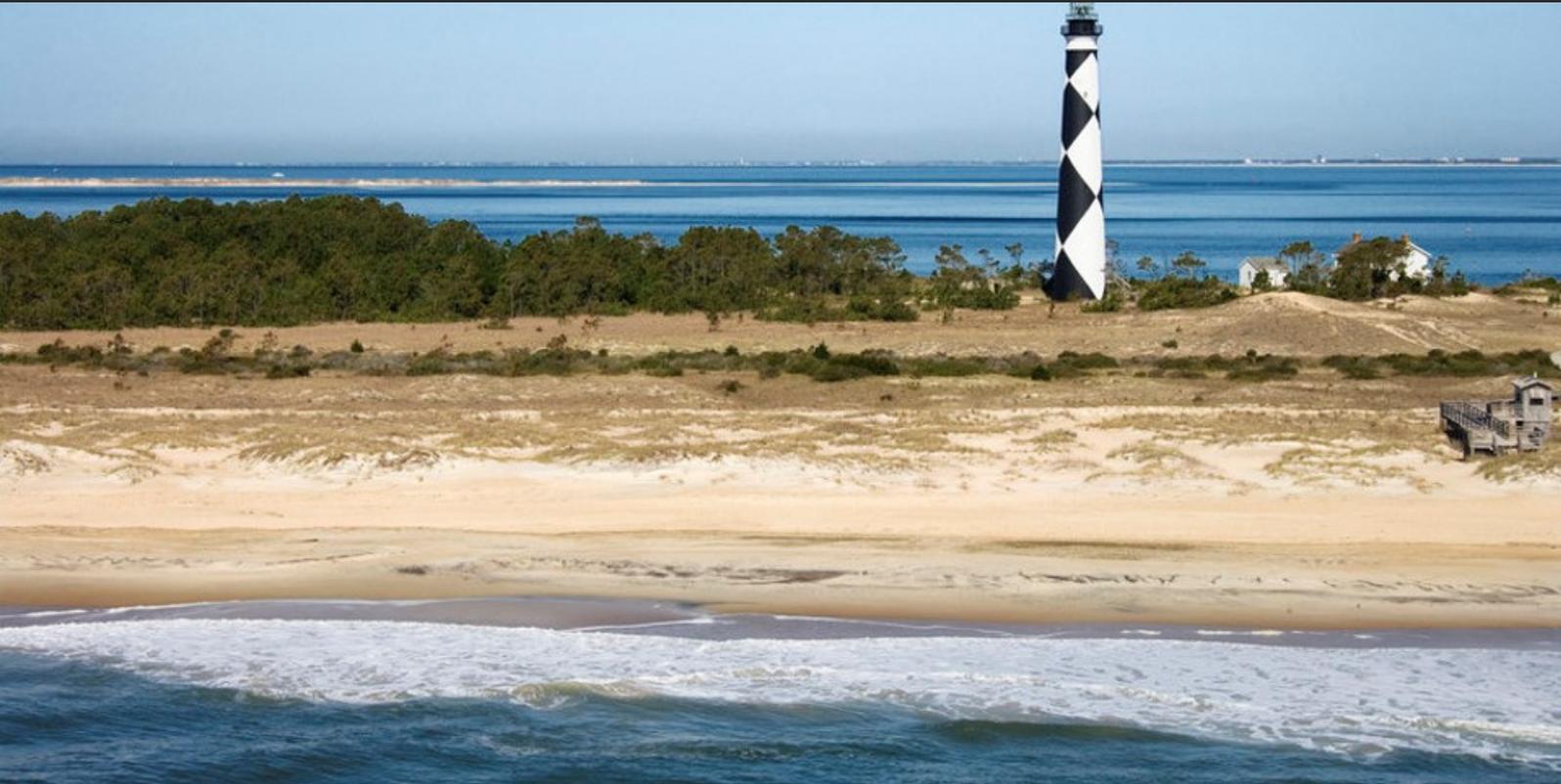


JUNE 2021

NEWSLETTER

The Monthly Newsletter of Eastern Carolina Workforce Development Board, Inc.



Renewed Efforts

This edition of our monthly newsletter features articles and updates on our region over the last few months. As our current program year comes to a close, we are excited to move into the new program year on July 1st with reinvigorated motivation. We continue the motivational campaign with featured quotes from a few of our partners and coworkers. Workforce Development is a group effort and every member of our community is a valued individual.

