

## WORK READY COMMUNITIES

### EDITORIAL

Our Committee of 100 Business and Industry Innovation Council was originally conceived as the Workforce Partnership and was driven by long-time Board member Buster Humphries as a way to bring public and community college, education, Region Q Workforce Development and the NC Employment Security Commission (now called the NC Division of Employment Security) together with private sector employers on a monthly basis. Buster and the rest of the Committee understood that, in order for Beaufort County to have the best chance for a manufacturing expansion or location, these agencies and groups needed to be working together. The Council gave us the ability to respond quickly to particular needs of industry. It has operated quietly behind the scenes supporting economic development efforts by meeting with new businesses and recommending new initiatives designed to strengthen our workforce. Members of this group meet with new businesses to discuss how the company can avail itself of programs which produce the best qualified workers for the company.

In the last few months, the group worked together to develop a plan of action for a local company that needed to hire 159 people over the next three years. The action plan optimized all the available resources at minimal cost to the company for hiring its workforce. The Council also decided recently to support the development and marketing of an Industrial Maintenance and Certified Production Technician program. These programs, after successful completion, help improve the skill level of the workers, thereby improving their opportunity for employment. The Council is also preparing Beaufort County to become a Work Ready designated community, which means more focus on graduation rates, Career Readiness Certificates and participation from our local employers. It will advocate for more STEM programming in our schools' curriculums.

Looking ahead to 2014 and beyond, it is clear to me that what Buster Humphries started years ago, as the Workforce Partnership, will now, as the Business and Industry Innovation Council, play the most important role in the success of economic development in Beaufort County. My thanks to the many professionals involved in this effort. *Rocky Jacobs*



The Finance Committee of the Committee of 100 voted to support Beaufort County Community College in their efforts to build a new digital sign at the front of the campus along US 264. The Finance Committee believes the modern sign will enable the college to better promote and announce new training opportunities for the public and, in addition, provide public service messages in case of emergency events. The picture above shows Dick Barber presenting a check to Dr. Barbara Tansey, Lentz Stowe and Judy Jennette.

increase in the number of Career Readiness Certificates issued to the total labor force, with a minimum rate of 5% and annual progress towards a goal of 25%, 4) ten of the top twenty largest employers committed to excellence in the workforce by certifying they will prefer or require the Career Readiness Certificate for recruitment and hiring. Beaufort County, through a lot of hard work by our agencies, already meets many of the requirements. What's needed now is a commitment in the future to strive to improve our numbers and a commitment from employers to prefer or require CRC in recruitment and hiring. The Innovation Council hopes to expand and include more private sector members for the monthly workforce discussions. If successful as a Beaufort County Work Ready Community, our opportunity for growing existing companies or locating new companies will improve.

Normally, workforce development is a topic that does not merit much attention in a community. This is a different day and different time and there are many people in this community who recognize the importance of higher-level skills for Beaufort County's future. The Innovation Council recently endorsed the pursuit of a Work Ready Community designation after a presentation by Kathy Howard, Vice President of North Carolina's Eastern Region. The Eastern Region developed a multi-level certification program designed to elevate the regions workforce into a competitive advantage. In order to qualify, certain criteria have to be met: 1) letters of commitment to workforce excellence from county leadership, 2) an increase in the high school graduation rate of 1%, a minimum of 70% towards a goal of 80%, 3) a 2%



**The 2014 Oyster Roast was a great success! 301 people signed up to attend this year's event. We invite you to join the Beaufort County Committee of 100 to attend our monthly meetings and be our guest at next year's oyster roast.**

### Events

- **Wednesday, February 5, 2014 @ 12:00 PM**  
Ted Abernathy, Executive Director of Southern Growth Policy Board
- **Thursday, March 6, 2014 @ 12:00 PM**  
Greg Coltrain, CEO/General Manager, TriCounty Telecom
- **Thursday, April 3, 2014 @ 12:00 PM**  
Lew Ebert, President/CEO, North Carolina Chamber

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# YOUR MEMBERSHIP DOES MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN BEAUFORT COUNTY

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Tom Richter  
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## IN THE NEWS

**Board Members will have a retreat on January 30, 2014.**

**Please contact us if you have any suggestions or ideas in which the Committee of 100 should be involved relevant to economic development in Beaufort County.**



## PotashCorp Eliminates Positions at Aurora

PotashCorp announced a layoff of 85 positions at their Aurora facility in December as part of an overall reduction in workforce affecting nearly 1,000 positions worldwide. The workforce reduction allows the company to reduce operating costs, thereby positioning the company to be more globally competitive.

PotashCorp is a great asset – great jobs, great investment and an economic driver - for Beaufort County and eastern North Carolina. While layoffs are never easy, businesses, both small and large, all need to look at how to reduce costs every day in this worldwide competitive environment.



## The Small Business Center located at Beaufort County Community College offers one-on-one business counseling, which provides an evaluation to determine immediate needs. Custom designed programs to assist with preparation of paperwork necessary to obtain financing for a qualified new business or expansion of an existing business. Assistance for owners of existing businesses seeking information and direction. Examples of workshops and seminars relating to small business include:

- How to Start a Business
- How to Write a Business Plan
- Financing a Business
- Marketing for Success
- Doing Business with the Military
- Social Networking
- Export Ready
- Taxes and Recordkeeping for Small Business

## Tier One Designation

The North Carolina Department of Commerce evaluates statistics per county annually and ranks the counties into three groups. Tier One (40 counties) are the most economically depressed counties in the State. Next, Tier Two (40 counties) are less economically depressed and Tier Three (20 counties) are the least economically depressed. The rankings are based on four criteria: 1) property tax base per capita, 2) percentage growth in population, 3) median household income and 4) average unemployment rate. Beaufort County returned to a Tier One status due to an increase in the poverty rate, which stands at 19.1%, up from 17.3%. Beaufort County ranks 29th in property tax base per capita, 45th in population growth, 55th in median household income and 74th in average unemployment rate.

## Poverty in Beaufort County

According to the US Census, based on 2012 data (most recent), Beaufort County's poverty rate is 19%, with a poor population of 8,954 earning less than \$11,945 individually and \$23,283 as a family of four. Compared to other counties nearby (Pitt 24%, Northampton 31.8%, Lenoir 23.6%, Wilson 23.8%, Wayne 23.4%, Nash 20.8% and Durham at 19.3%), Beaufort County does not stand alone in high poverty numbers. Interestingly, the two highest percentages in Beaufort County are in two census tracts covering Washington and the immediate surrounding area. They stand at 34.4% and 34.6% (see American Community Survey).

**Misery index = unemployment rate plus the inflation rate.**

November 13 misery rate = **9.64%** compared to

November 12 misery rate = **12.06%**

## Washington Company Connects in Washington, NC

The next time you are in Washington, DC at Union Station, take time to visit the bus information and ticketing pavilion on the concourse. The ultra-creative pavilion is a result of a collaboration between architectural firm Studio Twenty Seven and our local Washington company Compmillenia. Owner Jim Gardiner, using his boatbuilding skills, built the pavilion out of composites, a new process for the architects. The end walls of the pavilion feature Morse Code etchings of a song called "Soul Meets Body".

