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At High Point University our $250 million investment is transforming academics and campus life into a magnificent student-focused environment. Our rigorous academic programs and our stellar faculty attract outstanding students who enjoy many study abroad and internship opportunities, NCAA Division I Athletics, high-tech classrooms and residential halls, services such as tutoring, valet, concierge and much more. This environment is why Forbes.com ranks HPU in the top 6% of American schools and U.S. News & World Report ranks us #5 among comprehensive colleges in the South and #1 in the category “Best Schools to Watch”. See for yourself what’s extraordinary at www.highpoint.edu.

WHERE DOES HPU STUDENT JESSICA COLE FIND EXTRAORDINARY?

“In a student center that’s so well equipped I feel like a professional athlete.”

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DROPOUT PREVENTION

Dropping out of high school can have a disastrous effect both on students’ futures and on the future of the state. With the North Carolina’s dropout rate hovering around 30 percent, both the General Assembly and a variety of nonprofits are working to ensure more kids graduate from high school. In this section, read profiles of several of these nonprofits, learn about the General Assembly’s grant program and find out how technology in the classroom is helping motivate students to stay in school.

ON THE COVER:
Howard Lee, chairman of the state board of education, and Sam Houston, president and CEO of the North Carolina Science, Mathematics and Technology Education Center.
Photo by Jonathan Fredin
Easley on Education

Governor continues to tout state programs that have received nationwide acclaim

Two education programs with rhyming titles are what Gov. Mike Easley hopes can carry North Carolina into enhanced economic productivity long after his time as governor expires early next year. Easley fervently expresses how More at Four and Learn and Earn changed the dynamics of how public education is conducted in the state. The initiatives impact children from the time they begin their educational journey with smaller class sizes to the time they have the opportunity to obtain college credit or an associate degree while still in high school.

“We could not have created these programs without the partnership among educators, administrators, business leaders and the General Assembly,” Easley said. “We have moved the bar, but there is so much farther to go and much more to accomplish.

“It is crucial that we keep education at the highest level possible in North Carolina,” Easley continued. “Our children will be the ones to run this state and nation, so if we give them the best possible educational opportunities, we will be a better state and nation for it. This is an issue for all citizens because one day everything is going to depend on how we have prepared every child. They will be running our schools, our churches, our courts and even government. We must give every child every tool possible to succeed. Our future depends on it.”

Easley pointed out that he began to prepare the state for that future soon after he took office in 2001. At the time, he recalled how North Carolina was in the midst of its manufacturing downturn when thousands of workers lost jobs and the state faced a $2 billion budget shortfall. Easley said correcting those factors served as his primary motivator and remained a focus throughout his two terms as governor.

“You cannot separate the two; having a sound economy and providing opportunities for an excellent education go hand-in-hand,” Easley said.

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North Carolina Community Colleges create success for North Carolina citizens, businesses and communities through a variety of educational opportunities, customized worker training programs and the hope of dreams fulfilled.

The 58 colleges located across our state open the door to high-quality, accessible education, including associate degrees, college transfer programs and continuing education offerings. We strive to maximize student success, no matter what the area of study, to develop a globally competitive, effective workforce, and to improve the well-being of North Carolina citizens and communities.

The cornerstone of our mission is to provide support for economic development through services, and in partnership with business and industry.

Our Small Business Centers provide counseling and support for those businesses that are the backbone of our economy, while our customized training programs work to meet the workforce needs of new, existing and expanding industries across North Carolina.
The Science of Success

Center focuses on advancing students and boosting the economy through improved science, math and technology education

BY KATI KNOWLAND

Few words in the English language elicit quite as loud of a gnash from the general population as “trigonometry” or “chemistry.” That might be because math and science frequently haven’t been taught in an engaging way, said Sam Houston, president and CEO of the North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Science, Mathematics and Technology Education Center.

“Young people have a tendency, by the time they get to the middle grades, to make some decisions about what they don’t want to do,” said Houston. “So, by not engaging them in very exciting things early, we miss that window of opportunity to give them a vision about what they can be.”

The SMT Center, headed by Houston, was created by the Burroughs Wellcome Fund in 2002 with the mission of helping to improve science, mathematics and technology education in North Carolina’s pre-K-12 classrooms. According to the center’s official mission statement, the end goal is to provide children with enough background in these subjects “to have successful careers, be good citizens and advance the economy of the state.”

Howard Lee, center board member and chairman of the state board of education, compared North Carolina’s current focus on science and technology to the space race spurred on by Sputnik.

“We didn’t have a lot of commitment to going into space until Sputnik, then all of the sudden, America was in a crisis and we had to catch up,” said Lee. “We didn’t have a commitment to science and technology until we began to realize that when corporations couldn’t find enough scientists and mathematicians to fill the need for the growing industries that were coming, those corporations started making the decision to leave the country and go somewhere else.”

“From that standpoint, we have a lot of ways to have scientists divide their time between their primary work and offer some time in the public schools to help motivate kids. That accomplishes what I know we consider to be important as part of the center — helping kids connect the science, math and technology to the real world so they can see the connection between where they are and where they would like to be.”

In addition to getting scientists into classrooms, the center helps to train teachers to be more knowledgeable about science, technology and math so that they can pass along that knowledge and excitement to their students.

“Our teachers come to the classroom, and a lot of them don’t know any more science than the man on the street, and they really don’t have a deep and well-founded understanding of members,” said Houston. “From that standpoint, we have a lot of people in the classroom today who don’t have all of the tools that they need.”

“We need to find ways to have scientists divide their time between their primary work and offer some time in the public schools to help motivate kids. That accomplishes what I know we consider to be important as part of the center — helping kids connect the science, math and technology to the real world so they can see the connection between where they are and where they would like to be.”

— Howard Lee, chairman of the state board of education

Houston notes that understanding and forming opinions about issues of national importance, like gas prices, global warming and stem cells, requires a good deal of scientific knowledge.

“From that standpoint, we have a lot of people in the classroom today who don’t have all of the tools that they need.”

In this vein, the center acts as a catalyst for professional development programs, connecting teachers with programs conducted by the Department of Public Instruction, the Math Science Education Network, Science House, Teacher Academy, the North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching and others.

“We’ve had great deal of success in pulling all of these different deliverers, providers of services, around a particular focus and target,” said Houston. “As a world skill they will need to get a good job. Through a program called Teacher Link, the center is bringing the state’s wealth of professionals in science, math and technology into the classroom.

“We have 84 scientists that basically volunteer their time,” said Houston. “We’ve trained them on the standard course of study. They know the first and second grade science standard course of study, and they’re available for teachers to use for support.”

Lee noted that the move to get scientists into the classroom can go even further.

“We need to find people like the scientists who have been laid off at GlaxoSmithKline,” said Lee. “We should be on them like a duck on a lune bug, convincing them to at least come into the school. And we need to find ways to have scientists divide their time between their primary work and offer some time in the public schools to help motivate kids. That accomplishes what I know we consider to be important as part of the center — helping kids connect the science, math and technology to the real world so they can see the connection between where they are and where they would like to be.”

“Fifty years ago, a kid could leave high school, and all he or she needed to know was to walk into a textile plant and push a button,” said Lee. “All of the decisions about what kind of dye, what kind of cloth and what was going into the production of whatever the product was were made by somebody else. Today, one talks into the textile plant, and the person has a complete project under his or her control. That person has to mix the dye, know when the dye’s not coming out correctly, know what the cloth is made of and know how to avoid interactions between the various chemicals that are within their control.”

Creating well-informed citizens, even beyond those who choose to become scientists, is another important goal of the center. Lee added that the recognition that scientists divide their time between the various chemicals that are within their control. That person has to mix the dye, know when the dye’s not coming out correctly, know what the cloth is made of and know how to avoid interactions between the various chemicals that are within their control.”

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—in Howard Lee, chairman of the state board of education
Righting the Writing Test

BY KATI KNOWLAND

Science and math are an important part of a child's education, but expression through writing is vital as well. That's why the state board of education is working to develop a new, more comprehensive and realistic way of testing students' writing abilities.

"The board has recognized the importance of expression through writing," said Lee, chairman of the state board of education. "Unfortunately, what has been a part of our standards and accountability system, we have not been impressed with the writing tests as a fair process by which to measure a person's true understanding and capability."

Under the current testing process, students in grades 4, 7 and 10 respond in writing to a specific prompt within a given time limit. This response is then graded and ultimately determines whether a student has succeeded or failed in writing, said Lee.

"Writing should be more important than a snapshot, in grades 4, 7, and 10," said Sam Houston, chairman of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Testing and Accountability and president and CEO of the North Carolina Science, Mathematics and Technology Education Center. "Kids ought to write all of the time.

Lee and the board of education agree with this assessment and are working to develop a new testing instrument. The new method of testing writing skills has not been decided, but Lee said the board is exploring a number of options.

"One approach is that it would be integrated as a part of the graduation project, that a person would be measured on that basis," said Lee. "Another is to look around and determine what other states are doing in terms of writing and see what is something we can latch onto there. And then, of course, the third is to come up with a completely new independent instrument that could be administered and then judged.

No matter what new assessment method is chosen, Houston said that it will increase the importance of writing, not diminish it. "The state board has been under criticism or misconstrued," he said. "What the state board has chosen to do is an innovation in the standards of writing, not a reduction in the standards."

"The standards right now require kids to generate almost a formula-written response to a fictitious prompt," said Houston. "It gives us the opportunity to actually measure more than students' ability to write in an acceptable format; it could include a request that they demonstrate that they also know something other than just writing.

The board is expected to make a decision about a new testing instrument in the coming months so that a timetable for implementing the new test can be established.

The board of education mulls over new standards that would increase the relevance of the writing test

BY KATI KNOWLAND

The board is expected to make a decision about a new testing instrument in the coming months so that a timetable for implementing the new test can be established. The board of education mulls over new standards that would increase the relevance of the writing test.
Ralls is passionate about making an impact as the new NCCCS president

A family background in education combined with significant firsthand experience in manufacturing plants greatly shaped the man R. Scott Ralls is today and ultimately led him to his current position — president of the North Carolina Community College System.

Ralls explained that his father's family included several educators, so gatherings were peppered with plenty of discussion about the importance of education. An industry downturn prompted his mother's family to move from a Tennessee sawmill community to a textile mill town in South Carolina, but education remained in high regard. Ralls praised his grandfather — who only had an eighth-grade education — as the kind of man who showed children the value of an education. His mother at a time when women rarely obtained higher education.

“Because of his successful reign at Craven, the community college system tapped Ralls to replace H. Clinton Lancaster as president. Ralls officially took charge on May 1, becoming not only the second former community college president for almost six years, Ralls was president of Craven Community College in New Bern.”

“Ralls said he took great pleasure in walking the campus and interacting with students. Many of those individuals obtained not only associate degrees but went on to earn bachelor's degrees without leaving the campus through partnerships with NC State University and East Carolina University.

“When that happened with education now, even though we've known this in North Carolina now for a long time, is education is tied to economic prosperity more than ever before,” Ralls continued. “It's more important than ever for the different areas of education to work together. That's a lot of talk about this abstract term, seamless education. I believe that oftentimes the community college system is the places to get the most bang for your buck. There are a lot of students who are not in the pipeline and you want to make sure that they have a chance to get in and stay on track.”

“Craven, at the very end of the 1970s, just happened to be the right place at the right time,” Ralls added. “The community college is a school that's close, affordable and accessible. It's a model as it relates to education and to economic growth.”

“Sometimes that’s the most difficult aspect of leadership — making sure you are doing the right thing because something can be very important, but it might not be the top priority at that time. Part of this job and any job, you have to let the priorities as much as you can dictate your time and not what becomes the priority of the issue of the day. I tell people that you can't chase every squirrel that crosses your path. You've got to keep your focus on what you're trying to do.