Throughout the newsletter, we have collected success stories from individuals who participated in our programs and articles covering updates on our region. We are very excited about the progress being made at both the macro and micro levels of the workforce and the economy. Some of these trends are supported and detailed in the labor market overview featured at the end of the newsletter.

Enjoy reading!

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Board of Directors and Consortium

ECWDB is governed by a twenty-eight member Board of Directors in partnership with the local elected officials. The members of the Board of Directors are:

Officers

Al Searles - Chair

Jason Trull - Vice-Chair

John Wilson - Secretary Treasurer

Carteret County

Bob Cavanaugh, Carteret County

Commissioner

Mike Kraszeski, Atlantic Veneer, President

Cindy Holman, Carteret County

Government, Consolidated Human Services

Director

Trapas Pratt, MechWorks Mechanical

Contractors, Inc., Senior Vice President

Craven County

John Wilson, BSH Home Appliances

Corporation, Human Resources Manager

Anthony Cruz, International Machinist &

Aerospace Workers Union, Labor

Representative

Bill Green, Truist Bank, Vice President of

Business Services

Duplin County

Kennedy Thompson, Duplin County

Commissioner

James Wolfe, Economic Development

Partnership of NC, Southeast Existing

Industry Expansions Manager

Al Searles, Smithfield, Sr. Director,

Transportation & Logistics

Brenda Upchurch, Pacom Manufacturing,

Human Resources Manager

Joe Wood, United States Cold Storage,

General Manager

Greene County

Jerry Jones, Greene County Commissioner

Angela Bates, Greene Lamp, Inc., Executive

Director

Judy Darden, Darden Bookkeeping, Owner

Rick Davis, Tide Tamer

Jones County

Mike Haddock, Jones County Commissioner

Frank Emory, Emory Construction, Owner

David Hill, DP Hill Manufacturing, President

Dr. Norma Sermon-Boyd, Jones County

Partnership for Children, Executive Director

Lenoir County

Roland Best, Lenoir County Commissioner

Jason Trull, Spirit AeroSystems, Human

Resources Manager

Dr. Rusty Hunt, Lenoir Community College,

President

Bruce Parson, Blind Shop, Owner

Onslow County

Mark Price, Chief Elected Official

Shannon Vitak, NC Dept. of Health and

Human Services, Vocational Rehabilitation

Manager

Veronica Perez, Concentrix, Site Director

Karl Zurl, NC Department of Commerce,

Southeast Division of Workforce Solutions,

Regional Operations Director

Pamlico County

Candy Bohmert, Pamlico County

Commissioner

Carla Byrnes, B & B Yacht Designs, Co-

Owner

Dr. Jim Ross, Pamlico Community College,

President

Lisa Jackson, Superintendent

Pamlico County Schools

Wayne County

Charles Brogden, Franklin Baking Company,

LLC, Director of Human Resources

Melanie Sanders, Caswell Development

Center, Human Resources Manager

Vision

Our Vision for Eastern North Carolina is a qualified workforce with an educational attainment level that meets the needs of local firms so they can compete in today's marketplace.

Mission

Our mission is to develop the workforce through a collaborative, customer-focused approach that facilitates partnerships between job seekers, workers, employers, and educators, aligning workforce requirements to economic needs.

Value

We add economic value to our community by ensuring that our public workforce system is responsive in meeting the education and training needs of our job seekers and employers alike, thereby leading to a better quality of life and ensuring employers have access to the skilled workforce they need, resulting in a thriving economy.

Key Strategies

- Certify an integrated, seamless, and customer-centered workforce development system.
- Engage business and community leaders in addressing workforce issues and promote strategies to improve education levels and essential workplace skills.
- Implement a community awareness plan that promotes education, life-long learning, and the workforce development services that are available for both job seekers and employers.
- Identify and implement effective career pathways strategies that result in employment opportunities for all citizens.
- Establish an accountability system that builds the capacity of the Eastern Carolina WDB, staff, NCWorks partners, and service providers in addressing regional workforce needs.
- Strengthen alliances with economic development to identify and address workforce needs of current and future industries.

