

Eastern Carolina WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD, INC.



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

March, 2008

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Onslow County Holds 2008 Trades Day Event: Champions at Work

On March 29, over 140 high school students competed for cash prizes and bragging rights at the second annual Trades Day - Champions at Work competition on the campus of Coastal Carolina Community College. "The competition was aimed at bringing excitement back to learning trades and was a great success by all measures. These young people represent the new generation of skilled trade workers and will be vital to the growth of our region," commented Mona Padrick, President of the Jacksonville/Onslow Chamber of Commerce.

Trades day is an opportunity for students to demonstrate their skills in the various areas. "I encourage my students to participate because it reinforces what they learn in the classroom and to see where they stand against other students and other schools," said James Zirnheld, electrical trades teacher at Jacksonville High School.

W.T. Humphrey, Inc. catered in lunch, followed by the awards ceremony. "The best way to ensure a pipeline of workers entering the skilled trades is to build awareness among young people," said Don Harris, Eastern Carolina Workforce Development Board Chairman. "That's what this trades day event is doing."

Representatives from local businesses, various trades-related vendors, Coastal Carolina Community College, along with the Eastern Carolina Workforce Development

Board had career planning displays set up and were available to answer questions.

Students representing Onslow and Jones County schools competed in the areas of construction, electrical trades, automotive technology, small engine repair, drafting, masonry and welding. The event also included a nail-driving contest.



The Trades Day event was sponsored by following partners and local businesses:

Jacksonville/Onslow Chamber of Commerce, Coastal Carolina Community College, Onslow County Schools, Eastern Carolina Workforce Development Board, Inc., W. T. Humphrey Inc., the Onslow County Homebuilders Association, Adams Building Products, Askews Building Supply, BB&T, Big John's Electric, Cooperative Bank, Bryant Durham Electric, David and Rhonda Casey, Contractor Yard, Ferguson, Gulf Stream Steel, Jacksonville Builders Supply, Johnson Controls, Joyce Plumbing Company, Guy C. Lee, Ray Evans III-Home Team/GMAC, Blum Services, R. Jones Builders, Emerald Coast Inc, Haws Woodworking, Inc., Hasco-Kitchen and Bath Showroom, William and Dina McCall, Modern Exterminating, National Dodge, National Welders, Parker & Associates, John L. Pierce, Precision Stairs, Pride Electrical Contracting, Inc., Southern Auto Parts, Texas Steakhouse, Town and Country Building Company, Woodman of the World Lodge #564, Eastern Building Components, Wells Fargo Home Mortgage, Wagoner Insurance, Southern Leisure, Sue Cruddas Real Estate, Haurbrick Development Group, LLC, Jones-Onslow EMC, and the Little Bank.

Source: Jacksonville/Onslow
Chamber of Commerce

Dear Friends,

Please join our efforts in contacting your elected officials to voice your continued support for the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and Employment Service programs and request that funding for these essential career development efforts be restored in the fiscal year 2009 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill.

For the first time in the past several years, unemployment rates have begun to rise and more than 7.6 million Americans are unemployed. WIA programs are the front lines of assisting those impacted by the current economic slowdown, helping workers get the assistance and training they need to return to the workforce. This year, over 14 million workers, one in ten workers nationally, will seek assistance from our nation's employment and training programs.

In the Eastern Carolina Local Area (which serves the counties of Carteret, Craven, Duplin, Greene, Jones, Lenoir, Onslow, and Wayne) WIA is making a real difference in our community. For instance, in the last year, our JobLink Career Centers have served more than 42,000 individuals with employment and training needs. During our Program Year ending June 30, 2007, over 2,400 individuals were enrolled in our WIA Adult, Youth, Dislocated Worker, and Incumbent Workforce programs. In the last eighteen months, more than 270 WIA participants received college degrees to meet the critical needs of our business community and more than 70 others were able to receive Occupational Skills Certifications in high-demand areas such as Dental Assistants, Electricians, Truck Drivers, Radiologic Technicians, and Welders.

Additionally, in the last five years, almost 400 WIA youth were able to complete high school, or receive a General Equivalency Degree (GED) in order to further their education goals, or to enter the workforce. None of these would have been possible without the availability of WIA funds. However, investment in employment and training programs continues to diminish. In fact, the Administration's FY 09 budget proposes funding WIA and Employment Services \$1.2 billion below funding levels enacted this past year. The Administration's proposal not only seeks to cut WIA programs by \$484 million, but also eliminates the Employment Service program.

A time of economic slowdown is not the moment to cut funding for our most valuable economic resource, our workers, and employers needing skilled workers to compete in the global economy. In light of the pending rescission and continued projected reductions in federal funding, I ask that you join our efforts in contacting our North Carolina Congressional Delegation and urge their support to include WIA funding in their program priorities and request that the proposed cuts be restored this year.

