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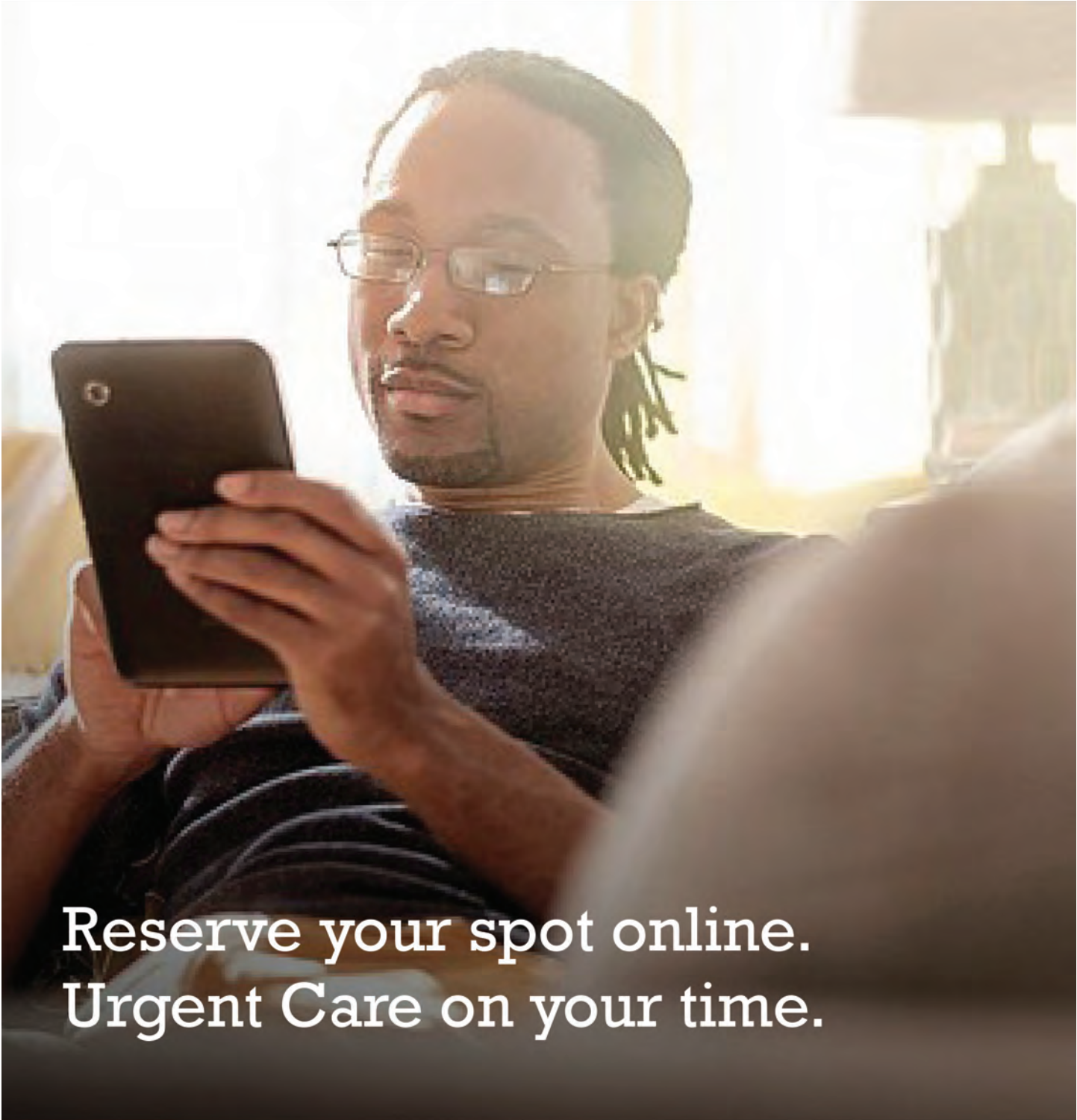
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PUBLISHER
Sandy Selvy-Mullis

EDITOR
B.J. Drye

ADVERTISING MANAGER
Tracey Almond

EDITORIAL STAFF
Ritchie Starnes, News Editor
Charles Curcio, Sports Editor
Shannon Beamon, Staff Writer
Hazel Saunders, Editorial Assistant

ADVERTISING STAFF
Terri Locklear
Anna James
Sherry Nance
Tonda Furr

DISTRIBUTION
Deborah Holt

CORRESPONDENTS
Sandy Hatley
Toby Thorpe
Jo Grey

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS
Marty Bowers

**STANLY COUNTY CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE PRESIDENT & CEO**
Kathy Almond

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116 E. North Street
Albemarle, NC 28001
Phone: (704) 982-8116
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Phone: (704) 982-2121
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ABOUT THE COVER:
This collage of photos reflects what is
great about Stanly County.

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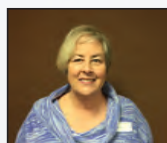
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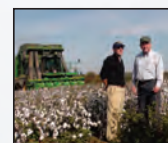
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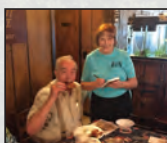
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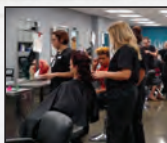
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Welcome to Stanly County!



A message from Kathy Almond, SCCoC President and CEO

As president of the Stanly County Chamber of Commerce (SCCoC), I would like to welcome you to our community.

SCCoC is a membership organization of dynamic professionals, non-profit entities, dedicated individuals, businesses, and industries from Stanly County and the surrounding region. We support and promote our members in many ways throughout the year, offering numerous opportunities for marketing member business.

Our Mission: Stanly County Chamber of Commerce (SCCoC) serves as a catalyst

for collaborative economic development in business, education, entrepreneurship, leadership, and public policy to create a thriving community.

SCCoC partners with The Stanly News & Press (SNAP) to present interesting information regarding our county and our greater Uwharrie region. Included in these pages are topics of interest in education, economic development, business and industry, tourism, and local leadership.

SCCoC maintains a year round schedule of business related activities including:

- Ribbon Cuttings and Groundbreakings;
- Business Before and Business After Hours;

- Annual Legislative Breakfast;
- Candidate Forums;
- Small Business of the Year;
- Annual Membership Meeting;
- Chamber Classic Golf Tournament;
- A regional local foods event
 - Taste of the Uwharries;
- Certificates of Origin;
- Referrals of SCCoC Member Businesses;
- Management of Stanly County Managers Association (SCMA);
- SCMA Scholarships for Workforce Education.

SCCoC recognizes outstanding individuals:

- Chamber Ambassador of the Year;
- Stanly County Citizen of the Year.





Friends, family and Chamber community join Jazmin Caldwell as she celebrates the opening of her new location, The Law Office of J.G. Caldwell, PLLC in downtown Albemarle with an official SCCoC Ribbon Cutting event.

SCCoC convenes Leadership Stanly, a group of local leaders, who participate in a nine month program (Sept-May). These leaders from across our county obtain a greater knowledge of our local community, which creates pride of place and a sense of belonging. Leadership Stanly cultivates and motivates informed leaders to take active roles in community affairs. In May 2018, SCCoC will graduate and celebrate our 30th year of Leadership Stanly!

SCCoC strives for continuous improvement. From building greater networks to reaching new markets, SCCoC, offers events, activities, and programs for outreach and growth both personally and professionally. In today's global economy the role of local chambers continues to evolve, and your local chamber continues to enhance its efforts in making your return on investment stronger for growing our future.

SCCoC is proud of our 80+ year heritage! We welcome the changes and opportunities that are on the horizon of our Chamber Community.

SCCoC members and volunteers are what make our community grow and prosper. SCCoC, Champions for Prosperity! Visit our website at www.stanlychamber.org Like us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/StannyChamber/ 



2016-2017 Stanly County Chamber Leadership Stanly Class



2016 Citizen of the Year

It takes a village: Albemarle councilman proves belief that no one stands alone

**By Shannon Beamon
Staff Writer**



When Dexter Townsend was little, he couldn't catch a break.

If his parents weren't hounding him about homework or good behavior, then his teachers and coaches and neighbors and pastors were.

"I grew up during a period of time when the phrase, 'it takes a village to raise a child' had true meaning," he said, remembering the instances of tough love throughout his school years.

Recently named the 2016 Citizen of the Year by the Chamber of Commerce ~ and serving as both a city councilman and production supervisor for the international company Preformed Line Products ~ it would seem the village did things right by him.

"I attribute all my accomplishments to (them)," Townsend happily admitted.

In fact, rather than outgrowing that village

mentality when he graduated Albemarle High School in 1986, it became steadily more important to him over the years, Townsend noted.

While working toward his associates degree in business administration at Stanly Community College, he detailed, he first saw the importance of "the village" coming together through a group called Phi Beta Lamda.

Phi Beta Lamda helped with several local fundraisers and community initiatives at that time, including a massive effort to rename East South Street to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive.

"Every other municipality... appeared to have a street or highway named after this pioneer of the civil rights movement and we wanted to bring our city in compliance with other places," Townsend said.

However, a storm of opposition blew in during a second hearing on the matter. In

the end, only a portion of the street was renamed ~ primarily within the boundaries of the traditionally African-American community of south Albemarle.

"It still irritates me to this day that the boundaries of East South Street and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive are literally a separation of the communities," Townsend said.

However, the experience also made Townsend realize it would take a village to raise a city as much as it took a village to raise a child in the community.

And like all those teachers, coaches, neighbors and pastors who helped him, he suddenly wanted to be one of those hounding Albemarle to be its best.

So after graduating from SCC in 1988 and marrying high-school sweetheart Tina Scott in 1993, Townsend got more involved in the community through dozens of civic organizations including Men Making a



Councilman Dexter Townsend works with the Blink of an Eye Program.

Difference, the Albemarle Downtown Development Corporation, the Stanly Community Outreach, and the Stanly County Arts Council.

In 1994, he also went on to work for PLP where he quickly found his niche in promoting community development, creating balanced growth and listening to the “voices and concerns of citizens,” employers said.

“I followed very closely the issues and concerns in local government, and got mentored by many past elected officials and community leaders,” Townsend remembered of the decade after graduating college.

Perhaps, it should come as no surprise, then, that when Councilman T.E. White of south Albemarle passed away in 2008, Townsend was called on to fill his place.

According to former editions of *The Stanly News & Press*, people across the district contacted the city council and then Mayor Elbert “Whit” Whitley directly to urge

them to put the young husband ~ and recent father ~ into that seat.

“It was an unanimous vote,” Whitley said of the meeting in 2008 when Townsend was nominated and elected to the council for the first time. “And we feel very fortunate to have a person of Mr. Townsend’s caliber to put into that job.”

A decade later, Townsend still holds that seat. And while the county and the city have some work to do toward embracing diversity, he noted, there’s been plenty to lift his heart, too.

Whether the growing success of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Prayer Breakfast each January or ongoing improvements to the E.E. Waddell Center in south Albemarle, or the birth of new civic groups like Youth in Action, or the success of young entrepreneurs just starting to pursue



their dreams, Townsend said seeing “village efforts” succeed continually puts a smile on his face.

“Even on simple things, when the community based groups plan small events, but put a lot of sweat equity into it, (I love to see that),” Townsend said. “I am humbly honored to continue ensuring that all citizens have a voice at the table in this process.” ②

EDC director describes the county's economic development climate in a Q&A

By Ritchie Starnes
News Editor



Last March Michael Smith took over the reins as director of Stanly County's Economic Development Commission (EDC).

Smith brings a wealth of experience to the job, including 25 years of economic and business development in both the public and private sectors. For seven years Smith served in multiple roles at the N.C. Department of Commerce where his responsibilities included lead generation, responding to business inquiries and the development of marketing initiatives in an effort to recruit new businesses to North Carolina.

He previously served as the president of the North Carolina Economic Developers Association, which provided networking opportunities and fostered relationships with many high level state and regional economic development leaders in North Carolina.

Prior to coming to Stanly, Smith spent 10 years as executive director of Statesville Regional Development. There he developed a marketing plan to promote the city and surrounding area to prospective businesses and industry. He also

implemented a business retention program to assist existing companies with their growth and expansion.

In Statesville, Smith spearheaded new and expansion projects that led to the creation of 800 new full-time jobs and more than \$260 million in new capital investment.

It didn't take long for Smith to assess Stanly County's assets and challenges as the rural area prepares for an ever-changing economic landscape.

At the request of The Stanly News & Press, Smith graciously agreed to partake in a Question and Answer (Q&A) forum aimed at forecasting the county's economic development future. Below is a series of 10 questions followed by Smith's responses.

Q. Characterize the present state of economic development in Stanly County.

A. Economic development is very competitive in the Charlotte region. We are fortunate to be within an hour of the largest city in the Carolinas. This area is known for having a number of very strong competitors for new companies, which is positive in relation to generating activity.

We have several potential expansions in Stanly County, which could result in more announcements in 2017 than we have seen in recent years. The completion of the I-485 Outer Loop has created new energy and activity on the eastern side of Charlotte. Our Board of Commissioners recently named several new EDC members and retained other key members. In addition, the organization has added a new member to help in our mission to work with existing industries and bring new ones to the community. For the second straight year, Stanly County ranks second in the Charlotte region for new residential permits issued. This shows we are a great place to live, but also points out that we must balance this new residential growth with commercial/industrial to keep our tax base balanced, and provide good jobs for the new residents.

Q. What do you perceive to be the future's prevailing industry and how might Stanly tap into that vein?

A. We believe that our position within an hour of two major metro areas offer opportunities for supplier operations for existing North Carolina companies. In addition, we see sectors in automotive,

energy, aerospace and metal working continue to grow. Our area has strengths in all of these areas. Finally, the Internet of Things (IOT) continues to evolve. The existing resources and additional new programming that is on the way at Stanly Community College will help us be prepared. Finally, our location, water and power access will give our community the potential for data center projects.