“You want to surround yourself with folks who are a lot smarter than you are, and I feel very good about the team that we have here,” Ralls continued. “Very few things of much magnitude occur because of one individual or one group. Some of the things that have been accomplished in our state have occurred because of groups coming together and not worrying about who gets the credit but trying to make things happen.”

“Part of this job and any job is that you have to let go of it. You can’t think about where you’ve been. You've got to move it forward. Sometimes that’s easier said than it is done, but it’s very important when you have that perspective.”

“Ralls fervently believes many positive outcomes spin out of North Carolina’s community college system. He says that’s what prompted him to vie for the system president position, not for its perceived prestige but rather the impact.
Boat building, said Ed Verge, is serious business. “This is not Mr. Smith’s high school shop class,” said Verge, lead instructor for the boatbuilding program at Cape Fear Community College in Wilmington. Cape Fear is one of three community colleges in the state that offer a boatbuilding program at Cape Fear Community College in Wilmington.

Boatbuilding programs at NC’s community colleges are transforming a workforce

The Cape Fear and Albemarle programs both can take from one and a half to two years and require that students obtain a thorough grounding in materials (wood and composites), tools and equipment (including safety), marine measurement, marine terminology, basic boat construction techniques, project design and planning and even computer-assisted design. Albemarle courses also include study of the history of boatbuilding in North Carolina.

From there, students move on to more specialized subjects, such as cabinetry, electrical systems, marine electronics, marine mechanics, engines and power systems, marine painting and marine sewage systems. Cape Fear offers two programs—one focusing on wooden boats and another on fiberglass and other materials. Carteret’s MARTEC is more technologically oriented, with course concentrations on marine construction, with strong emphasis on computer-assisted design, and on marine propulsion systems (outboard, diesel, etc.) and support systems (electrical, plumbing, etc.).

“The companies know that it’s good to have somebody in and they’re not standing around and are amazed by the shop and the equipment and all that’s going on. Our guys can go in and go to work right away and be useful. They know the tools. They know the job.” — Ed Verge, Cape Fear Community College

For those reasons—and because the curricula and the work are so demanding—the boatbuilding programs get few applicants straight out of high school. Many program applicants are already working in the industry and are trying to improve their skills. “Most of our students are 22 to 28,” Verge said. “We have some with four-year degrees who just didn’t like what they were doing. We don’t get many straight out of high school.”

Some come from other industries. That’s often the case in Western North Carolina, where Cleveland and Wilkes community colleges, and a few others, develop specific courses to retrain out-of-work furniture-makers and textile workers for jobs with Chris-Craft and Mako.

At College of the Albemarle, James said the emphasis has also been on retraining. “Dare County is an expensive place to live, and not many people move here unless they’re professionals,” she said. “Our focus has been on the people already here. We’ve had some coming from other industries, such as construction.”

But for those who do take the challenge and receive certification or a boatbuilding diploma, there are jobs available. “Since 1978, we’ve averaged 10 to 12 students a year through the program,” Verge said, “and all have gotten jobs, although not all in boatbuilding.”

James said the College of the Albemarle also has averaged about 10 students a year and about half take jobs in boatbuilding.

“Of course, not all of our boatbuilding companies participate in the program, but we’re working on that,” she said. “We’d like to reach a point that all local companies require new hires to at least complete the two introductory courses, to learn the terminology and measurement and such. It simply would mean less for the companies to have to train and save them time and money.”

As for the companies that do hire products of the community college programs, “Our [local companies] love ‘em,” said Verge. “By the time a local company that’s got four or five of our graduates working for them, “These companies know that it’s good to have somebody in and they’re not standing around and are amazed by the shop and the equipment and all that’s going on,” Verge added. “Our guys can go in and go to work right away and be useful. They know the tools. They know the job.”

BY TOM HARRIS

Nautical Knowledge

Boatbuilding at Cape Fear

As Verge noted, boat building is serious—and demanding—business. The Cape Fear and Albemarle programs both can take from one and a half to two years and require that students obtain a thorough grounding in materials (wood and composites), tools and equipment (including safety), marine measurement, marine terminology, basic boat construction techniques, project design and planning and even computer-assisted design. Albemarle courses also include study of the history of boatbuilding in North Carolina.

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Guilford Technical Community College

CHANGE — STILL THE CHALLENGE

In the beginning, students at what is now known as Guilford Technical Community College were taxing their brains to learn how to repair textile knitting machines or how to cut and sew upholstery material.

Fifty years later, the challenge is more high tech and involves becoming astute at meeting the needs of airplane builders, engineering firms and electronics. The educational needs have changed.

"Change" has always been the challenge, from the school’s opening with 42 students to the thousands who come here today looking to improve their educational and economic status.

The latest change will be training students in avionics, a word unknown when those first students were sweating over knitting machines.

A $243,958 grant from Duke Energy will help establish a training program for avionics technicians at the college’s facility near Piedmont Triad International Airport.

More change. Another challenge met.

In early 2005, Montreat College, a Christian liberal arts college located in western North Carolina, commissioned a study on the economic impact of the 416-student school.

The results were staggering, school officials said. The college contributed $30.4 million to the western North Carolina economy — Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, Madison, McDowell, Rutherford, Transylvania and Yancey counties — during the 2004-2005 academic year. One dollar of every $30 spent in the nearby town of Black Mountain was attributed to the college, and the school provided 5.4 percent of the town’s government revenues, according to the report.

"It’s just amazing to think that this small residential liberal arts college can have so much of an impact," said Jerry Bobilya, the former vice president for institutional advancement at the school. "It was really an eye-opener for town leaders."

Montreat College isn’t a unique case. While known primarily for the education they provide, North Carolina’s colleges and universities have a significant impact on the economies of their surrounding communities. Students contribute millions of dollars to local businesses, and sporting and cultural events draw thousands of visitors each season. Colleges and universities are also major employers of local residents and provide valuable tax dollars for local governments.

The Cooperating Raleigh Colleges recently released the results of their own economic impact study. The association, which comprises Meredith College, Peace College, North Carolina State University, Shaw University and Saint Augustine’s College, contributed an estimated $5.5 billion to the Wake County economy in 2007 and accounted for more than 85,000 jobs, according to the report.

Those numbers account for 25 percent of all wage and salary income in the county and 20 percent of total employment. The association also generated $443 million in public revenue, money that is used by local governments.

Jenny Spiker, director of Cooperating Raleigh Colleges, said that even she was surprised by the magnitude of the economic impact.

"I think it was stronger than I expected," Spiker said.

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Education and the Economy

Colleges and universities impact the state’s economy in surprising ways

BY JONATHAN YEOMANS
“High Point University is one of the premier attractions in High Point. As the university grows, so does the number of visitors who come to our city. Their economic impact is in the millions.”

— Charlotte Young, president and CEO of the High Point Convention and Visitors Bureau

Similarly, High Point University, located in High Point, contributes heavily to the Piedmont Triad area. The college contributed an estimated $320 million to the region last year, according to a recent report. During the same time period, the university drew to the area a total of 57,468 visitors, who logged 5,350 nights in local hotel rooms and spent money in restaurants and retail shops.

“High Point University is one of the premier attractions in High Point,” said Charlotte Young, president and CEO of the High Point Convention and Visitors Bureau. “As the university grows, so does the number of visitors who come to our city. Their economic impact is in the millions.”

In the past three years, the school has invested more than $250 million in academics, student life and facilities. “All of our new buildings are being built using local contractors and subcontractors and architects,” said Chris Dudley, vice president for administration and community relations. “We’re committed to using North Carolina-based companies for the benefit of our local economy.”

And when you add students, that means close to 1,700 people connected to the college are buying gasoline, food, clothing and paying rent in the area.

The college also runs its own Community Development Corporation, which partners with the city to buy and renovate existing buildings and re-market them.

“We have that partnership to bring people back into this community,” she said. “And needless to say it is regenerating interest and energy in this community.”

The college also provides some intangibles for the surrounding community, she said. It functions as a beacon of hope for many residents. Many of the college students go to the local barbershop and take their children to the local day care.

“The numbers don’t lie,” he said. “The college has been here for 140 years. Communities are dependent on that. When you come to our campus, our food service people are community members…. The employees who live outside the boundaries come here every day and spend money for lunch; they go to the local harborship and take their children to the local day care.”

With faculty, staff and students, there are close to 1,650 individuals who bring their finances and wisdom to this campus and this community.”

Dianne Boardley Suber, the college president, said the college is one of the largest employers in southeast Raleigh.

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Duke Energy’s business partnership with Alamance Community College is extensive. Understanding the budgetary constraints under which community colleges operate, last year the company awarded two Duke Energy Community and Technical College Grants totaling nearly half a million dollars to ACC.

The grants have helped upgrade to state-of-the-art status the college’s Machining Technology and Industrial Systems Technology programs. This has resulted in rising enrollments in both of these programs.

Local Duke Energy personnel volunteered their time to provide technical expertise and consultation when requested by ACC staff. Duke Energy is also a financial supporter of ACC students by annually providing $1,000 for scholarships.

The future of the school looks promising. In 2008, 883 freshmen enrolled in the school, up from 470 freshmen in 2005, and the total undergraduate program has doubled in the same time span, Dudley said.

Members of the economic development corporation use the university as a lure for potential businesses, Dudley said.

“The university is one of the first places they take prospective clients to see,” he said. “It represents great vibrancy and growth for our economy.”

North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities, an organization that represents the state’s 36 private colleges, will begin a study of its collective economic impact this fall. But it doesn’t take a study to illustrate the effect the colleges have had on the state’s economy, officials said.

“Our colleges and universities award one-third of all bachelor’s degrees in the state, produce 60 percent of the lawyers, 50 percent of the doctors and about 25 percent of the teachers who graduate from college,” said Hope Williams, organization president. “One of the reasons that is so important is the low out migration rate. Studies have shown that students are more likely to live where they go to college.”

Williams said that as an organization, the private colleges in North Carolina are one of the state’s top employers.

“That obviously has a direct economic impact on North Carolina,” she said.

The colleges also boast advanced research facilities, such as the Center for Regenerative Medicine at Wake Forest, which draw qualified professionals from around the globe.

“The possibilities are amazing,” she said.

Members of the private colleges in North Carolina are one of the state’s top employers.

Commitment to service has landed Gardner-Webb University on the President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll.

Graduate School of Business graduates are executives at major corporations such as Bank of America, BMW, Carolinas Healthcare System, Deloitte & Touche, Federal Reserve, Krispy Kreme, NFL, Pfizer, Sara Lee, and many more.
Educating the Educators

A wide variety of programs at colleges and universities across the state help prepare more teachers for a lifetime of educating students.

North Carolina’s colleges and universities graduate about 4,000 new teachers each year, just enough to keep up with the demands of growing enrollment in the state’s public schools. Of those 4,000 graduates, about two-thirds actually enter the classroom, according to a study by the NC Center for Public Policy Research. Of that group, about one-third will quit teaching within three years. Another 7,000 teachers are lost each year through retirement, career changes and other causes.

“The Employment Security Commission estimates that North Carolina will need 34,000 additional teachers by 2014,” said Dr. Linda Ann Patriarca, dean of the School of Education at East Carolina University. So, with jobs available, why aren’t more students entering the teaching profession? “The number of traditional students wishing to pursue teaching has not increased because they see careers in other disciplines leading to higher-paying jobs as more attractive,” said Dr. Ed Shearin, dean of the Triangle Campus of North Carolina Wesleyan College. “This is especially true of those with majors in sciences.” And why are so many qualified teachers leaving? “In survey after survey of teachers who leave teaching, the same items seem to surface,” said Dr. Charles R. Duke, dean of the Reich College of Education at Appalachian State University. “These are lack of administrative support, poor teaching conditions in the school, salary and excessive paperwork. These individuals also report that they do not see teachers having the same respect in the community in ways they once did.”