Sincerely,



D. T. Harris, Chairman

**Resolution of the Board of Directors of the
Eastern Carolina Workforce Development Board, Inc.
WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT (WIA) PROGRAM**

WHEREAS we live in a "knowledge economy" in which knowledge and skills are increasingly important for the state's economic competitiveness; and

WHEREAS investments in workforce development translate into positive economic activity for rural North Carolina and the state as a whole; and

WHEREAS the Workforce Investment Act is one of the primary workforce development programs funded by the federal government, offering training, career planning assistance and other services for economically disadvantaged workers, displaced workers and at-risk youth; and

WHEREAS federal funding for state Workforce Investment Act activities is lower than it was preceding the downturn of the early 2000s;

WHEREAS the federal government has already made the decision to rescind \$263 million of existing Workforce Investment Act funds already appropriated to the states, which is estimated to mean a loss of more than \$2.7 million in North Carolina, following previous years' funding reductions; and

WHEREAS local workforce development boards have seen a reduction in workforce training due to the planned rescissions; and

WHEREAS economists estimate that we are either in or will soon face a recession, which reflects a reduction of economic activity and is marked by higher unemployment and a greater need for career assistance and training services; and

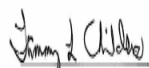
WHEREAS the federal government proposes to reduce WIA funding for the next program year (to start 7/1/2008 in North Carolina) by \$250 million, which would further reduce the capacity in North Carolina to respond to the state's workforce and economic needs at a time when it may be needed most; therefore be it

RESOLVED that the Eastern Carolina Workforce Development Board, Inc., strongly opposes further reductions or rescissions to the Workforce Investment Act and seeks to reinstate federal WIA formula funding for states to \$3.6 billion, in the same range as the initial funding level for states in Program Year 2002.

This 6th day of March 2008,



D. T. Harris, Chairman



Tammy L. Childers, Executive
Director

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.



"Investing in People"

Director's Corner

Dear Colleagues,

As you will read in this newsletter, March has been Job Fair Month across the region. JobLink partners from Carteret, Craven, Lenoir, and Wayne counties all had record attendance in the number of job seekers and employers participating in these events. Each was deemed a success in connecting people to career opportunities; and just in case you missed your local Job Fair, you can plan to attend Pamlico's Job Fair on April 24.

In addition to reading about the successful Job Fairs, you will also read of the exciting innovative programs that are occurring in some of our high schools and community colleges that are preparing the future workforce for careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM). For example, Wayne County Schools is one of the first in the region to start a "School of Engineering" at Goldsboro High School.

In Craven County, you will read how Craven Community College and Craven County Schools have collaborated with NC State to offer middle school students an opportunity to explore the world of engineering. To that end, our eastern Workforce Development Boards known as "Vision East" have applied for a "STEM" grant through the USDOL, which if funded, will provide resources to expand the STEM efforts throughout the east.

While planning for STEM careers will provide exciting career opportunities for the future workforce, you will also read how Onslow County partners and local businesses are promoting the skilled trade opportunities in the high schools and community colleges. With the region continuing to grow because of the expected military increase, these future workers should have no problems in pursuing this career path.

Throughout the newsletter, we have attempted to provide you with a glimpse of the many partnerships that demonstrate a commitment to ensuring workforce success, be it through individual achievements, collaborative partnerships, or innovative programs, eastern North Carolina continues to shine.

Thank you for making a difference!

Tammy Childers

Wayne Community College Nursing Graduates Top of the State on National Exam Passage Rates

Wayne Community College's nursing graduates have again exceeded state and national passage rates for the National Council Licensure Exams.

All of the college's 2007 practical nursing graduates who have taken the national licensure exam, the NCLEX-PN, have passed on their first attempt. Their 100 percent pass rate exceeds the state's pass rate of 94 percent and the national pass rate of 88 percent.

The associate degree nursing (ADN) class of 2007 had a 96 percent pass rate for first time testers on their licensure exam, the NCLEX-RN. This is higher than the pass rate for all registered nurse (RN) programs in North Carolina (87 percent) and all RN programs nationally (87 percent).

This is at least the seventh year that

Wayne Community College's nursing graduate exam passage rates have exceeded the state and national rates, according to Cindy Archie, allied health and public services division head.

"I am very pleased with both our practical nursing and associate degree nursing graduates' performance on their respective national licensing exams. These results are reflective of our students' motivation to achieve their career goals," said Rachel Hall, head of the nursing department.

Overall, last year's graduates of North Carolina's ADN programs posted an 86 percent pass rate. For all U.S. ADN programs, the rate was 85 percent. As of December 2007 all of WCC's 27 ADN graduates were licensed and practicing as registered nurses.

"It's interesting to note that Wayne's

associate degree nursing program passage rate is higher than all of the state's 15 baccalaureate or four-year programs and all but eight of the associate degree nursing programs," said Dr. Archie. The state's pass rate for 2007 graduates of bachelor of science in nursing (BSN) degree programs was 90 percent. The pass rate for all BSN programs nationally was 86 percent.