ECWDB Staff

The ECWDB's role is to ensure that the local workforce development system is business-driven and responsive to meeting the employment and training needs of both job seekers and employers. The members of the ECWDB staff are:



Tammy Childers,
Executive Director



Lisa Harvey,
Program Coordinator



Trina Hale,
Accounting Technician



Debbie Simpkins,
Fiscal Monitor



George Kramer,
Business Services
Representative



Erin Ananian-Gentile,
Strategic Initiatives
Coordinator



Phillip Prescott,
Business Services
Representative



David Jones,
Public Information
Specialist



Donna Hannig,
Finance Director

Committee Members

Executive Committee

Carla Byrnes
Mike Kraszeski
Judy Darden
Frank Emory
John Wilson
Al Searles
Melanie Sanders
Mark Price
Jason Trull
Veronica Perez

NCWorks Career Pathways Committee

Carla Byrnes
Judy Darden
Bruce Parson
David Hill
Cindy Holman
Veronica Perez
Bill Green
Brenda Upchurch

NCWorks Business Services Committee

Melanie Sanders
John Wilson
Charles Brogden
Mike Kraszeski
James Wolfe
Karl Zurl
Rick Davis
Dr. Rusty Hunt
Joe Wood

Youth Council

Frank Emory
Angela Bates
Anthony Cruz
Dr. Norma Sermon-
Boyd
Dr. Jim Ross
Melanie Sanders
Shannon Vitak
John Wilson
Lisa Jackson

Together, We are Making a Difference

The events of the past year have really taken a toll on the country. Unemployment rates have skyrocketed, businesses have had a hard time finding qualified employees for jobs that are vacant, and our NCWorks Career Center staff has had to stay vigilant to keep up with an ever-changing and uncertain workplace. From having to quickly pivot to virtual work and creating a space that is conducive to providing seamless services, staff members have had to adapt and overcome. In these trying times, motivation can be hard to find. With offices being closed and services being provided virtually, it was harder to connect with the individuals we serve. In an effort to get back to the root of why we do what we do, the ECWDB started a motivation campaign titled “What Do You Do?” This campaign started with a fabled story between President John F. Kennedy and a janitor at Cape Canaveral.

“It’s a fabled story about a janitor’s exchange with President Kennedy during the early days of NASA: “What do you do?” the president supposedly asked the man with a broom during a visit to Cape Canaveral. “Well, Mr. President, I’m helping to put a man on the moon.”

This meeting may not have actually taken place. But there’s a good reason it’s one of the most commonly-repeated management anecdotes: it illustrates the idea that a workforce motivated by a strong sense of higher purpose is essential to engagement.” (From the article: [How an Accounting Firm Convinced its Employees They Could Change the World](#))

You can watch the video from KPMG, the company that influenced our campaign, at <https://youtu.be/JZmZoURcmXI>

Each month over the next year, we will highlight staff members from all our NCWorks Career Centers who were asked to think about what they do and why they do it, their higher purpose, and create a slogan for themselves as a reminder. This campaign also helps us get to know those individuals who are working on the front lines every day.



Merianne Grigoriuc

I help remove barriers and coach youth to set and achieve their goals, through identifying their strengths, interests, skills and by building their confidence one step at a time.

Through compassion and taking a holistic approach to working with youth, I assist them in developing career plans that provide them building blocks of small successes combined with supports to develop their skills, passions and independence that allow them achieve success in their training, work, and life goals.





Duane Clark

I fight poverty by not blaming the individual but by recognizing that the system makes it hard for some people to live above the poverty line, while offering opportunities for educational services.

Many Career and Educational opportunities exist that individuals do not know about that are free to them. This is where I try to get information out about WIOA, CSBG, and other funding sources to the community that will lead to career and educational possibilities.



Eileen McGaughey

I bridge talent to business through relationships and development of people.

I love sharing my experience in the workforce development system with others, one-on-one and in workshops: how to tailor a resume and application, interview preparation, portfolios, sending the thank you note that surprises an employer. All this while building relationships with people: jobseekers, employers, community partners, peers, and co-workers. Helping to develop people and then, bridging the gap and building community.

Thank you so much for your participation! We appreciate all you do every day for our job seeker and business customers. You're making a difference in people's lives every day.



Lateesha Taylor - Success Story

Lateesha Taylor began working with John in January to find part time employment that suited her specific needs. She desired to stay local and had specific considerations that determined her ability to work. John has been working with her on her resume and provided resources outside of Career Services that could assist her in other ways.

John submitted a referral for Lateesha with Blue Arbor Staffing for a part time position as a receptionist at the NCWorks Career Center. Lateesha was offered the position 4/26/2021 and began work on 5/3/2021. John will continue to monitor her progress and provide assistance if needed.



