



# THE GROWING EDGE

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**Dear John,**

As I visit with business and community leaders in Greater Statesville, I hear the same question again and again, "When is the economic recovery going to happen?" I don't claim to be an expert in economics or forecasting, but based on my conversations with business people locally, regionally and nationally I am convinced the recovery has already begun.



If you've followed my recent writings, you know that there are many positive signs; businesses expanding, sales increasing, new clients landed. I am convinced that many of our prominent industrial sectors - advanced manufacturing, construction-related products, and motorsports - will be among the first to feel it. In particular, I believe the construction industry is likely to recover sooner rather than later.

But, are you ready? As with any economic cycle, there are people and companies that are prepared for the recovery and those who wait while others take the lead. Which will you be? Let's take a look at a few steps that you can take to prepare.

## **Make a connection**

Now, more than ever, you should be in touch with your current, past and prospective clients. It is absolutely crucial to reestablish, grow and maintain those relationships. Ask what you can be doing now to help them. They are being inundated by your competitors, large and small. If you're not top of mind, you may have a serious problem.

## **Build a sense of team**

At a time when employees are terrified that their jobs may be at risk or that their salaries may be cut, it's important to reassure them that they are part of the team and that their contribution is important to the recovery. Open, honest communications are part of creating a great workplace. And, be sure to include your vendors.

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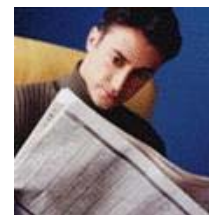
## **Quick Links**

[GSDC Website](#)

[PSNC Website](#)

[Mitchell Community College Website](#)

[GSDC Event Calendar](#)  
**\*NEW\***



**Continuously improve skills**

Whether through college-based coursework or a trade skill program, you should use this "slow" time to prepare for the recovery. Every employee, including management, should consider how they can be better prepared. In particular, sales and productivity training should be at the top of the list. It's very competitive out there and you (and your employees) need to be at the top of your game.

**Understand the Stimulus Plan (Or at least try)**

Talk to everyone you know in order to evaluate and understand how the Stimulus Plan might fund projects in your area. Thoroughly explore who's controlling those projects and how you might fit in. Get connected and get ready.

**Don't skimp on marketing and promotion**

"Our clients and prospects all know us," you say. In difficult times, the marketing budget is often the first to feel the ax. Here's the problem with that train of thought. It's very competitive out there! Nowadays, you may be one of ten or twenty organizations competing for a project rather than one of five. It's also very loud. If you're not aggressively staying in front of the marketplace, you could be in trouble. Now is the time to aggressively get in front of your target industries. While I am an advocate of highly-targeted "Lean" marketing, I do believe that it's important to be in front of those audiences much more often than ever.

The GSDC offers a variety of programs to assist existing industry with these and many other issues. Please feel free to contact me any time. We'd love to be part of the team.

[jmarek@greaterstatesville.org](mailto:jmarek@greaterstatesville.org)

Have a great week,

John

**In The News**

The *Charlotte Observer* recently ran a story on Statesville's selection as a finalist for the All-America City Award.

**Iredell County Unemployment Eases in March**

**Positive sign that the economic downturn may have bottomed-out for Greater Statesville**

The unemployment rate in Iredell County dipped to 12.7 percent in March from 12.9 percent in February.

Unemployment in the Charlotte/Gastonia/Concord area as a whole was 11.4 percent, down from 11.7 percent in February.



In the Hickory/Lenoir/Morganton region, unemployment was 15.4 percent, down from 15.6 percent

Here are county unemployment rates in March compared with February:

- Anson: 14.8 percent, up from 14.7 percent.
- Cabarrus: 11.3 percent, up from 11.1 percent.
- Catawba: 15.6 percent, up from 15 percent.
- Cleveland: 15.7 percent, unchanged.
- Gaston: 14.6 percent, down from 15.2 percent.

- Lincoln: 14.6 percent, down from 14.7 percent.
- Mecklenburg: 10.6 percent, down from 10.7 percent.
- Rowan: 12.8 percent, up from 11.9 percent.
- Stanly: 12.4 percent, up from 12.2 percent.
- Union: 10.6 percent, unchanged.

Statewide, the unemployment rate was 10.9 percent in March, down from 11.2 percent in February. Iredell County continues to have one of the lowest unemployment rates in the region.

Orange County had the lowest unemployment rate in the state in March at 6.1 percent. Scotland County had the highest at 16.6 percent.

## Statesville Launches Hometown Green Program with Energy Efficiency Breakfast for Commercial Electricity Users

**Companies learn about REPS and how they can apply for assistance for energy efficiency projects**

More than a dozen representatives of local businesses met with ElectriCities and the Electric Utilities for the City of Statesville on April 15th to discuss Senate Bill 3, the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standard (REPS) to which all public utilities, cooperatives and municipalities that serve retail customers within the state are subject.



In a nutshell, REPS mandates that 10% of all energy provided by these utilities must come from renewable resources by 2015, or must be generated through verifiable energy conservation programs. ElectriCities, the City of Statesville's electric utility partner, is currently working on a variety of renewable energy projects, including wind, solar, biomass, and hydro, but acknowledges that the majority of its REPS compliance will come from conservation programs. To that end, ElectriCities and the City of Statesville are now accepting proposals for energy efficiency projects. Worthwhile projects will be selected and partially funded. This funding program is open to any commercial, industrial or institutional customer with a peak annual billing demand of 250kW. Projects which offer a potential savings of 100,000 kWh or more per year will receive preference. Project proposals must be submitted by May 15th and funding recipients will be announced July 1st.