The National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission has awarded Wayne Community College's Associate Degree and Practical Nursing Programs Candidate Status.

Source: WCC

Craven Community College and NC State University Team Up to Offer Middle School Students an Opportunity to Explore the World of Engineering

This year's theme "Engineering—Using the Mysteries of Science to Change the World."

Craven Community College and N.C. State University are teaming up again to offer middle school students an opportunity to explore the world of engineering. Registration is now under way for NCSU's Middle School Summer Engineering Camp, which will be held June 23-27 at Craven's Havelock campus.

The day camp is designed to give rising seventh, eighth, and ninth-graders a fun and exciting glimpse into various fields of engineering by using hands-on, creative investigations and real-world building activities. "Students will have the chance to get their hands dirty and see what engineering is all about," said Bill Fortney, NCSU's eastern regional director for distance engineering programs.

"Last year's camp was a blast, and this year's camp is going to be even better!" Craven is proud to partner with NCSU to bring engineering-curriculum options to the area. Through Craven's 2+2 engineering partnership with NCSU, college

students can take their first two years of high-level mathematics and other courses at CCC, and then either transfer to NCSU to finish their engineering degrees or, if they choose, complete their engineering degrees through NCSU distance education courses at Craven. The upcoming summer day camp will give college leaders a chance to show area middle schoolers the options that they will have here if they decide to pursue engineering as a career.

This year's theme, "Engineering - Using the Mysteries of Science to Change the World," will encourage students to explore how engineering works to address many of today's problems. Throughout the week, students will be divided into design teams led by local middle school teachers. NCSU staffers and undergraduate students also will assist the students with their design challenges.

The camp will be in session from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. daily. On the camp's final

day, students will spend the morning working on a final design challenge that incorporates many of the concepts from the camp's activities. Students then will demonstrate their work for family and friends in a public design competition that afternoon. For more information, contact Bill Fortney or Susan Price at (252) 520-9597 or wbfortne@ncsu.edu or sprice@lenoircc.edu.

Source: CCC

***"The best way
to predict the
future is to
invent it."***

-Immanuel Kant

“The Pamlico Experience”

Workforce Investment Act program offers new beginnings.



Dannett Williford

Dannett Williford, in the middle of an interview about her experiences entering college as a client of the Workforce Investment Act, looked up and said, “I think you should call this story ‘The Pamlico Experience’ all I got was smiling faces and nurturing. They made me feel so welcomed.” That’s the way Williford, stay-at-home mom, described her first encounter with Kim Wallace, Pamlico Community College counselor. She is now finishing up her second semester in the Medical Assistant curriculum.

Dannett and her husband, Fred, have a mutual understanding about her need for education as a necessity for the family’s future. Fred drives an 18 wheeler hauling grain to various mills all across Eastern North Carolina, and, unfortunately he has diabetes. She pointed out, “With diabetes, you don’t get better, eventually you get worse.

We both agreed that the time might come when I would be the primary provider for the family and that meant for me, going back to school.”

Past family experiences, giving birth to a premature child among them, led her to choose a career in Allied Health. “I knew for me I would work in medicine,” Williford said. “I wanted to help other people, especially women with medical problems. I ultimately want to be an RN, but for now, becoming a medical assistant is the practical beginning.” Williford explored a great variety of choices before enrolling at Pamlico Community College. She says she looked at schools online and made campus visits. According to her, “visits to other schools really convinced me to go to PCC. It was here that I experienced the Pamlico Experience of everybody I met trying to help me.”

To ease into a fulltime curriculum, Williford was advised to take a couple of courses in the summer of 07. She credited Jamie Gibbs, dean of students, and Kris Patterson, the college’s financial aid officer, with finding ways to help pay for tuition and books as she tried this new venture.

Later, Bonnie Beard, the president of the Student Government Association and a medical assisting student, encouraged Williford to talk with Christy Lewis, who coordinates JobLink and the Workforce Investment Act programs. Lewis supervises 30 students in a variety

of curricula. While these programs help students with funding needs, Lewis also does a one-year follow-up after graduation. According to Lewis, JobLink Career Centers are user-friendly facilities that provide access to a variety of employment and training services all under one roof.

“We provide a venue for both employers looking for employees and job seekers looking for jobs.” Lewis explained. “We assist with all employment related issues such as career planning, training options and job search, resume preparation, and preparing to be interviewed.”

Pamlico Community College provides the host facility for JobLink and its partner agencies. At the facility in Bayboro, job seekers can make use of computers with internet service, fax machines, and copiers in their quest for jobs and training opportunities. Lewis, who was the WIA case manager at the New Bern Employment Security Commission office prior to becoming the JobLink coordinator said, “Students like Dannett make me so proud that I had a small part in what she calls the ‘Pamlico Experience’.”