Q. Much has been made in recent years about the increasing need for spec buildings as a way to locate industry. How do you assess this need and what part of the county would be the most suitable for spec buildings? Why?

A. There is a lack of available modern industrial buildings in Stanly County. Many companies looking for a new location have a short window of time to begin operations and therefore see existing buildings as a faster way for them to start. A new shell building in the Riverstone Business Park in the western part of the county would be an excellent way to draw interest to our area. Research done by our office has indicated there is a need for a facility that would be 12 minutes from the I-485 Charlotte Outer Loop.

Q. In your discussions with prospective industry leaders considering Stanly as a business location, what do they seem to like most about the county? What do they like least?

A. Our county is located between Charlotte and a major state park and a national forest. We have a beautiful place to call home. We are centrally located to a wide variety of labor. We do have challenges regarding our proximity to interstate highways.

Q. What do you perceive to be Stanly's top assets when attempting to appeal to prospective businesses?

A. A new county-owned business park, 12 minutes to I-485; a new city owned business park on U.S. 52; Pfeiffer University and its new Health Sciences 42,000-square-foot facility in downtown

Albemarle; 10,000 acres of lakes; the Uwharrie National Forest; Morrow Mountain State Park; four vineyards; two world class sporting clay facilities; a great workforce and an excellent connection with Stanly Community College and its AMIT (Advanced Manufacturing Industrial Technology Center).

Q. What do you perceive to be Stanly's top five weaknesses?

A. Broadband capacity; shovel ready fully served industrial sites; available modern industrial buildings of 40,000 square feet and larger; looming retirements in our aging workforce in our manufacturing facilities may create challenges for existing industries; and four-lane highway access.

Q. In terms of transportation, where would you most like to see changes in the road infrastructure? Or, what changes would prove to be the most advantageous for future economic development?

A. Completion of four lanes on N.C. 24-47 is a key. Widening U.S. 52 from Anson County through Stanly to Cabarrus County would connect I-74 and I-85.

Q. What's the future of rail service in Stanly County?

A. Our rail connectivity is another advantage for businesses. We have mainline access to CSX, and Aberdeen Carolina & Western and the Winston-Salem Southbound both help connect us with CSX and also with Norfolk Southern.


Q. What's the missing link to increase business interests in the airport area? Badin Business Park?

A. The Stanly County Airport is an incredible general service aviation facility.



In addition, the N.C. Air National Guard facility is a great asset for our community and brings in significant technical expertise to the area, along with a number of international visitors. Projects want highway accessibility and that has limited our opportunities in some situations. We believe the Badin Business Park remains a site with strong potential and we will continue to work to market that for clients with significant energy needs.

Q. Data shows that while Stanly maintains a low unemployment rate, it also has a declining rate of the number of workers. Stanly ranks as one of those rural pockets that is losing workers. Do you perceive this as a concern for a future workforce or is this simply remedied by recruiting new industry?

A. The demographic shift of mid-career workers from rural areas is happening in a number of places. We will continue to market our available business parks to bring new industry to town. Our ability to continue the positive momentum we have with our quality of life improvements such as downtown Albemarle, new activity in Locust, our investment in Morrow Mountain State Park, our expanding community college and our lake access will help us bring new residents to our scenic county. 

2017 Small Business of the Year

Hobby evolves into a thriving local business

By Charles Curcio
Sports Editor

The 2017 Stanly County Chamber of Commerce Small Business of the Year winner first started as a hobby but quickly turned into a full-time profession. Mary Margaret Fields Wysocki started making T-shirts and signs in her basement in 2013 while still working fulltime as a customer service representative at Fiberon.

"I didn't like the 8 to 5 routine," Wysocki said.

Her first big show which helped show her the promise of bigger things to come was a booth at the Best of Badin Festival, when she first started getting some of her first orders professionally. The booth featured wooden signs she made, but along with those items she made herself a shirt with her monogram on it.

"A lady asked me to make her (a monogram shirt). I advertised that shirt and everyone went crazy, so we slowly moved from wood signs to more apparel," Wysocki said.

Between social media, her page on the craft marketplace website Etsy and a business website, orders began to rush in.

"I was staying up until 2 a.m. filling orders," Wysocki remembered.

In June 2015, she decided to quit her regular job and become her own boss by starting her full-time business.

"I knew if I didn't pursue this full-time, I would regret it," Wysocki said. "I think I would have looked back and thought what would have come of the business if I hadn't pursued it."

Wysocki said the amount of time spent on the regular job and filling orders in her spare time started to catch up with her.

"Physically and mentally, I was burned out, staying up so late. When at my job, I was worried about orders. It just became too much," she added.

While at the time, Wysocki said it felt

like she was taking big leaps, in fact, she believes she was testing the water slowly, working in her basement for six months before opening the first retail location located next to Tass on Main Street in downtown Albemarle.

However, her business continued to grow exponentially and outgrew that location, so she moved into her current location at 1021 Old Charlotte Road in January.

One of the benefits of her new location is being able to have a retail storefront along with a production room and have enough space in a separate room to offer do-it-yourself crafting parties, which she has at her current spot, along with ample parking.

The majority of Wysocki's business comes with the production of custom T-shirts, specifically making shirts using a vinyl heat-transfer process.

Wysocki said she prefers the heat transfer shirt more than screen-printed despite being more labor-intensive because of the





quality and feel of the finished product as well as the ability to make shirts in smaller batches.

“The majority of our sales are people that want custom five, 10 or even just one shirt,” Wysocki said.

Make It Personal does screenprinting as well, but mostly for bulk orders. Monograms on T-shirts, bags, purses, backpacks and more are popular right now, according to Wysocki, and another major part of her business.

“If it sits still long enough, we’ll monogram it,” Wysocki said.

The business also does a great deal of embroidery work, something she added because embroidery is much better for bags, shoes and things like that. Wysocki said she believes the popularity of the items she makes is because people love to celebrate things in their life.

“People want a shirt or something to remember an event in their life, a memento from a special occasion,” Wysocki said.

Make It Personal has done T-shirts for a wide range of events from wedding parties, baby announcements, sports teams, baseball and softball moms shirts, beach trips, cruises, Disney trips and more.

Maintaining a high standard of quality is also important to Make It Personal, according to Wysocki.

“We buy top-quality vinyl, top-quality garments...if I wouldn’t wear it, I won’t sell it. I pride myself on having high-quality garments and doing a good job on them.”

Even beyond normal retail work for the business are the DIY parties, which started when one of Wysocki’s friends asked if she could do a party for her young daughter.

“I always thought I would love to do it, but

I didn’t know how. I tried it on her and it went off without a hitch,” Wysocki said.

The extra room just off the main showroom has a table in the middle and plenty of space to host a crafting party, which Wysocki said stays booked nearly every weekend in the winter months but a little less during the summer.

Keeping her products trendy while continuing to expand and adding new products is important to Wysocki.

“I want to continue to expand. Fads come and go...we have to keep thinking outside the box, see what else we can offer, stay up to date with the trends.”

Beyond even custom T-shirts, Make It Personal has a showroom with a line of T-shirts which Wysocki calls “statement Ts” offering funny, clever and often inspirational views on life.



“They may be my favorite shirts to make,” she said. “It’s a challenge to come up with (the slogans)...it’s hard to be original in the T-shirt industry.”

When reflecting on the award from the Chamber, Wysocki said she still gets emotional thinking about it. After listening to the descriptions of the other two businesses in the category, Falling Rivers Gallery and The Polka Dot Owl, Wysocki said she thought “What am I doing here? Is this a joke?”

Winning the award was humbling, Wysocki said, spurring memories in her mind of how far the business has come.

“Often, with a lot of small businesses, you’re always worried about tomorrow... (winning the award) gave me a minute to reflect on how much we have grown.”

Looking to the future, Wysocki said she wants to expand the business further, possibly adding a full-time staff, along with building a unique brand. To the end of the latter, Make It Personal has created Lydia Grace Apparel, a line of grace-inspired clothing for women and children named after her aunt and niece.

Wysocki also wants to continue to be an advocate for shopping local businesses, saying she “wants people to understand you

can find things online but it’s right here in your backyard.” Buying local means not having to pay shipping costs as well as being able to try on apparel before purchasing.

Make It Personal is open 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Tuesday-Friday and on Saturdays by appointment for DIY parties. When it comes to buying local, Wysocki says she does business online, but around 70 percent of her business comes from local purchases and people coming in the front door.

“There are so many things local businesses can do for you if you give them a chance.” ⑦



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2017 Ambassador of the Year

Jan Goetz loves to promote her adopted home

By Toby Thorpe
Contributing Writer



If you ask Jan Goetz what she likes about Stanly County, you'd best be prepared to listen for a while.

Named in early 2017 as Stanly County Chamber of Commerce's Ambassador of the Year, Goetz relocated to the county 21 years ago from California and has never regretted the move.

"My mom was from Sampson County, North Carolina and my dad was from New York," she said. "We moved to California when I was 6 months old, but we would come back to North Carolina in the summers."

One of the places to which Goetz and her family often returned was her cousin's home in the Finger community.

"I absolutely loved the area then, and still do now."

After purchasing a home here in

1996, Goetz worked in Charlotte for OrthoCarolina for 10 years before accepting a position with Community Home Care and Hospice in Troy, where she serves as a hospital liaison/community educator.

"At OrthoCarolina, I served as a registered nurse in the orthopedic section of the neonatal intensive care unit. Now, at Community Health Care and Hospice, I educate people on just what Hospice is," said Goetz. "Many people believe it's just end of life care, and that's definitely a big part of what we do. But, it includes preparing for end of life as well. We do our best to teach others to live every day the best that they can up until the final day."

Goetz credits the Leadership Stanly program with building her love of the county by helping her become knowledgeable of its history and resources as well.

"I was nominated to take part in the program in 2014, and it's amazing how much I was able to learn about Stanly County through Leadership Stanly. There are many things we learned that lots of people who grew up and have lived their entire lives here aren't aware of."

After completing Leadership Stanly, Goetz informed Chamber President Kathy Almond that she would be willing to help the organization in any way possible. Not long after that, she was asked to come on board as a Chamber ambassador.

"I love meeting new people, and helping new businesses get up and running," she said about her duties with the Chamber. "The Chamber does great things for business here. People don't realize just how much assistance and encouragement it provides to new businesses."

Having moved from a major metropolitan



area, Goetz says she often is questioned as to what makes Stanly special.

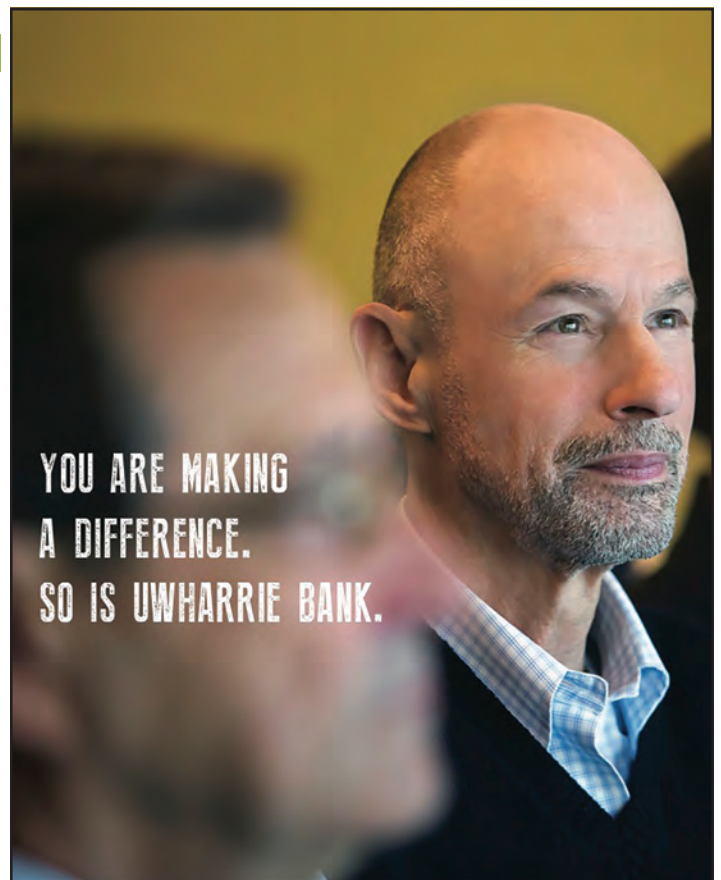
“People ask, ‘Why would you move here from Los Angeles?’ But why not? I love the lakes, hills and small towns, while still being fairly close to larger cities.”

Goetz believes that many who live in Stanly County don’t realize what a great place it is.

“Stanly County is a gem,” she said. “And unfortunately it gets a bad rep from some. Too many people look outside the county for things they can get here.” ⑦



Jan Goetz, care consultant with Community Home Care & Hospice, stands by a community chalkboard in downtown Albemarle aimed at promoting better communication about death.



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Dirt to Shirt: Cotton of the Carolinas brings textiles back home

By Toby Thorpe
Contributing Writer

Back in 1992, the United States entered into a trade pact with Canada and Mexico known as the North American Free Trade Agreement, or NAFTA for short. Created during the George H.W. Bush administration, it was ratified in the Clinton years and took effect in 1994.

The purpose of NAFTA was to stimulate international trade and, as a result, bolster the U.S. economy. And most economists will cite statistics that show the agreement did indeed result in an increase in profits for many stockholders and owners of large corporations.

But for the average worker in many U.S. communities, NAFTA signaled the end of an era, as production of textiles and other manufacturing jobs were outsourced to

countries where workers would perform the same duties for considerably lower wages. And while the nation's economy remained relatively stable, many small towns whose local economies depended upon the careers that manufacturing and (particularly in the Carolinas) textiles provided were devastated by the loss of jobs.