COVID-19 UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS ARE ENDING SEPTEMBER 6TH

Start looking for work today! Contact your local NCWorks Career Center for job and training opportunities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the economy across the nation. We have seen unemployment rates at record numbers and many businesses were forced to shut down. In an effort to stabilize the effects of the pandemic, the U.S. Federal Government established several programs that provide additional unemployment benefits, such as a \$300 bonus to unemployment checks, while removing many of the restrictions to qualifying for unemployment. Many people have been relying on these relief efforts to get by during these challenging times, but time is running out on these programs.

Effective September 6th, the additional unemployment bonus will be ending in North Carolina and the requirements to qualify for unemployment will return to normal. Many will be left stranded after the programs end, but you don't have to be. The economy has begun to rebound from the pandemic, and job openings are rising across the state. The end of the pandemic is in sight, and we need to be ready for when it comes.

Now is the time to take advantage of the rise in job openings before the unemployment benefits run out. Research the job openings in your area and begin preparing and applying now, before other people reentering the workforce fill those positions ahead of you. The pandemic is almost over! The economy will rebound, and things will return to some semblance of normal, but we need to be prepared for when that happens.

For more information on job openings and training opportunities, contact your local NCWorks Career Center.

*David Jones, ECWDB
Public Information Specialist
jones@ecwdb.org*

USDOL AWARDS MORE THAN \$146M TO SUPPORT WORKFORCE AGENCIES' EFFORTS TO RETURN UNEMPLOYED TO WORKFORCE MORE QUICKLY

48 states, Puerto Rico, US Virgin Islands, District of Columbia to receive funding.

WASHINGTON, DC – The U.S. Department of Labor has awarded more than \$146 million to workforce agencies in 48 states, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and the District of Columbia to operate their Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments programs.

RESEA is an evidence-based program focused on individualized assessments, reemployment services and referrals to support an individual who is receiving unemployment benefits return to work more quickly. State agencies provide individual reemployment plans and support more informed job searches. This program is critical to states' abilities to help individuals return to work as the nation's economy recovers amid the pandemic.

In the early stages of the coronavirus outbreak, many states shifted resources to respond to the unprecedented increase in new unemployment claims, and reduced or suspended their RESEA activities temporarily. States have since resumed their RESEA programs with greater use of remote services and virtual person-to-person video conferencing to deliver services.

“Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments programs have a proven track record of providing needed assistance that gets people back to work quicker,” said Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training Suzi LeVine. “These funds will assist states as they grow and restructure their RESEA programs to assist workers who are struggling to recover from the economic effects of the pandemic.”

RESEA is one of many tools states have to introduce workers receiving unemployment benefits to services the broader workforce system provides. Individuals receiving benefits under temporary federal extension programs are ineligible to participate in RESEA but other state workforce systems' resources are available.

North Carolina Department of Commerce received \$5,746,751

6th Annual Craven Works Outdoor Job Fair

The sixth annual Craven Works Job Fair was held on 3/30 in New Bern. The event was a great success, as over 130 job seekers registered to attend. Check out some photos from the job fair and a link to the WNCT 9 News coverage below:

[WNCT 9 News Coverage](#)



Aerospace Company to Expand with \$5 Million Investment in Craven County

Raleigh, N.C. – Aeronautical Systems Incorporated (ASI), a world class provider of engineering, manufacturing and MRO services for military platforms, will create 30 new jobs in Craven County, Governor Roy Cooper announced today. The company will invest \$5.6 million to expand its manufacturing footprint in New Bern.

“The decision by Aeronautical Systems to expand in Craven County is good news for eastern North Carolina’s economy,” said Governor Cooper. “It speaks to our strong workforce, location, resilience and quality of life when businesses continue to invest in our state.”

Since its inception in the late 1980’s, ASI has provided military fleets worldwide with specialized services in system-centric and component repair and overhaul, manufacturing, supply chain management and aeronautical engineering. “This investment solidifies ASI’s commitment to Craven County’s highly skilled workforce, U.S. military depots, and highly accredited educational communities it offers,” said Felipe Rodriguez, ASI’s Founder and CEO. “We look forward to further expanding our relationships in New Bern to better serve our customers.”