-By Ben Casey, Community Relations Coordinator and Marketing Director. PCC

Wayne County Schools Opens Wayne School of Engineering Housed Within Goldsboro High School

At the beginning of the 2007 fiscal year, \$661,680 was appropriated to the State Board of Education by the legislature in support of a cohort of STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) high schools. The total included \$40,000 for each of ten schools for planning and support for early employment of principals at each planning site. All of the state’s high priority, or “turnaround,” high schools were invited to apply for STEM partnership planning grants by the State

Board of Education. Wayne and Duplin County Schools were selected to participate. In the Fall of 2007, Wayne County Schools opened the Wayne School of Engineering housed within Goldsboro High School with about 85 incoming Freshmen.

Wayne County Schools partnered with the Boston Museum of Science, Wayne Community College, and East Carolina University. The school is a “STEM” school with an innovative curriculum that integrates Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math.

riculum that integrates Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math.

Freshman students will study engineering, robotics, solid modeling, and biomechanics, as well as take other specialized courses. Students will graduate with a two-year associate’s degree or complete a college transfer program which will allow them to transfer as a junior to a four year university.

Sources: DPI/Wayne County Schools

Pamlico County Commissioner Mele Honored by the John Locke Foundation



In February, Commissioner Christine Mele, of Pamlico County was recognized by the State's conservative politicians and policy-makers when she was honored by the John Locke Foundation. John Hood, president of the Raleigh-based think tank, praised Mele during an annual banquet in Cary.

Commissioner Mele received the organization's James Knox Polk Award for Leadership in Public Office, named for the native son who served as the 11th President of the United States.

Source: Pamlico News

NCER Request for Proposals for Work Keys Assessments and Career Readiness Certification Projects

North Carolina's Eastern Region is soliciting innovative, competitive proposals for projects that will expand and accelerate the use of WorkKeys Assessments and Career Readiness Certifications in the Eastern Region. Their focus is the workforce for the Construction Industry, Life Sciences (Healthcare), and Advanced Manufacturing (to include Marine Trades) in Carteret, Craven, Duplin, Edgecombe, Greene, Jones, Lenoir, Nash, Onslow, Pamlico, Pitt, Wayne and Wilson counties. To receive an electronic copy of the RFP, contact Kathy Howard at howard@nceast.org.

Perseverance Pays

Just Ask Former WIA Participant Denise Gooding

All Workforce Investment Case Managers work hard to assist the customers with achieving a level of success that allows them to go home and sleep well each night. Every once in a while that special customer asks for assistance and gives each person in their path a feeling that the assistance given is a stepping stone not taken for granted.

I began working for Lenoir Community College JobLink/WIA program in December 2001. One of the first files that were given to me was that special student. She set the bar so high, that other students were successful when meeting her half-way. Denise Gooding Gibbs was dislocated from Masterbrand Cabinets Inc. in Kinston on October 19, 2001. Through Lenoir Community College's WIA dislocated workers program she received training in the Information Technology program. Denise completed a paid internship arranged by WIA/JobLink with the Global Transpark Training Center gaining valuable work experience under their IT Manager. Denise served as a Marshall for the 2003 graduation ceremony. In 2004, Denise graduated from Lenoir

Community College with high honors in Information Systems, Networking and Support. Denise graduated with a 4.0 GPA in her major and a 3.87 GPA overall.

After graduation, Denise began working at Craven Regional Medical Center in New Bern as a Network Analyst. She began working on her Bachelors Degree from Mt. Olive College. She completed this degree with honors in December 2007.

Denise informed her WIA Case Manager on February 18, 2008 that she has been promoted to the Computer Technician Supervisor's position at Craven Regional. Between 2004 and 2008, Denise has assisted aging parents, gotten married and served as a faithful member in her church.

The Lenoir County WIA program is proud to know Denise, and deeply humbled when she calls and emails us to say thank you. In essence, we are thankful that she crossed our paths to serve as an example to others that perseverance pays off.

Source: Bobby Merritt, Lenoir JobLink

Lenoir County JobLink Staff Participates in National Read Across America Campaign

Volunteering To Make A Difference

The Lenoir County JobLink staff knows that Workforce Development begins early. Staff member Joan Kornegay was invited to take part in the Kinston Charter's Academy National Read Across America campaign and read several Dr. Seuss Books to Tina Moore's kindergarten class. The class loved the animation and reading of "I Can Read With My Eyes Shut" and "Yertle the Turtle King". This is the second year that staff has taken part in this festivity. Joan was also invited to read Dr. Seuss books to Melissa Southerland's first grade class at Northwest Elementary School.

Source: Bobby Merritt, Lenoir JobLink



Joan Kornegay Reads to
Kindergarten Class



Hard Times Don't Last, Determined People Do

LCC'S WIA Dislocated Worker Program Changes Lives.

Kimberly Brock is now on her way into a more professional career. Kim currently works full-time at a Skin-Care Clinic in Goldsboro, NC and loves what she does. Ms. Brock is also a full-time student, the president of the Medical Assisting Club, a Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society member, a mentor to other medical assisting students, and has been nominated for Who's Who Among Students in American Junior Colleges on numerous occasions. While all this seems to be the highlights of Kim's wonderful life, I can tell you things weren't always copasetic for her.

