I greatly appreciate all the hard work Merry Maids did for him. This is a prime example of a business giving and supporting veterans.” Hamilton is shown presenting Certificates of Appreciation to Donna Kyle (L) and Mary Parker (R) of Merry Maids.

“Kelley exemplifies the often heard statement ‘Serving those who have served,’ said Larry Woods, Jacksonville ESC Veterans program supervisor. “Through Kelley’s facilitation of service to veterans in the Jacksonville area, she has improved the community’s awareness concerning special needs veterans.”



Left to Right: Donna Kyle, Merry Maids, Kelley Hamilton, DVOS/ Onslow Co JobLink Staff, Mary Parker, Merry Maids

Source: Ralph Leeds, Onslow JobLink

North Carolina



- ◆ Tax Credit and Hiring Incentive Information
- ◆ Resource for Job-Ready Candidates
- ◆ Employee Recruitment
- ◆ Employee Retention Assistance
- ◆ Rapid Response Consultations for Business Layoffs or Plant Closings
- ◆ Customized Training for Employees
- ◆ Workplace Literacy

NC’s JobLinks are an Equal Opportunity Employer/Program. Auxiliary aids & services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

(TTY) 1-800-735-2962

(Voice) 1-800-735-8262

Call your local JobLink Career Center today!

Carteret County JobLink Career Center

Phone: (252) 726-7151

Craven County JobLink Career Center

Phone: (252) 514-4828

Craven County JobLink Information Site

Phone: (252) 444-2384

Duplin County JobLink Career Center

Phone: (910) 296-1478

Greene County JobLink Career Center

Phone: (252) 747-5689

Jones County JobLink Career Center

Phone: (252) 448-5021

Lenoir County JobLink Career Center

Phone: (252) 526-4435

Lenoir County JobLink Information Site

ESC Phone: (252) 527-7320

Onslow County JobLink Career Center

Phone: (910) 347-2121

Onslow County JobLink Information Site

CCCC Phone: (910) 938-6309

Pamlico County JobLink Career Center

Phone: (252) 745-9931

Wayne County JobLink Career Center

Goldsboro Phone: (919) 731-7950

Wayne County JobLink Career Center

Mt. Olive Phone: (919) 658-4926

North Carolina Dropout Rate Increases in 2005-06

State Recorded 22,180 Dropout Events in Grades 9 Through 12.

North Carolina's dropout rate increased slightly in 2005-06 and is now 5.04 percent, an increase of 6.33 percent according to the *Annual Dropout Event Report for School Year 2005-06*. The dropout rate in 2004-05 was 4.74 percent.

Many parts of the state experienced decreases in dropout events with 46 of the 115 local districts reporting decreases. Five of the largest school districts account for a disproportionate amount of the increase. Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Wake, Guilford, Cumberland and Winston-Salem/Forsyth schools accounted for 56 percent of the increase in the grade 9-12 dropout events. Overall, the state recorded 22,180 dropout events in grades 9 through 12.

State law requires school officials to record the reason for a student's decision to drop out of school. In 2003-04, 7 percent of dropouts reported community college enrollment as the reason; in 2004-05, the percentage was 9.6. In 2005-06, 12.1 percent or 2,692 students gave community college enrollment as the reason for dropping out. A majority of dropout events continue to be related to attendance issues. Other reasons identified include students moving with school status unknown (9.5 percent) and academic problems (6.5 percent).

State Board of Education Chairman Howard Lee found the results troubling but reiterated that he fully expects that

trend to improve in coming years as the state's efforts to improve its high schools take root. "The Board, the Department of Public Instruction and other organizations are working closely with local districts to reinvent high schools to make them more rigorous and relevant to today's students. The fact that we see a significant increase in students dropping out to enroll in community colleges shows that they understand education will be important to their future. Life is demanding in the 21st century, and we need to make sure students are ready to meet those challenges," he said.