Twenty-five years later, Democrats and Republicans still point fingers of blame at each other over NAFTA. But who's to blame loses its relevance when the focus turns to working together to solve problems. An example of this is Cotton of the Carolinas, a coalition of local and regional businesses, which is cooperating to bring back textile jobs through a sustainable and transparent process that moves from farm to processing to factory to product, all within the two Carolinas.

The production of a cotton garment involves a process of up to nine steps: growing, ginning, spinning, knitting, finishing, cutting, sewing, printing and dyeing. As a result of NAFTA, a garment purchased in a department store may, between the picking of the cotton and the final sale to the consumer, have traveled as far as 17,000 miles.

In contrast, a Cotton of the Carolinas garment travels far fewer miles from the cotton field to the customer. And while the knitting, finishing, cutting and sewing processes may be handled by one of several Cotton of the Carolinas member industries, the locations of the first three steps (cotton farm, cotton gin, spinning), as well as the final two (printing and dyeing), are common to virtually all the garments bearing the coalition tag. In



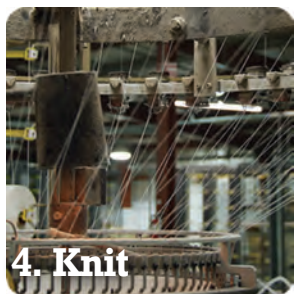
1. Farm



2. Gin



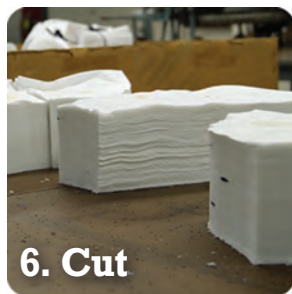
3. Spin



4. Knit



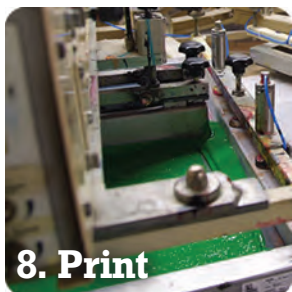
5. Finish



6. Cut



7. Sew



8. Print



9. Dye

Step by Step

We give you unfettered access to our supply chain.

1. Cotton gets harvested once a year, in the fall.
2. It's then sent through gin machines to remove seeds and trash.
3. Next, it gets spun into yarn.
4. From there, it gets knit into long rolls of fabric.
5. That fabric has to be cleaned, stabilized, and softened
6. Then it gets cut into the components that make a garment.
7. Finally it is sewn into a T-shirt!
8. Once it becomes a finished product, it can be printed.
9. Lastly, the shirt is dyed a color.

addition, Cotton of the Carolinas provides consumers a means to track these steps from beginning to end, while supporting not just domestic manufacturing, but “manufacturing at home.”

The Farmers:

**Thurman Burleson and Sons Farms,
Richfield, N.C.**

The “Dirt to Shirt” process begins with growing cotton. And all Cotton of the Carolinas products begin at Thurman Burleson and Sons Farms, headquartered in Richfield.

Burleson and Sons was started by Thurman Burleson, who later partnered with his two sons, Ronnie and Dennis. Today, Ronnie and Dennis run the farm along with their sons, Andrew and Aaron, respectively.

Ronnie Burleson believes in supporting

local businesses. And he believes that his farming operation, which raises more than 2,000 acres of cotton in and around Stanly County, can help accomplish this.

“I prefer to do business with local people when I can,” Burleson says. “I’m more than willing to help and support local businesses, even if it costs a little more. There’s a lot of folks out there who are willing to pay a little more to help support their neighbors and help save jobs.”

And the cotton grown in Richfield is of the highest quality, according to Andrew Baucom of the North Carolina Agricultural Extension Service.

“Textiles want this type cotton for high quality clothing,” said Baucom.

With most of Stanly County’s textile mills having been closed for nearly 20 years, production of massive cotton crops might appear on the surface to be “too little, too

late.” But the crops raised and harvested in Richfield are the first steps in a process that benefits the economy, not just in Stanly County, but throughout an entire region from which thousands of textile jobs vanished not so long ago.

The Cotton Gin:

Rolling Hills Gin, New London, N.C.

Wes Morgan has seen lots of change in his 20-plus years of operating Rolling Hills Gin on Kendall’s Church Road in New London.

“At one time, we sold our cotton to Wiscassett Mills, seven miles down the road in Albemarle,” said Morgan in an interview with WTVI. “The cotton went from the fields behind the gin, to the gin, and to the manufacturer. Now they (the cotton mills) are gone.”

At Rolling Hills, cotton farmers bring their harvests, normally in 2.5-ton round bales, for processing. The machinery at the gin is at its peak production period from October through December annually. At the gin, machinery separates and cleans the cotton fiber and removes the seeds (which are used in cattle feed and for cottonseed oil), after which the cotton is repacked in smaller (500 pounds) bales and graded and labeled for sale to textile producers.

“The cotton fiber and seeds are separated, then the fiber must be graded on length, strength and color,” notes Morgan.

Ideally, all cotton ginned at Rolling Hills would be purchased by producers within the USA, but that is not the case.

“We would love for all of our cotton to stay in the Carolinas and be a totally ‘made in the Carolinas’ product,” said Morgan, “but that’s not going to happen. Still, if we can get it (the process) started, if a person wants a shirt that is made in the Carolinas, we can at least fulfill that.”

For the cotton that does stay in the U.S.A., the next trip is another short one.

The Spinner:

Hill Spinning, Thomasville, N.C.

Mark Leonard comes from a textile family.

“We (Hill Spinning) started in the 1940s, when our grandfather started making hosiery,” says Leonard. “And attached to the hosiery mill, he built Hill Spinning Mill.”

The hosiery section of Hill Spinning, located in Thomasville, has been closed for several years now, another casualty of NAFTA.

“We closed the hosiery operation, mainly due to imports,” he said. “And now the only thing left is the cotton mill.”

And although Hill Spinning is not a mega-producer, Leonard has recognized that the company can fill an important niche.



The Rolling Hills Gin

“The bigger companies go for the big volume, and we can’t compete with that,” he said. “But because we are small, we can handle a lot of the smaller orders.”

Leonard noted the steps that are taken with the cotton when it arrives at Hill Spinning.

“Once the cotton arrives, we handle the opening, cleaning and blending of the fibers, then we bring it through our cards (a machine with hundreds of fine wires that pulls the fibers parallel to each other) nice and slow.”

Following the carding step, the fibers are drawn, twisted and spun smaller and tighter at each step before being wound onto bobbins to conclude the spinning process.

And while many such production jobs have been relocated overseas, Leonard has worked both hard and smart to keep Hill Spinning up and running.

“We still have some equipment that is original from our start-up, and we have stayed in business by purchasing used equipment from other mills that have gone out of business, and using them and parts from them to cut costs,” said Leonard. “We feel an obligation to our family name, our employees and our community to keep these positions and these jobs running.”

And from Hill Spinning, the product may be shipped to any of a number of North and South Carolina locations for the next steps.

The Knitters, Finishers, Cutters, and Sewers:

Various Industries and Towns in North and South Carolina

As the process continues, a number of manufacturers perform like processes. Following the spinning of the cotton fibers from bale to bobbin, the next steps (knitting, finishing, cutting, sewing) may be handled at a myriad of Cotton of the Carolinas network locations. These include:

Knitting:

Alandale Industries, Troy, N.C.
Contempora Knitting, Lumberton, N.C.
Professional Knit, Clover, S.C.

Finishing:

Carolina Cotton Works, Gaffney, S.C.
South Fork Finishing, Lincolnton, N.C.

Cut and Sew:

Eagle USA, Middlesex, N.C.
Granite Knitwear, Granite Quarry, N.C.
Hemingway Apparel, Hemingway, S.C.
Industries of the Blind, Greensboro, N.C.

But to finish the process, all garments from all locations converge at one final destination before being passed on to the consumer.

The Printer & Dyer:

TS Designs, Burlington, N.C.

Eric Henry, president of TS Designs of Burlington, is the patriarch of Cotton of the Carolinas, and worked to organize the highly transparent nine-step sequence of how the project's garments are made.

"We started Cotton of the Carolinas eight years ago to connect consumers to the farmer and create jobs in the Carolinas," said Henry in an interview with North Carolina Field and Family. "With the overwhelming majority of our apparel made overseas – plus the fact that we grow great cotton right here in the Carolinas – it seemed like a no-brainer to us."

TS Designs was founded in 1977, and at one time printed and dyed shirts for mega-producers such as Gap, Nike, Ralph Lauren and Tommy Hilfiger. But when NAFTA took effect in 1994, the company saw most of its business leave for other countries.

Rather than allow TS Designs to fold, Henry created a new business model, with Cotton of the Carolinas being the end result.

With each of the nine steps performed by a North or South Carolina business, the materials and processes needed to produce a garment all take place within a footprint of 750 miles. And a smaller manufacturing footprint results in a smaller carbon footprint with less fuel consumed in shipping. The environmentally-friendly brand exemplifies the organization's unique business motto that focuses on "people, the planet and profits."

At TS Designs, cotton garments arrive from the cut-and-sew manufacturers as plain

white pieces. Garments that are screen printed go through a sublimation process rather than traditional screening, which results in a softer and more comfortable article. Dyeing of the garment is the final step, and also takes place at the Burlington facility.

Henry is enthusiastic when talking about the benefits of using local cotton.

"Jobs! And educating the customer to know the value of keeping their money local and the positive impact it has on their communities, which is very similar to the 'farm to fork' local food movement," Henry says. "Not to mention the personal satisfaction of knowing who made your shirt."

During the first round of production in 2008, the Cotton of the Carolinas project resulted in 15,000 pieces. The following year, the amount doubled. Eight years later, over 100,000 individual garments were produced.

The Transparent Supply Chain:

www.wheretheyourclothing.com

The transparency of the Cotton of the Carolinas process uses digital information technology to enable customers to track the manufacturing path of their clothing. Each garment has either a code number on the tag, or is sewn with a specific color of thread in the hem. The customer can then log on to www.wheretheyourclothing.com and enter either the tag code or hem color(s). And in the space of 10 seconds and two or three mouse clicks, the road from "dirt to shirt" is illustrated, along with the total miles of the supply chain. The chain is made even more personal through photographs of the people in charge at each step.

One example of this process is the following:

- Grown in Richfield, N.C. by Thurman Burleson and Sons Farms
- Ginned in New London, N.C. by Rolling Hills Gin
- Spun in Thomasville, N.C. by Hill Spinning Mills

- Knitted in Lumberton, N.C. by Contempora Fabrics
- Finished in Gaffney, S.C. by Carolina Cotton Works
- Cut and Sewn in Greensboro, N.C. by Industries of the Blind
- Printed and Dyed in Burlington, N.C. by TS Designs



The Future?

While a fully local manufacturing process like Cotton of the Carolinas makes sense ecologically, economically and environmentally, it is not likely to unseat the textile mega-producers anytime soon. And although a local supply chain saves cost in transportation, the savings is not enough to offset the lower labor costs in other countries.

"It's the labor to process the cotton to garments that greatly impacts the price," said Henry. "There's a big difference in labor cost between domestic and non-domestic manufacturing. That's why 98 percent of the apparel we buy today is made offshore."

Even so, Cotton of the Carolinas is keeping Carolina people working, Carolina farms productive, Carolina towns vibrant and Carolina consumers clothed and comfortable...things that just a few years ago seemed to be vanishing from North and South Carolina. ②

Sources:

- Kathy Almond, Stanly County Chamber of Commerce
- Lori Ivey, North Carolina Agricultural Extension Service
- North Carolina Field and Family
- WTVI



Cooperative Extension Staff – (L-R) Duštin Adcock, Samantha Foster, Lisa Forrest, Lori Ivey, Courtney Huneycutt, Courtney Swain.

Farm tour shows the evolution of farming and its impact

By Sandy Hatley
Contributing Writer

“You’re feeding America,” Joyce Whitley told Ridgecrest farmer Curtis Furr during a recent tour of Stanly County farms led by the Cooperative Extension Service.

Approximately 50 individuals took part in the adult field trip that was planned by Extension Director Lori Ivey.

“Our goal is to introduce citizens to agriculture in Stanly County from small farms to large operations,” she explained.

The tour included Spring Lake Family Farms in Albemarle, Big Bear Creek Farms, Inc. in Ridgecrest and Almond Farms on Biles Road near Albemarle.

The first stop was Spring Lake Family Farms on Old Salisbury Road with a lesson in aquaponics, the combination of aquaculture and hydroponics. Gabe Lowder and Michael Veatch met the group and explained their operation.

“We grow fish (tilapia) and a crop,” Lowder said.

Open for three years, the six-man team raises five types of lettuce, five different kinds of herbs, celery, cabbage, tomatoes and bok choy while growing fish.

“The water continuously recirculates and the plants absorb the nitrates from the fish,” the NC State grad elaborated. “You get organic fertilizer





Left: Gabe Lowder of Spring Lake Family Farms describes the system of aquaponics during a recent farm tour conducted by Cooperative Extension.

for the plants from the fish. All we have to do is feed the fish. The big advantage is fresh veggies and food fish.”

After doing extensive research, Lowder and Veatch built their own set-up, designing the entire system.

“We put it together ourselves,” Lowder said.

The fish tank goes through three stages of filtration. The water has to be aerated with a blower and air line to diffuse oxygen into the water.

“Plants grow faster in water than soil. Lettuce grows out in four weeks,” the entrepreneur explained to his visitors.

Each plant is started from a seed in their greenhouse. Everything is recycled so there is little waste.

“We try to create a farm that gets back to basics and foster a good ecosystem,” he added. “We are leaning toward an organic way of doing things. We have almost no disease problems. Our biggest battle is aphids.”