The North Carolina Department of Commerce led a team of partners in supporting Aeronautical Systems’ decision to expand in North Carolina. The new positions created in New Bern include engineers, machinists, manufacturing technicians, clerks and shipping personnel. The average annual salary for the new warehouse positions is \$45,367 creating a potential payroll impact of more than \$1.3 million per year. Craven County’s average annual salary is \$40,352. “Manufacturers require a skilled workforce, strong business climate and a great quality of life to support their growth trajectory and continued innovation,” said Commerce Secretary Machel Baker Sanders. “ASI knows North Carolina has the infrastructure to support their current and future needs through our strong economic and workforce development partnerships.”

A performance-based grant of \$75,000 from the One North Carolina Fund will help facilitate Aeronautical Systems’ expansion. The One NC Fund provides financial assistance to local governments to help attract economic investment and to create jobs. Companies receive no money upfront and must meet job creation and capital investment targets to qualify for payment. All One NC grants require matching participation from local governments and any award is contingent upon that condition being met.

“Congratulations to ASI on this new expansion,” said N.C. Representative Keith Kidwell. “Companies that reinvest in our community are great advocates for doing business in North Carolina and we’re proud to support ASI’s continued growth.”

“This is another solid economic development win for our community and the kind of business opportunity that we want to continue attracting in Eastern North Carolina,” said N.C. Senator Norman Sanderson. “ASI’s new jobs and investment are welcomed additions and the people of Craven County are ready to support the company for many years to come.” Joining the North Carolina Department of Commerce and the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina were key partners in the project that included the North Carolina General Assembly, the North Carolina Community College System, Craven Community College, East Carolina University, Craven County, the Craven 100 Alliance, North Carolina’s Southeast and the Craven County Economic Development Department.

Literacy Council Makes an Impact

In the square, bookshelf-lined room, Virginia Acevedo paused, placed her hand over her heart and smiled. “I’m from Cuba, but now I’m from North Carolina,” said Acevedo, whose eyes exuded a grateful patriotism that spoke louder than her words. She moved to Craven County two years ago, after living in Miami since 2014. She gained her citizenship in December of 2020, an accomplishment that means everything to her. An accomplishment that she would not have been able to achieve without the help of the Craven County Literacy Council.

Acevedo is still a student at the Literacy Council, working on her English reading and pronunciation, because she still faces another obstacle—getting a better job. “I need change, I need one opportunity to open the door for work, to practice my English, I want another job,” Acevedo said. “I need change, I am here and little by little I am learning every day.” Since moving to the area, she worked in a nail salon, but is seeking other employment, often a challenge for those with lower rates of literacy.

In Craven, Jones and Pamlico Counties, 19,000 adults can not read higher than a third-grade level. “Literacy is kind of the foundation of everything we do. We need to be able to read and write in order to understand information, gather information and critically analyze the situation. I think that is just an important part of being an informed citizen,” said Dr. Todd Cherner, director of the Master of Arts in Educational Innovation, Technology, and Entrepreneurship Program at UNC-Chapel Hill. “The ways we interact in our daily lives with individuals, we need to be able to read and write.”

In Craven County, 12 percent of people lack basic literacy prose, slightly lower than the state average of 14 percent. Counties with the lowest percentages were places like Dare, New Hanover and Johnston counties while Halifax County was the highest at 28 percent. In the U.S., illiteracy costs businesses and overall society \$225 billion dollars each year due to loss of workforce, productivity, crime and unemployment.

Literacy is a vital indicator of the health of the overall community, affecting things like crime rates, poverty, healthcare, and of course, job growth. “Adults with higher skill levels have better health outcomes, which results in greater productivity in the workplace, and so they are better able to participate in community life,” said April King, executive director of Craven County Literacy Council. “Because they have higher skills, they are taking better care of themselves, have greater productivity, less absenteeism.” These factors explain the statistic that every \$1 invested in adult literacy yields \$7.14 in return. The largest demographic of students at the Craven County Literacy Council is Burmese, however, they have students from all over the world, King said.

King said for foreign-born and American-born students that come to the Craven County Literacy Council, it takes an event happening in their lives such as having a child in school and in many cases the loss of a job. “Sometimes it will be because they are getting ready to lose their job and they are being passed over for promotions,” King said. “It used to be that especially in rural North Carolina, you could make a sustainable living and wage, whether it be farming or fishing. Now it is not like that.” Functional literacy, being able to navigate society with low literacy rates based on experience, is becoming harder and harder to achieve with the increase of technology—a trend Acevedo knows all too well.

