



# The Growing Edge

Greater Statesville Development Corporation

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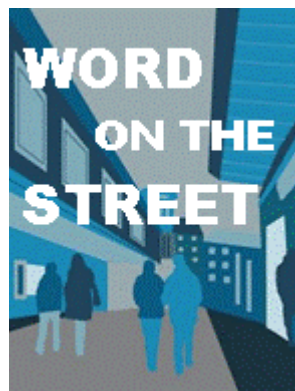
**Ever read an article** in *The Growing Edge* and wish you could comment on it? Now you can! The Growing edge is now a weblog where you can read and comment on the most current issues affecting the Greater Statesville business community. Have your say today at [thegrowingedge.wordpress.com](http://thegrowingedge.wordpress.com).

**The 2008 GSDC Annual Report** is now available for download on our website. The annual report contains a wealth of information on industrial activity, employment trends, wages, population, retail sales and building permits. Click [here](#) to download your free copy.

**The Greater Statesville** Development Corporation and Mitchell Community College are presenting a FREE workshop entitled *Permission-Based Email Marketing: Tips and Techniques for Reaching Your Customers with Constant Contact*. This program, part of the TechnoMarketing Workshop Series,

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**Landing On Water**

Like many people, when I heard that a US Airways flight bound for Charlotte had crashed into the Hudson River, I feared the worst. It has, after all, been a rough couple of months for those two cities; linked as much by the collapse of their major financial institutions as they are by the dozens of daily flights to and from their airports. So it was quite a relief to turn on the television and see Flight 1549 drifting peacefully down the Hudson with a hundred shaken, but very much alive, passengers and crew crowding her wings and emergency slides. My first thought was that maybe one day soon we will look back on that day and its indelible images and say, "That was the turning point, the exact moment when the clouds of gloom and doom began to break and things began their long steady climb back to normal."

In many ways, the saga of Flight 1549 is an apt metaphor for the economic issues we are facing. Things were going along just fine, maybe a little behind schedule but essentially in good shape, as the Airbus 320 lifted off the runway at LaGuardia Airport. Then, suddenly and with very



will be held on Friday, February 6th, from 9:00 A.M. until 11:30 A.M. in the computer lab at Mitchell Community College's Technology and Workforce Development center. Registration is required. Click [here](#) or call Lisa Taylor at 704-871-0062 for more information or to register.

**Iredell County will be featured** in the February edition of NC Magazine. This profile will consist of 15-20 pages of Iredell-centric articles, photos and advertising. Be sure to check out the Greater Statesville Development Corporation ad, which premieres our new advertising campaign, "Sign of the Times."

### Save The Date

#### January 27, 2009

Breakfast Buzz  
Hiring Best Practices: Using the CRC to Find the Best Candidates - Suzanne Wallace guest speaker  
8:00 AM - 9:00 AM  
Mitchell Community College  
Technology and Workforce  
Development Center, Room 108

#### February 3, 2009

North Carolina Chamber  
Government Affairs Conference  
12:00 PM - 5:00 PM  
Raleigh Convention Center

#### February 6, 2009

TechnoMarketing Workshop Series -  
Permission-Based Email Marketing  
9:00 AM - 11:30 AM  
Mitchell Community College  
Technology and Workforce  
Development Center  
Computer Lab

#### February 19, 2009

Legislative Update in Labor and  
Employment Law  
8:30 AM - 10:30 AM  
Mitchell Community College  
Technology and Workforce  
Development Center  
Room 205

### Just For Fun

little warning, the plane encountered a flock of birds. Jet engines are designed to survive multiple bird strikes, but apparently there were too many birds all at one time or the birds were too large. The pilot, instinctively knowing that it would be impossible to return to the airport with the engines so badly damaged, began to look for a place to set the plane down, and among the spires and towers of New York City, the only viable spot was in the river. The problem is that water landings are tricky, very tricky. If the plane comes in too fast, or nose-down or if its wings are not level there is a strong possibility it will tumble out of control on impact and break up. Fortunately for the passengers, Captain "Sully" Sullenberger had logged thousands of flight hours, had practiced this scenario hundreds of times in simulators, and had learned from the mistakes of other, less successful, attempts to land passenger jets in water. And finally, according to published reports, there was no panic among the passengers. Once the plane was in the water, they quickly and efficiently exited, taking time to assist those who were injured and making certain that no one ended up in the icy waters.

Similarly, the American economy was going along just fine, maybe slowing a bit but essentially strong. Then suddenly and with very little warning, a series of interrelated events - high oil prices, declining home values, the mortgage crisis, bank failures, the credit crunch, rising unemployment - hit the engines of the economy. The American economy is resilient and designed to survive multiple hits, but these were too numerous, too big and in too short a period of time. And that's where we are today, a plane full of frightened business people descending toward an uncertain landing on water. In the end, however, if there is a lesson to be learned from the "Miracle on the Hudson," it's that we can make a difference. We may not control gravity, the physics of flight or the random nature of circumstance, but we can make decisions about how and where we spend our money, how we treat our neighbors and associates, and how hard we work together toward a common goal. We can and will guide this economy to a soft landing through that hard work, perseverance and the ability to learn from past mistakes... and most importantly by not panicking. Even with the amazing job done by Captain Sullenberger and the crew, the end results would have been quite different - and almost certainly more tragic - had the passengers panicked and blocked the exits or knocked each other into the freezing river.