For more information about this program, qualifications and/ or assistance with developing a proposal, please contact [John Marek](#) at the GSDC or [Joe Blevins](#) with City of Statesville Electric Utilities.

**Greater Statesville Committee of 100 Luncheon Features *Site Selection* Magazine Leader**  
**General Manager Ron Starnier explains why Greater Statesville is a**

### great place to do business

On April 15th, the Greater Statesville Committee of 100 welcomed guest speaker Ron Starner to the Statesville Civic Center for its quarterly luncheon and a discussion of the factors which lead *Site Selection* magazine to select Statesville-Mooresville as its #1 Micropolitan area. Mr. Starner is General Manager of Conway Data Inc and *Site Selection* magazine, an international corporate real estate publication. He also serves as Executive Director of the Industrial Assets Management Council (IAMC).



In his presentation, Mr. Starner mentioned a number of factors that have lead to the area's remarkable and consistent success in recruiting and retaining industry, specifically mentioning location, workforce, and a positive business environment. He went on to describe the top 5 sources that companies say they use to evaluate a community when making a location decision: Input from industry peers; Economic development agency websites; Site selection consultants; Phone calls to economic developers; And editorial content in industry publications.

## Conway Data Makes New Book, *Project New America*, Available Free for Download

**Publisher of *Site Selection* magazine offers plan for economic revitalization and a "golden age of leadership"**

Atlanta-based Conway Data, publisher of the leading business real estate and relocation magazine *Site Selection*, is making Publisher McKinley Conway's timely new book *Project New America* available online, free of charge.



Conway's 45th book, *Project New America* offers a detailed plan for national investment in alternative energy to create millions of jobs and make the nation energy independent. Additional material online includes:

- Conway's commentary on how *Project New America* meshes with the Obama recovery plan.
- Experts' opinions about *Project New America*, including endorsements from economic developers and opinion leaders from around the country.
- The *Project New America* Energy Industries Index, featuring a listing of energy companies by nation and state.

## NC State To Offer ExporTech in Greensboro

**"How-to" program designed to help small- and medium-sized companies enter or expand into the growing global export market**

With the weak dollar and rapid growth in emerging economies, export sales are the fastest growing



segment of the market. However, many companies are missing out on these growth opportunities because they don't know the "how-to's" of exporting.

Developed by the US Department of Commerce in conjunction with the US Commercial Service, ExporTech is the "how-to" program that will help your small- or medium-sized company enter or expand into global markets by assisting in the development of an international growth plan customized specifically for your business. Utilizing a team of export experts, ExporTech will help your company move quickly beyond planning, into actual, profitable export sales.

The ExporTech program is intended for executives and is aimed at both new-to-export companies and those that have done some exporting, but have not fully exploited global opportunities.

The NC State ExporTech program begins with three, full-day, training sessions, scheduled approximately a month apart. During these sessions, you will gain an understanding of how exports can be a major growth driver, identify hurdles to your expansion, and work with the export facilitators to develop a customized international growth plan for your company.

The program size will be limited to six to eight participants to provide sufficient time and attention to each company's specific problems. Participants will be from non-competing organizations, so each can share strategic information in a confidential environment as their plan is being developed.

The program content will be customized to your specific learning needs. And, unlike a static classroom environment, this program has the flexibility to help you understand and identify the areas where you need assistance in exporting, and then bring to you the international business experts needed to help you to address specific areas. The experts will assist you in refining your international strategies, developing your international growth plan, and, ultimately, implementing it.

The next program series will begin in Greensboro May 5th, with subsequent sessions June 2nd and July 9th. The cost is \$600 per person. For more information or to register for the program click [here](#).

## Habitat for Humanity of Iredell County Names New Development Director

**Position is important step in the growth of the organization**

On April 14th, Scott Loudermelt, Executive Director of habitat for Humanity of Iredell County announced the addition of Sally Nix to his staff as the Director of Development.

Sally joins Habitat after 12 years of development and non-profit experience with foundations, government agencies, and non-profits on a national level. Before joining Habitat, Sally was with The Breast Cancer 3-Day, a Susan G. Komen for the Cure Project and also served in a grassroots capacity with LIVESTRONG Army, the Lance Armstrong



Foundation.

Sally attended both Lees-McCrae College and the College of Charleston where she studied English and Mass Communications. She is a member of the Association of Fundraising Professionals and a life-long member of the First Presbyterian Church of Statesville. Sally lives in Statesville with her husband and two daughters.

In her role as Director of Development, Sally will be responsible for expanding Habitat's development efforts, while helping organizations and individuals find mutually beneficial ways to successfully engage in Habitat's mission.

Sally's start date will be April 20th.

## Just for Fun

### Plug-In hybrid hits the streets of Statesville

ElectriCities brought its state-of-the-art plug-in hybrid Prius to Statesville to kick off the Hometown Green campaign. According to the driver, the vehicle got about 83 MPG on the trip from Raleigh, noting that he often gets 100 MPG or more on short trips around the city. The ElectriCities Prius differs from the commercially available version -- which gets about 55 MPG -- in that it can be plugged in and recharged through any home electrical outlet. It also uses a more sophisticated Lithium Ion battery technology than similar plug-ins operated by other utilities. The vehicle gets about 40 miles on a full charge (six hours), after which the 76 HP gasoline engine kicks in. The gasoline engine also assists with inclines and speeds over 35 MPH. The operational cost for the vehicle is about 2.4 cents per mile in full-electric mode and about 8 cents per mile in gasoline mode.



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.

Learn more about the [Committee of 100](#).

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