Lee added that the Board is still very interested in increasing the legal dropout age. "We are sending students the wrong message when we tell them it's acceptable to drop out of school at 16. At a minimum our students need a high school diploma as a stepping stone to future success." Currently, state law requires students to attend school between the ages of 7 and 16, but the State Board of Education is seeking legislation to change the age requirement to 18. State Superintendent of Public Instruction June Atkinson echoed Chairman Lee's expectations that high schools are on the right track to improve. "I've been to a number of high schools that are using smaller learning communities, and I'm seeing a lot of excitement among students and educators. That is how we drive home the importance of staying in school and the connection between the courses stu-

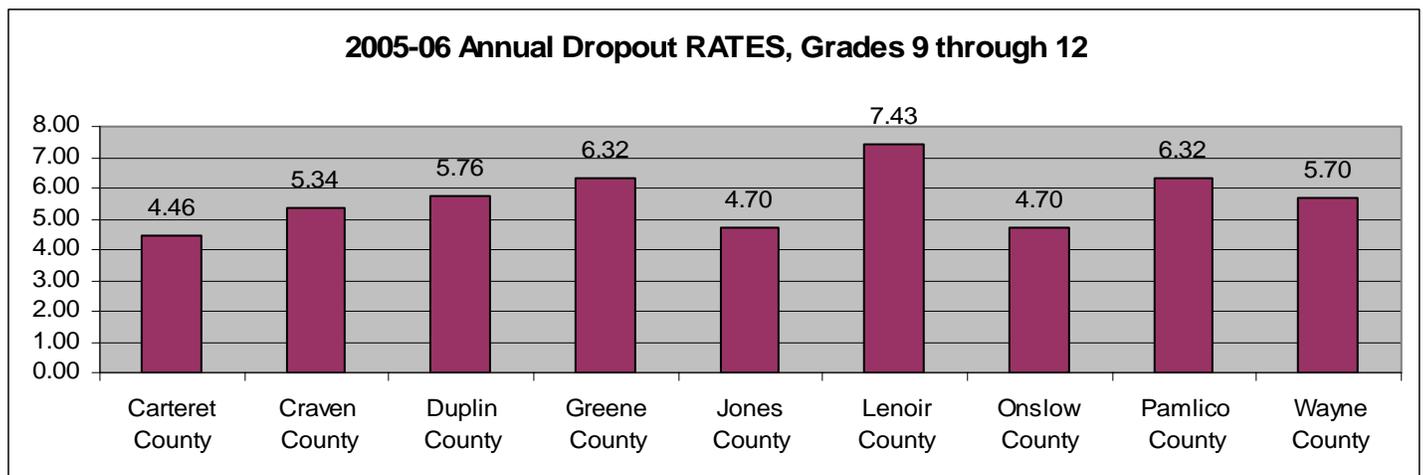
dents take and the demands of life once they graduate." Atkinson went on to say that academic support for struggling students and close attention to student needs during transition years play major roles in keeping students in school.

Data analysis found that almost one-third (32.7 percent) of all dropout events continue to occur during the 9th grade year with 25.7 percent of students dropping out in 10th grade and 22.4 percent of students dropping out in 11th grade. Dropout rates increase in frequency as students reach 16 years of age. Seventy-nine percent of dropout events occurred between the ages of 16 and 18.

The 2005-06 school year also saw an increase in the number of male students dropping out with over twice as many leaving school as opposed to female students. Black males accounted for a disproportionate amount of the increase in the dropout count. While the dropout rates for Hispanic and American Indian students remain high, the rate for American Indian students decreased. The rate for Hispanic students continued to rise. The complete dropout report is available at

<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/schoolimprovement/effective/dropout/>. For more information, please contact the NCDPI's Communications division at 919/807-3450.

Source: [ncpublicschools.org](http://www.ncpublicschools.org)



U.S. Chamber Releases Report: Leaders and Laggards A State-by-State Report Card on Educational Effectiveness

Report Card on Education Says States Failing our Students, Risking our Future.

In February, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce released its bipartisan report on state educational effectiveness showing that America's K-12 schools are failing their students and putting America's future competitiveness at risk.