Spring Lake Family Farms networks with another Stanly County aquaponics system, Lucky Clays Farm in Norwood.

“We buy our fingerlings (young fish) from them,” Lowder pointed out.

Lowder and Veatch are raising about 2,000 fish. It takes six to eight months for them to grow to harvest size, which is about two pounds. The fish are available for purchase at their facility.

Next, the group met Curtis Furr with his tractor and corn planter on Millingport Road. After shaking hands with all that gathered, the farmer shared some background information.

“I’m a fifth generation farmer and my son is farming, too. I enjoy every day and every minute of my life because I enjoy doing what I do,” Furr said.

The 58-year-old farms 1,400 acres in Stanly County. While he was planting corn this spring, his crop rotation will be wheat in the fall, soybeans the following summer, then a cover crop the next winter.

“We’ve grown cover crops for some time now,” Furr added.



Curtis Furr of Big Bear Creek Farms and Dustin Adcock, field crop and horticulture agent, discuss the technology of farming.

Dustin Adcock, field crop and horticulture agent, said, “We’ve come a long way. We have improved the soil by no-till.”

“We produce a better crop,” Furr agreed. “The biomass in the field really holds the moisture, breaks down and produces carbon and feeds the soil. It holds the soil (less erosion) and controls the weeds. I have produced 10-15 bushels of corn better than those without cover crops.”

Furr was the 2016 No-Till Corn Yield Winner, averaging 218.31 bushels per acre.

“I graduated high school in 1976. A computer was a typewriter and now I have an app on my phone where I can drive around the boundary of a field and know how many acres are in the field.”

His planter used to plant four rows. Now it

does 12. It used to be 10 feet wide, now it’s 30. The farmer used to space his rows 12 inches apart, now they’re half that distance.

“Technology has come a long way. The computer uses GPS and cuts off the planter when I turn so I don’t waste seed. Using technology, on an 18-acre field where I used to put 18 tons of fertilizer, I learned I only needed 2 1/2 tons.”

“I have soil samples done every other year, doing it in zones and grids. It is costly, but it pays off. I pull tissue samples out of my corn so I will know what I need (for it to grow best).”

Participant Ronnie Shoe observed, “It ain’t brain surgery, but it is pretty close.”

Furr described his test plot where he is growing 24 varieties of corn with a seed

company to learn not only which yields the most, but also which handles stress (heat, drought, insects) the best.

“Without GMOs (genetically modified organisms) we couldn’t feed the world.”

The Ridgecrest farmer also discussed equipment costs. The tractor that he was using costs around \$300,000 if bought new, the planter more than \$100,000.

“Farming is a big risk and a big debt. There’s also a lot of record keeping,” Furr concluded.

The group’s last stop was Almond Farms run by third generation farmer Earl Almond. His family-owned farm dates back to the early 1900s and is number 14 registered out of the 3,900 farms listed in Stanly County.



Blackberries (foreground) and Christmas trees (background) grow on the Almond farm.



Earl Almond of Almond Farms explains his agribusiness to attendees of the Stanly County farm tour.



Almond grows four different varieties of pick-your-own blackberries that sell for \$5 a quart. He opens the day after Thanksgiving with 1,500 choose and cut Christmas trees. He also sells homemade blackberry jelly, strawberry jam and barbecue sauce made from blackberries. He plans to open a barbecue catering service. Farm tour attendees were treated to a barbecue lunch prepared by Almond. Dessert included Ivey's homemade pound cake topped with Cody Farms' strawberries.

As the tour concluded, participants expressed their gratitude for an enjoyable and educational day.

Adcock remarked, "It's important for people to see the faces behind the farms of the food that we eat." ②

For more information on Stanly County agriculture, contact the Cooperative Extension Service at (704) 983-3987.

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Goodness grows at farmers markets

By Sandy Hatley
Contributing Writer

Local Farmers Markets



Agriculture is the No. 1 industry in Stanly County and area farmers' markets offer locally-grown fruits and vegetables and hand-crafted items from spring into fall.

Stanly County Farmers Market

Located in historic downtown Albemarle at Market Street Station, 100 Railroad Street, the renovated train depot. The market is open Saturdays from April - October, 8 a.m.-noon, and on Wednesdays and Saturdays during June, July and August.

Stanly Commons Farmers Market

Located inside the Commons near the Health Department, 1000 N. First Street, is open Mondays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. In addition to fresh produce, local honey, hormone-free meats, eggs and home-baked goods are available.

Locust Farmers Market

The Locust Farmers Market is open on Thursdays, 11 a.m.-4 p.m., from May through September. The market is located in the open field across from Locust Elementary School, on the corner of N.C. Highway 24-27 and Vella Drive.

Oakboro Farmers Market

The Oakboro Farmers Market is at 128 Aquadale Road at the Oakboro Railroad Museum. Open on Saturdays, May to September, 8 a.m.-1 p.m., the market offers flowers, fruits, vegetables, plants, arts and crafts.



Johnny Barnes sells his hand-crafted items at the Stanly County Farmers Market at Market Street Station.
Pictured right is JB's Woodworking specialty- rocking piggy bank.

Steve Efird of All Seasons Farm in Albemarle peddles his produce at the various markets. Working in the plant nursery business for 40 years, he has been selling vegetables for six years. He grows a wide variety of summer goodies such as tomatoes, squash, green beans, cucumbers, corn, peas and watermelon.



"I've always had a garden since I was 6 or 7 years old," Efird shared.

The farmers market at Market Street includes items by craftsmen such as Johnny Barnes, 74, of JB's Woodworking of New London. He builds bird feeders, bird houses, bat houses, book holders and games. One unique item is a rocking piggy bank. A best seller is his copper top bluebird house, guaranteed not to rot.

Another vendor is Gary and Gloria Hunsucker of Canton Road. Gary, pastor of Vine Life Baptist Church and a Union County driver's ed teacher, farms soybeans and wheat, in addition to the fresh produce that his wife sells at the market.



Stanly County Health Education Specialist Jennifer Layton organized the Stanly Commons Farmers Market.



Jennifer Layton, health education specialist at the Stanly County Health Department, was instrumental in organizing the Stanly Commons Market.

“Farmers markets are important because they provide access to healthy foods, help lower taxes and create a strong sense of community,” she said. “Our goal (at the Monday market) is to increase access to low income families.”

There is a SNAP/EBT booth where individuals can swipe SNAP/EBT cards and enter an amount they wish to spend; an attendant will provide a receipt and wooden tokens to be used for requested amount of purchases at the Commons Market. The indoor market usually features 8-10 vendors. Plans are underway to transition from seasonal to a year-round market.



One of the Commons' vendors is Crooke Meat of Marshville. The Crookes, Tony and Amy, sell grass-fed beef and pork that contains no antibiotics, hormones or steroids. It's more than a business, it's a mission for the couple.

"Our daughter, Starr, age 9, was born with both Turner syndrome and Down syndrome. The doctor advised us to feed her as natural as possible so that's how we got started (in the business)."

Another vendor at the Commons Market is Sid Fields of Fieldstone Farm Co-op on Valley Drive. His display includes goat cheese, local honey, blueberries and eggs. Across the aisle is Peachberry Farms & Bakery operated by Kevin and Julia Lowder of Millingport. Their table features fresh baked goods.

Besides farmers markets, there are also roadside stands dotted across the county. So even if you don't have your own garden, there's no excuse to not enjoy fresh, delicious, seasonal, locally grown vegetables. Goodness grows in Stanly County. ②



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Front row L-R- Debbie Little, Cheryl Snyder, Lauren Graves, Ginger White, Jason deBuhr.
Back row L-R- Harold Davis, Eric Deese, Jeff Radford.



Carolina Paper Company produces quality products, jobs

By Toby Thorpe
Contributing Writer

Normally, businesses are conceived to fill a need and turn a profit.

But Carolina Paper Company came about in 1999 with another purpose in mind...to provide jobs for the people in and around Oakboro.

“Don Russell and Foreman Rushing started the business in 1999,” said General Manager Eric Deese. “Stanly Knitting Mills was closing, and their (Russell and Foreman) goal was to start a business that would provide some jobs in the community.”

The business started small.

“Foreman had experience in the paper industry, and Don had a business background. They started the business with only two pieces of equipment,” said Deese. “Now we have eight.”

A husband and wife team, Paul and Millie Harris, operated the plant (then called Carolina Paper Converters) in the beginning.

“We started out making jumbo roll

tissue, and center-pull and hard-wound towels using those two original pieces of machinery,” said Deese. “And in 2000, we moved into the old Stanly Knitting Mills facility.” The company remains there today.

Eventually a salesman and a production manager were hired as word spread about the small company in Oakboro. Soon the demand for product reached a point that mandated expansion. A new converting machine with multiple capabilities was added in 2005, and a new machine which generated multi-fold towels and napkins was installed four years later.

By 2010, Carolina Paper Converters had added another machine which produced standard bath tissue. This addition allowed the company to carry a complete product line, which enabled the business to become a supplying partner to other, larger paper supply industries.

About this same time, the company took two major steps forward.

“We hired a rep group in 2010,” said Deese, “and doing that led us in a new direction.”

Later in 2010, the company name was changed from Carolina Paper Converters to Carolina Paper Company, and this was announced at the International Sanitary Supply Association (ISSA) convention in Orlando, Florida that October. In addition, CPC announced the launch of two of its own product lines – Blue Ridge and Eco-Wise. A third product line – Country Soft – has been added since that time. All three lines meet a goal that is front and center in all CPC products – being environmentally friendly. The importance of being a good corporate steward of the environment is evident in all the company does.

“We recycle everything,” said Deese. “Waste disposal used to cost us \$4,000 a year in disposal fees. Now we get some money back, but the most important thing is we are not filling up the landfill anymore.”

In addition to ecological awareness, CPC strives to generate products that are of consistently high quality. Production manager Harold Davis and Quality Manager Jeff Radford are two members of the CPC management team who occupy key roles in making this happen.



“To stay competitive, we follow LEAN principles in our workflow, which are designed to minimize waste and create ‘continuous improvement continually,’ which is based on Toyota’s processes, said Davis. “In addition, we are certified in GMP (Good Manufacturing Practices), which assures quality and sanitation of our products.”

Radford recently formulated and implemented a tracking system that provides the capability for CPC to be able to trace finished product all the way back to its inception. This makes possible, in the case of a recall, for the company to determine who the recalled product went to and thus who to contact.

But the company is proactive in taking steps early in the manufacturing process to prevent such incidents. The company website states, “CPC works closely with all vendors to ensure that they are compliant with the Lacey Act and that none of our parent rolls (large rolls of paper from which the various products are manufactured) are made from fiber that comes from



countries involved in illegal logging.”

Another step Radford takes to assure quality is hourly testing of the company’s products.

“We have an on-site lab, and we test rolls every hour to assure that specifications are being met,” he said.

When a company provides quality products at reasonable prices, demand for the product is going to grow. And sales figures indicate that CPC is moving in the right direction.

“Sales growth in 2017 is on pace to grow by approximately 15 percent,” says Jason deBuhr, CPC’s vice president for sales and marketing.

And the market is growing geographically as well, according to deBuhr.

“We have been primarily marketing to North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia, but recently we have been expanding to new markets: Texas, Upstate



New York, Michigan, Ohio and Central America. Our goal is to eventually expand to sell everywhere east of the Mississippi River.”

As the company has increased production, added machines and increased sales, it has also added jobs.

General Manager Deese said, “Our goal is to bring sustainable business and jobs to the community. We recently partnered with Stanly Community College and Stanly Chamber of Commerce and have since added 25 employees. We went from 65 jobs to 90. We want to provide jobs. Don (Russell) doesn’t take payment from the company, he reinvests it into the company and the community.”

But Deese is quick to add that he never wants to sacrifice quality for profits.

“We want to put out a quality product, and give the customer exactly what they ask for.”





Chroma Provisions is reviving former textile mill space

By Toby Thorpe
Contributing Writer

Michael Snyder grew up in a textile family, and for a number of years was involved in the sales side of the operation at E.J. Snyder, Inc. in Albemarle. But since opening Chroma Provisions in a section of Norwood's former Collins and Aikman plant a year ago, his focus has shifted from sales to production.

Chroma, under the management of Snyder and partner Rodney Foreman, specializes in dye-sublimation at the Collins Avenue facility just off U.S. Highway 52 in Norwood. Sublimation, which applies an image using ink, heat and pressure, is commonly used with sports apparel, but also can be performed on other materials as well.

"We do sublimation work on all things polyester," said Snyder in a recent presentation to local educators, "however,

polyester can also be applied as a laminate. So not only can we subliminate to things commonly associated with polyester, but we can also subliminate to glass; we can subliminate to wood."

Chroma's main focus is twofold, according to Snyder.

"We do a lot of point-of-sale presentation — printing, cutting and sewing — for companies, particularly those in the mattress industry," he said. "Also we produce quite a bit of custom sportswear for athletic teams. Polyester lends itself well to sportswear and sublimation lends itself well to customization."

Snyder described the two types of sublimation processes available to apparel customers.



Chroma History

“There are two ways to make an item. There is ‘all-over’ sublimation, in which the entire item is done at once. And there is a second way to make the item which is what I call ‘print-press-cut-and-sew,’ in which we do the front, back and sides or sleeves separately.”

While Chroma produces various sublimated items and products, the company does not sell merchandise under its own label.

“We are not a brand,” said Snyder. “You won’t walk into a store and see apparel with a ‘Chroma’ tag, but we do manufacture items that may carry the label and brand of another company.”

This is known as “white label production,” according to Snyder.

“We don’t have a sales team, and we have a very small manufacturing team. So we rely on sales forces coming to us, asking us to produce our goods for them.”

Snyder also noted that Chroma’s size and location are an advantage when large textile industries need sublimated product quickly.