Kim was laid off from Mundy a few years ago and had no clue of what her next move would be. Kim became acquainted with WIA Case Manager Ika Dawson Grant and started her career planning, but before she could settle on selecting a career path to follow, she first had to start with the basics. Kim enrolled into the Basic Skills Program at Lenoir Community College and received guidance from Katrina Hinson.

While working on her GED, Kim decided to enroll into an occupational extension course. She took a Phlebotomy course in hopes of getting a job once her unemployment benefits (UI) ended. Shortly after working diligently on her goals, Kim completed the GED Program and Phlebotomy class successfully. She impressed so many individuals in the Basic Skills Program with her determination to finish at a rapid pace, that she was selected to be the speaker at her Basic Skills graduation ceremony.

Kim was so ecstatic and eager to go further. She enjoyed taking the Phlebotomy course and decided to select a major in the medical field.

With assistance from WIA combined with great potential and drive, Kim enrolled into the Medical Assisting Program at Lenoir Community College in January 2006. At the end of her first semester, she received three "A's" and one "B". Kim's grade point average during her first semester was a 3.853. Later that year, Kim became worried about her UI benefits ending soon and started looking for a phlebotomist job immediately. She was unable to find one in this area. She applied for work-study and worked in Basic Skills for a short time. Determined to complete, Kim also took out a loan to help pay her expenses. Despite her situation Kim made it work. (She is a strong willed individual that has learned to roll with the punches and faces her challenges head on, whether it is school, family, finances, or just life in general. Kim has a strong support system at LCC, that cheers her on and gives her the extra push to make it over the hurdles of life.)

Her WIA Consultant is proud to have known her and is impressed with her will to succeed in life despite life's ups and downs. Kim will graduate from Lenoir Community College on May 9, 2008 with a degree in Medical Assisting and a full time job as a medical assistant at Goldsboro's Skin Clinic.

Source: Ika Dawson-Grant, LCC

Congratulations and Best Wishes to Kimsey Welch



Jim Pleasant of Vocational Rehabilitation in Greenville presents Kimsey Welch with Certificate of Retirement on March 28.

On behalf of the Eastern Carolina Workforce Development Board and Youth Council, we would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Kimsey Welch, who retired after 30 years of public service.

Kimsey was the Regional Unit Manager for Vocational Rehabilitation serving Carteret, Craven, Jones, and Pamlico Counties. In his role, Kimsey served on various Boards, Commissions, and Committees at both the State and local levels.

Kimsey was on the Board's original One Stop [JobLink] Planning Grant Committee that began in 1995. In 1998, he was appointed to the Eastern Carolina Board of Directors, and serves on the JobLink Committee and Youth Council. Kimsey has provided invaluable leadership to the workforce board and local JobLink partners.

Kimsey, we wish you continued success!

North Carolina's Career Readiness Certificate Initiative Continues to Grow

Employers across the State are seeing the benefits of their workforce having a Career Readiness Credential (CRC).

"Our vitality depends on a workforce that is able to adapt to change and operate in a manufacturing environment that thrives on lean leadership principles. It is more imperative than ever to make sure we're hiring the best candidates in the marketplace. The Career Readiness Certificate allows us to do just that." says Bernadette

Young, Human Resources for Energizer Battery.

Since 2006, nearly 12,000 North Carolinians have earned their CRC. North Carolina's Career Readiness Certification 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, the CRC serves as a portable credential that can be more meaningful to employers than a high school degree or a resume citing experience in a different job setting.

To date, 763 certificates have been issued within the Eastern Carolina Local Area. For more information, visit your local JobLink Career Center or visit online at www.crcnc.org.

Source: crcnc.org

N.C. Unemployment Rate at 4.9% in January

State Unemployment Rate Pulls Even with National Rate

North Carolina's unemployment rate increased to 4.9% after seven straight months at 4.7%, according to statistics released by ESC. The increase matched the U.S. rate. "While North Carolina is feeling the effects of the current economic situation, employment was up nearly 5,400 workers over the past month and by nearly 30,000 over the course of the past year," said

ESC Chairman Harry E. Payne, Jr. "Job announcements have offset some of the layoffs, and we continue to make progress in helping North Carolinians find work."

Overall, employment increased in January by 5,372 to 4,325,582. Seasonally adjusted unemployment increased by 8,936 workers, to 220, 598.

Since this time last year, unemployment has increased by 16, 344 workers. The labor force, over the year, has increased by 46,298 people. The state rate in January 2008 was 4.5 percent.

Source: ESC

Local Career Fairs Prove Successful Across the Region

Wayne County—18th Annual Job Fair A Success

Recruiters were so busy at the Wednesday's (March 19) job fair at Wayne Community College in Goldsboro that many ran out of job applications.