King shared the story of one student, a housekeeper, who came to the Literacy Council because her employers wanted to communicate through texting and she needed to be able to read their messages and type responses. Applications for even seemingly low-level jobs have to be filled out online now, said King.

Though traditionally an agricultural area, Eastern North Carolina's largest economic sector of employment is the retail trade which employs 32,524 people at an average weekly wage of \$606.57. This is closely followed by healthcare and manufacturing. "Workforce is the number one factor of most businesses right now whether they are looking to build a new place and come to a new location or expand an existing location," said Karl Zurl, the regional operations director for the North Carolina Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Solutions. "When we talk to the economic developers...quality of workforce is the top thing most business leaders keep in mind when making decisions about where to locate and expand their operations." He said that many larger companies who pay higher wages tend to move to the urban areas around the Triangle and Charlotte and seek higher-skilled, highly educated workers. In Eastern North Carolina, many of the available jobs do not require a higher level of education and this could deter people from pursuing further credentials in the area.

"That impacts when a developer, commercial or industrial company is looking to come into the area, they want to know about the workforce. They want to know, just like with Hatteras, how easy is it going to be to train that extra 500 new employees," said Dana Outlaw, Mayor of New Bern. The City of New Bern and Craven County works to increase literacy rates and the quality of education in the area through various programs and will continue to investigate new ways to do so, Outlaw said.

In 1988, Craven County Partners in Education was founded by a \$10,000 grant from Carolina Power and Light, now Duke Energy. It aims to enhance the educational experience in Craven County Schools and provide resources that might otherwise not be available. Outlaw said that both himself as mayor and the city support all types of programs and organizations from Craven County Community College's Workforce Development Program, to the Boys and Girls Club, to the Literacy Council because he understands the importance of literacy and education to the overall future of the community.

Cherner said that while various community nonprofits help support increased literacy rates, research shows that investment in pre-k education is the best determinant of success. "There is a huge amount of research that says the earlier we can get our children good literacy foundations and good schools and start building that background knowledge—that is going to be the best intervention and support that we can offer our students and our citizens," Cherner said. Children raised in a more educated household hear hundreds of thousands of more words than those raised in less educated homes. The greatest indicator of a child's success is the reading level of their parents. Investing in a child's future at a young age can give them the foundations that will support them throughout life, Cherner said.

Adult students coming to the Literacy Council are setting an example of the importance of education for their children, said King. "We are not where we need to be; we can always do more," said Outlaw. King first got involved in the Literacy Council because she had always enjoyed reading and wanted to share her passion. She quickly realized that for the students at the Literacy Council, reading was not for leisure, but a critical indicator of their future. "We are talking survival and we are talking changing lives," King said. And Virginia Acevedo's life was changed.

Julia Masters, Sun Journal

New Center on CCC Campus to Connect Businesses with Federal Contract Opportunities

MOREHEAD CITY — With the military considered the second largest business in North Carolina, area officials celebrated the grand opening Tuesday of a North Carolina Military Business Center on the campus of Carteret Community College.

The purpose of the center, or NCMBC, is to identify military and federal contract opportunities, source them to businesses in the region and state and help them compete for, win and grow jobs through federal contracts.



U.S. Rep. Greg Murphy, R-N.C., shares his excitement Tuesday regarding the grand opening of a North Carolina Military Business Center on the campus of Carteret Community College. (Cheryl Burke photo)

The center, housed in the Big Rock Career Center at CCC in Morehead City, is one of 15 located at community college campuses across the state, with the main branch headquartered at Fayetteville Technical Community College. “The N.C. Military Business Center institution really helps bring federal money to this area,” Rep. Greg Murphy, R-N.C., said during the opening celebration, held in the CCC Hospitality and Culinary Arts Center. He reported 40,000 people have moved into the state’s third congressional district, which he represents, over the past year. “Many of those people will need jobs and getting federal contracts can boost those efforts,” he said. “I believe the community college system is the network for small businesses to connect to those contracts.”

CCC President Dr. Tracy Mancini said she was “so pleased and proud to house this opportunity on our campus.” She said since the first center opened in 2005, the NCMBC has assisted state-based businesses in winning more than 3,800 contracts valued at more than \$15 billion. “That has generated more than \$500 million in tax revenues for the state of North Carolina,” she said.

Scott Dorney, executive director of the NCMBC for the state, said with North Carolina ranked third in the nation for military personnel, there are billions of dollars in contracts available to businesses.