“For example, a company might come to us, wanting production on the East Coast so they can provide a three-day, two-day or one-day ship-out of product. Many of these customers will ask for what we call a ‘full process, meaning that we print, press, cut, sew, pack and ship the product. They may not ever see the product, but they know it’s going to get done properly and get shipped out on time.”

The company currently works with a number of brand-name mattress industries including Sealy and Mattress Firm, and with apparel industries including M.J. Soffe.

Chroma has four full-time employees, and officially opened for business on July 1, 2016. The Norwood facility also offers warehouse space and distribution services, as well as a community room available for rentals. ⑦

Chroma Provisions site circa 1954.



Norwood, NC is no stranger to textiles. The first yarn operation opened in 1898 under the name of Norwood Manufacturing Co. the same year W.M. Ivey and R Amos were given permission to run a telephone into town. In 1943, Collins and Aikman expanded their textile production in Norwood acquiring the Norwood Manufacturing Co operating until the mid ‘90s.

Two third generation textile manufacturing and third generation textile finishing and dyeing families partnered together in order to revitalize textile production in Norwood to create Chroma Provisions.

Fast forward to today, Chroma Provisions is revitalizing the textile industry applying new technologies to traditional manufacturing and finishing techniques in the same location it all started. With more than a quarter million square feet of production and warehousing, they are using digital print coupled with traditional manufacturing methods to produce unparalleled goods to market for their clients.





Ben Woodrow (L) and Brandon Moses explain a procedure to educators during a tour of Stanley Engineered Fastening on July 21, 2017.

Stanfield factory ‘fastens’ productivity, cohesive workforce

By Toby Thorpe
Contributing Writer

There’s a pretty good chance that some item belonging to you — maybe your car or your home — stays in one piece because of items made right here in Stanly County...Stanfield to be exact.

Despite operating under several different titles over the years, the current Stanley (yes, the “e” is supposed to be there) Engineered Fastening facility on N.C. Highway 200 continues to produce high-quality rivets and other fasteners used in the automotive and construction industries. Employing a workforce of 105 employees and running three shifts, the Stanfield operation is one of 13 such facilities in the USA, and 60 worldwide.

Stanley/Black and Decker, which produces a number of other brands (DeWalt, Craftsman,

Bostitch, for example), acquired the Stanfield factory from Avdel in 2012, but the product created there has remained essentially unchanged despite the new moniker. The facility occupies a 90,000-square-foot building and produces roughly 725 part numbers, according to Lindsey Toole, human resources and safety director.

Toole also described the company’s investment in its employees during a recent presentation to Stanly County educators.

“We are a Carolina Star worksite,” said Toole, “meaning that we partner with the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) and the North Carolina Department of Labor to assure that our safety program exceeds industry standards. This shows our employees and the community that our company cares

about their safety and health.”

In addition to providing a safe workplace, Stanley/Black and Decker also supports continuing education for its employees, said Toole.

“Our employees are eligible for up to \$5,250 a year in tuition reimbursement. This can help them work toward an undergraduate or graduate degree, or it can help them get specialized training that can help them in their specific job responsibilities.”

Also, according to Toole, a wellness center is being developed on site for the employees at the Stanfield facility.

With such perks, employees tend to stay with the company.



Alicia McCall (left) and Lindsey Toole (R) explain processes to educators during the CAFE Program tour of Stanley Engineered Fastening on June 21, 2017.

"There's not much turnover here. On the average, our employees have been here 14 years, and their average age is 47," she said. "Our second shift employees receive 6 percent above base pay, with third shift receiving 5 percent above," in order to help offset the less-desirable evening and overnight work hours.

Although infrequent, vacancies do occur. And when they do, Toole described the skill sets required for those seeking employment at Stanley Engineered Fastening.

"We look for applicants with troubleshooting skills; those who are problem solvers," she said. "We find that those with good mechanical skills and aptitude typically do very well here."

Various types of machinery in the manufacturing area are in operation around the clock, producing rivets and various other fastening devices from wire of different gauges and compositions. Other machines sort product, automatically inspecting and culling defective or blemished pieces before orders are packed and shipped. And while most of the operation is mechanized, the facility's employees assure that operations are proceeding properly, safely and smoothly. ⑦

Those interested in employment with Stanley/Black and Decker or Stanley Engineered Fastening can learn about employment opportunities by visiting the Stanley/Black and Decker Careers website <http://www.stanleyblackanddecker.com/careers>.

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Stanly's airport pilots a unique training site, hub for future economic development

By Ritchie Starnes
News Editor

Within the challenging landscape of economic development, the continued reinvention of the Stanley County Airport proves there's a future in change.

"The airport is a key economic development asset," County Manager Andy Lucas said. "It is a showcase for our community and demonstrates the county's commitment to making investments in public infrastructure. As such, the airport facility is a key asset in our business recruitment efforts."

When textiles and manufacturers nourished the county's economic vein, Stanly's airport mostly served the arrivals and departures of company executives. Otherwise, the airport provided Northern flyers en route to Southern warmth, or snowbirds, a refueling stop.

Then was a bustling era for Stanly with the airport a complementary cog in a well-oiled machine. Other than mostly a flight hub for textile bosses, the airport also proved to be a picturesque landing spot with its surrounding farms, open land, lakes, Morrow Mountain and the Uwharrie National Forest. Those flights helped promote Stanly like a defacto tourism advertisement for the rural Piedmont.

As the 1980s faded by textile plants were either closing or relocating to countries for cheaper labor. North Carolina, specifically the state's rural areas like Stanly, suffered the economic pinch more than others. As plants shuttered, jobs vanished and the local economy sank.

Consequently, the foundation of Stanly's airport seemingly weakened and the Federal Aviation Administration concluded

it was not worthy of investment.

Already struggling to secure financing for runway extension and expansion when business was good, the task became significantly tougher with the decline in air traffic. Stakeholder motivation, however, evolved into survival mode.

No longer was the airport only looking at serving existing businesses, attention turned toward the future. First, however, the airport had to upgrade its facility before culling new business and bolstering its general aviation.

The FAA had repeatedly rejected efforts of David Griffin, then airport manager, to obtain funding needed for improvements. After continued rejections, a serendipitous eavesdrop led to a meeting between Griffin and the 145th tactical airlift of the Air



National Guard (ANG) in Charlotte.

Stanly needed funding for airport improvements and the ANG needed an airport for training. The ANG unit struggled to find airports suitable for necessary training. Between unavailable or unsuitable facilities, the ANG struggled to locate a consistent training site.

The airport had to be able to accommodate the ANG's C-130 airplanes. As Charlotte Douglas International Airport continued to grow, commercial airlines demanded more space, which squeezed the ANG from conducting exercises there. Forced to travel to other airports in convoys of loaded equipment, the ANG sometimes found itself bumped for other military training.

In 1989, the Stanly County Airport struck a deal with the ANG providing the 145th tactical airlift unit with a guaranteed venue for training. In exchange, the ANG ensured the Stanly airport would get the upgrades sought and needed for the heavier C-130s.

As a result, military funding poured into

the Stanly County Airport. Stanly got its runway lengthened to 5,500 feet and widened to 100 feet. It also obtained the coveted instrumental landing system as well as an aviation weather monitoring system. Over the span of two decades, some \$60 million poured into the county airport. ANG pumped in \$40 million. Even the FAA chipped in \$15 million, with the state and local government providing the balance.

The forged relationship brought the airport a radar system, control tower and two parallel runways. Per the ANG, a fire department is stationed at the airport.

It's a partnership both Stanly and the ANG have a vested interest to not only continue, but grow.

"I believe the Stanly County Airport will make every effort to continue its strategic, integral and mutually beneficial partnership with the Air National Guard," Lucas said.

An economic study shows the ANG

impacts the local economy with \$100 million annually.

"The relationship with the military enhances activity," Lucas said. "The military employees and visitors training at the facility fuel the local hotel, restaurant and retail sector. This activity increases our sales tax revenue."

Just as it did nearly 30 years ago, the ANG holds the key to the airport's continued evolution. Stanly's airport is poised for new growth. As the military looks to retire the workhorse C-130 for the newer C-17, there will be a need for additional upgrades since the new aircraft carries a heavier load. The runway will be required to convert to concrete instead of asphalt at that time.

"We'll be trying to support their (ANG) training mission with the C-17," said Ken Swaringen, new airport manager. "Just the sheer size difference (between the C-130 and C-17) will drive some things."

Other likely improvements include strengthening and extending the runway,





taxiway and ramp space. There will be some changes not yet determined.

Meanwhile, Stanly's airport and its near 1,000-acre property could become the training site for other military personnel.

"We certainly hope so," added Swaringen, an ANG retiree with 28 years of service. "More and more units will choose to deploy here for their training."

Because of Stanly's relationship with the ANG, the airport also has a refueling contract with other military branches. Aircraft from other branches routinely use Stanly as a logistical refueling station.

Not only does the ANG relationship and all of the upgrades that follow help with future relationships with other military branches, but all of those assets should

assist with improving Stanly's general aviation. Larger aircraft, particularly corporate airplanes, will begin using the facility. Hopefully that'll lead to more planes stored here. Stanly already has full occupancy in its hangars, with a waiting list for future openings. Plans are afoot to build more hangars.

"We want to expand our hangar complex," Swaringen said. "There's a big push for us to add hangars as economically feasible as possible."

Stanly County's modest property tax rate encourages aircraft owners to store their planes in hangars here. Higher-valued planes bring more tax revenue to the county's coffers.

"As the Charlotte region continues to grow more and more businesses and those

involved in general aviation will be seeking space to house their aircraft," Lucas said. "Stanly County's location adjacent to Charlotte will allow us to capitalize on the opportunity to develop and construct more hangar space so additional planes and jets can be housed and sited for tax purposes in Stanly County. This will increase activity, visibility and our tax base."

Overall the evolution of the Stanly County Airport has been dependent and the beneficiary of its partnership with the ANG. Stanly's pursuit of an expansive general aviation should also reap the benefits of the partnership.

The relationship could also help foster Stanly's optimum location as ideal for the development of new technology.

"Stanly County's strategic position in the

state as it relates to air space and our military connection, provides a unique opportunity to position ourselves as research and development hub for UAS/UAV (unmanned aerial system and unmanned aerial vehicle, or drones) type technologies,” Lucas said. “Stanly County has been participating for several years in state level planning meetings associated with the further development of a UAS/UAV research corridor. It is important we continue to stay engaged in this planning process.”

Stanly’s relationship with the ANG has contributed to the airport’s unique niche as a training site as well as a catalyst for future economic development. ②



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Kathy Smith, right, who has worked at Jay's for 40 years, asks if George Bradshaw needs anything. Bradshaw has been a regular customer for 60 years, coming in every Thursday.

Jay's reels in customers for five decades

By Charles Curcio
Sports Editor

Restaurant goers from Stanly County and the surrounding counties have been enjoying plate after plate of fish from the Stallings family.

This year, Jay's Restaurant on Stony Gap Road will celebrate its 50th year of operation as Ned Stallings, his wife Donna and his son, Vic, continue to operate two restaurants in Stanly.

The original fish house, "on the curve" as its known locally, opened in 1956 as Stony Gap Fish House by the Sells family but the Stallings took over in 1967 and renamed it Jay's for the owner, Jay Stallings.

Jay Stallings, Ned's father, had a fish house previously in New London with his brother-in-law called Pat (Cagle) and Jay's, named after both owners. It opened in 1956. The place was eventually renamed Pat and Mick's and was in operation until closing its doors in 2014.

Jay's Seafood was different from Stony Gap or other fish houses in terms of how fish was prepared. One example is using flour

to bread the fish; Stony Gap used flour while Jay's uses cornmeal.

"At the time, there were seven or eight fish houses (in Stanly)," Ned Stallings said.

When Jay's opened, people ate family style at long tables; it was all-you-can-eat fish, fries, hushpuppies and loaf bread for \$1.25, tax included. Slaw was kept on the tables and refilled throughout the dinner service.

Those original tables are still in Jay's in the room to the right when patrons walk into the front door; that area was previously a screened-in porch.

"You might sit with someone you don't even know," Ned Stallings said.

After years of the same menu, the Stallings family expanded the menu in the mid to late 1970s to include hamburgers and mini shrimp.

"Every time business would slump down we would try something to boost it back up," Ned Stallings said.

Jay's fish comes from Pamlico Seafood, which fishes up and down the coast of the Atlantic Ocean.

The buffet was the brainchild of Ned's mother, Ann Cagle Stallings. Ned said customers have liked the buffet from the beginning. Ann was also responsible for opening Jay's Downtowner in the old Stanly Dairy building in Albemarle in 1981.

"My mom and dad were very good business people; their minds were always working," Ned Stallings said about the idea for the expansion.

"Mama saw it and wanted to do something with it; she fell in love with that building."

In order to prepare for customers for both the Jay's on the curve and the Downtowner, Jay and Ned, along with several others, would come in the day before opening and spend at least six hours getting ready.

Workers will prepare both red slaw, made from tomatoes, vinegar and cabbage, along

with mayonnaise-based white slaw by the gallon, cutting the cores out of enough cabbage heads to make 100 gallons of slaw, which is how much both restaurants use in a week.

Much of what both restaurants use are made in-house, including macaroni salad, potato salad, tartar sauce, cocktail sauce, ranch dressing

Jay's also specializes in ribeye steaks and hamburger steaks. The restaurants will use 100 pounds of ground beef a week and around 100 to 200 pounds of ribeyes using an in-house marinade.

Those numbers do not account for the amount of fish Jay's sells, which is close to 500 pounds a week.

According to Vic, flounder and Alaskan whitefish are the most popular, but customers can order catfish filets, perch, scallops, oysters, mini and jumbo shrimps and even deviled crab.