Students and members of the public swarmed around the 60 business and industry representatives at the 18th annual "Wayne County Career Day Job Fair" co-hosted by the college's Cooperative Education Department and Seymour Johnson Air Force Base Airman and Family Readiness Center.

Construction, insurance, military and local industries were hot spots, reported Lorie Waller, WCC co-op/cooperative programs/job referral coordinator.

She estimated around 600 people visited during the three-hour fair. "It was full the whole time," she said.

"A lot of people ran out of applications. I had to make several trips to the copier for them," Ms. Waller said.

It was deemed a success by the organizers, who had employers calling until the day before the event to get a spot. "Everyone was pleased, both employers and job seekers," Ms. Waller said.

Next year's fair is already scheduled for March 18.

Source: Tara Humphries, Public Relations, WCC



Jimmy Miller (left), an Alcohol Law Enforcement agent, talks with Daniel Legg about careers with the N.C. Department of Crime Control and Public Safety at the Wayne County Career Day Job Fair put on by Wayne Community College's Cooperative Education Department and the Seymour Johnson Air Force Base Airman and Family Readiness Center. Legg is preparing for a second career after he retires from the U.S. Air Force.

Craven County—11th Annual Twin Rivers Career Fair Draws Job Seekers

The 11th annual Twin Rivers Career Fair was held on Thursday, February 28th at the New Bern Riverfront Convention Center. The Career Fair is a collaborative effort of the Craven County JobLink partner agencies including the Employment Security Commission, Craven Community College, NC Vocational Rehabilitation, Greene Lamp, and Coastal Community Action, Twin Rivers Opportunities, and the Eastern Carolina Workforce Development Board. PCS Home Appliances, PCS Phosphate, and the Havelock Chamber of Commerce were corporate sponsors again this year.

The day began with a "Lunch and Learn" session for employers. Tom White, Director of Business and Industry for the NC Division of Workforce Development/NC Department of Commerce, was the featured speaker and

focused on the benefits to employers and economic development in utilizing the services of the JobLink system.

Approximately 50 employers and over 300 jobseekers attended the Twin Rivers Career Fair. A number of employers commented that this was the best career fair they had attended. They also indicated that the jobseekers were well-prepared for the event. This is likely to be a result of Craven County JobLink staff and partners devoting several days prior to the Career Fair assisting jobseekers with resumes and job search tips in anticipation of their attendance at the Twin Rivers Career Fair.

The Career Fair Committee wants to thank the many employers who participated and offer a special note of thanks to the corporate sponsors. We also offer an early invitation to attend next

year's event, which is scheduled for March 2009. We hope to see you there.



Tom White, Director of Business and Industry for the NC Division of Workforce Development/NC Department of Commerce addresses local businesses

Source: Mary Brown, Craven JobLink

Lenoir County– Job Fair Grows to Nearly 900 Job Seekers

On March 19, Lenoir County JobLink Partners held their annual Job Fair at Lenoir Community College. Since 1993, the job fair has grown from 30 employers to about 120 employers offering jobs to prospective employees. About 900 people from the area attended this year's job fair at LCC. For the first time, Disney representatives attended the job fair where they promoted a paid internship college program. Employers seeking job applicants at the fair included Duplin General Hospital, Greene County Department of Social Services, Commerce Over-

seas, BSH, Primerica Financial Services, and the Lenoir County Sheriff's Office. Also, several companies attended the job fair knowing they were not currently hiring. LCC Director of Workforce Development Bobby Merritt said when planners organized the fair; many employers told him they were not going to attend because there were no jobs available with their respective companies. "I told them they should come out anyway because they may see someone they want to hire in the future when they do have job openings," Merritt said. Kinston-based com-

pany Commerce Overseas recently hired 18 employees and expects to hire up to 75 more workers during the next two years, Merritt said.



Source: Bobby Merritt, Lenoir JobLink

Carteret County– Job Fair Theme “It’s a Jungle Out There”

The annual Eastern North Carolina Career Fair was held on March 6, 2008 at the Crystal Coast Civic Center in Morehead City. There were 72 businesses and organizations with booths at the fair. Approximately 480 jobseekers attended the Career Fair. Exhibitors included a good mix of businesses, industry, military recruiters, restaurants, area police departments, health care, National Park Service, etc. This year's theme was “It’s a Jungle Out There”. Organizers of the event wore safari hats and decorated tables with images of African

wildlife to convey the theme. A “Lunch & Learn” session was held for businesses prior to the opening of the Career Fair. The speaker provided tips for employers on “How to Work a Trade Show”. The event also included a “Dress for Success” fashion show presented by career and technical students from local high schools.

The Career Fair was organized and sponsored by the Carteret County News-Times, Employment Security Commission, Carteret Community College, Vocational Rehabilitation, Carteret County Schools

Tech Prep Program and the Carteret County Chamber of Commerce.