“The Department of Defense, other federal agencies and bases in North Carolina represent tremendous opportunity for our state,” Mr. Dorney said. “There is a \$66 billion impact on our state economy. There were over \$9 billion in federal prime contracts in 2020. In Carteret County, there were over \$40 million in federal contracts, including \$28 million in DoD contracts. “Our state has great business capacity and there is great demand,” he continued. “What was missing was someone to bring those two together. The NCMBC is a great opportunity to bring demand and capacity together.”

He added that the NCMBC has four main goals: to help businesses win more government contracts, recruit more defense contractors to the state, help transitioning military personnel find jobs and help businesses with technology transition.

He encouraged small businesses to not shy away from bidding on military contracts because the center can help them with the complex process. “There is not a lack of contract opportunities, but too many businesses have self-selected ‘no’ because they don’t understand the Department of Defense process,” he said.



Scott Dorney, executive director of the North Carolina Military Business Center, shares comments Tuesday during the grand opening of the state's 15th center on the campus of Carteret Community College. (Cheryl Burke photo)

Randy Chandler, who now serves as the business development professional for the county's new NCMBC, said his job is to monitor federal contract websites, notify businesses of available contracts and provide one-on-one assistance to help companies bid on and win contracts. "My goal is to provide help to all of you to bid and hopefully win those military contracts," he said.

County Chamber of Commerce President Tom Kies said he was excited to see the NCMBC open. "This is incredibly important to have a local business center to help contractors successfully bid for contracts at places such as (Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point) and (Marine Corps Base) Camp Lejeune," he said.

County Economic Development Director Don Kirkman agreed. "It's highly important to have an expert resource here in our county to assist businesses in bidding for government contracts," he said. "It's a tremendous asset for our community."

Cape Lookout National Seashore Superintendent Jeff West, too, said the NCMBC would have a positive impact on local businesses. "The center is going to be able to help local contractors go through the process to get a federal contract," he said. "There are three major federal agencies in our county on top of military bases that have opportunities for local contractors. There is Cape Lookout National Seashore, NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) and the Croatan National Forest. There are opportunities that aren't realized because (local contractors) don't know how to fill out the paperwork because it's so daunting." He said this year, Cape Lookout National Seashore has awarded 14 contracted projects that total \$3.5 million.

*Cheryl Burke, Carteret County News-Times
252-726-7081, ext. 255 | cheryl@thenewstimes.com*

Black, Latino NC workers had to play 'Russian Roulette' during COVID—News and Observer

"According to the state's 2020 mortality file — a dataset built from official death certificates — more than 8,300 North Carolinians died of COVID-19 last year. For this story, McClatchy North Carolina analyzed the death records of working-age coronavirus victims — those between 19 and 65. Reporters reviewed the occupations and industries of those workers — about 1,100 records in all. A picture emerged. Like Cabrera Lopez, those who died often had low-paying jobs in essential industries, such as food processing, food service, health care, construction and transportation. And like Cabrera Lopez, a high percentage were Black or Latino, the data show. McClatchy's analysis, the first of its kind in North Carolina, offers evidence that may help explain why COVID-19 killed so many blue-collar Black and Latino workers. Workplace safety advocates say the findings also raise questions about whether industry leaders and state Department of Labor officials did enough to protect vulnerable people unable to work from home or keep distance from others on the job."

Visit [News Observer](#) for the full article.

Brian Dandridge - Success Story

On Feb 4, 2021, Brian Dandridge came into the Duplin County NCWorks Career Center for job search assistance and career guidance. Melvin Sabillon, CSR, assisted Mr. Dandridge with registering into NCWorks.gov and referred him to Carla Whaley, Career Advisor, for additional services.

Carla assisted Brian with job searching and explained the services offered through the Career Center. He told Carla he was currently homeless and unemployed. He had worked as a swine farmer for seventeen years and lost his housing upon resigning his position.

Brian's experience working with swine lagoons inspired him to enroll in the Combined Biological Waste Water Operator I and II class at James Sprunt Community College. Carla instructed Brian to update his resume to showcase his work history and enrollment in the Waste Water class. Carla learned Mr. Dandridge was a Disabled Naval Veteran. She explained the NCWorks Veteran's Program to Brian and contacted Zackary Branch, Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialist (DVOP) for Duplin County, to request his assistance with Mr. Dandridge, as well.