As much as the two restaurants are similar, they do have differences. Primarily every plate at the Downtowner is prepared personally for each customer, while the buffet allows diners to make their own plates.

"You might run a party of 30 to 50 people through that bar and the kitchen doesn't even get backed up," Vic Stallings said.

Another difference between the two restaurants is what people eat in terms of choice. Most people tend to eat more fish and the regular sides while on the curve a lot of patrons go for the vegetables, including green beans, lima beans and more.

Buffet goers can also enjoy homemade meatloaf, chicken and dumplings and fried chicken.

"Fish, we won't run out, but you have to get here early for chicken," Ned added.

One of people's real favorites, Ned Stallings said, is the sidemeat, or fatback.

Before any of those courses, though, customers can enjoy a trip down the salad bar, and can top off the entire meal with cobbler and soft-serve ice cream.

On Thursday, Ned and Vic will get to the restaurant around 9:30 or 10 a.m. to continue preparations for dinner service. After a lunch break around 2:30, both will be back before dinner service from 4-9:30 p.m.

"This is a labor-intensive business. People can tell the quality of your work by how much time you spend in anything you do," Ned Stallings said. "If you skim by, they can tell when you skim by."

"One of us is always in the kitchen. We don't ever just leave it with someone else if they're not family...we just want to make sure it's perfect," Vic Stallings said.

Along with the Stallings family, many of the servers and other people have worked decades at the restaurants.

One waitress, Kathy Smith, has worked for the Stallings 39 years and can count those years because of Vic's age; when she started, Vic's mother was pregnant with him.

Many of the workers are second-, third- and even fourth-generation of people working at the restaurants.

The Stallings are planning a celebration this year to commemorate people's efforts over the years.

Jay's Seafood, according to Vic, will continue to provide good food and service to customers for the foreseeable future in the traditional way.

"They hit the nail on the head when they started this...the stars were aligned," Ned Stallings said. "As long as we keep working, I don't see a decline in people coming here."

Regarding the future, Vic added he, his family and the staff will "keep on going, we hope and pray. That's our goal." ⑦





Pfeiffer University plants seed for downtown prosperity

By Ritchie Starnes
News Editor



Pfeiffer University's plans to build a satellite campus in downtown Albemarle figures to be a catalyst for an economic boom.

An anticipated financial investment of more than \$10 million in new development and historic renovation is part of the windfall to be generated by Pfeiffer's two graduate health science programs locating in the county seat's downtown. A study revealed the project would net an economic impact of \$27.5 million over a six-year period.

Once established, the satellite campus would employ at least 17 full-time jobs and serve 200 students. Those employees and students would bring new commerce to downtown while presenting the opportunity for renewed growth in housing, retail and restaurants.

"The immediate economic impact of the project is very exciting, and the potential to have a lasting and transformative impact on our city is equally exciting," said Albemarle Mayor Ronnie Michael.

The new 42,000-square-foot Health Sciences Facility, as presently called, will house the graduate programs of Occupational Therapy and Physician's Assistant education.

Not only is the downtown campus expected to catapult the city of Albemarle, but it's projected to propel Pfeiffer University onto a national stage in the field of health sciences.

"The campus and the new programs will extend higher education and resources in rural areas, which is vital to the mission of Pfeiffer University, especially in our local community," said Colleen Perry Keith, president of Pfeiffer University.

Pfeiffer's graduate enrollment will increase with the new campus. Other Pfeiffer satellite campuses are located in Charlotte and Raleigh.

Other locations wanted Pfeiffer's satellite campus before downtown Albemarle was designated as the future site. The site also figures to enhance connectivity between Pfeiffer's main campus, in Misenheimer and Albemarle.





In November 2016, Albemarle City Council approved incentives for a campus in the city several miles south of the main campus. Graduate programs will be located in a new building at the location of the former Stanly County Museum, which relocated to the City Hall Annex. Check out these first renderings!

Estimated to cost between \$13 and \$15 million, the four-story facility will blend a historic landscape with a twist of contemporary education. The brick facades and tall narrow windows are modeled after buildings on Pfeiffer's main campus and the nearby structure that housed the defunct Lillian Mills.

"When considering the design of the Albemarle campus, Pfeiffer looked for inspiration from Albemarle's downtown architecture, as well as Pfeiffer's

Misenheimer architecture, to come up with a design that blends with the downtown and still speaks to Pfeiffer's history and future," said Ken Russell, Pfeiffer's vice president for digital transformation and chief information officer.

Since its original plans, the Albemarle campus has expanded conceptually before the start of construction. Another 12,000 square feet was added to make room for a wider variety of interactive learning facilities, including lab spaces, simulation

rooms, replicas of intensive care unit and operating room (ICU/OR) environments as well as a model of as an assisted living quarters.

Enthusiasm for more downtown development has also grown, including more businesses that cater to younger residents. Several analyses concluded attracting and retaining a younger generation is critical to the long-term success of Albemarle.

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“We are also excited about having something to attract a younger population to Albemarle,” Michael said.

Plans call for the campus to spawn more downtown residents, too. There’s hope the former Albemarle Hotel might evolve into an apartment complex for students.

Efforts are underway to ease concerns about parking availability for the Albemarle campus. Ideally, the downtown campus will lead to a more pedestrian and bike-friendly setting.

Along with helping downtown Albemarle restore its county status as a destination, the impact of Pfeiffer’s presence should make it a hub of prosperity. ⑦

Below: President Colleen Perry Keith welcomed graduates, families and friends of Pfeiffer University at Pfeiffer’s Commencement.





C.A.F.E. Program unites educators, industry for common goal

By Toby Thorpe
Contributing Writer

Twenty-four educators representing elementary, middle, and high schools throughout Stanly County took part in the 2017 Career Academy For Educators (CAFE) program.

CAFE, in its 14th year, provides an opportunity for local educators to become familiar with the various types of industry in the county, according to Kathy Almond, president of the Stanly County Chamber of Commerce.

“The program was started through Stanly Community College in 2004,” said Almond, “and is supported through a partnership of five organizations: Stanly County Schools, Stanly Community College, the Stanly Chamber of Commerce, the Centralina Workforce Development Board and For Stanly.”

Originally targeted toward guidance counselors, the program has expanded over

time to include teachers and administrators as well.

“The purpose of the program is to help educators see first-hand the number and types of manufacturing jobs in the county,” she said.

During the first two days of the program, participants toured four manufacturing facilities in the southern and western regions of the county. Sites included Michelin Aircraft Tire Corporation and Chroma Provisions in Norwood, Stanley Engineered Fastening in Stanfield and Carolina Paper Converters in Oakboro.

Tour participants received an overview of the businesses they visited, followed by a tour of the facility.

Those taking part in the program agreed on the value of familiarizing students with local employment options.

Pictured above are 2017 CAFE participants from (L-R).

First row: Michael Smith, Gene Beneduce, Vivian Barnette, Ginger Burris, Melissa Belk, Andrea Russell, Isaac Russell

Second row: Phillip Little, Beth Safrit, Leesa Fuller, Penny Breslin, Christy Wilson-Kaber, Traci Diggs, David Mueller

Third row: Krista McGuire, Pat VanHoose, Whitney Pratt, Jennifer Nahrgang, Jennifer Flowe, Taylor Smith, Jenifer Brown

Fourth row: Shenise Watson, Julianne Fallen, Misty Hughes, Sharon Cole, Elizabeth Standafer, Alan Turner

Fifth row: Adam Storms, Krista Bowers, Kathy Almond, Marion Kinley

"Students sometimes don't realize that there are opportunities after high school other than a four-year college," said Dave Mueller, a teacher at Albemarle High School. "This program helps us (teachers) let them know about the different job opportunities in Stanly County. A lot of times, they (the students) don't know what's available."

Ginger Burris, a teacher at Central Elementary School, expressed the importance of making students aware of career opportunities early on.

"Through this program, we can gain insight into area businesses, and make our students aware of real-world applications and needs, and what's available for them job-wise."

Burris also noted that the first-hand experience she is gathering from the program will be reflected in some of her lesson plans.

"I can present some problem-solving lessons based on what we are seeing," she said.

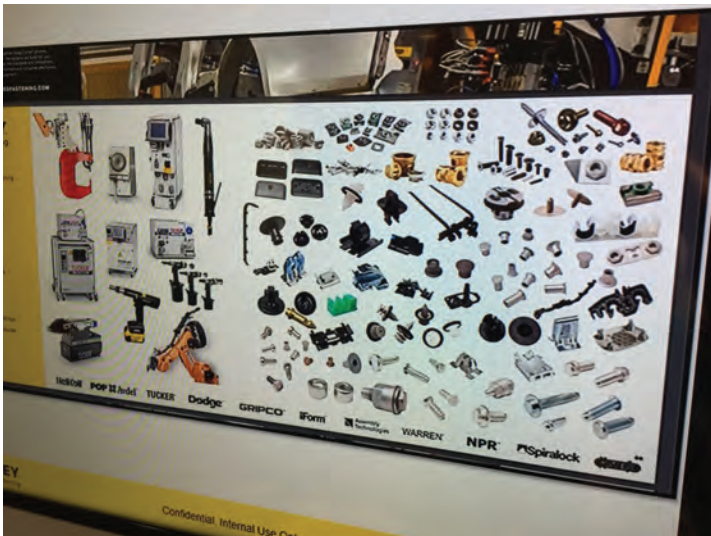
Pat Vanhooose, a math teacher at West Stanly Middle School, agreed.

"This is an opportunity for us to see available job opportunities that Stanly County offers," she said. "Problem-solving is a key component of the jobs, and I can incorporate that into my lessons."

In addition to the facility tours, program participants heard presentations from

experts in the field of manufacturing. Gene Beneduce of North Carolina State University opened the program with an overview of LEAN manufacturing, a process which is designed to provide high value products to the customer through an efficient process which minimizes waste. Krista Bowers and Mary Rickaby of Stanly Community College provided a look at the school's Manufacturing Production Technician Program, and Dana Chaney of SCC closed the three-day program with a presentation on "Making High Quality Decisions." ②

For more information on the CAFE program, contact the Stanly County Chamber of Commerce at (704) 982-8116.





SCC's cosmetology program is a cut above

By Shannon Beamon
Staff Writer

Stanly Community College has always prided itself on filling the gaps.

When local industrial businesses found their skilled workers were aging out, the college put together a multi-million dollar program to provide the latest training to new employees.

When health care professions started to surge, they beefed up their facilities in Locust with simulation centers and new labs, becoming the No. 1 program for entry level nurse licensure in the nation.

And now, it seems, they've found another gap to fill.

"When the textile mills closed around here (back in the '90s), there was a major surge in the demand for cosmetology courses,"

David Smith, program head for that department, said.

That demand continued to increase over the next decade, even spurring SCC to create a high school program that enables students to take free cosmetology classes before getting to college.

"But that was about all we could do," Smith said. "We couldn't handle much more where we were at."

Due to limited space at the salon facility they were renting at the time, the maximum enrollment the cosmetology school could handle was about 40.

"And it was super crowded in there," cosmetology student Jessica Gentry recalled. "It always felt like you were

working over top of people."

In addition, the high school program couldn't fit in the space, so it had to be housed at West Stanly High School, far away from the SCC campus and the students at other schools.

"We've wanted to be able to expand (the department) when I started working here," said Smith, who first began teaching at SCC in 2001. "Even before that, really."

And now they can.

Thanks to a \$500,000 donation from the Morton-Moffitt family, the school constructed a new 12,000-square-foot facility in 2016. Featuring 49 hair styling stations, 20 manicuring stations, a facial room, a clinic classroom, two general



Jerrie Sue
Moffitt - Morton

classrooms, offices, conference rooms and a salon lobby area, the facility provides more room for not only students to work, but for the program to grow.

“Our maximum enrollment now is 80,” Smith said. “And we have about 50 enrolled currently.” In addition, the high school program has been moved into the facility, providing a more centralized location for those students.

“It just is so much more space,” Gentry said of the new building. “It makes it a lot easier to do what you need to.”

With classrooms and salon all in one building, students also get more opportunities to rotate through different roles and duties, SCC Associate Vice President Merlin Amirtharaj said.

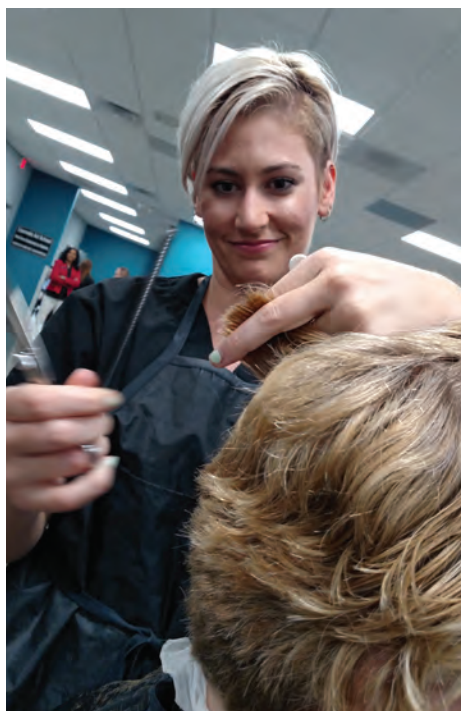
“Sometimes that’s working in the salon, but it’s also doing laundry and linen duty, greeting clients, doing inventory in the chemical closet,” Amirtharaj said. “They can just take a walk down the hall and practice with all of that.”

Overall, it takes 1,500 school hours to get a cosmetology license in North Carolina, she added, so the extra hours are always needed. After that, students can choose to either begin working or take extra classes to get an associate’s degree as well.

“It’s a very flexible set up, which sets us apart from some of the bigger community colleges in the area,” Amirtharaj noted.

Paired with a roomy, modern facility and the fact that SCC maintains one of the least expensive cosmetology tuitions in the region, and it seems SCC may have just found another way to fill in a gap.