"We are not making the grade when it comes to preparing students for their future," said Tom Donohue, Chamber President and CEO. "Without real leadership in education reform, our economic future and prosperity are at risk. If companies were run like many education systems, they wouldn't last a week."

Leaders and Laggards: A State-by-State Report Card on Educational Effectiveness graded all 50 states and Washington, DC, on nine broad categories including academic achievement, return on investment, truth in advertising, rigor of standards, and data quality.

The report and accompanying recommendations for reform were prepared with John Podesta, CEO of the Center for American Progress and former Clinton White House Chief of Staff, and Frederick M. Hess, Director of Education Policy at the American Enterprise Institute.

"The business community cannot sit on the sidelines while another generation loses its chance at the American dream," said Donohue. "Young people cannot succeed without a first-rate education and we cannot succeed as a nation without them. We must immediately ensure that our students have effective teachers, that all schools use rigorous standards, and that education systems are innovative and employ sound management principles. Without these steps, the wage gap will become a chasm."

Education is critical to the American dream. Unemployment rates for those without a high school degree are 8.1% compared with 2.2% for college graduates. Yet, approximately 40% of all U.S. college students take at least one remedial course, and most students who take remedial courses never earn a college degree.

"The quality of United States public education must be significantly improved for all students and most especially for those students who historically have received lesser educational opportunities—students of color, with special needs and/or from low-income families," said John D. Podesta, President and CEO of the Center for American Progress. "We need every

student to be a successful learner if we are to maintain a thriving economy in which everyone contributes and succeeds."

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is the world's largest business federation representing more than 3 million businesses and organizations of every size, sector, and region. The report is available online at www.uschamber.com/reportcard

Source: uschamber.com

"Only about two-thirds of all 9th graders graduate from high school within four years. And those students who do receive diplomas are too often unprepared for college or the modern workplace."

North Carolina Ranks 27th on US Chambers' Education Report Card

NC Receives A on Return on Investment, Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness, and 21st Century Teaching Force.

North Carolina

Academic Achievement	C	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	B	
Return on Investment	A	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	D	
Rigor of Standards	C	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	A	
21st Century Teaching Force	A	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	B	
Data Quality	C	

Duplin County Welcomes New Business

Veteran Fire, Inc. One of the Latest Companies to Expand in Duplin County.

The Duplin County Board of Commissioners welcomed a new business to the county, approving the sale of a five-acre parcel of land in the Southpark Industrial Center to Veteran Fire Inc. for \$30,000.

Veteran Fire, a full service fire protection company that sells, installs, services and inspects fire extinguishers, restaurant and corporate fire suppression systems and exit and emergency lighting systems, was founded in Wilmington by Chuck Reimel in 2004.

"He's expanding into the Raleigh market, so it makes sense to come to Duplin, halfway between the two," Duplin County Economic Development Commission Director Woody Brinson said.

The plan is to build one new structure in the industrial park and employ four to

five people initially, but the company does plan to expand. "We're really on a strong growth trend," Reimel said.

No incentives were given to the company, but Brinson added, it could be eligible to apply to the county's revolving loan fund for a low-interest loan to help in the building process.

Other expansion announcements in the past few months include United States Cold Storage in Warsaw that is involved in a \$10 million expansion and will hire 18 more employees.

Accu-Form Polymers in Warsaw is adding 10,000 sq. ft. and will be hiring 20 additional employees.

Moulding Solutions in Chinquapin is building a new 12,000 sq. ft. building. They've been leasing several buildings and

this will allow them to consolidate and improve production efficiency. They will be hiring 16 additional employees.

"Duplin County has had numerous new commercial ventures announced recently," stated Brinson. Carolina East Home Health & Hospice is building a new Hospice Care Center on the Kenansville bypass which will create 22 new jobs. Additionally, at the Magnolia exit of I-40 there will be 3 new businesses – convenient store, fast food restaurant, & motel – totaling over 120 new jobs.

"Yes, a lot is happening in DC", commented Woody Brinson, Duplin County Economic Developer.

Source: Woody Brinson, Duplin EDC

Jones County to Receive Grant to Encourage Growth of Start-up Businesses

Funds Totaling \$350K Will Help Build Facility to Serve Jones, Craven and Onslow.