But steps are being taken to address some of these issues. The state’s colleges and universities, teaming with community colleges, businesses and industry, have developed innovative programs to attract bright students to teaching, to prepare them to succeed and to keep them in the classroom.

For recruiting new teachers, few programs have succeeded like the North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program. Established in 1986, the program awards 500 scholarships each year to qualified high school seniors who agree to teach in North Carolina public schools. Almost 4,000 NC Teaching Fellows now teach in the state.

“This program has a proven track record in preparing students to become educators,” said Dr. Chris Law, who directs the program at Queens University of Charlotte. “Students are required to participate in a variety of exercises that are required for all Teaching Fellows across the state. In addition, students are given more specific programming that reflects the commitments of the individual campus.”

The North Carolina Teacher Cadet Program provides classroom experience for high school juniors and seniors, giving them a chance to “try out” teaching. Students typically take a Teacher Cadet I course as juniors and a Teacher Cadet II course as seniors,” said Dr. Brenda Timkham, dean of the School of Education at Chowan University. “Many teacher education programs accept these courses for college credit.”

Dozens of scholarship and loan programs, from the federal Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarships to Teach for America loans, which offer incentives for teachers in low-income schools, also are available. Many institutions have individual programs, such as East Carolina’s Maynard Scholars Program, patterned after the Teaching Fellows Program.

Other successful recruitment efforts involve the community colleges. The 2+2 Plus program allows students to earn a two-year associate degree at a community college, then complete education courses and licensure at a four-year school. “This program has doubled the number of degree-seeking students in our elementary education program,” said Dr. John Hemphill, director of teacher education at Greensboro College.

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At East Carolina, the Wachovia Partnership East allows students to complete education degree requirements with online courses or with evening courses at one of five consortium sites and is designed “to recruit prospective teachers from rural communities who plan to return to their communities.”

“This ‘grow your own’ approach has been hugely successful in that the program started with one cohort of 16 students in fall 2003 and has grown to 20 cohorts with 372 students enrolled this fall 2008,” said Patriarca. In Western NC, the Appalachian Learning Alliance and Western Carolina University’s BK Distance Program offer similar programs, which allow students access to degree programs without leaving their homes or their jobs. “Graduates of these programs are eagerly sought by local school districts because they know the graduates are tied to the region and are unlikely to leave teaching once they enter it,” said Duke.

Significant efforts also are underway to attract qualified students with bachelor’s degrees or are adults considering a career change.

The Masters of Arts in Teaching, NC TEACH and the NC TEACH Online programs and Greensboro College’s Licensure Plus program offer individuals with bachelor’s degrees the opportunity to earn master’s degrees and state licensure. The NC Model Teacher Consortium paves the way for teachers and other educational personnel to gain full licensure. At Chowan, the Collaborative to Support Initially Licensed Professionals works to train and license teachers for the northwestern region of the state. Several colleges have special programs to attract retiring military personnel.

Most colleges also offer evening or online courses to allow working adults to become teachers. “Our number of online courses has doubled in the past three years,” said Dr. Leah H. Fiorentino, dean of the School of Education at UNC-Pembroke.

Some schools are expanding education-
North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities

North Carolina’s 36 independent colleges and universities enroll more than 80,000 students, more than half of whom are from North Carolina. They grant almost one-third of the baccalaureate degrees awarded each year in North Carolina, about half of the medical degrees and more than 60 percent of the law degrees. They offer 126 different undergraduate majors. They prepare close to 25 percent of the teachers who graduate in the state.

All 36 nonprofit institutions are liberal arts, comprehensive or research colleges and universities accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. They constitute North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities, which represents private colleges and universities statewide and nationally on education issues and public policy.

NCICU also provides research and information to and about private institutions; conducts staff development; raises private scholarship funds; and coordinates collaborative programs. Dr. A. Hope Williams is president of the Raleigh-based organization.

North Carolina Independent Colleges & Universities

In 2007, 99 percent of Peace College graduates were either employed, continuing their education or both. Ninety-nine percent of class of 2007 graduates have been attending graduate school or both. Peace College offers an engaging four-year program of arts and sciences designed to prepare women for today’s world. Located in downtown Raleigh, Peace offers a faculty-student ratio of 1-to-11, with teachers who are drawn to the education profession by the desire to help children learn.

But attracting bright individuals to the classroom and keeping them there may require more than new programs and changes in educational tactics.

Although lip service is given to addressing the teacher shortage in North Carolina from politicians and the general public, the state has done remarkably little to address the shortage in a meaningful way,” said Duke, adding that we need more programs such as Teaching Fellows, stronger support within communities, support from parents, competitive salaries and “to return teaching to a level of respect it once had.”

“It is a sad commentary on our times,” he said, “that somehow, somewhere, our value system regarding education has become almost nonexistent, and yet we all know that education is the key to unlocking the doors to so many opportunities for our people. What could be a more valuable investment than that?”

— Dr. Charles R. Duke, Reich College of Education at Appalachian State University

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Efforts also are being made to better educate teachers. Many programs require students to gain more classroom experience.

“We must better prepare teachers for the reality they face,” said Dr. Tommy Benson, chairman of the Department of Education at Mount Olive College.

But some retention issues must be addressed outside of the education framework, by changes in traditional operating methods.

“We should relieve teachers from having to finance many of their own instructional materials, provide them with easily accessible phone service, adequate office space, less extra-duty time and more time to collaborate with fellow teachers,” said Benson.

Teacher salaries also are an important, but not an overriding factor.

“Although pay is an important issue for teachers,” said Hemphill, of Greensboro College, “they are drawn to the education profession by the desire to help children learn.”
UNC-TV brings you the most in-depth television coverage of the candidates and issues in this election year. With expert analysis and painstaking research, PBS and UNC-TV help you sort through the campaign confusion to get the facts and make your choices.

For even more information and helpful resources, visit UNC-TV’s Election 2008 web site, developed in partnership with the North Carolina Center for Voter Education, at www.unctv.org/election.

**DROPOUT DILEMMA**

Nonprofits, schools, businesses, parents, teachers, students — everyone is concerned about the number of students dropping out of high school in North Carolina. According to the Department of Public Instruction, more than 30 percent of students who entered high school in 2004 had not graduated by 2008. The DPI also found that a total of 23,550 students — or 5.24 percent of the students in grades nine through 12 — dropped out of school in the 2006-07 school year, marking an increase from 5.04 percent in the 2005-06 school year.

When North Carolina’s economy was dependent on low-paying, low-skill jobs, it didn’t much matter how many students weren’t completing high school; even dropouts could find gainful employment and support themselves. But in today’s economy, fueled by new manufacturing and high-tech enterprises, high school dropouts are a major concern.

“Every year North Carolina has been hurt by unprecedented economic change that is reshaping jobs and markets in the United States and around the world,” said Tony Habib, president of the North Carolina New Schools Project. “In the state’s past, students could quit school and still earn a living,” he added. “That past is no more.”

Those jobs have been replaced with an economy that is reliant on a well-educated workforce.

“Our success as a state and nation depends on educating all students; today’s students are tomorrow’s citizens, leaders, entrepreneurs and workforce,” said Tricia Willoughby, executive director of the North Carolina Business Committee for Education. “The jobs that our leaders are attracting to North Carolina are knowledge-based and require critical thinking, problem solving, innovation and technological literacy.”

In order to ensure that they continue to have a well-educated workforce ready to meet their needs, businesses are standing up and taking notice of the climbing dropout rate.

“More than anyone, business leaders understand that our education system must keep pace with the rising demands of the global knowledge economy,” said Susan Millican, executive director of Futures for Kids.

One such company is SAS, based in Cary. “To maintain North Carolina’s reputation as a destination for technology and knowledge-driven companies, it’s essential that a qualified workforce be in place,” said Jane Rivers, manager of SAS Education Value-Added Assessment System. “SAS is one of the companies that need that talent, as are our customers, so we focus our social responsibility efforts toward creating more engaging and rewarding learning environments for our state’s children.”

In addition to hurting a student’s earning potential and hurting the business community, high school dropouts cost all North Carolinians more than they might realize. According to the Alliance for Excellent Education, this year’s high school dropouts in North Carolina will cost the state’s economy $11 billion in wages, taxes and productivity over the students’ lifetimes.

According to Communities in Schools of North Carolina, at the low end of the scale, a dropout costs society $5,483 more per year than does someone with a high school degree. CISNC pointed out that the US Census Bureau counts 1,350,000 dropouts in North Carolina, costing the state $7.4 billion in 2008. The organization notes that this is more than one-third of the current state budget.

“The state’s high dropout rate has profound implications for the future health of North Carolina’s economy,” said John Dornan, president and executive director of the Public School Forum of North Carolina. “If North Carolina is going to attract high-wage, high-skill jobs, it needs to build a workforce that has the capacity to meet the demands of a global marketplace. From a humanistic point of view, the state can’t stand by and see nearly one-third of its young people run the risk of being mired in poverty because the educational system failed them.”

On the following pages, you’ll find profiles of six of the many organizations working to keep kids in school. Their leaders discuss how they tackle the problem of dropouts and the grants they’ve been successful in their missions.

Also in this special dropout prevention section, NC Magazine highlights the work of the General Assembly’s Joint Legislative Committee on Dropout Prevention and the grants it is providing to organizations working to curb the number of dropouts in NC. Also, NC Magazine profiles an innovative new program working to put a laptop in the hands of every student.
ON THE DROPOUT FRONT LINES

COMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS OF NC
WWW.CLSN.C.ORG

Leadership: Mike Stephens, COO, and Linda Harrill, president

Date founded: 1989
Mission: We assist North Carolina communities in replicating the Communities in Schools process of coordinated service delivery, support the 39 local CIS organizations across the state, and advocate for children, youth and their families. CISNC provides regional and on-site training and technical assistance, builds partnerships with state agencies and organizations to benefit young people, and serves as a resource and information center for local communities concerned about youth at risk of school failure.

Communities in Schools is the nation’s largest stay-in-school network, providing direct services to nearly 1.2 million youth in 195 communities across the United States. CIS is providing the link between teachers and the community by bringing caring adults into the schools and community sites to meet children’s needs. This link gives children the much needed opportunity to focus on learning and their future. Our network’s mission is to champion the connection of needed community resources with schools and other sites to help young people successfully learn, stay in school and prepare for life.

How they’re helping: Communities in Schools was founded on the concept that all students can and will achieve academically when resources to address their academic and social service needs are tailored, coordinated and accessible. That premise has evolved into what we now call community-based, integrated student services. Through the efforts of a single point of contact (site coordinator) at a school, individual student needs are assessed, and research-based connections are made between the student and targeted community resources. Most of these resources fit into what we call the Five Basics.

The Five Basics:
A personal relationship with a caring adult.
A safe place to learn and grow.
A healthy start to a healthy lifestyle.
A marketable skill to use upon graduation.
A chance to give back.

Among dropout prevention programs using scientifically based evidence, the CIS Model is one of a very few in the United States proven to keep kids in school and is the only dropout prevention program in the nation with scientifically based evidence to prove that it increases graduation rates and graduating students on time with a standard high school diploma.

When implemented with high fidelity, the CIS Model results in a higher percentage of students reaching proficiency in fourth- and eighth-grade reading and math.

Effective implementation of the CIS Model correlates more strongly with positive school-level outcomes (i.e., graduation rates, achievement, etc.) than non-orchestrated service provision alone, resulting in notable improvements of school-level outcomes in the framework of the CIS model.