“It’s been a dream for a long time,” Smith said. “And it’ll be exciting to see where we go next.” ⑦



A Beautician's Legacy

Jerrie Sue Moffitt-Morton worked a long career as a beautician before passing away in 2009.

In memory of her passion for bringing out the best in others, husband Jack Morton — whose family also has a long history of supporting education — donated \$500,000 to SCC for its new cosmetology building. “You can tell he was so proud of her,” David Smith, program director of SCC’s cosmetology

school, said of Morton. “He’d visit (the construction site) every other week just to see how it was going and talk with the people out here.” Jerrie Sue graduated High Point Beauty School, a program not unlike SCC’s. She was known for her fighting spirit and ability to put others at ease. “We are deeply honored to have the family’s support,” Smith said.



The Aquadale Explorers, Joellen Teeter, adviser, were busy this year exploring North Carolina and the many festivals the state offers. From the Woolly Worm Festival in Banner Elk to the Pickle Festival in Mount Olive to the museum's own American Indian Heritage Celebration in Raleigh, the group from Norwood used their experiences at these wonderful events as motivation for their 2017 art/exhibit group project entry. Their adventures and enthusiasm for the state are just a few of the reasons why they were this year's Chapter of the Year.

One local school has become a champion at peeking into the past

By B.J. Drye
Editor

Aquadale Elementary's Aquadale Explorers History Club was named the 2017 N.C. History Chapter of the Year through the North Carolina Museum of History.

Now in its 20th year, the club has won Chapter of the Year four other times: 1998, 2004, 2008 and 2012.

So how does the club find continued success?

"You get an interested group of fourth- and fifth-grade students, snacks, Mr. David Wagoner, draft your student teacher from Pfeiffer University, Lynnette Huneycutt, to help with students and meetings, and prepare to make history interesting," said Joellen Teeter, special education resource teacher and adviser of the club at Aquadale.

The Aquadale Explorers History Club began in 1997 when Wagoner wanted to help students learn more about local and state history.

"To be a chapter of the year, the North Carolina Museum of History chooses one club each year who has worked with school-age children (4-5 graders, middle schoolers, or high schoolers) to promote history exploration and provide learning experiences for the children," Teeter said.

"There are approximately 60 history chapters represented in the state that the Aquadale Explorers competed against. The Aquadale Explorers is the only history club in Stanly County."

The 2016-17 club consisted of Addison Springer, Avamae Anderson, Brody Moon, Caleb Mabry, Damerriya Crump, Dianna Justice, Evan Kimrey, Myranda Ricketts, Roy Smith, Skyler Almond, Will High, Andrew Huggins, Austin Havens, Cory Poplin, Dayna Miller, Jack Frashuer, Jake Turner, Kate Foutz, Kiersten Hollis, Kyle Smith, Luke Dennis, Makia Colson, Mary Ryan Hinson, Mylee Swaringen, Tatyanna Bautista and Ximena Jaimes.

The club met after school and began the

2016-17 school year by learning about Native Americans. They attended the American Indian Heritage Celebration in Raleigh at the North Carolina History Museum in November.

"All eight tribes of North Carolina Native Americans were represented through dance, foods, stories and celebrations at the festival," Teeter said.

"The club loved it. For many, this was their first exposure to Native Americans and their culture. They especially loved the music and dances."

The club worked on a group project to enter in the annual Tarheel Junior Historian convention in April.

"Their project was about the different festivals that are unique to North Carolina and represent the regions' unique characteristics," Teeter said.

"The students researched a festival, chose what to write about that made their festival

special and then drew a picture to represent it on a North Carolina map that had been created with clay. Their group project did not win anything, but the group had a wonderful time working on it.

“The Tarheel Junior Historian Association provides contests ranging from artifact searches, essays on Civil War, American Revolution and African Americans to a Christopher Crittenden State History Quiz and essay, numerous photography contests, and video documentary contests,” Teeter added.

During the year, students also attended the Woolly Worm Festival in Banner Elk and the Pickle Festival in Mount Olive.

“Not only did the Aquadale Explorers history club win Chapter of the Year, but there were individual winners as well. Each student is provided information on how they can enter THJHA contests on their own,” Teeter said.

“The most popular contest is the Artifact Search. This allows students to take a picture of something (an artifact) that is

50 years old or older and is personal to someone in their family,” she added.

“The best part is that the children get to have conversations with parents, grandparents and other adults about their family.

“This year Evan Kimrey won with a great paper about a wooden grain scoop that has been in his family for years. Ava Anderson won also with a story about how her great-grandfather made a pin for her great-grandmother during WWII. Not only are the winners papers posted for a year on display at the museum, Ava’s parents were asked to display the pin for everyone to see.”

In the Historic Architecture Photography contest, Ava won first place for architectural detail on the Pisgah Covered Bridge and second for houses with a photograph of the Kron House at Morrow Mountain State Park.


Cory Poplin won an individual Sports History Award for his research and paper on the 1940s American Legion Little League World Series that was played in Albemarle.

“There were other students who completed contests, but did not win at this time,” Teeter said.

“The club members are encouraged to find something that is of interest to them and talk to their family about it and get them involved in the research and project.”

In addition to traveling to festivals and researching topics for the convention, club members discussed Uwharrie ghost tales by the late Fred T. Morgan, wrote to penpals in Fuquay Varina, constructed homemade Christmas ornaments and participated in other projects.

Activities in previous years have included visits to Morrow Mountain, Stanly County Museum, Marks House, Snuggs House and the Stanly County Public Library to research genealogy.

“These resources have been incredibly valuable to the club,” Teeter said. “The History Club is always looking for speakers and persons interested in sharing some Stanly County history with the group.” 



Each spring, the North Carolina Museum of History hosts the THJHA Annual Convention. Hundreds of junior historians from across the state gather for a fun, interesting, and educational day of hands-on workshops and activities. The day also includes the announcement of the winners of THJHA Annual Contests and Awards.



2017 Sports History Award - “Crossing the Color Line,” by Cory Poplin, Aquadale Explorers, Aquadale Elementary School



The Stanly County Museum and the Heritage Room, formerly at the Stanly County Library, are both now located in the Stanly County History Center at 157 North Second Street in downtown Albemarle.

Keeping history in the present

By B.J. Drye
Editor

Sometimes changing history is a good thing.

Making history is even better.

Local historians, with the help of county and city leaders, have created a new home for the county's museum. In doing so, the permanent and rotating exhibits have increased substantially.

"I like our location better," said Megan Sullivan, museum director of the Stanly County History Center. "We're not that far away from our old location, but we do have more foot traffic now. We feel like we're more involved at this location."

Sullivan added that she has been able to do more programs in coordination with

other events, such as an Elvis-themed event during the Tour de Elvis run in July 2017.

The former museum at Five Points in Albemarle was 2,400 square feet, including offices, bathroom and kitchen. The old Heritage Room at the Stanly County Public Library was 626 square feet. At the new location in downtown, the center houses both in 5,760 square feet, and that's just the first floor. (The second floor was not open to the public as of this printing.)

The building, known as Lefler Furniture, a car dealership and a bank, housed City Hall Annex before the new City Hall was constructed across the street.





The Uwharrie Mountains and Yadkin/Pee Dee River System have attracted people to settle here for thousands of years. This area has been referred to as "North Carolina's Cradle of Civilization" because of its many pre-historic archaeological sites.

"The main gallery is a general history of Stanly County," Sullivan said. "Cases focus on The Native Americans and Early Home Life, Early Transportation and Education, Industry, Military, and The Last 100 Years."

An interactive exhibit such as "Are You Smarter Than A 5th Grader from the 1800s?" allows visitors the opportunity to solve math problems from 1848. Visitors can also listen to World War II veterans from the county discuss their experiences from the war. Other individuals may want to try carding cotton, take a typing test or try to date an archaeological site.

A changing exhibit will rotate throughout the year. Upcoming exhibits known by the fall of 2017 included "Women of Stanly County" and one on World War I.

The expanded space has also allowed for more hands-on learning, Sullivan said. During the summer, the center hosted History Hunters on Wednesdays to collaborate with the library's summer

reading program. Each week children ages 3-6 learned about history through craft projects, games, stories and guest presenters.

"We're averaging 30-40 kids and we can do that here," Sullivan said in comparison to the former location.

On the first Saturday of each month, the museum hosts a STEM program for students in kindergarten through fifth-grade. Previous topics have included the 1970s — where students learned about fashion, music and Albemarle during the decade. They also made lava lamps.

Another topic was on the history of dams

and the Alcoa plant in Badin. Attendees were able to make their own dams.

The program in November 2017 will look at the history of Thanksgiving dishes and how they are prepared, along with an experiment with corn kernels. The December program will focus on how changing technology impacted Stanly County.

"Kids will get hands-on interaction with early machinery, including a 19th century cream separator and add machine," Sullivan said. "We will then learn the science behind fidget spinners and kids will make their own fidgets to take home. Sign ups are required for this program."



The Stanly County Museum is open in downtown Albemarle! Come enjoy exhibits designed for the whole family! Try on mid 20th century hats, type on a typewriter, learn how to card cotton, listen to oral histories from Stanly County WWII veterans, and much more.

The museum's move to the former City Hall Annex also impacted the library's Heritage Room.

"The move to our new location has been very positive," said Paul Morrison, manager of the Heritage Room. "All the patrons I have talked with, all love the new space the Heritage Room and Museum now share. Patrons like the layout of the History Center with the museum located at the front of the building and the Heritage Room located at the rear of the building.

"The move has given the Heritage Room more space for our research materials and storage space," Morrison added. "It is also great to now have all our photos and research materials located in one location, which patrons really seem to like."

Genealogists have many tools available at the Heritage Room. In addition to the web database Ancestrylibrary.com being available for patrons to use, the room has "family books and files on many Stanly County families and county records such as census, deeds, marriage, wills, court records, etc. for Stanly and other counties for North Carolina," Morrison said.

"We also have some county record books from Georgia, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia," he added. "We also keep the Stanly News & Press on microfilm."

The History Center is open 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday and 9 a.m.-1 p.m. the first Saturday of each month. ⑦

Upcoming Events at the Stanly History Center

2017

Ghost tours every Thursday evening during October 2017.

Holiday Tea in the Snuggs House Museum in December 2017.

2018

"Choose Your Own Adventure" interactive museum exhibit in 2018.

History of NC BBQ and a barbecue cook-off in Fall 2018.

For information about programs email historicstanly@gmail.com or call the Stanly County Museum 704-986-3777.

Stanly Historical Society
historicstanly.org

Stanly County Museum
Stanlycountymuseum.com

Want More History?

The Stanly County Historical Society usually hosts at least one program per month dealing with a specific topic related to Stanly County history.

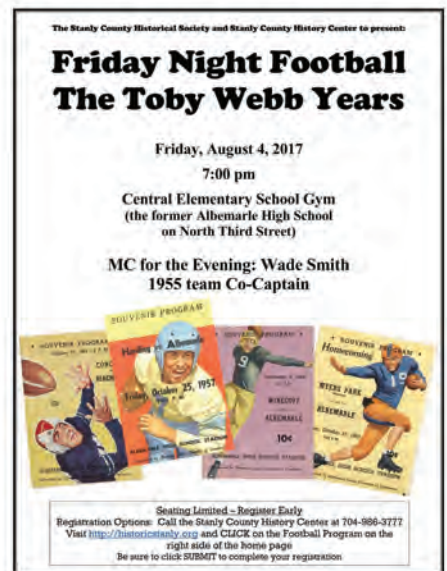
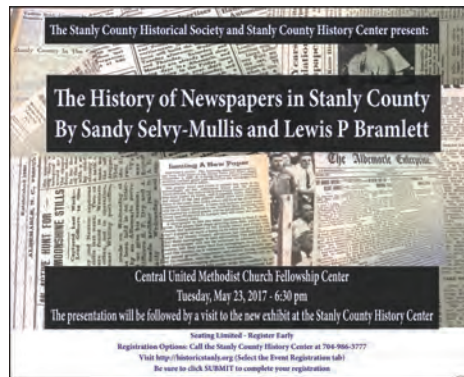
Programs have included a look at newspapers in the county, Stanly County radio, "Friday Night Football: The Toby Webb Years," key women from the county and how each town got its name.

Pat Bramlett of Albemarle is a frequent volunteer through the history center and the historical society.

"The programs planned by the Historical Society's Education Committee consistently draw 100 or more people," Bramlett said. "At this time we will continue to

hold our programs in churches or other locations near the History Center, so when appropriate we can invite program attendees to visit the History Center following the program to view a rotating exhibit related to the program.

"We hope in the future that the lower level of the History Center can be renovated to be used



for meetings and some of our educational programs. We would also like to be able to use that area to expand our exhibit space. We have so many interesting items that we would like for visitors to the History Center to see."

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County historians explain how places got their names

By Jo Grey
Contributing Writer

Stereotypical history events don't always draw crowds, nor is humor on the main menu. Even so, the Stanly County Historical Society and the Stanly County History Center's program, "How Places in Stanly County Got Their Names," pulled in 125 folks. Richfield's former mayor, Jim Misenheimer, brought laughter with his comment about a bunch of smiling faces in the room where the county commissioners usually meet. "The commissioners would be envious," he said.

Pat Bramlett chairs the Historical Society's Education Committee, so she's no stranger to such gatherings. Bramlett cautioned the speakers to stick to the five-minute limit or her husband would ring the family supper bell. All 13 speakers cooperated.

Mayor Ronnie Michael reported that the city of Albemarle came into being the same time as Stanly County due to a North Carolina

law passed by the General Assembly in 1841. Originally part of Montgomery County, the new county was named for John Stanly, a prominent businessman and politician in New Bern.