Source: Dan Williams, Carteret JobLink

Vision East Partnership Applies for USDOL Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Grant

In March, the Vision Workforce Development Boards consisting of Cape Fear, Cumberland, Eastern Carolina, MidCarolina, Northeastern, Lumber River, Region Q, and Turning Point joined efforts and applied for a \$2,000,000 USDOL STEM Careers Initiative Grant.

Vision East is a unique network of 42 eastern North Carolina counties and eight Workforce Investment Areas, home to 2,524,073 residents, of whom 1,205,494 work. This Vision East initiative will engage regional STEM employers, the workforce system and the education continuum in developing talent that results in increased competitiveness and growth that transforms the Vision East region. The goals of the Vision East

STEM Careers Initiative are: (1) develop and broaden the region's STEM talent pool; (2) increase the participation of non-traditional populations, particularly disadvantaged youth in STEM career pathways; (3) transition Dislocated Workers into STEM fields; and (4) create a knowledgeable and engaged business-led STEM Careers Partnership.

This project will vividly demonstrate that a major regional problem such as an inadequately trained STEM workforce can efficiently be addressed with a large coordinated effort. The guiding vision of this initiative is that improving the preparation and qualifications of residents to work in existing and future STEM-related jobs will help foster both economic development

and the well being of Vision East region residents.

Expected outcomes of the Vision East STEM Careers Initiative are: 1) STEM employers are engaged and partnering with the workforce system in talent development efforts; 2) More eastern North Carolina residents have living wage STEM jobs; 3) Talent is recruited and trained to fill current and projected vacancies; 4) Greater awareness of the importance of STEM industries and of the high skill, high-wage opportunities they bring to Vision East residents and consequently 5) a responsive, transformed regional workforce delivery system.

Source: Denise Day, MidCarolina WDB

Mission of WIA

“...increase the employment, retention, and earnings of participants, and, as a result, improve the quality of the workforce, reduce welfare dependency, and enhance the productivity and competitiveness of the Nation.”

A Fresh Approach for Workforce Development

The Workforce Alliance's 2008 National Advocacy Summit



Anne Bacon, NC Rural Center, Tammy Childers, Eastern Carolina WDB, Inc. & John Quintero, NC Budget & Tax Center

Stakeholders from across the nation took a fresh approach to workforce development at the Workforce Alliance's 2008 Advocacy Summit. On Feb. 12 and 13, 150 stakeholders from 24 states came to Washington to meet with over 100 elected officials about a new vision for federal workforce policy that can make the U.S. more competitive. John Quintero, NC Budget & Tax Center, Anne Bacon, NC Rural Center, and Tammy Childers, Eastern Carolina

Workforce Development Board, Inc., representing the newly formed NC Alliance for Workforce Competitiveness, attended from North Carolina.

The summit focused on the need to invest in workforce training for **in-demand** middle skill jobs -- those which require more than high-school but less than a four-year degree and which make up the largest part of America's and North Carolina's labor market. Repeatedly, we hear how North Carolina employers in industries such as manufacturing, health care, and construction continue to struggle to find workers for good-paying middle-skill jobs with advancement opportunities. Programs like the Workforce Investment Act provide training opportunities for current and future workers to acquire those skills needed to compete in the local economy.

While in Washington, the North Carolina team had the opportunity to

met with Representatives Robin Hayes and Mike McIntyre, along with the staff from the offices of Senator Elizabeth Dole, Senator Richard Burr, Representative Walter Jones, and Representative David Price to talk about our transitioning economy, the State's Workforce Development System, and to seek their continued support for the Workforce Investment Act, Trade Assistance Act, and Unemployment Insurance Modernization Act.

The message is clear, with the projected funding cuts for education and workforce development programs, our federal policymakers—including North Carolina's congressional delegation—must address the investment shortfall in the forgotten middle of the labor market. North Carolina simply cannot afford the lost jobs and productivity that complacency brings. For more information, about the Workforce Alliance, visit www.workforcealliance.org.

Come and Enjoy A Taste of

Eastern Carolina's Bounty!

Saturday, April 26, 2008

12:00 Noon – 2:00 pm

Recipes will be prepared from the cookbook.

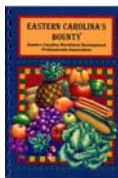
This event will be held at the Eastern Carolina Workforce Development Board, Inc.

1341 S. Glenburnie Road

New Bern, North Carolina

Tickets are \$10.00 and include a copy of Eastern Carolina's Bounty cookbook,

A Collection of Recipes



Sponsored by Eastern Carolina Workforce Development Professionals Association

Eastern Carolina Youth Council Presents:

2008 Youth Summit!

Motivational Speaker, Mr. Jimmy Ford of Wayne County will kick off the event with his inspiring message. This year's theme is "Welcome to the Real World".

Thursday, April 24, 2008

8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

New Bern Convention Center

2008 Quiz Bowl – "Battle of the Brains"

This year's game show style quiz bowl is even more exciting. WIA Youth from the nine county region will compete against Board and Youth Council Members to see who will win the **"Battle of the Brains"**. Board and Youth Council Members can opt out for a \$35.00 donation to help sponsor future youth events. Come join the fun and show support for our young people!

