

The Growing Edge

Greater Statesville Development Corporation

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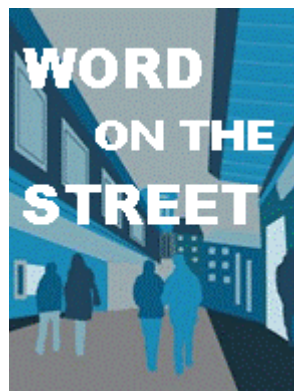
FEB 2 '09

Hot Topics

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.

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*



How's Business? The Changing Role of BR&E in a Slowdown

How's business? If local manufacturers had a dollar for every time they've been asked that question lately, we wouldn't be in an economic slowdown. The simple truth is that business, for the vast majority of companies in Greater Statesville, is not good. As the nation, and indeed the world, struggles with decreased spending, tight credit and rising unemployment, many local businesses find themselves in unfamiliar territory; cutting hours, temporary shutdowns, laying off employees, or worse...

Traditionally, Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) activities have tended to focus on the expansion part, and our BR&E program in Greater Statesville has been no exception. Over the past year and a half, our efforts have been focused primarily on identifying and assisting companies that are in an expansion mode. Sometimes - as was the case with Amesbury - the expansion was a competitive situation, one where the local facility was competing against another location for jobs and investment. More often, the local company simply needs assistance with issues like finding, hiring and training new employees (Keco Coatings), locating or constructing a new building (Pratt Industries) or weaving their way through the



Contact. This program, part of the TechnoMarketing Workshop Series, 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.

The Financial Times has ranked several N.C. schools as having top MBA programs. For 2009, the publication ranks the Fuqua School of Business at Duke University as No. 22 in the world. That's ahead of the Kenan-Flagler Business School at UNC Chapel Hill, which checked in at No. 45. Wake Forest Graduate School of Management came in at No. 86. The Financial Times ranks programs on the average salary of graduates, the average increase between pre-MBA salary and post-MBA salary and the percentage of students who land a job within three months of graduation.

A Labor Law Update will be presented by Ken Carlson (Constangy, Brooks and Smith, LLP) on 2/19/2009 from 8:30 AM until 10:30 AM at Mitchell Community College. Ken will provide a breakdown of the projected impacts of current and proposed legislation including:

- 1) Employee Free Choice Act
- 2) ADA Amendments of 2008
- 3) FMLA Leave Act updates
- 4) Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act

The event is no charge to members of the sponsoring organizations and open to the first 45 respondents. Call the Chamber (704-873-2892) to register.

Save The Date

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

permitting process (Asphalt Paving Equipment). Since May of 2007, our BR&E program has been involved in 18 expansion projects, most of which resulted in an increase in area jobs and significant new capital investment.

Over the past six months, however, the number of companies looking to expand their local operations has decreased significantly as the economy has slowed. In fact, sad as it is to say, some of our most recent expansion projects have come at the expense of other communities where plants have been closed and the jobs and equipment moved to Greater Statesville. Given this changing business environment, the focus of our BR&E efforts has shifted toward proactive identification of "at-risk" companies, making financial and legal service referrals, enlisting the appropriate state, county and city agencies in support of local business, workforce development through training and re-training and productivity improvement through technology and innovation.

Perhaps the most important of these retention activities is the identification of companies who may be at risk of failure. Obviously, this is an inexact science. Companies fail for a variety of reasons, from lack of working capital to customer service issues to unexpected market swings, and these reasons may not always be obvious to even the most careful observer. Making the task more difficult, many companies are reluctant to self-identify as "troubled" or ask for assistance, either because they are afraid of the consequences should such information "get out," or because they believe (erroneously in my opinion) that involving an outside party merely complicates their situation.

The fact of the matter is, there will certainly be cases where the assistance available from the GSDC and our partners at the state, county and local level will not ultimately make a difference in the viability of a company. But there ARE situations where a reasonable level of assistance can and will make a difference. We are all too familiar with the recent notices of plant closings and lay-offs in Greater Statesville, but what is not nearly so obvious or well-known are the cases where such actions have been mitigated or averted completely by proactive identification and remediation of critical business issues. In this economic climate, the departments and agencies we partner with are in a position to go the extra mile in an attempt to save jobs and investment, and we urge companies who are having significant, business-threatening problems to seek the assistance they require and are entitled to.

Specifically what types of assistance are available? Perhaps the most valuable assistance the GSDC can offer is referrals to financial, legal and other professional resources through our network of service providers. Many of the troubled companies we speak with tell us that the only thing we can do

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

February 27, 2009

TechnoMarketing Workshop Series -
SEO and Internet Advertising:
Targeting Your Markets with Google
AdWords
9:00 AM - 11:30 AM
Mitchell Community College
Technology and Workforce
Development Center
Computer Lab

March 5-6, 2009

NCEDA MidWinter Conference

March 26, 2009

Statesville Business Show
10:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Statesville Civic Center

to help them is to get people to buy more cars, houses, widgets or whatever it is they manufacture. Changing global demand for these products is quite obviously beyond our capabilities, but finding innovative ways to help by restructuring debt, generating cash flow, improving efficiency and productivity, and identifying new markets are all goals that can be reasonably achieved through our business partners. If you want to fight for your business, your jobs and your community, we will fight with you, and we will assemble a team of the best and brightest in their fields to fight along with us.

Finally, our BR&E has significantly increased its corporate training programming in an effort to provide local businesses access to new and innovative tools and techniques for marketing their products, hiring quality employees, improving productivity, and dealing with legal issues. Our four TechnoMarketing Workshops, Breakfast Buzz guest speakers, Employee Free Choice Act Seminar and Lean Marketing Executive Workshop are all being presented free of charge over the next three months.