Clearly the entire CIS network is pleased that what we have been saying for years has finally been validated by a disinterested, well-respected, third-party research group.

F4K’s mission is to bridge the gap between the hopes and dreams of our students and the workforce development needs of our communities. We use technology to connect middle and high school students to real people and their communities in their neighborhood and across the state. Technology can level the playing field for students, who may not otherwise have the opportunity to talk with an engineer at Cisco or to learn how their artistic skills might be used in a career. Students with a plan are more successful in school, and our goal at F4K is to show every one of our students that there is a future for them that makes the most of their unique talents and interests.

How they’re helping: F4K gives students relevance by reinforcing the value of education. Research confirms what we already know, that students who understand why they’re in school are less likely to drop out. F4K helps students discover what makes them tick and shows them how to translate that into a career plan.

According to an evaluation by the Duke Center for Child and Family Policy, “91 percent of students using F4K understand they need to do well in school in order to get the kinds of jobs they want.” Through F4K, students can also connect to businesses and people who can encourage them, including students who have limited access to these resources due to location or socioeconomic background. It’s not just for students, though. F4K gives schools and families access to real people, from biotechnologists to bike mechanics and more. This unique and provides students with a context for achievement and success.

A story of success: Carlos and Wendy now work at Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina thanks to a partnership with F4K. Traci Claine, the career development coordinator at Sanderson High School in Raleigh, has been using F4K to help her students create career goals. This spring, F4K shared with Ms. Claine how new hires are doing great in training. The most excited person though may be Carlos’s father, who has been sharing Carlos’s opportunity with plenty of other parents. It’s a win-win for everyone, most of all Carlos and Wendy.

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FUTURES FOR KIDS
WWW.F4K.ORG

Leadership: Susan Milliken, executive director

Date Founded: 2001
Mission: The idea behind F4K is bringing together our business resources in one place to support students and equip them with the skills necessary to succeed in the workplace while at the same time, helping businesses “grow their own.” F4K addresses the need to be proactive about workforce preparedness in NC.

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NORTH CAROLINA BUSINESS COMMITTEE FOR EDUCATION
WWW.NCBCE.ORG

Leadership: Tricia Willoughby, executive director

Date Founded: 1983
Founded by: Governor Jim Hunt
Mission: The mission of NCBCIE is to provide advocacy for public schools as well as to provide input, feedback and communication for members and other education policy leaders. NCBCIE is a nonprofit, nonpartisan consensus of businesses from across the state with a 25-year history of support, input and advocacy for public schools.

How they’re helping: NCBCIE impacts the graduation rate in a number of ways. For example: Members stress the importance of graduation using communication tools provided by NCBCIE. A flash drive with videos, a PowerPoint presentation and talking points was given to all members to assist them in speaking to civic clubs, education groups and other organizations.

The goal of that message is that staying in school pays off — both financially and in choices students have beyond high school. An NCBCIE publication, “Snapshots of Strategic Corporate Investment,” provides examples of ways businesses in our state can support students in our schools.

To promote retention of quality
teachers. NCBCE supports the Teacher Working Conditions Survey. In 2008, over 104,000 educators participated in the survey. Data from previous surveys has driven legislative policy changes such as requiring planning time for teachers during the school day.

NCBCE’s survey of members provided information to the State Board of Education about the knowledge and skills that NC employers look for in potential employees. These survey results were instrumental in the board’s revision of its missions, goals, curriculum and testing program.

The Graduation Project is an assessment that requires students to demonstrate what they can do with what they know. NCBCE’s Job Shadowing Program provides a template to connect students to community leaders that will enhance these projects. Relationships with business leaders in work environments will help students understand the importance of graduation from high school.

A story of success: Here are some examples of ways NCBCE helps improve the graduation rate:

NCBCE’s clear intent is to spark and support deep instructional change. The conditions that permit this change are created in part by purposefully and dramatically rethinking traditional high schools’ organization to allow different teaching and learning. This contrasts with laying a “new program” over existing instructional practice and school organization.

A story of success: While the state’s dropout rate climbed to 5.24 percent for 2008-07 (the most recent year for which data is available), the 37 innovative high schools open then recorded a dropout rate of 2.8 percent—about half the statewide rate. If North Carolina’s rate had matched that of innovative high schools, the state would have seen 11,000 fewer dropouts. Sixty percent of innovative high schools had no more than one dropout.

The success of innovative high schools wasn’t a one-year occurrence. More than three quarters of the innovative high schools that enrolled ninth-graders in 2005-06 have seen no more than two dropouts during those students’ ninth- and 10th-grade years.

“How they’re helping: Research nationally on the reasons why students drop out has found that disconnection and disengagement are bigger factors contributing to the dropout crisis than academic failure or lack of ability. Most dropouts could succeed in school and believe as much. The NCNSP partners with local communities and educators to create innovative, highly personalized high schools that push all students to be college- and work-ready and prevent any students from losing interest or focus. More than 100 innovative high schools are open this school year.

The NCNSP partners with local communities and educators to create innovative, highly personalized high schools that push all students to be college- and work-ready and prevent any students from losing interest or focus.
Dropout prevention must begin early, and if students have a strong education foundation in their elementary years they will be much more likely to be successful in school. The initiative focuses heavily on building the capacity of teachers and administrators through intensive staff development.

A story of success: The largest contribution the Forum has made has been through the Teaching Fellows Program, which the Forum proposed in 1986 and has administered on behalf of the state ever since. One graduate of the Teaching Fellows Program, Ron Clark, became one of the nation’s most successful teachers, ultimately winning the national Walt Disney Teacher of the Year award. Ron makes a profound difference in the lives of disadvantaged young people, first in rural Eastern North Carolina and then in Harlem, in New York City. He has gone on to write two books on education. A movie was made that was based on his experiences with disadvantaged students, and he has gone on to open a school that is drawing national attention in inner-city Atlanta.

The early identification becomes the catalyst that encourages educators to develop specific academic interventions with at-risk students two to three years before the students are likely to take the test and experience failure. This early intervention is a proactive use of the results of rigorous analyses of test scores.

In 2007, the NC Department of Public Instruction made SAT scores available to SAS. The EVAAS group has worked in collaboration with Dr. Arnold Bell of the Development & Experiential Learning Division of Undergraduate Academic Programs at NC State University to extend the NC DPI EVAAS reporting to also include all of the virtual professional development sessions on the EVAAS web reporting as an in-kind contribution to North Carolina school districts. The focus of many of the virtual professional development sessions is the early identification of students likely to fail high school graduation tests. The early identification becomes the catalyst that encourages educators to develop specific academic interventions with at-risk students two to three years before the students are likely to take the test and experience failure. This early intervention is a proactive use of the results of rigorous analyses of test scores.
The future is grim for most students who drop out of high school. They are more likely to be sent to prison than those who have earned a high school diploma, and they’ll earn substantially less than students who have graduated.

“We know that if (students) become dropouts, then the chances of them having a quality life is practically next to none these days in this economy,” said Shirley Prince, superintendent of Scotland County Schools.

As state businesses grow, the state’s inability to recruit a strong local workforce becomes apparent, and dropouts have become a hot-button issue.

To combat the problem, the state General Assembly last year formed the Joint Legislative Committee on Dropout Prevention and appropriated $7 million that the committee divvied up among state education programs aimed at increasing the graduation rate.

In 2007, 60 groups, including school systems, schools, agencies and nonprofits across the state received grants between $25,000 and $150,000. The committee received 307 grant applications seeking more than $34 million in funding.

This year the committee will divvy up a larger chunk of money — $15 million — but the end goal remains the same: graduate more students. About $9.2 million of the money will be dedicated to new proposals, and about $5.5 million will be earmarked for proposals from 2007 that weren’t funded in the original review. The committee plans to distribute funding later this year.

Prince, one of the 15 committee members on last year’s panel, called the dropout issue “critical,” because the types of jobs that hire residents without a high school diploma rarely pay a family-sustaining wage.

Prince, who was appointed to the committee by Gov. Mike Easley, argued that many schools have adopted a mentality regarding student achievement that is too rigid. Scotland County is currently pioneering a new, nontraditional high school model that provides students a much more personal, flexible learning environment. Prince said the school system’s goal is that 95 percent of the ninth-graders who enrolled last year be college-ready — have the credentials to enroll in a two-year college or four-year university — when they graduate.

“We herd them through classes with this idea that you sink or swim, and we are doing an injustice to them,” she said. “We must hold the standards constant, but differentiate and vary the amount of time they need, as well as give them support to meet those standards.

“Successful students rarely drop out.”

The key to student success is support, she said, and lending that support as soon as the student needs it.

“The big thing is that it doesn’t start in high school, it starts when they enter our pre-K program,” she said. “We need to make sure that every experience they are provided is the best that it can be. We want every student leaving second grade, leaving on grade level.”

Prince said she lobbied for programs that placed emphasis on reading and mentoring, two of the most important components to success in school.

“If you can read and write, you can pretty much do anything you need to do,” she said. “We can get you where you need to be.”

Cynthia Marshall, state president of AT&T and a committee member, called the dropout problem a “silent epidemic” that was killing the community. A third of state students who enter ninth grade don’t graduate, and that number jumps to 50 percent for minorities, she said.

“Education saved my life, and we need to do that for these kids,” she said. “It’s unacceptable that one third of our kids aren’t graduating from high school.”

Marshall said that the committee looked favorably on new and innovative programs that placed emphasis on reading and mentoring, two of the most important components to success in school.

North Carolina Community Colleges
Create Hope, Opportunity and Jobs in Biotechnology.
www.ncbionetwork.org

STARTUP FUNDING PROVIDED BY

Granting new opportunities
Committee hands out millions in grants to organizations helping to lower the state’s dropout rate
Farmer, who will co-chair the committee again this year, advocated for a more analytical approach to distributing money. He said that there were more definitive factors to solving the dropout problem than gender, race and ethnicity. For example, he said that studies have shown that when a student fails a grade at any point in his or her academic career, the likelihood of not graduating increases substantially.

“If you failed Algebra 1, then as soon as you failed Algebra 1, we should start focusing on you,” he said.

He also said that he will encourage the committee to give funding to programs that improve teacher recruitment and retention.

“At the end of the day, what will make schools successful are strong teachers, superb principals, mentoring, homework assistance and small class rooms,” he said. “Those are the answers, but they are expensive answers, and they may require more creativity to resolve those issues.”

ill Farmer, co-chairman of the committee and president and CEO of the The Farmer Group, is a product of public education. He attended state public schools and graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He agreed that public education is critical to success of both students and state businesses.

Farmer, whose company assists non-profits and businesses in developing and implementing public policy programs, favored the programs that worked with assistance with homework and mentoring, because a large part of reason students drop out of school is that they don’t get enough mentoring, because a large part of reason students drop out of school is that they don’t get enough personalized attention.

“They need additional assistance, and the schools don’t have the resources to provide the kind of assistance they need,” he said. “And programs that provide mentoring are important because students need to see and be involved with people who can mentor them and show them why getting a high school diploma is important.”

Like Marshall, Farmer said that the dropout rate has a direct, substantial effect on state businesses. The high number of dropouts gives a negative perception of the state’s public education system to companies that are considering relocating to North Carolina, he said.

“It looks like an economic imperative,” Farmer said. “It’s a competitive disadvantage for the state…If we don’t confront the dropout issue, there will be states whose public education will surpass ours in the future.”