Jones County will use a \$350,000 grant awarded by the state to build a facility in the county Industrial Park designed to encourage the growth of start-up businesses. The money is part of \$1.75 million in Community Development Block Grants given to seven rural areas in the state. The facility, which Jones officials call a small business

incubator, is to serve Jones, Craven and Onslow counties. "The incubator is primarily for people who want to start up their business because the first three years are the most difficult; the concept is to help those make it," Roy Fogle, Jones County Economic Development Director, said. Construction is expected to take five to seven months.

The building will include classrooms, research and development production spaces and tenant office spaces. Lenoir Community College is building an extension campus across from the incubator. "We have a good combination for the clients that come into the park," said Larry Meadows, Jones County Manager.

Defense Company to Create 25-30 Jobs in Jones County

Scott Electronic Defenses to Relocate in Jones County.

Scott Electronic Defenses (SELDS) has manufactured electronics components for a quarter of a century in Pennsylvania but is moving south and bringing jobs to Pollocksville. The Latrobe, Pa., company plans to relocate to a 7,300 square-foot Main Street building, formerly home to Bender Candy Company. SELDS will focus on defense and homeland security industry specialized component manufacturing and will hire as many as 25-30 employees within the next three years.

CCEO, Michael Scott, said the company designs and manufactures electronic

systems in contract design house work for the Navy, Army, Air Force and varied industries including scientific and medical. "The initial employment mix will be 60 percent manufacturing, 40 percent office, clerical, engineering and other technical staff," he said.

A \$25,000 Eastern Region grant is expected to assist the company in its relocation and startup costs, \$5,000 more than the basic grant because of anticipated multi-county impact.

Other key factors include Pollocksville's proximity to MCAS Cherry Point

and MCB Camp Lejeune, which Scott said can benefit from SELDS history with legacy design and new technology for parts allowing aircraft with obsolete components to maintain their places in the defense arsenal.

Scott said the company plans to initially look in Eastern North Carolina to fill all positions and, with the accuracy demands of the company's defense and homeland security work, plans to look at military spouses as potential employees.

Source: Sun Journal

WIA Program Produces Community Leaders

Congratulations Bonnie Beard of Pamlico Community College.

Bonnie Beard, a Workforce Investment Act student of Pamlico Community College, has been accepted in the North Carolina Community College Student Leadership School.

The school is comprised of a series of workshops teaching students leadership skills. Following a rigorous application process, only 35 students from across the state's system of 58 community colleges are chosen to attend the one week session at Johnston Community College in June.

Graduates return to their home campuses in the fall prepared to share these learned skills with fellow students in campus leadership positions.

Beard has been president of the Pamlico Community College Student Government Association for two years and has been an active volunteer for a variety of campus functions. She serves as a non-voting member of the college's Board of Trustees.

In addition, Beard was also selected as one of the two Academic Excellence Award winners for the 2006-07 academic year. She will be honored in April by the North Carolina Community College system for that distinction. She plans to graduate in May, 2008, with a double major in Medical Assisting and Electroneurodiagnostic Technology.



Bonnie Beard, PCC

Source: Pamlico JobLink

Dislocated Worker Program Assists Laid Off Workers

Former Amital Workers Enroll in Nursing Program .

Chris Hudson and Dennis Mitchell are adapting to the decline of North Carolina's traditional economy in a non-traditional way: They're studying to become nurses. Both men are enrolled full-time in Craven Community College's Associate Degree Nursing program.

They decided to come back to school after being laid off when the Amital plant in New Bern shut down last year. "I expected to be there 30 years," said the 59-year-old Mitchell. "At my age, it's very difficult to change careers." But with the help of both a supportive college community and the Workforce Investment Act Dislocated Worker Program to retrain displaced workers, Mitchell and Hudson, who's 35, are on their way to becoming skilled caregivers.