"Presumably, new counties and towns to be established in the western part of the state were often named for prominent Easterners as a means of gaining favor with the eastern dominated legislature," Michael said.

The name Albemarle — as in Duke of Albemarle — was rejected by eastern counties so the legislators deemed it "appropriate to restore the lost name of Albemarle when naming the seat of the newly-formed County of Stanly," Michael said.

Locust sits where muddy crossroads once caused problems for farmers and travelers from all directions. The spot where folks camped out, waiting for roads to become

*Left to Right: Mayor Ronnie Michael
Les Young - Aquadale and Norwood
David Summerlin - Badin
Anabel Speight - Big Lick
Bill Hinson - Frog Pond
Dexter Townsend - Albemarle City Councilman
Mayor Steve Huber - Locust
Mike Reimann - Misenheimer
Christy Starnes - New London Town Commissioner
Mayor Doug Burgess - Oakboro
Mayor Larry Wayne Smith - Red Cross
Jim Misenheimer - Richfield
Tara Tarlton - Stanfield*

passable, turned into a spot for gambling, drinking and the like, said Mayor Steve Huber.

By 1869, they dug a communal well, folks turned from camping to settling and requested a post office, but "Crossroads" wasn't acceptable to postal officials.

When residents met to choose a new name, a teenaged girl, Maggie Howell, spotted a large locust tree in full bloom in the level fields, and said, "Why not call our place Locust Level?" The name stuck until 1894 when it became simply Locust.

"Some of my uneducated friends in Charlotte still call it the Bug City," Huber said.

Norwood Museum historian Les Young related that his town started out as Centre, as shown on the original 1825 property deed for the First United Methodist Church. In

1826, a post office opened in the Norwood Brothers Store with the address Norwood Store, North Carolina. Civil War-era maps show both names, but in 1881 the North Carolina General Assembly solved the dilemma, incorporating the village as the town of Norwood.

David Summerlin, historian at the Badin Museum, told of the work started by a Frenchman in 1913 who planned to build a dam on the Yadkin River as well as a town for the workers. Though Adrien Badin was called back to France at the start of WWI, the town took his name. Summerlin invited the crowd to read the rest of the story in the book, "Badin North Carolina, the First 100 Years."

Speculation abounds over the naming of Oakboro, whose mayor, Doug Burgess, offered several theories. It may have been because of the white oak trees in the area, burros tied to the oak trees, a contest or Mr. Hartsell may have suggested a name. Originally known as Furr City, the name was changed to Oakboro in 1913. In summary, Burgess said, "How it got its name? We don't know."

Tara Tarlton, a Stanfield historian, related that the town was simply named for a railroad engineer named Stanfield. She also shared a 1913 article from The Charlotte News about station location selections and the help given by a local farmer to railroad agent E.B. Rice who was trying to influence his superintendent, Col. W.A. Witt. During the area tour, the railroad officials stopped

for dinner at the farm where "fried chicken galore and an attractive young lady to wait on the table" swung the deal in Rice's favor — and in Stanfield's.

Red Cross also grew up around a muddy intersection, inspiring the folks to call it the "red crossroads," according to Mayor Larry Wayne Smith. During armed forces maneuvers in 1942, the store built by Daniel and Annie Belle Cauble Hinson had an unexpected visit from "Old Blood-and-Guts" Gen. George Patton, who bought crackers and a soda.

Red Cross incorporated in 2002 to avoid losing its identity.

"We are country and proud of it, but we will take a little of the new things that comes with growth," said Smith.

The Village of Misenheimer, previously known as Gladstone, incorporated in 2003. Discovery of gold came first, but it was the discovery of natural sulphur springs by Claiborne Misenheimer that brought growth to the area.

Former Mayor Mike Riemann said trains stopped at the community of Gladstone where a post office was established in 1891, a short buggy ride from the thriving resort. However, that name caused confusion for train passengers bound for Misenheimer Springs, so by 1904, Gladstone became Misenheimer.

"Richfield was definitely not named for the farm land," quipped Jim Misenheimer. He thought it should be "Rockfield."

The town's first charter had the name Ritchie's Mill because of Daniel Ritchie and his sons who started mills and opened a general store. By 1893, the town's new post office had a new name. Ritchie's Mill had morphed into Richfield.

"No one knows exactly how the name got changed," said Misenheimer.

Christy Starnes, a New London town commissioner, might be serving the town of Bilesville if some English mining executives hadn't come to town in the late 1800s.

W.A. Judd, responsible for the mining operation, thought the rich settlement of Bilesville would only increase in importance, maybe rivaling his native London, England.

"When he suggested the name be changed, hardly anyone objected," said Starnes.

The town of New London incorporated in 1891.

Bramlett said the presentations would be compiled into a book to be made available through the Stanly County Library and the History Center. Misenheimer recommended also "Stanly County, The Architectural Legacy of a Rural North Carolina County" as a helpful reference. ⑦

At a Glance

Following is a list of municipalities and communities, their claim to their name and the presenter who detailed their history.

Albemarle - name of historic figure (Duke of Albemarle) chosen by Legislature
Ronnie Michael, Mayor of Albemarle

Aquadale - winning contest entry of Miss DeBerry—Aqua (water) and Dale (valley)
Les Young, Stanly County Historical Society

Badin - name of founder, Adrien Badin
David Summerlin, Badin Museum Historian

Big Lick - because of large rock covered in minerals and salt used by cattle
Anabel Speight, Oakboro Museum Historian

Frog Pond - a pond filled with frogs at the hands of pranksters
Bill Hinson, resident of Frog Pond's oldest home

Kingville - for Dr. Ogden D. King, champion of Albemarle's black community
Dexter Townsend, Albemarle City Councilman

Locust - named for locust tree found in area
Steve Huber, Mayor of Locust

Misenheimer - named for founder of Misenheimer Springs
Mike Reimann, former Mayor of Misenheimer

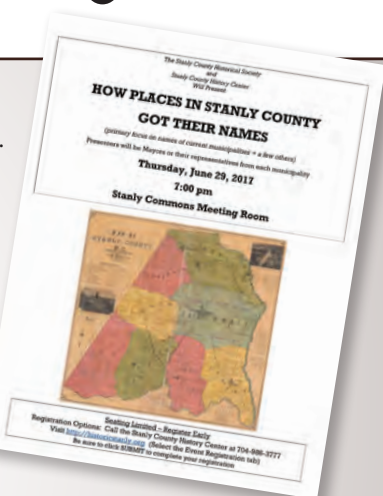
New London - chosen by English mining executive
Christy Starnes, New London Town Commissioner

Norwood - because of Norwood Brothers Store
Les Young, Norwood Museum Historian

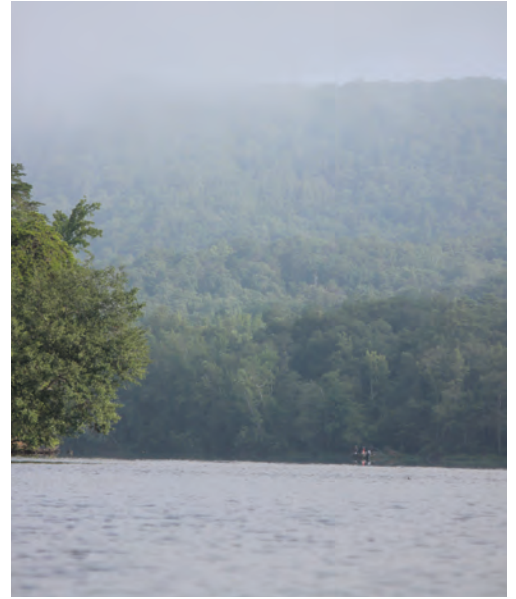
Oakboro - nobody knows for sure
Doug Burgess, Mayor of Oakboro

Red Cross - crossroads was once red muddy dirt
Larry Wayne Smith, Mayor of Red Cross

Richfield - derived from Ritchie family who settled the area
Jim Misenheimer, Former Mayor of Richfield



Stanfield - name of a railroad engineer who finished the line through Stanfield
Tara Tarlton, Stanfield Historian



Morrow Mountain State Park sports a unique amenity

By Shannon Beamon
Staff Writer

Out on Lake Tillery, life can move slow as molasses.

Fishermen nap with poles in the water. Pontoon boats cruise atop the waves. Canoes paddle up marshy byways, while herons creep and turtles bask, shells toasting in the sun.

But molasses isn't always the way it goes.

Sometimes jet skis skim and boats zoom. Sometimes kids squeal sharp and the breeze moves swift and hawks plummet quick as lightning through the air.

"There are two main reasons people come out here," said Tonya Jolly, boathouse manager at Morrow Mountain State Park. "To slow down and to have fun."

So with their boathouse loaded with easy-going canoes — nine of regular size, nine larger — it was time to give lake-lovers something to get their hearts pumping, the staff there decided.

"That's why we got these fellas," Jolly said, patting one of six racing kayaks the park acquired this year.

The slim, round-hulled boats — equipped with rudders for quick steering and skegs for cleaving a straight path — can go at least twice as fast as a traditional kayak, an average of 4-8 miles per hour.

While a little trickier to handle than their slower counterparts, they are one of fastest man-powered ways to move about a body of water when mastered, Jolly noted.

"They can really fly," she said.

Whereas other parks are loading up on traditional kayaks and paddle boards, Morrow Mountain is currently the only state-owned park in North Carolina to rent out racing craft, at least that they know of, officials noted.

"It's something most people never get a chance to try," Jolly said. "It's something unique."

One reason they may be alone in that amenity is the cost, staff admitted.

Traditional kayaks and paddle boards can be purchased for \$200-\$1,000, whereas the average racing kayak ranges from \$1,000-\$3,000.

"It's not cheap, that's for sure," Park Superintendent Jeff Davidson said.

For several years, Morrow Mountain tried to get state funding for the purchase of the new craft, but with so many other higher priority projects, the pricey boats never got funded.

"We figured if we wanted it, we'd have to find a way to get them ourselves," Davidson said.

Spearheading that effort was park employee Jason Murvine, who jump-started fundraising with a triathlon at the park in 2016. Named the Naked Mountain Triathlon after an old name for Morrow Mountain, the race featured kayaking



rather than swimming in its trio of events.

“We had a ton of people come out for that,” Davidson said.

When those proceeds were combined with sponsorships collected by the Friends of Morrow Mountain State Park and a \$10,000 donation from the Stanly County Convention and Visitors Bureau, the park found it had raised a total of \$21,000 in less than a year, more than enough to get what they wanted, Davidson said.

In fact, thanks to a special deal from the kayak manufacturers, the park was able to purchase not only a half dozen racing craft — five Epic V5s and one Epic V7 — and a full set of high-quality paddles and personal flotation devices to go with them, but also a popcorn machine and outdoor movie projector to use for other events at the park.

“It’s given us a lot of new ways to get people in here,” Davidson said.

Visitors can now rent the new kayaks any time the boathouse is open, officials noted. However, that isn’t the only way to try them out.

To encourage the community to think of watersports as a form of exercise, the boathouse is offering Free Fitness Fridays from 10 a.m.-12 p.m. During that time, visitors can use the kayaks free of charge.

“It really engages your core, going that

fast,” boathouse worker Nelson Smith said. “It’s a great workout.”

For those wishing to test their speed, a race course is plotted out on the lake, as well. Top times are posted on a record board at the boathouse.


“We’ve already had some people say they want to come back and beat the times,” Jolly said.

However, whether speeding across the water in one of the Epics or drifting with

the waves in a canoe, life on the lake lingers with everyone who goes out.

“When they get off the boats, they have this look on their face,” Holly Efird, a boathouse worker, said. “It’s kind of calm. Kind of excited.”

A bit like molasses and lightning, or herons and hawks. Something fast and something slow.

“There’s nothing else like that,” Efird said. “That’s what I love about being out here.” 



Want to try it for yourself?

The Morrow Mountain State Park boathouse sees about 50 -150 visitors a day. The facility opens daily from 10 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. during the summer (June-mid-August) and on the weekends before and after that (May-October). All boat rentals are \$5 an hour or \$30 a day. Day rentals must reserve their craft when the boathouse opens.



Youth Breakfast Celebrates 50 Years of Fellowship

By Shannon Beamon
Staff Writer

Getting teenagers up for school is hard enough. Getting them out the door an hour ahead of time for a church event, that would seem to border on the impossible.

But with God all things are possible, local church leaders said.

For the past 50 years, the Stanly County Youth Breakfast has drawn a group of about 100 teenagers to the churches of downtown Albemarle for a 6 a.m. breakfast and program. And not just for a single day, either, but for a whole week.

"It started as a way for students from different churches and schools to get together," said the Rev. Matt Drumheller of the Presbyterian Church in Albemarle, one of four downtown churches that spearhead the event each year.

"It's a way to meet the other kids and show them they're not alone in their faith," Drumheller said.

As a way to look back on the past 50 years of doing that, the 2017 breakfast series featured a speaker from each decade of participants.



Jamie Kimrey



Marty Titwell



"We were all teenagers once, right?" Jamie Kimrey, the speaker for the '80s, said.

The 1980s was often called the "decade of decadence," he noted, with showy styles and even showier hair. With all of today's technology, the millennial generation deals with decadence of a different kind, but it's still there.

"I see a lot of promise in this generation, though," Kimrey said. "They have a social awareness that gives me a lot of hope."


Marty Titwell, the speaker for the 1990s, remembered how waking up early wasn't any easier in her day than it is now.

"And I had to be up early," Titwell said. "If I wasn't at the car when my brother was ready to go, I got left."

But as much as the teens complain about the early mornings, Drumheller said, it also seems to bring them together.

Like an early morning workout gets a team committed to winning

the game, or an early start to a roadtrip gets someone geared up for their destination, it opens up a space for those students to become committed.

"Maybe 50 years from now they'll look back on this and see it as their own start," Kimrey said. 

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