For example, he said that studies have shown that when a student fails a grade at any point in his or her academic career, the likelihood of not graduating increases substantially.
A pilot program is putting a computer in the hands of every student at eight NC high schools

Providing laptop computers for high school students isn’t new. Maine had a program more than five years ago. In North Carolina, Cary Academy (supported by the SAS Institute) and the Greene County School System (with a grant from the Gates Foundation) initiated laptop programs several years ago. North Carolina got involved two years ago when the legislature, at the urging of SAS founder Jim Goodnight and others, approved funding for the NC 1:1 Initiative. “It is a pilot program, and the legislation included seven early-college high schools plus Hunt,” explained Frances Bradburn, director of the initiative for the New Schools Project and the Department of Public Instruction. “The legislature provides funding for support; SAS provides laptops and training for teachers, and the Golden Leaf Foundation provides funding for students’ computers.”

The early-college high schools were established as part of Gov. Mike Easley’s education initiative and allow high school students to earn college credits by taking college-level courses, usually at local community colleges. Participating schools include Davidson Early College High School, Edgecombe Early College High School, Hunt High School, Sandhills Early College High School, Macon Early College High School, Nash-Rocky Mount Early College High School, Rutherford Early College High School and Wayne Early College High School. Hunt was included, Bradburn said, “because Hunt had done a spring of 2007, and the students soon after.”

He NC 1:1 program started in 2007, with the hiring of teachers and professional development for those instructors provided by the Friday Institute. “We began offering professional development to teachers late last year, and teachers got their laptops then,” Bradburn said. “At Hunt, it was a little different. The teachers got laptops in the spring of 2007, and the students soon after.”

While most of the schools are gearing up — students have just received their computers in some of the schools — Hunt has had its program running for a year. The results, said Hunt’s principal, are astounding. “One immediate impact, Davis said, is that students now take tests on their computers and the tests can be graded immediately, providing immediate feedback.”

They will be the first line of defense when a technology problem arises in class,” Wolf said. “In turn, they take their training and present sessions, on topics such as acceptable computer usage and troubleshooting, to other students and teachers.

“The Student Technology Team that is receiving advanced technology instruction, which will enable these students to address technology problems. “They will be the first line of defense when a technology problem arises in class,” Wolf said. “In turn, they take their training and present sessions, on topics such as acceptable computer usage and troubleshooting, to other students and teachers. The Student Technology Team will host a parent night in the fall, showcasing the differing technologies we have to offer here at DECHS,” Wolf added.

Both Davis and Wolf said that support from the students, staff, faculty and parents has been critical in the early success of the Laptop Initiative at their schools. “The students’ enthusiasm for the technology within their classes is contagious,” said Wolf. “Other students, and their teachers, are seeing more potential uses for technology firsthand.”

“Providing laptop computers for high school students isn’t new. Maine had a program more than five years ago. In North Carolina, Cary Academy (supported by the SAS Institute) and the Greene County School System (with a grant from the Gates Foundation) initiated laptop programs several years ago. North Carolina got involved two years ago when the legislature, at the urging of SAS founder Jim Goodnight and others, approved funding for the NC 1:1 Initiative. “It is a pilot program, and the legislation included seven early-college high schools plus Hunt,” explained Frances Bradburn, director of the initiative for the New Schools Project and the Department of Public Instruction. “The legislature provides funding for support; SAS provides laptops and training for teachers, and the Golden Leaf Foundation provides funding for students’ computers.”

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The dropsouts from the North Carolina high school freshman class of 2003-2004 cost the state almost $177 million in 2007.

““The 1:1 program has significantly impacted the way we do school at Hunt,” Davis said. “It takes learning to a whole new dimension.”

One immediate impact, Davis said, is that students now take tests on their computers and the tests can be graded immediately, providing immediate feedback. “The foundation of learning is making sense of new knowledge using existing knowledge,” the principal said. “With this type of return, students are able to create new knowledge faster.” Students are allowed to take their laptops home, providing additional educational opportunities. “We are piloting an online tutoring experiment,” Davis continued. “This program will allow our Algebra 1 students to get online tutoring from a real person outside the classroom.”

The tutors provide help and real-time feedback on homework assignments. The program can even provide progress reports to parents after each assignment, by text or voice to the parents’ cell phones.

“No student who has a laptop computer in their house will drop out,” Davis said. “The student is speaking — not the parent.”

The NC 1:1 program has seen a significant impact on dropouts. One immediate impact is that students are doing better academically and are more engaged in the classroom. “The student is speaking — not the parent,” Davis said.

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Dropouts are twice as likely to be unemployed at any time in their lives and more than three times more likely to be unemployed one year after leaving school.

More than 25,000 of the state’s DOC inmates were high school dropouts in March 2008, which cost the state $635 million last year. Source: CISNC
What Employers Want

To NC employers, a good work ethic is just as important as the basics of reading, writing and math

North Carolina employers want workers with a strong grasp of the educational fundamentals — reading, writing and math. But they also want workers with a good work ethic — reliability, teamwork and good character.

Those wants — or needs — were re-emphasized in a survey conducted recently by the North Carolina Business Committee for Education, a nonprofit based in the governor’s office to act as a link between business and the state’s public education system. All NCBCE members — more than 70 of the state’s leading corporations and businesses — participated in the survey.

“We asked the respondents to assess 15 skills, qualities and areas of knowledge and to give the importance of each,” explained Tricia Willoughby, the committee’s executive director. “We also asked for open-ended responses.”

What the survey found was that employers considered the ability to apply basic mathematical skills and the ability to read and comprehend materials of the utmost importance for new workers, recent high school graduates. But equally important, the survey revealed, are the ability to work effectively as a member of a team and the ability to “conduct oneself appropriately in line with social responsibility and sound ethics.”

Skills such as clear communication, taking personal responsibility, flexibility in adapting to new situations, problem-solving and sensitivity to cultural or ethnic differences also ranked high on the list.

There were no surprises in the survey. “Our results reflected what we’d seen in other national surveys,” Willoughby said. “Businesses at the national level identified the same skills that have traditionally been measured, including the so-called ‘soft skills.’” Those would include working as a team member, social responsibility, social ethics, being a self-starter and the flexibility to adapt to new ways of doing business, which is critical in a global business environment in which there may be cultural and ethnic differences.”

While many of the traits in the survey may have been required of workers 10 or 15 years ago, the relative value of some of those traits may have changed. Willoughby said the survey supported that.

“For example, the ability to work as a team might not have been as important on an assembly line,” she said. “But today it is that important because a worker may not be assigned to one job for eight hours.”

The survey also pointed to the importance of understanding and applying the basic skills in math, science and, increasingly, in technology.

“Today’s jobs require it,” Willoughby said. “The jobs that Governor Easley has recruited to replace the textile and furniture and tobacco jobs we’ve lost are knowledge-based jobs.”

“When we relied on manufacturing jobs or textiles, you could drop out of high school and find a job to support yourself and your family. But those jobs are rapidly decreasing. Now, working for a flooring company in Davidson County requires more technical knowledge.”

The survey is not intended to judge the state’s educational system. In fact, North Carolina is about on par with the rest of the states in providing the skills that high school students and their employers need, according to NCBCE Chairwoman Mary Linda Andrews.

“I think high schools in North Carolina are pretty much on track with schools across the United States,” said Andrews, of GlaxoSmithKline. “But there’s an organization — the OCED [Organization of Cooperation and Economic Development] — that looks at 12 countries, and the US is ranked 26th in math, 20th in science and 17th in reading assessment, so it’s obvious we all need to make some changes.”

Those changes are already on the way, said Willoughby. Last year, the State Board of Education changed its mission to more accurately reflect a more global economy, she said.

“What we’ve got to do is get our infrastructure right, to make sure our curriculum is aligned with what employers need,” Willoughby explained. “That means changing standards not just for students, but for teachers, principals, administrators and making sure those changes are passed along to our colleagues and universities so that the changes are reflected in how we educate our teachers and educational personnel.”

Both Willoughby and Andrews said that programs such as the North Carolina Graduation Project, Learn and Earn and job shadowing programs give the state a head start.

“We need a pipeline for students with 21st century skills,” Andrews said. “We baby boomers are retiring, and we need replacements. And, if not for good schools, we wouldn’t be able to recruit new employees.

“And,” she added, “we’d much prefer to hire students from North Carolina.”

NCBC PARTNER SURVEY RESULTS

FIVE ‘MOST IMPORTANT’ SKILLS

• Apply basic mathematical concepts and skills.
• Work effectively as a member of a team.
• Use and integrate information and communication technology.
• Conduct oneself appropriately in line with social responsibility and sound ethics.
• Read and comprehend materials of varying complexity.

SEVEN ‘IMPORTANT’ SKILLS

• Identify a problem, develop and evaluate creative alternatives and arrive at a solution.
• Demonstrate flexibility by adapting to people, new situations and challenges.
• Identify a problem, develop and evaluate creative alternatives and recommend a solution.
• Understand the science and their responsibility and application in today’s society.
• Understand and be sensitive to cultural/ethnic differences.

THREE ‘SOMewhat IMPORTANT’ SKILLS

• Understand history, civics, government and economics and their relevance and application in the 21st century.
• Display leadership skills.
• Communicate in two or more languages.
Beyond the Ordinary

BY TOM HARRIS

The Kenan Fellows program allows teachers to explore new teaching methods, gain leadership skills and stay in touch with the world outside the classroom

At Carrboro Elementary School, Briana Corke’s fourth-graders spend seven weeks each year devising and building new classroom programs, an electromagnet. Then, each child is asked to build a new invention using magnets and electricity. “They keep an inventor’s log,” Corke said. “We look at inventors’ logs in the library of Congress to see how famous inventors, like Benjamin Franklin, go through the process, writing it all down.

The final project is a nonfiction piece describing how their invention works and why it’s useful. We ask them, ‘Would another scientist be able to come...’”

The Kenan Fellows Program differs from other teacher professional development programs in several ways. First, the fellows remain in the classroom during their two-year fellowship.

“They spend summers in six weeks of leadership training and four weeks of research,” Knott said. “Some even travel outside the country. It’s designed to get an idea about what’s going on outside the classroom.”

The program also has a strong “sharing” component.

“It’s ongoing,” said Knott. “We have ‘fireside chats,’ where the fellows come back and meet with educational policymakers for discussions. All of our fellows attend the North Carolina Science Teachers Association convention the first year and make a presentation at the convention the second year.”

The program’s Web site features results from the fellows’ projects, which can often be applied to other classroom programs, and a new, expanded Web site is in the works. All of the information also is available through the NC LEARN program.

“Dissemination is a large part of the process,” Knott said, “so it’s not just a learning experience for only the fellows.”

At Carrboro Elementary, it turned out to be a learning experience for Corke’s students.

“I got into this because, like most elementary teachers, I’m not comfortable with physical sciences,” the teacher said. “Then, in fourth grade, we had the [state] writing test. I was looking for a way to do meaningful nonfiction writing and practice it.”

The students complete their unit study of magnets and electricity and build an electromagnet. Then, each child is asked to build a new invention using magnets and electricity.

“The students complete their unit study of magnets and electricity and build an electromagnet. Then, each child is asked to build a new invention using magnets and electricity.”

At North Carolina GlaxoSmithKline Foundation

Dedicated to improving the lives of North Carolinians

Moving forward and pushing for progress are what the North Carolina GlaxoSmithKline Foundation is all about. Since 1996, the Foundation has sought partners who lead us to better solutions and more innovative ways of reaching out and making a difference in people’s lives — through programs that promote the sciences, health and education.

Two of our cornerstone programs are the Child Health Recognition Awards and the Women in Science Scholars Program. We are pleased to recognize public health professionals and support young women pursuing careers in the sciences, because we know that these make our society stronger and healthier.