Zackary began working with Brian on Feb 23, 2021 and referred him to several openings within the surrounding area. Mr. Branch also contacted Charles Lee with the Veterans Services of the Carolinas-Homeless Veteran Reintegration Program (HVRP). After enrolling in HVRP, the program paid for Brian to test and receive his Waste Water Treatment Plant I certification. Mr. Dandridge continued to receive services from the Duplin County Career Center. Charliss Gwynn, Career Advisor, joined the team focused on assisting with his job search. Charliss found a position with the City of Jacksonville and the Pender County Utilities – Water Department Division. She shared the information with Carla who immediately called Brian with application instructions. Brian promptly submitted a Pender County application and was soon scheduled to interview. After completing the interview Mr. Dandridge was extended a job offer with Pender County Utilities starting on May 17, 2021.

The NCWorks Career Center continues to assist Brian with locating affordable housing. Zachary Branch (DVOP) referred Brian to Volunteers of America and Charliss Gwynn referred him to the Homeless Emergency Solutions Grant operated by Greene Lamp Community Action.

Kara Thomas - Success Story



In March 2021, Kara Thomas utilized our AWS to request referrals for positions with two local municipalities posted in NCWorks. Kara and Eileen McGaughey met via telephone to complete her NCWorks registration including setting up virtual recruiter and completing her requested referrals. Kara's situation was unique so she and Eileen spent time discussing how to manage the application and interview process.

About a week after their initial meeting, Kara called with great news-she had two interviews scheduled for early April. Kara and Eileen met to strategize and plan for her interviews, also reviewing Kara's career portfolio.

Kara worked her plan and on April 12 called Eileen to share the wonderful news-she was offered and accepted a position with Pamlico County!

Labor Market Overview



A Second Life for North Carolina's Shuttered Factories – New York Times

“Less than a decade ago, the economic malaise in Rocky Mount, N.C., was tangible. Rocky Mount Mills, a big cotton mill that had given the town its identity, had shut down in 1996, costing the area hundreds of jobs. Downtown was deserted. Nobody was hiring. Now, the mill is a bustling complex with restaurants and breweries. It has a small hotel composed of tiny houses on wheels, a wide lawn where concerts regularly take place and a Wiffle ball field. Since 2013, Rocky Mount Mills’ current owner, Capitol Broadcasting Company, has redeveloped the site, giving it a dynamic atmosphere with stores and residences. Its leaders are aiming to create a sense of community that will entice out-of-town businesses and workers to settle there, raising the town’s economic prospects and spurring more growth. Rocky Mount isn’t the only mill town in North Carolina trying to revitalize its economy. In High Point, Greensboro and Winston-Salem, a region known as the Piedmont Triad, other large factories that once served as economic engines providing many blue-collar jobs are being turned into vibrant mixed-use complexes for work and play. The projects have been designed to connect struggling regions to a new economy based on technology, information and innovation. Christopher Chung, the chief executive of the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina, is optimistic. “A lot of these communities have the best chance they’ve had in a while to recruit individuals to take advantage of much more affordable housing prices and the other amenities that are there,” he said. “This seems like a unique moment to realize the gains.”

Visit [New York Times](#) for the full article.

NCWorks Career Center Locations

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Craven County

2836 Neuse Boulevard
New Bern, NC 28562
(252) 514-4828

Duplin County

192 Magnolia Extension
Kenansville, NC 28349
(910) 296-1478

Greene County

Greene County Education
Center of LCC
818 Highway 91 North
Snow Hill, NC 28580
(252) 747-3434 ext. 764

Jones County

Jones County Education
Center of LCC
509 Highway 58 North
Trenton, NC 28585
(252) 448-5021 ext. 790

Lenoir County

Lenoir Community College
231 Highway 58 South
Kinston, NC 28502
(252) 775-6021 OR
(252) 527-7320

Onslow County

461 Western Boulevard
Suite 106
Jacksonville, NC 28546
(910) 347-2121

Pamlico County

5049 Highway 306 South
Room 431 Brinson Building
Grantsboro, NC 28523
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Wayne County

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Goldsboro, NC 27534
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MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

7/8/2021	ECWDB Consortium Meeting
8/5/2021	NCWorks Business Services Committee Meeting
8/12/2021	NCWorks Career Pathways Committee Meeting
8/26/2021	Executive Committee Meeting
9/16/2021	ECWDB Consortium Meeting
9/23/2021	Youth Council Meeting
9/30/2021	NCWorks Business Services Meeting



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