Saturday, May 10, 2008

10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Craven Community College Auditorium

The event is free for all in attendance, donations are graciously accepted!

NC Center for Justice Releases 2008 Living Standard of Income Report

One-third of North Carolina's working families earn low incomes, and the number and proportion of such families has risen since 2000. That increase, in turn, is linked to trends in the labor market, most disturbingly the growth of low-wage work.

In 2006, some 24 percent of working Tar Heels earned less than \$9.12 per hour. Moreover, low-wage jobs are less likely to provide basic workplace benefits and advancement opportunities, thereby increasing the odds that people will be unable to move ahead, no matter how hard they work. Restoring the promise of work for families earning low wages is a central challenge confronting North Carolina. Yet a lack of meaningful statistics about the economic pressures facing low-wage families often hinders progress. The primary national measure, the federal poverty level, is widely regarded as outmoded. Similarly, the prolonged erosion in the value of the minimum wage has undercut its relevance as a basic wage standard.

To better inform the debate around work, wages and opportunity, the North Carolina Budget and Tax Center developed the Living Income Standard (LIS), a market-based approach for estimating how much income a working family with children needs to pay for basic expenses. Updated periodically since 2001, the LIS provides a more nuanced assessment than otherwise is available of how much it truly costs to make ends meet in the Old North State.

The 2008 version of the LIS finds that the typical North Carolina family with children must earn \$41,184 annually – an amount equal to 201 percent of the federal poverty level – to afford the actual costs of seven essential expenses: housing, food, childcare, health care, transportation, other necessities and taxes. To meet that level, the adults in the average family would need to earn a combined \$19.80 per hour for every working hour of every week of the year. Yet 37 percent of the families included in this study fall below that modest income threshold.

Women, African Americans, Hispanics

and immigrants are disproportionately likely to live in families below the LIS. And 60 percent of the adults in those families work full-time.

This special report of the Budget and Tax Center updates the LIS for 2008, describes the characteristics of families that fall below the LIS, discusses the role of low-wage work in holding families below the LIS and presents strategies for helping more low-wage families share in the state's prosperity.

The NC Justice Center is a statewide, non-profit advocacy organization dedicated to securing economic justice for disadvantaged persons and communities. The mission of the Justice Center is to address poverty by ensuring that low-income individuals and communities have the resources and services they need to move from poverty to economic security.

A copy of the full report is available at: <http://www.ncjustice.org>

Source: John Quintero, NC Budget & Tax Center

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North Carolina



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- ◆ Customized Training for Employees
- ◆ Workplace Literacy

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) 527-7320

Onslow County JobLink Career Center

Phone: (910) 347-2121

Onslow County JobLink Information Site

Phone: (910) 938-6309

Pamlico County JobLink Career Center

Phone: (252) 249-9934

Wayne County JobLink Career Center

Phone: (919) 731-7950

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

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ECWDB Staff:

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 Robert Kehres, Assistant Director
 Lisa Harvey, WIA Coordinator
 Trina Hale, Accounting Technician
 Joe McCarthy, Youth Coordinator
 Debbie Simpkins, Fiscal Monitor
 D'Andra Knight, Program Assistant

Communicate with Us!

1341 South Glenburnie Road
 New Bern, NC 28562
 Telephone: (252) 636-6901 or (877) 916-6901
 Fax: (252) 638-3569

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

ECWDB Financial Management Workshop

at the ECWDB offices in New Bern
 April 9, 2008, 6:00 pm

Adult/Dislocated Worker Service Provider Meeting

at the ECWDB offices in New Bern
 April 10, 2008, 10:00 am

JobLink Committee Meeting

at the ECWDB offices in New Bern
 April 10, 2008, 6:00 pm

Executive Committee Meeting

at the ECWDB offices in New Bern
 April 24, 2008, 6:00 pm

Board Meeting

at the ECWDB offices in New Bern
 May 1, 2008, 6:00 pm

Pamlico County Job Fair

Thursday, April 24, 2008

2:00pm– 6:00pm

Pamlico Community College

Life Care Learning Center

Auditorium

5049 Hwy 306 South

Grantsboro, NC 28529

Sponsored by: Pamlico Community College, Pamlico Job-Link Career Center, and the Pamlico Community College Foundation. For additional information contact Jo Baker 252-249-1851 ext 3026.

PFC Ryan Smith is the son of Ms. Phyllis Smith, a WIA Counselor at West Craven High School, New Bern. Ryan attended West Craven High, graduated June 2006. He joined the Army National Guard, stationed in Fort Jackson, South Carolina, where he went through boot camp and training. He decided he wanted to join active army and was sent to Fort Carson, Colorado. He deployed in January 2008, and is currently located at Camp Liberty, Iraq. Please keep Ryan and all of our deployed military in your prayers.



PFC Ryan E. Smith, U. S. Army
Currently serving at Camp Liberty, Iraq.

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