WOMEN IN SCIENCE SCHOLARS PROGRAM

In today’s world, more than ever, we need women making contributions through science. However, at GlaxoSmithKline, we know that women traditionally have been underrepresented in science and science-related careers. The Women in Science Scholars Program was established to encourage and support female undergraduates in North Carolina to pursue careers in the sciences. The North Carolina GlaxoSmithKline Foundation has endowed scholarships at our 29 partner schools to help support the scholars financially. Also, GlaxoSmithKline is delighted to invite their time and knowledge to serve as mentors to the scholars, providing one-on-one interaction and perspectives on working in the sciences.

Partners:

Appalachian State University
Bartram College
Bennett College
Campbell University
Davidson College
East Carolina University
Elizabeth City State University
Elon University
Fayetteville State University
Gardner-Webb University
Guilford College
Johnson C. Smith University
Lenoir-Rhyne College
Morris College
North Carolina Agricultural & Technical College
North Carolina Central University
North Carolina State University
North Carolina Wesleyan College
Queens University of Charlotte
St. Andrews Presbyterian College
Saint Augustine’s College
University of North Carolina - Asheville
University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill
University of North Carolina - Charlotte
University of North Carolina - Greensboro
University of North Carolina - Pembroke
University of North Carolina - Wilmington
Western Carolina University
Winston-Salem State University

GSK Foundation is pleased to recognize them as heroes!

CHILD HEALTH RECOGNITION AWARDS

At GlaxoSmithKline, we understand that the public health field faces many daunting challenges in today’s society. This program honors public health professionals in North Carolina for their outstanding and innovative programs, which we share in a booklet and honor the award recipients and nominees at a ceremony. These are thoroughly dedicated, committed people and the North Carolina GSK Foundation is pleased to recognize them as heroes!

2008 Child Health Recognition Award Recipients

Lifetime Achievement Award
Joseph C. Stegman, MD, Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics of the Carolinas, Concord

Individual Recognition Award
Willard Helmuth, MD, Medical Director, Child Health and Communicable Disease Programs, Union County Health Department, Monroe

Local Health Department Recognition Award
• New Hanover County Health Department (Personal Health & Support Services Division), Wilmington
• Pender County Health Department (Dental Program), Burgaw
• Caldwell County Health Department (Dental Clinic), Lenoir
• • •

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“The training was excellent, and I also gained a lot networking with other teachers across the state. I had just become a department chair when I got the fellowship, and the leadership training was extremely valuable and gave me a lot of good perspective.”

— Chad Ogren, a science teacher at W.G. Enloe High in Raleigh and a 2006-2008 Kenan Fellow

“Isn’t and repeat what you’ve done?” and “How would your invention work in this situation?” so we’re also teaching critical thinking skills.” It’s all about combining science, technology, math and how to write it all down in a meaningful way.

“I get some of the best writing samples at the end because they want people to know how to use their inventions,” Corke said. “It’s the same thing that a researcher at SAS or some other research lab might do. It’s teaching real-life skills.”

But Corke’s fourth-graders aren’t the only ones who profited from Corke’s two years as a Kenan Fellow.

“When I got the fellowship, I was only a couple of years into teaching, and it really re-energized me,” she said. “It challenged me a lot.”

But Corke added, she got just as much benefit from activities outside the classroom.

“I learned a lot about how the state school board works and got a much better sense of how things work on the state level,” she said. “I love what I do in the classroom, but I found that I like to complement that by advocating with the people who make the decisions. It lets me get classroom experience and a touch of reality, too.”

Corke also benefited from the camaraderie with other teachers and education personnel.

“As an elementary teacher, collaborating with college professors and other teachers is important,” she said. “I still have those connections, and I use them.”

That’s a benefit shared by other fellowship winners.

“The training was excellent, and I also gained a lot networking with other teachers across the state,” said Chad Ogren, a science teacher at W.G. Enloe High in Raleigh and, like Corke, a 2006-2008 Kenan Fellow. “I had just become a department chair when I got the fellowship, and the leadership training was extremely valuable and gave me a lot of good perspective.”

Unlike Corke’s project, Ogren’s research project — designing and writing a program for a video game that focuses on insects’ role in the food chain — wasn’t directly applicable to his classroom, due to some computer incompatibilities.

“I certainly became more technologically savvy, not just from my program, but from all the other programs I had to learn,” Ogren said. “But more and more, kids are finding video games as educational tools, and this project puts us right at the start of that. It is the future.”

The success of teachers like Corke and Ogren points to a bright future for the Kenan Fellows program. Ninety-six teachers have received fellowships since the program started in 2000, and in 2008, the program expanded to include teacher-fellows from outside the Research Triangle and Piedmont-Triad regions.

“We’re expanding, contingent on funding,” said Knott. “We have some things in the works.”

The fellow programs receive some funding from the state, but most comes from business, industry and foundations. Major sponsors include SAS, IBM, Cisco Systems, MedWestVaccs and GlaxoSmithKline.

The Kenan Fellowships provide another benefit, too. They keep teachers teaching.

“I see a lot of Kenan Fellows staying in the classroom,” Corke said, “because you get to do what you do while staying in the classroom.”

Join us as we expand into new fields of study essential to the future of North Carolina...
1. According to the state Department of Public Instruction, in 2008 only 69.9 percent of students who started ninth grade in 2004-2005 had completed high school in four years or less. North Carolina’s current dropout rate of 30 percent is a great concern for employers across the state. How would you marshal the state’s resources, both public and private, to ensure that more North Carolina children graduate from high school?

I am running for governor to change the culture in Raleigh — a culture that considers a 30 percent dropout rate acceptable. We need new leadership and a bold new plan for our schools in North Carolina because the status quo is not working. We need to challenge and inspire our students to stay in school by providing them courses that hold their interest. And we must provide an education that trains today’s students for tomorrow’s workforce. One of the goals of an education should be preparing our young people to get a job. Although the politically correct approach is to expect all students to attend college, not every student wants or needs a four-year college degree. I believe we need to enhance our vocational education programs to help prepare those students for a job. We have preschool programs for students at risk; now we need some emphasis on improving high schools.

2. North Carolina employers depend on having qualified workers to keep their businesses and the state’s economy growing. What is the most important thing you can do as governor to make sure that we have enough qualified workers and that the workforce matches the needs of the business community here?

It is important that we match our current and future labor needs with our education strategy. As governor, I will re-emphasize a policy that initiates more intensive levels of technical, science and trade studies in our high schools, community colleges and universities. I believe this will help fill our growing job-gap of mechanics, electricians, nurses, biotech and health care workers, engineers, and math and science teachers for our rapidly changing economy. In addition, I believe this will help many students stay in school — and lower the number of students who drop out — because they will be able to see how their skills can be applied in the real world.

3. As governor, what will be your primary strategy for bringing more technology and innovation to our state’s classrooms?

We need more innovation in our curriculum, and as governor, I will work to increase funding for technology. Our children need to be prepared for the jobs of the future that will result from new technological developments. For example, I will set a goal to replace outdated textbooks with laptop computers for every middle and high school student in the state. By increasing funding for the latest technologies possible, our students will be able to compete against some of the greatest minds in the world.
1. According to the state Department of Public Instruction, in 2008 only 69.9 percent of students who started ninth grade in 2004–05 had completed high school in four years or less. North Carolina’s current dropout rate of 30 percent is a great concern for employers across the state. How would you marshal the state’s resources, both public and private, to ensure that more North Carolina children graduate from high school?

I believe North Carolina’s public education has made significant progress over the last few decades, but, as I like to say, we are halfway home with a long way to go. Our high school dropout rate remains too high, and in the face of new competitive global challenges, a high school dropout rate of 30 percent is simply unacceptable.

A strong consensus has formed that quality education initiatives targeted to children early in their development is a long-range anti-dropout tool in our educational arsenal. That is why as governor I will continue to push for expansion and better coordination of our nationally recognized Smart Start and More at Four initiatives.

We must also implement diagnostic assessments as a means of identifying difficulties before it is too late. If we can identify a student’s problem areas early, then teachers will be able to focus on the particular areas of difficulty, which will help the student long-term and help prevent dropout later.

Quality education in the early years is critical, but I believe we must go further by giving students a reason to stay in school. That is why I have proposed my College Promise Plan, an ironclad contract with students that lack of family income will not be a barrier to vocational education, community college or a four-year university. In exchange, students will have to stay in school and stay out of trouble, graduate from high school and earn the necessary grades to gain acceptance into college, and give back to their community.

I will also transform the EARN scholarship program into a powerful new anti-dropout tool. The first step will be to expand the state’s new EARN scholarship program for students from families earning up to $42,400 annually and change EARN’s current two-year scholarship assistance into a full four years for university students. Furthermore, all students who graduate from high school and enter a community college full time will be able to have their tuition waived, further demonstrating our College Promise to North Carolina’s students.

2. North Carolina employers depend on having qualified workers to keep their businesses and the state’s economy growing. What is the most important thing you can do as governor to make sure we have enough qualified workers and that the workforce matches the needs of the business community here?

As our next governor, my larger goal will not just to keep more high school students in school, but also see that they graduate prepared to succeed in the 21st century workplace. And I know that earning an economically competitive wage now typically requires at least the advanced skills provided by vocational education, community college or finishing a four-year undergraduate degree.

Opening the doors of educational opportunity as wide as possible is not only morally right, but also fiscally wise. Recent expert estimates indicate that significantly lowering the dropout rate and increasing the graduation rate could gain North Carolina over a billion dollars from increased tax payments and reduced social costs over the next four decades.

As governor, I would also strengthen the state’s commitment to the new high school redesign initiatives as exemplified by Learn and Earn and the New Schools Project. These initiatives are leading the way in making the curriculum reforms necessary to equip our students with the skills necessary to compete and succeed in the 21st century. Learn and Earn allows high school students to take challenging and career-relevant, skill-based coursework from our community colleges. The New Schools project is establishing 30 new career-centered academies across the state. Examples include the East Wake School of International Technology, South Granville school of Health and Life Sciences and Clement Early College High School.

3. As governor, what will be your primary strategy for bringing more technology and innovation to our state’s classrooms?

It’s way past the time when we thought that the only way a kid could learn is by catching a school bus and sitting in a building. I led the fight to create North Carolina’s Virtual High School, which allows students to participate in online learning, providing access to expanded educational opportunities across North Carolina any time, day or night, and there are already more than 25,000 students enrolled.

Technology is the chalk and blackboard of the 21st century, which is why I have led the state in getting 21st century–state-of-the-art technology into North Carolina’s public schools. As governor, I will work to ensure that every public school is wired with broadband access, which will allow students to have tremendous new learning options through online classes. This type of learning will never replace our traditional classrooms, but does give students another opportunity to be competitive in this global economy and take classes that may not be available in every corner of North Carolina.

We all understand that technology and computers are the common language of the global economy. North Carolina’s workers must have the ability to work in a world defined by and through technology if we are to succeed economically.
“Take control of your future. Fayetteville State University lets you discover your potential and open the door to success in areas such as biotechnology, communications, forensic science and information management. In fact, FSU offers 43 undergraduate degrees, 24 master’s degree programs, and one doctoral degree—all in a personalized learning environment with average class sizes of under 25 students. One of the most affordable public institutions in the country, FSU is a member of the esteemed University of North Carolina system so you know that the education you’ll get here will carry you far. Expand your mind. Expand your vision. Come grow with us.”

Dr. James Anderson,
Chancellor of Fayetteville State University
BRAC, the Department of Defense’s acronym for Base Realignment and Closure, could have translated into a significant downfall for the future of Fayetteville and Cumberland County. However, the decisions made by federal officials not only left one of the US Army’s largest installations, Fort Bragg, in the region; they are leading to a swell of growth never before seen in Cumberland County in such a short amount of time.

