



THE GROWING EDGE

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Dear John,

Lets face it, when we, as business people, hear the word "sustainable" the first thing that comes to mind is some guy wearing a "Save the Whales" tee shirt. While **sustainable business practices** certainly can include environmentally sound principles, the concept of sustainability goes for beyond the so-called "green" movement. In fact, sustainability and profitability share common enemies, waste and inefficiency.

On a local level, many companies are adopting sustainable business practices. These can be as simple as recycling paper around the office or as complex as installing solar panels on the roof or implementing a Lean Six Sigma program. The GSDC has launched an initiative called **Sustainable Statesville** to identify, acknowledge and promote sustainable practices within the Greater Statesville business community. In conjunction with the AMA, we have created a brief survey for local companies to determine their current level of commitment to sustainable business practices and their future desire to incorporate these practices into their strategic planning. Please click on the attached link to access this survey. Your responses will be completely anonymous, and the aggregate results will be published in a future issue of *The Growing Edge*.

Participate in survey.

Best regards,

John

New Commerce Secretary Lays Out His Agenda

State must adapt to tough times; flexibility is the key

When Governor Bev Perdue named Keith Crisco as her choice for secretary of commerce, he understood that he would be assuming that office during one of the worst recessions to hit the state in half a century. "I've run a business. I've seen the ups and downs. I understand it's not always up. I can't sit here and say



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In The News

The Statesville Record & Landmark recently published an article on the TechnoMarketing Workshop Series. [Click here](#) to read this article or [here](#) to learn more about the next workshop, *SEO and Internet Advertising*.

it's going to be a sweet, glorious time. There are some major issues in the economy. We have to have hope."



The founder and owner of a successful textile manufacturer, Crisco said North Carolina needs to do what any company must do when business is down: Adapt to a tougher environment. In a recent interview with the *Charlotte Observer*, Crisco, 65, often referred to his experience growing up in rural Stanly County and later running Asheboro Elastics, which makes the elastic used in underwear. "Asheboro Elastics did adapt to the global environment. We are a textile company that has survived mainly for one reason: We didn't fight it, we adapted to it. We found our niche. That's what North Carolina needs to do, too."

In terms of his agenda, Crisp indicated that he plans to be more global in his approach to selling the state. "We just opened an office in China. We need more emphasis in Asia, India. These are huge economies investing in the United States. We have all these Ph.D.s from China at Duke, UNC and NC. State. That's a connection. We're connected at the hip with China, whether we like it or not."

On using tax breaks and other incentives to attract new jobs, Crisco indicated he favors a flexible, targeted approach: We do give money based on performance. Yes, it's writing checks. If all the states would get together and stop incentives, that would be nice. I'm staggered what the competition is with other states. Sometimes we have to draw the line and choose not to play. We don't give away the ship. But we can't afford not to play the game in today's job market".

He also noted that the economic downturn is having a major impact on development opportunities in the state. "Companies are cutting jobs or shipping them overseas. Expansions are on hold. Corporations that were considering moving operations to this state are rethinking those plans." But, he reiterated that the fundamental draw of the region is still strong relative to other part of the country. "We've seen an increase from California. You can probably figure out why. Given our quality of life, our cost of doing business, our climate, we'll come out ahead. We'll lose some, but we'll come out ahead."

He also believes that manufacturing, especially advanced manufacturing, will remain an important part of the state's economy. "There is a core base of traditional manufacturing in this state. Will it be our bellwether like it was? No. I'm not saying there's not a place for traditional manufacturing. It will be here. But it's not our strategic bellwether. But high-tech manufacturing and niche manufacturing? Yes. There are a number of high-tech manufacturers in the pipeline looking at our state ... from other states and overseas."

According to Crisco, economic development activities are crucial to the future of the state and, while there will need to be some adjustment, the return on economic development investment is too high to make drastic cuts. "We've been able to cut back, to cost control things like travel, various expenses. We have not yet hurt missions. We have to do a better job on selling, and we might not visit a prospect three times, might only visit two times. We need to have the attitude of being efficient. But if it comes to spending a dollar to get 10 dollars, we're going to do it."

Small Businesses Are More Optimistic

But believe it will take time for the economy to recover

Owners and managers of small businesses are feeling a little more optimistic than they were a few months ago. But that optimism is tempered by a deep conservatism toward expansion, and an expectation that it will take time for the economy to recover, a new Network of City Business Journals survey of 776 small business leaders in January shows.



Small business bosses are more optimistic than they were just after the election. In November, only 37 percent expected their business prospects to get a lot or a little better. In January, 63 percent expected conditions to get a lot or a little better.

Still, just 27 percent expect to hire new employees when the economy recovers, while 39 percent expect to pay down credit lines and 34 percent intend to increase their capital reserves.

And the optimism is mixed with concern. Forty seven percent said they were very concerned about the long-term survival of their companies, up from 41 percent in November. Seventy percent say they're very concerned about the economy. That topped all other concerns, with the cost of health care coming in second at 66 percent.

And they don't expect a quick turnaround. On average, small business executives expect it will take 2.4 years for the economy to turn around. But most do expect the economy to recover. Sixty-three percent expect the economy to regain its former strength.

To download the survey results, click [here](#).

GSDC Names Director of BRE and Marketing

Marek has been BRE Coordinator since 2007

The Greater Statesville Development Corporation (GSDC) has named John B. Marek to the newly created position of Director of Business Retention/Expansion and Marketing. Marek previously served as Business Retention and Expansion Coordinator for the GSDC, and as economic development liaison with Mitchell Community College. He will continue in that capacity with the school.



Marek is a 1986 graduate of Bowling Green State University with a degree in Business Administration/Marketing. He has more than 23 years experience in marketing, business development and strategic planning with corporate, nonprofit and public sector organizations. Prior to joining the GSDC in 2007, Marek ran his own marketing consulting and corporate training firm and served on the Huntersville Parks and Recreation Commission.

The new Director of BRE and Marketing position will report to GSDC Executive Director C. Michael Smith, who commented on the

announcement: "Since joining us in 2007, John has done an outstanding job both working with existing industry in Greater Statesville and marketing the organization and the community. He will continue to focus on helping our local companies grow and look for new opportunities This is an affirmation by our Board of Directors of the fine work he has been doing."

Just for Fun

Troutman restaurant raps on YouTube

If you like good Italian food, you might want to check out Pellegrino's Trattoria in Troutman. If you like to laugh, check out this YouTube "viral" video posted by the owners. This is a great example of how web-based technology can be used to market your products.



The Greater Statesville Development Corporation (GSDC) is a public-private partnership of local governments and business leaders. Our purpose is to promote the industrial and commercial development of the City of Statesville, the Town of Troutman and the surrounding area of upper Iredell County, North Carolina. We provide a variety of services and assistance to help locate, maintain and expand new and existing businesses and industries in our area.

View available [sites and buildings](#).

View [resources](#) for existing industry.

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