If you would like to learn more about any of these programs, please give me (John Marek, BR&E Coordinator) a call at 704-657-7007. Confidentiality is assured and there is a good chance we can do something to help.

Just For Fun



Favorite Super Bowl Ad

So what was your favorite ad from this year's Super Bowl. I have to vote for the blink-and-you-missed-it Miller High Life One Second Commercial. "High Life!" Inspired. You can have a look at all of this year's spots on Hulu. That's www.hulu.com.

Quick Links

[GSDC Website](#)

[The Growing Edge Blog](#)

IREDELL COUNTY UNEMPLOYMENT RISES IN DECEMBER; STILL ONE OF THE LOWEST IN THE REGION

LATEST FIGURES SHOW JOB LOSSES IN THE MANUFACTURING, MOTORSPORTS AND RETAIL SECTORS

The unemployment rate in Iredell County rose to 9.2 percent in December from 8.1 percent in November.

In December, 7,609 residents were unemployed among the county's labor force of 82,975, according to the N.C. Employment Security Commission. Even with this increase, Iredell County still had the fourth lowest unemployment rate in the region.

In contrast, unemployment in the Hickory/Lenoir/Morganton metro area was 10.9 percent, up from 10.2 percent and unemployment in the Charlotte/Gastonia/Concord area was 8.9 percent, up from 8.2 percent in November.

Here's a breakdown of county unemployment rates in December, compared with November:

·Anson: 12.6 percent, up from 11.2 percent.



[Mitchell Community College Website](#)

[PSNC Website](#)

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- Cabarrus: 8.5 percent, up from 7.7 percent.
- Catawba: 10.7 percent, up from 9.7 percent.
- Cleveland: 12 percent, up from 10.6 percent.
- Gaston: 11.4 percent, up from 10 percent.
- Iredell: 9.2 percent, up from 8.1 percent.
- Lincoln: 10.4 percent, up from 9.2 percent.
- Mecklenburg: 8.3 percent, up from 7.8 percent.
- Rowan: 9.3 percent, up from 8.6 percent.
- Stanly: 9.5 percent, up from 8.8 percent.
- Union: 8.1 percent, up from 7.5 percent.

Statewide, the unemployment rate was 8.5 percent in December, up from 7.8 percent in November.

Orange County had North Carolina's lowest unemployment rate in November, at 4.8 percent. Scotland County had the highest rate, at 13.9 percent.

STATESVILLE CHAMBER ANNOUNCES ECONOMIC STIMULUS PLAN

The Greater Statesville Chamber of Commerce has announced its Economic Stimulus Plan. Through membership surveys the Chamber determined that providing enhanced business assistance and networking are the most important factors for many of its members. The plan expands many current opportunities, introduces some new features and is designed to promote working with/for/through each other. In all there are 12 points to this plan with 26 initiatives. Some of the projects simply provide publicity on behalf of partner organizations like the GSDC and Mitchell College (who are sponsoring the TechnoMarketing Workshop Series), but the vast majority of the plan deals directly with Chamber of Commerce events and programs. Of particular note is the Member to Member Discount Program. Chamber members can take advantage of special discounts offered by other member companies. The Chamber's goal is to help maintain and enhance business. For more information about the Economic Stimulus Plan, click [here](#).



DUKE MAY NOT BE ABLE TO MOVE AHEAD WITH SOLAR PROGRAM

Duke Energy Carolinas says it cannot proceed with its proposed \$50 million rooftop solar program, including projects



in Greater Statesville, unless N.C. regulators remove restrictions on how the utility will recover the initiative's costs from customers.

The company says the restrictions could cause Duke to violate federal rules governing up to \$250 million in energy-investment tax credits. Violating the federal regulations would force Duke to forfeit those federal tax credits, including \$125 million targeted for Duke's 825-megawatt Cliffside coal plant.

"That's not a risk we can take," says Keith Trent, Duke's chief strategy and regulatory officer. Without a change in the state requirements, "we are simply not going to be able to go forward with the program." And Duke says if it cannot proceed with the rooftop program, it won't be able to meet new state requirements for solar energy production in 2010. Duke asked the N.C. Utilities Commission on Thursday to rescind the restrictions.

At issue is the commission's Dec. 31 order approving the solar program. Duke wants to build solar panels capable of producing 10 megawatts of power on customers' property over the next two years. It will treat the small solar generators as a single large plant, helping the company learn how to more effectively use power from small sources as a way to avoid the need for large, potentially polluting plants. But the commission order set a limit on how much of the program's costs Duke can recover under the renewable-energy legislation the state adopted in 2007. Duke may be able to recover the remainder of its expenses under normal rate-base filings, the commission says.

The uncertainty of cost-recovery, and the longer time it can take to get approval for recovery under traditional rate filings, could cause Duke to violate strict cost-accounting requirements that cover how it uses tax credits, the company says.

The 2007 state energy legislation set goals for electric utilities to produce some of their power from renewable sources, starting next year. But legislators were concerned that relatively expensive renewable energy would drive prices too high for consumers. So it set limits on how much renewables could add to customer bills each year.

The commission's Public Staff, assigned to protect customers' interests, worried that the rooftop program's expense would drive Duke to the limit on costs before it produced the targeted amount of alternative energy. The rooftop solar program faces another challenge as well.

Owen Smith, head of Duke's solar programs, says the utility will have to ask the commission to delay the requirement that it produce solar energy in 2010 if the rooftop program is

abandoned. Duke plans to buy power from a large solar farm that SunEdison is building in Davidson County. But that energy won't be available until 2011.

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