During the five-year span concluding in 2013, Fort Bragg will add more than 2,600 active-duty military personnel and another 2,000 civilian jobs associated with the Army. Officials from the BRAC Regional Task Force expect that, as a result of the addition of military infrastructure, the population of Cumberland County will jump by more than 27,000. That influx would bring the number of county residents close to 400,000.

The task force released reports earlier this year to aid with coordination of local, state and federal officials who are left with the numerous and highly anticipated challenges of how to handle that amount of growth.

“We feel very comfortable that we can meet the needs of military families and their children,” Harrison said.

Harrison also pointed out that the system is making plans to hire additional teachers to handle the student population growth. The system is working closely with the state legislature as well as its congressional delegation to make sure the proper resources for public education are available for Cumberland County.

“If we see students come in at about 500 to 600 per year, we should be pretty well positioned,” Harrison said.

TRANSPORTATION

The Fayetteville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization is responsible for one of the most challenging areas detailed in the BRAC Regional Task Force’s report about handling the expected growth—planning for adequate transportation infrastructure. The report said that many major roadways in Cumberland County are currently at or have already exceed their capacity levels.

One component complicating FAMPO’s agenda is the impending closure of the segment of Bragg Boulevard that passes through Fort Bragg. The closure is designed to help boost security on the base, but the road is one of the main thoroughfares connecting Fayetteville to Spring Lake, to the north. Rick Heicksen, FAMPO’s section chief, said Murchison Road, another north-south artery, will be expanded to highway standards, with interchanges instead of normal street intersections. Finding ways to expand the road without terminally hurting the business community has been what Heicksen called a “tough balancing act.”

“First you’ve got to safely and efficiently move the traffic, but you’ve got to look out for the community, too,” Heicksen said. “For example, the first planned interchange we had at Butner Road would have wiped out about eight or nine businesses in Spring Lake. It’s not a large community, and those businesses in Spring Lake are so close to Fort Bragg that it’s sort of a bread-and-butter thing. You’ve got to watch out for the businesses and you’ve got to watch out for planned growth.”

Another significant project that will alleviate some of the traffic issues in Cumberland County is the expansion of Interstate 295. The road currently stretches from I-95 to US 401. Heicksen said a three-year construction plan is expected to start in 2009 that will extend I-295 from its current end point to the All-American Freeway just south of Fort Bragg.

“That’s going to be our major connector in getting traffic out of downtown Fayetteville and dispersing it around the urbanized area,” Heicksen said. “Plus it’s also the best vehicular route for moving deployments out of Fort Bragg other than train or plane.”

HEALTH CARE

There is an option for military personnel at Fort Bragg for medical care. Womack Army Medical Center opened in 2000 with the most sophisticated treatment infrastructure available to cover more than 160,000 eligible beneficiaries. Nevertheless, Cape Fear Valley Regional Medical Center in Fayetteville has positioned itself to handle the expected growth of the civilian population in Sep-

Cumberland County prepares for significant growth sparked by the military
“We have not seen what the national media sometimes talks about — the devastation in real estate. Our market in Cumberland County stays pretty steady. Prices have gradually gone up and stayed within the market.”
— Henry Spell, Fayetteville Regional Association of Realtors

In October, the hospital will bring 96 more beds online, raising its total to more than 700. It’s also reconditioned its emergency room to handle a greater volume of patients.

“We think we’re ready for these numbers to come into this community,” said Joyce Korzen, COO of Cape Fear Valley Regional Medical Center. “If we see that the need becomes greater, just like any other time, we will work with the health department to continue planning and look at other services that we would need to provide. We have been talking with the state. We have been looking at some of the projections for the numbers, and right now, based on population growth in the community and what’s expected from BRAC, it appears we will have the capacity to handle that volume.”

Additionally, the center oversees more than a dozen clinics for primary care, which includes several facilities that have specialists in both pediatric and geriatric care.

HOUSING

Obviously, the additional residents of Cumberland County are going to need somewhere to live. Henry Spell, president of the Fayetteville Regional Association of Realtors, said the inventory of existing homes as well as newly constructed dwellings leaves the community in prime position to handle growth.

“We feel we have a handle on it unless something drastic changes,” Spell said.

Drastic changes aren’t normally associated with the Cumberland County real estate market. While the housing industry nationwide is in a severe downturn, Spell indicated that the area has continued to remain on the steady pace established during the past couple of years. He said in 2006, more than $1 billion in closed values of properties was recorded in Cumberland County for the first time. That figure topped $1 billion again in 2007, and sales numbers for the first half of this year are on track for that mark to be reached for the third consecutive time.

“We have not seen what the national media sometimes talks about — the devastation in real estate. Our market in Cumberland County stays pretty steady. Prices have gradually gone up and stayed within the market.”
— Henry Spell, Fayetteville Regional Association of Realtors

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Have You Seen America’s Hometown Lately?
It’s time to take another look at Fayetteville, NC!

Fayetteville’s downtown revitalization effort has been a steady stream of success stories, bringing retail, great restaurants, culture and the arts together in an atmosphere fit for romance, family or just a night out with friends.

Whether you’re looking for a steak dinner, in the mood for something ethnic or vegetarian, the streets are lined with amazing eateries to include: a local microbrewery; a café with west coast flare; finger-licking southern BBQ; a comforting diner; and a food and entertainment complex with games for the whole family.

Once you’ve finished eating, take a walk down Hay Street and enjoy the shops and boutiques that line the street. Enjoy some homemade fudge, splurge on that bag you’ve been eying, or order a one-of-a-kind gift for that special someone.

Downtown Fayetteville is also the host of multiple festivals that provide year-round entertainment. Whether its live music on the lawn or folk festivals and parades that celebrate the community’s cultural diversity, the fun is limitless!
Fayetteville is no longer an eyesore, no longer a place avoided by Cumberland County business leaders and recruiters. Now restaurants with patio seating, unique shopping venues, high-end residential units and tributes to the military all meld together to form an area that urban enthusiasts crave.

Millions of dollars have been poured into the revitalization of downtown Fayetteville during the past 10 years, coming from both the public and private sectors. Millions more are planned to be spent for further projects, building on what’s already been done to overcome the area’s past negative reputation, which began during the time of the Vietnam War.

“In our business, when a new business comes to town, they want to see your downtown, they want to see the seat of government,” said Phyllis Owens, senior vice president, economic development for the Fayetteville-Cumberland County Chamber of Commerce.

“In days past, many years ago, we actually tried to talk them out of that, but now we bring them downtown,” Owens continued. “Some of the folks who have been here before and haven’t been in quite a while, they’re a little skeptical when we start to bring them in this direction. But now, ‘wow’ is the word they use every time. They’re just so thrilled with what they see going on downtown. Today, I use the downtown as my marketing tool.”

The sharpening of that marketing tool truly started to take place in 2003 when officials commissioned a study to examine how the downtown area could be revitalized. Owens noted that the study served as a springboard because the chamber created a position for an executive whose sole responsibility was to foster development in the downtown area.

Revitalization plans had an anchor project, as well. The Airborne and Special Operations Museum, a $22 million facility, opened in 2000. The museum takes visitors on a military journey from World War II to an up-close look at today’s technology.

The downtown amenities for visitors grew further when the Fayetteville Area Transportation Museum opened in 2006 in the restored Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley Railway Passenger Depot. Exhibits and artifacts tell the story of the history of transportation in the Fayetteville area from Native American trails to steamboats and trains. Last year marked the opening of Festival Park, a $10.4 million facility that helped Fayetteville’s annual Dogwood Festival to reach a new attendance record of more than 100,000 people.

“The last 10 years really has been a renaissance and a rebirth,” Mayor Tony Chavonne said about the change in downtown Fayetteville. “There’s been a significant amount of public investment, and what we’ve seen in the last several years is the private sector stepping up and getting involved and investing in our city’s future. We take that as a very positive sign when the private sector responds that way.

An example of that private sector investment is a development along Hay Street that includes a mix of townhomes, condominiums and retail space. Chavonne and his wife, Joanne, plan to live in this development.
“We’re doing it because we’re committed to downtown and very excited about living there. We recognize that it’s symbolic, and we’re proud to do it,” Chavonne said.

“To be successful in this turnaround project, it really does require a true partnership, public and private,” Chavonne added. “The public side wants to make sure it’s investing in infrastructure and those kinds of things and in some cases incentives to ensure private sector involvement. Then when they do come in, you provide everything you can for them to be successful so that will nurture more growth on the private sector side. That’s really been the model that we’ve followed. It’s one step at a time — public investment incentives, good infrastructure, encouragement for private-sector involvement.”

All told, more than $65 million worth of investment has been completed within the major sections of downtown Fayetteville. Plenty more investment is already on the horizon.

The state has pledged $15 million for a veteran’s park. Furthermore, Fayetteville received a Hope VI federal HUD grant totaling more than $20 million that will be matched with local funds for more residential development. Another $23 million worth of roadway enhancements are on the way, too.

Chavonne, a lifelong resident of Fayetteville, explained that individuals who haven’t visited the downtown in some time will be quite impressed with the transformation from an area that had an unpleasant reputation.

“You never rest on your laurels and say, ‘Gosh, look how much better it is now than 10 years ago.’ Every city continues to be a work in progress,” Chavonne said. “What we’re driven and what I get up every day as mayor thinking is we want to continue to make Fayetteville an even more attractive, clean and peaceful city. It really speaks to the quality of life. If you’re able to do those kinds of things in your downtown and your community can be an attractive place that people would want to live, raise their family and want to do business, those are the key elements to success. As long as we stay focused on those, we will continue to see the success we’ve had.”

“The last 10 years really has been a renaissance and a rebirth. There’s been a significant amount of public investment, and what we’ve seen in the last several years is the private sector stepping up and getting involved and investing in our city’s future.”

— Mayor Tony Chavonne

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The Fayetteville-Cumberland County Chamber of Commerce has existed for more than 50 years, bringing together military personnel with leaders and residents of the community. During that time, the success of the council’s efforts can be measured by the accounts given by Lee Warren, its current chairman.

“When we have had Military Affairs Council events in the past, several of the generals and commanding officers at Pope Air Force Base and Fort Bragg have said to us that they have been in many military communities in their careers, but the relationship that the business community through the Military Affairs Council has with Fort Bragg and the relationships and the friendships that has built over the years have just been far and away one of the premier points for them to move to this area,” Warren said.

“They talk with commanders and other officers and other military personnel from other bases whenever they see they're going to be assigned here,” Warren continued. “Just about every one of them tells us the same thing. That when they start inquiring those who have been here, they find that this is probably one of the best bases in the country in relation to the community.”

The Military Affairs Council actively engages in communication with base command in an attempt to keep the community informed about issues critical to military personnel and their families. Warren reiterated how it's all about cultivating relationships.

“MAC has been just an invaluable tool for our community,” Warren said. “We reach out to our great patriots that are here in our community and all the things that they have done to protect the freedoms that we enjoy.”

Council members, a contingent that now approaches about 400 small businesses and large corporations, salute the military in a myriad of ways, Warren said. He recalled seeing many times where a member anonymously purchased a meal at a restaurant for a military family. Even more tangible, the council raised more than $40,000 in a span of just a few months to expand a fallen soldier memorial at Fort Bragg, a project highlighted by President Bush during his visit to the base this past May.

“The one common thread with all of our efforts and events is to be able to say thank you,” Warren said.

The Military Affairs Council is just one of more than 12 dozen community organizations that concentrate on supporting the military community in the area. One of the largest and most established is the Braxton Bagg Chapter of the Association of the US Army.

AUSA is a private, nonprofit educational organization that supports the nation’s army, which includes active and reserve personnel, the National Guard, civilian workers, retirees and their family members. Don Goulet, a retired colonel, serves as the president of the chapter, which is the largest in AUSA.