While still a female-dominated profession, nursing is becoming an increasingly attractive option for men. Overall, health care is one of the nation's fastest-growing economic sectors, which means trained workers have a good chance of finding good-paying jobs. Both men have some experience with the medical field. Hudson is a volunteer with the Vanceboro Rescue Squad, and his wife works in radiation oncology. "I'd always been interested in health care," he said. "This is a wonderful opportunity." Meanwhile, Mitchell's oldest daughter is a nurse, and his son is thinking about a career in nursing.

Hudson and Mitchell say the faculty and staff at Craven have helped make the transition back to the classroom easier. "Initially, it was really bad be-

cause you're not sure you'll be able to learn," Mitchell said. "There were a couple of times in the beginning when I got discouraged. "However, the people here have been great in helping me get started. Everyone doesn't get the opportunity to go to college the first time around. You can do it as well as a young person." The two also say it's encouraging to see many of their former co-workers around campus. "We're going to rename it Amital Community College," Mitchell said with a laugh.

Both men are on schedule to graduate in Fall 2008. Hudson thinks he'll pursue a career as an emergency room nurse. Mitchell is interested in hospice care.

Source: Sandy Wall, CCC

Are you interested in "Doing Business with the Base"?

Well, now's your chance to learn more! On April 19, 2007, the Jacksonville-Onslow Chamber of Commerce and the NC Military Business Center (NCMBC) are hosting a seminar just for YOU!

Mark your calendars and don't miss out on this fantastic opportunity. The "Doing Business with the Base Seminar" is a public event and ALL are welcome to attend. This FREE event will be held at the Jacksonville-Onslow Chamber of Commerce building on Gum Branch Rd, and it begins at 8:30 am. A continental breakfast will be served for all who attend.

Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, Marine Corps Special Operations Command (MARSOC), Marine Corps Installations East (MCIEAST) and Public Works contracting officials will be available to answer your questions and provide insight as to how you can best do business with the federal government.

Please RSVP (no later than close of business on April 17th) to Amy Rivera via email — arivera@jacksonvilleonline.org or via phone — (910)-347-3141.



Eastern Carolina WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD, INC.

ECWDB Staff:

Tammy Childers, Executive Director
Robert Kehres, Assistant Director
Lisa Harvey, WIA Coordinator
Trina Hale, Accounting Technician
Joe McCarthy, Youth Coordinator
Pat Moss, Administrative Assistant
Debbie Simpkins, Fiscal Monitor
Jessie Bode, Business Services Coordinator

Communicate with Us!

1341 South Glenburnie Road
New Bern, NC 28562
Telephone: (252) 636-6901 or (877) 916-6901

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

Youth Committee Meeting

at the ECWDB offices in New Bern
April 10, 2007, 4:00 pm

WIA Oversight Committee Meeting

at the ECWDB offices in New Bern
April 19, 2007, 6:00 pm

JobLink Committee Meeting

at the ECWDB offices in New Bern
April 25, 2007, 6:00 pm

Executive Committee Meeting

at the ECWDB offices in New Bern
April 26, 2007, 6:00 pm

Vision East Workforce Board Retreat

at the New Bern Sheraton
May 4-5 2007, 1:00 pm

Congratulations on your Retirement Pharonda Cannon!



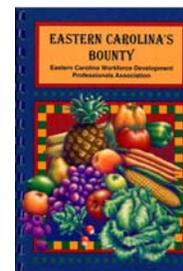
Pharonda Cannon, Employment Counselor,
Craven County JobLink

May God richly bless you as you enter
into this exciting phase of your life.

Saturday, April 28, 2007

12:00 pm – 2:00 pm

The Eastern Carolina Workforce Development Professionals Association will host "A Taste of Eastern Carolina's Bounty" Tasting on **Saturday, April 28, 2007 from 12:00 pm – 2:00 pm** at the Eastern Carolina Workforce Development Board, Inc., 1341 S. Glenburnie Road, New Bern. Tickets are \$10.00 which include a copy of Eastern Carolina's Bounty cookbook, A Collection of Recipes by members of the Eastern Carolina Workforce Development Professionals Association. For more information, please contact Ms. Sandra Shepard, at 910-347-2121.



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