### DR. DONALD MCNEELEY ENTHRALLS CAPACITY CROWD AT C100 LUNCHEON

**HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL GRAD  
AND NORTHWESTERN PROFESSOR  
SAYS THINGS AREN'T AS BAD AS**





### The Six Pillars of Six Sigma

Having some background in consulting, retreats and Six Sigma, I had a couple of laugh-out-loud moments during last week's *30 Rock*. The episode focused on Jack and Liz's attendance at the General Electric "Six Sigma Retreat to Move Forward." Click [here](#) to view a chart describing the "six pillars of Six Sigma" or [here](#) to see the whole episode.

### Quick Links

[GSDC Website](#)

[The Growing Edge Blog](#)

[Mitchell Community College Website](#)

[PSNC Website](#)

### Join Our List



## THEY MAY APPEAR; SEES ECONOMIC RECOVERY BY MID-2009

Dr. Donald McNeeley spoke to a capacity crowd at the Greater Statesville Committee of 100 Annual Meeting Luncheon on Wednesday. A graduate of Harvard Business School and an adjunct professor at Northwestern University's McCormick Graduate School of Engineering, Dr. McNeeley is also President and COO of Chicago Tube & Iron, which recently acquired a company in Stanly County. His speech focused unabashedly on the positive, noting that; yes, we are in the midst of a significant economic downturn; yes, unemployment is at levels not seen for 30 years; but, if you look to history as a guide, even the longest economic downturns of the last 50 years have run their course in 16 months, and since we are already 12 months into this downturn, the economy is almost certain to begin its recovery by the middle of this year."

In assessing blame for the current situation, Dr. McNeeley took issue with short-sighted and unsustainable business practices, equating the mortgage crisis and the failure of financial institutions to the Dutch tulip mania of the 1600's and the dot-com bust of 2000-01. "Markets operate on a bell curve, and what goes up will eventually come back down, generally at the same speed and trajectory that they rose." He took particular exception to the concept of derivative financial instruments that are so far removed from their actual source of value that it becomes impossible to determine what they are actually worth, eventually resulting in speculation on the imaginary value of an imaginary asset.

He also discussed the perception that manufacturing was on the decline in the United States, relating this to the media's fascination with bad news and their inability to understand what the numbers actually mean. He noted that while manufacturing jobs might be down, manufacturing productivity is up. Manual labor is being replaced by technology, and future jobs will be created working with that technology. According to Dr. McNeeley, it is no longer possible for someone to drop out of high school, get a job tightening bolts at the local GM plant and make \$80,000 a year. Today's workers need to have specific technology skill sets and the ability to work together in teams. Exactly the kinds of skills which are taught at community colleges.

Dr. McNeeley closed his presentation with a short film that documented some of the changes which technology has made in our lives and will make in the future. This video can be viewed on YouTube, click [here](#).

## CRP NAMES JERRY AWARD WINNERS

The Charlotte Regional Partnership will honor UNC Charlotte and California financier David Murdock with its 2009 Jerry Awards. The awards recognize contributions to the Charlotte region by individuals and organizations from the private and public sectors.



Ronnie Bryant, chief executive of the partnership, says Murdock will be honored for his work in the private sector. "He not only was instrumental in creating hundreds of jobs in Gaston County at the Dole Fresh Vegetables plant, but his vision for a collaborative, public-private research facility focused on health and wellness has come to fruition in Kannapolis at the N.C. Research Campus."

UNC Charlotte will be honored for its work in the public sector. The university is one of eight on the research campus and is the state's sole urban-research university. "The innovation, creativity and intellectual capital that both the N.C. Research Campus and UNC Charlotte contribute to our region are key economic drivers that contribute to our global competitiveness," says Tony Almeida, board chair for the partnership.

Murdock is establishing the research campus at the former site of textile company Pillowtex Corp. The life-sciences hub includes the participation of Duke University, the UNC System, the N.C. Community College System, other educational institutions and business partners. The total investment is expected to reach \$1.8 billion. The Charlotte Regional Partnership will host its annual Jerry Awards luncheon May 28 at the Charlotte Convention Center at 11:30 a.m.

UNC System President Erskine Bowles will present the keynote address. Business and civic leader Ruth Shaw, current chair of UNC Charlotte's board of directors and former chief executive of Duke Power Co., is honorary chair of the event.

Last year, the partnership honored former Bank of America Corp. chief executive Hugh McColl Jr. and the Lincoln Economic Development Association with the 2008 Jerry awards.

The awards are named in honor of its first recipients in 2007 - Jerry Richardson, owner and founder of the Carolina Panthers, and Jerry Orr, aviation director for the city of Charlotte.

## SOUTHERN PRESTIGE INDUSTRIES NAMED CHAMBER INDUSTRY OF THE YEAR

Statesville-based Southern Prestige Industries was named the 2008 "Industry of the Year" at the Greater Statesville Chamber of Commerce Annual Gala last Friday evening.

Southern Prestige Industries was founded in 1979 by Jim Wilson and since its inception has built a reputation for innovation, quality craftsmanship, and customer-oriented service. SPI manufactures products ranging from safety equipment for the military to one-way vision graphics for advertising. SPI was recognized in the 2008 INC 5000 as one of the fastest growing private companies in America, ranking 58th among manufacturing companies.

The award was presented to company owners Jim and Cordia (Cookie) Wilson by Mike Smith and John Marek of the Greater Statesville Development Corporation. The Wilson's thanked the Chamber for the honor and recounted some of their experiences growing the business over the years. Cookie Wilson, formerly with ISS, joined her husband in the business a little over a year ago, bringing with her knowledge of quality systems gained during ISS's run at the Malcolm Baldrige Award. This resulted in developing a quality management system that earned Aerospace Standard AS 9100 Rev. B in a record time of 6 months. The company was also noted for enlisting the assistance of Mitchell Community College in the implementation of a Lean Six Sigma program.



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