“A lot of the people from Fayetteville want to do good things for the people in the military,” Goulet said. “But like any other major installation, a lot of people don't have a strong standing relationship with the military. There are a lot of the subtleties and nuances associated with the military organization. They wanted to help but they didn't know how. What we've done is to act as the point man. Rather than trying to compete to do all of these good things, let's collaborate so we can maximize the efforts.”

The collaboration of efforts has led to some superb results. The Braxton Bagg Chapter quickly put together a concert at Festival Park in downtown Fayetteville this past spring, attracting more than 10,000 attenders to salute the military. The support has also helped the chapter distribute more than 60 scholarships to a combination of combat veterans, ROTC cadets and military dependents who are pursuing bachelor's degrees. Each of those scholarships given during the past two years was $1,000.

“We're interested in taking care of soldiers and their families,” Goulet said. “In order to do that, we have to build community relationships. We can't do it on our own.”

With organizations such as MAC and AUSA in the community, support for the military seems to come just when it is needed most.

“Any time there is a special project concerning the military,” Warren said, “our community just steps right up to the plate.”
North Carolina in October 1948

A report from the federal Department of Commerce showed the total income amount earned by North Carolina residents grew at the median rate as compared to other states in the Southeast. From 1946 to 1947, the total income generated by North Carolina residents grew from $3.02 million to $3.29 million, an increase of 9 percent.

Florida had the smallest growth rate of this period at 4 percent while Mississippi's was the largest at 15 percent. Among the Carolinas, North Carolina, however, had the highest total income generation in the Southeast, a figure that was more than double the amount of either Mississippi or neighboring South Carolina.

As state residents generated more income, they faced some critical choices about possible amendments to North Carolina's Constitution. The proposed amendments included the raise of pay for legislators in the General Assembly from $600 to $1,200 annually as well as permission for counties to levy as much as 25 cents per $100 tax valuation, up from the 15-cent cap. The other proposals were permitting special tax elections to be held by a simple majority rather than qualified voters, and abolishing a limit on the amount the state could borrow for projects without a vote by the people.

Raleigh commercial artist proudly displayed his unique findings from the Outer Banks. G.F. Hill secured the beaches in Dare County to find highly coveted sandstone that is now used all over the state when struck by lightning.

This specific type of stone, fullerite, could only be found off North Carolina's beaches, on the shores of Lake Michigan and San Clemente Island in southern California.

The state's beaches were just part of North Carolina's natural resources that a UNC-Chapel Hill faculty member stated were in need of greater attention. Paul W. Wager urged state administrations to protect and value the state's coastal resources as one of the nation's most precious assets.
North Carolina in October 1983

Two executives from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina conducted a study that revealed startling results about how many people end up being hospitalized in the state. Their report found that on average, there were 818 days of hospitalization per 1,000 employees. The state with the lowest total was Orange at 484, while Columbus County topped the chart at 1,281.

The researchers concluded that the training for health care professionals established a basis for proposing overall solutions for the findings came in correlation to business sector concerns about the soaring costs of health care. Dr. Sandra B. Greene, one of the report authors, said increased use of health maintenance organizations could be a way to lower these hospitalization rates and costs.

“We are optimistic that employers can do to lower hospitalization rates for their employees as they become more aware of the cost problem,” Greene said. “Employers are learning how powerful an influence they can have in tailoring the shape of employee health programs to curb inappropriate use of hospitals and other health services.”

No matter the amount of cases, N.C. Hospital Association officials countered by asserting state residents were receiving superb care at facilities throughout North Carolina despite costs rising greatly. “When people show up at a hospital, they want and expect the most sophisticated services and treatment available, regardless of their financial circumstances. And they get it,” association officials said.

Success on the bond front brought plenty of attention to both the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and North Carolina State University. The Tar Heels scored the NCAA men’s basketball championship in 1982, and the Wolfpack hit record numbers, too.

Crescent State Bank, Cary, has named Jeff Williams vice president, commercial lender for the bank’s Raleigh office to be responsible for commercial lending, business development relationships for the Greater Wake County area. Williams, a graduate of the University of North Carolina and Campbell University, has 16 years of industry experience. The bank also has named Sylvia Phillips Currin as mortgage account executive at the bank’s Raleigh office to be responsible for managing the existing account base by developing a complete understanding of account organizational structure and buying behavior. Currin, a graduate of Wake Forest University, has 25 years of industry experience.

High Point University has made a donation of furniture to Home to Home Ministries of High Point. The university gave 35 couches, 35 love seats and 70 chairs to be used at churches and ministries throughout the area.

WakeMed Foundation, Raleigh, has established an endowment to fund education opportunities for students, experienced nursing professionals and allied health professionals thanks to a $1 million donation from Dr. Wm. Charles Helton. The scholarships will be open to students or registered nurses who agree to practice at WakeMed or in Wake County.

Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation, Chapel Hill, has invested $240,000 in a Smart Start program, an evidence-based intervention program developed at UNC-Chapel Hill, that works to reduce childhood obesity by improving nutrition and physical activity in child care.

RCC Bank, Raleigh, collected supplies for students at Brentwood Elementary School in central Raleigh. Branch personnel collected more than 3,000 pencils, 273 packs of crayons, 89 folders, 16 couches, 35 loveseats and 70 chairs to be used at churches and other facilities. The bank also donated $2,300 to the local YWCA of Raleigh.

Reynolds American, Winston-Salem, has promoted Lisa J. Caldwell to executive vice president of human resources. Caldwell, a graduate of the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and the Wake Forest University School of Law, will leave the company in 1991, as manager of employment practices.

Manning Fulton & Skinner, PA, Raleigh, has hired Michelle L. Frazier as a government relations attorney to represent clients before the North Carolina General Assembly. Previously, Frazier, a graduate of Wake Forest University, was a student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Law, served as assistant executive director for the North Carolina Bar Association and as an associate in private practice.

Caldwell

Mon, October 2008

CONNECTS

North Carolina in October 1998

With full foliage set to hit its peak, the magazine gave readers a guide to enjoy the natural scenery in North Carolina fully understand how the majority of their business accumulates. Research data showed that 70 percent of hotel and convention facilities book the time for small meetings, gathering that range from about 200 participants to ones with 50 or fewer attendees.

Management executives offered some advice as to how to make a small meeting operate just as smoothly as one that includes several hundred people. The recommendations included: planning ahead as far as possible by determining your location and site, knowing your audio/visual needs and anticipating contingencies.

North Carolina Citizens for Business and Industry, the predecessor organization to the North Carolina Chamber, focused forces with the NC League of Municipalities and the NC Association of County Commissioners to lead a push for voter approval of a $1 billion water, sewer and natural gas bond. The state legislature is looking to fund a $6 per month increase in the gas bond. The proposal comes under an expansion moratorium because of the inferior infrastructure. “It is a good investment in the economic development of the state and a bond that have not enjoyed the recent prosperity, and it should provide help to the state’s cities as they try to clean their water and sewers,” the editorial board of the magazine wrote. “They cannot have it all. But we in support of the bond package. More than two dozen other utility, construction and engineering associations also threw their support behind the effort.”

MAGAZINE
A Message from Lewis Ebert

Chamber’s Campaign to Lower Dropout Rate Includes Graduation Awareness Week

As part of North Carolina’s ongoing efforts to strengthen our workforce — and ultimately our economy — with a solid education foundation, Gov. Easley designated Sept. 7-13 “Graduation Awareness Week.” At the invitation of Superintendent of Public Instruction June Atkinson, I participated in a press conference and awards event to kick off Graduation Awareness Week and launch a campaign focused on dropout prevention. Our Chamber’s second vice chair, Cynthia Marshall, president of AT&T North Carolina, also participated in the event because she knows what most North Carolina business leaders know: World-class education systems that continually produce a globally competitive workforce are key to not only economic development success, but also a prosperous future and exceptional quality of life here.

The press conference featured a signing of a Call to Action and a pledge to work throughout North Carolina to raise awareness of the importance of high school graduation. The North Carolina Chamber began our campaign to raise awareness about the importance of graduating more students prepared to further their education through North Carolina to raise awareness of the importance of high school graduation. The North Carolina Chamber began our campaign to raise awareness about the importance of graduating more students prepared to further their education and students’ skill in reading and mathematics at the middle-school level are two that are significant. It does not start in high school. We have to make sure we are working on improving our graduation rate starting in kindergarten. We know, for example, that having early childhood education for children who do not have “book-rich” homes, that is, adequate access to books and learning materials, yields long-term positive results.

As evidenced on the pages of this magazine, there are a number of individuals and groups in North Carolina — some around for a while and some new — focused on making sure our students not only graduate from high school, but also achieve that milestone equipped with the essential knowledge and skills necessary to be a productive part of the 21st-century economy. And they are each making considerable progress and realizing noteworthy results. Our Chamber and many of our members actively support these individuals and groups in a number of ways. But it has occurred to me that perhaps we could collectively maximize our potential and effectiveness if we sought and achieved true collaboration — if we strategically and collectively leveraged our individual expertise and resources to declare war on the dropout rate in a comprehensive “coming-at-it-from-all-sides” manner. I believe it’s a concept worth exploring further, and I am eager to hear what you think. Drop me a line at lebert@ncchamber.net.

Graduation Awareness Week was just the first of a variety of activities to highlight graduation and encourage community efforts to support students. As a follow-up to our Chamber’s participation in Graduation Awareness Week, we spent some time one-on-one with Superintendent Atkinson, who heads the state’s Department of Public Instruction. Here’s part of what she shared with our Chamber:

Q: Why do students drop out of high schools?
A: Students drop out for multiple reasons, and some of those reasons are beyond the control of public education. Consequently, we need to help businesspeople, community organizations and the faith-based community who want to help improve our graduation rate. We also need for every parent and every child to recognize that dropping out of school is a “million-dollar mistake” — a phrase I wish I could take credit for but which was coined instead by the CEO of America’s Promise.

A new Web site has been launched to provide information and resources for implementing local efforts to improve North Carolina’s graduation rate: www.ncpublicschools.org/graduate. Please also visit the North Carolina Chamber online at www.ncchamber.net/dropoutchallenge to participate in our dropout challenge — tell us what you or your company are willing to do to make sure more students graduate in North Carolina.

Q: What do you get when you combine expertise with personal attention?

S. LEWIS EBERT
NORTH CAROLINA CHAMBER
PRESIDENT AND CEO

“I chose First Citizens because it is a well-established bank but still has that neighborhood feel. As a sole practitioner, I founded my business on the promise of expertise and personalized care. My relationship with First Citizens follows this same model. From our very first meeting to the recent development of my new medical building, First Citizens has anticipated my needs and responded with personal commitment and knowledgeable service.”

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“I am being very, very conservative... it’s much more than $3 million.”

David Hepburn, Berry Plastics, Ahoskie, NC
Speaking in regard to the savings attained with IES

In true leadership form, David Hepburn, plant manager for Berry Plastics accepted the 1B4NC award, but not for himself. “I want to make it very clear that this award would not have been possible without the work of the employees of this company,” he said.

A crowd of 40 or so attendees, including North Carolina State Senator Edward Jones, filled the conference room in Ahoskie to celebrate this milestone.

The 1B4NC award is awarded to companies that report $1 million or more in value from the North Carolina State University Industrial Extension Service (IES) which may include jobs saved or created, increased sales or cost savings.

The 1B4NC campaign of NC State University IES promises to create $1 billion in economic impact from 2006 through 2010.

Berry Plastics reported $3.7 million in economic value based on implementation of lean principles that help companies identify and reduce waste and non-value-added work.

The Ahoskie plant’s efforts have made them the benchmark of all 60 Berry plants nationwide.

NC State IES is a provider of business solutions. Experts are stationed statewide and are ready to help your business prosper.