

BUSINESS FOCUS

Briefs

BB&T to acquire S.C. agency

BB&T Insurance Services, the nation's sixth largest insurance broker, has plans to expand its coastal South Carolina operation with the acquisition of the Grand Strand's largest insurance agency.

Puckett, Scheetz & Hogan, a coastal property insurance specialist, provides a full range of risk management services for businesses and families from its Myrtle Beach headquarters and a branch office in nearby Pawleys Island.

The merger would give BB&T the largest insurance market share in greater Myrtle Beach, a little more than a year after gaining the No. 1 banking market share in the same area.

The transaction is expected to be completed early this month. Terms were not disclosed.

Puckett, Scheetz & Hogan President Mike Hogan founded the agency in 1989. It began as a coastal branch of the former Puckett, Scheetz & Hagler agency based in Greenville, S.C. It now has 50 employees, all of whom will remain with "BB&T-Puckett, Scheetz & Hogan" following the acquisition.

Aggies receive grant from AT&T

The Office of Summer Sessions and Outreach at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University received a \$25,000 grant from the AT&T Foundation to implement Project Something New: Newly Empowered Youths to be decision makers through wireless technology.

The 18 weeks Saturday Academy Program that begins in the fall provides an opportunity to work with middle school students enrolled in the Guilford County School System, who are less likely to advance in subjects such as, science, technology, engineering and math. The purpose of the project is to create a science, technology, engineering and mathematics laboratory tutorial program for underserved middle school youths attending a Guilford County School in southeast Greensboro.

The project will consist of an on-site tutorial and mentoring program using academic resources and podcasting to deliver multimedia interactive education, to assist participating students with classroom assignments by providing immediate feedback. The proposed initiative will link up with the Guilford County School's website lesson homepage to obtain homework assignments for those participating in the project.

United Healthcare's Pittman elected to term on AHA board

Austin Pittman, president of United Healthcare in North Carolina and South Carolina, was elected to a two-year term on the American Heart Association Mid-Atlantic Affiliate board of directors at its June meeting.



Pittman

The American Heart Association's Mid-Atlantic Affiliate serves Maryland, the District of Columbia, Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina. Also joining the class of 2010 are Richard Foster, M.D., SVP of the South Carolina Hospital Association, Jay Mahaffey, SVP, Bank of America, and Pam Morris.

Pittman just recently completed a two-year term as chairperson for the Guilford Heart Gala, increasing profits by 41 percent from 2007 to 2008. Throughout Austin's involvement with the American Heart Association, United Healthcare has been a \$15,000 sponsor for the past two years and was a presenting sponsor for 2006 for the Guilford Heart Gala. United Healthcare is also a \$12,000 Heart and Stroke Walk sponsor and has active walk teams.

"We are so thrilled to have Austin Pittman join our visionary group of dedicated professionals," said Board Chair Leonard L. Edloe. "He brings great insight on how and where we need to focus our Association's energy to build stronger, healthier lives for our Mid-Atlantic neighbors."

Seattle's Virginia Mason Medical Center loses EEOC case

SEATTLE (Seattle Medium/NNPA) - The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has announced that Virginia Mason Medical Center has agreed to provide \$195,000 and other relief to settle a federal lawsuit charging that the non-profit health organization unlawfully fired a female employee due to a back injury.

According to the EEOC's lawsuit, surgical technician CaTina White had worked at Virginia Mason's facility in Seattle's First Hill area for over three years when she sustained an on-the-job injury to her back and took medical leave.

White was 32 at the time of her injury in 2004. When she returned to work with a medical release that restricted her from heavy lifting and prolonged standing, Virginia Mason informed her that she could no longer perform her job under these restrictions. The EEOC charged that Virginia Mason failed to reassign White to vacant equivalent positions for which she was qualified and could perform, and unlawfully terminated her due to her disability.

Smith to spend year away from Wake

Sociology professor is off to Colgate University

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

Wake Forest University Professor Earl Smith will spend the upcoming academic year away from the campus.

Smith, a professor of sociology and the Rubin Distinguished Professor of American Ethnic Studies at Wake, has been awarded the Arthur A. Sio Distinguished Visiting Professorship in Diversity and Community by Colgate University, a school of about 2,700 students in Upstate New York.

Smith will teach at the school for the 2008-2009 academic. This is the first time the professorship has been awarded to a non-Colgate faculty member.

Smith joined the Wake Forest faculty in 1996. For nearly 10 years, he chaired the school's sociology department. Before



Photo by Todd Luck

Professor Earl Smith sported a Colgate University t-shirt at a recent community event held by the Darryl Hunt Project for Freedom and Justice. Beside him is his Wake Forest colleague, Professor Angela Hattery.

coming to Winston-Salem, he was a professor and dean at Pacific Lutheran University, which is near Tacoma, Wash. Smith also spent 15 years teaching sociology at Washington State University.

He is also a prolific writer who has published extensively in the area of the sociology of sports. He is the author of "Race, Sport & the American Dream" (2007), as well as "African American Families" (2007). He

expects to publish three books in the next year, "Sport and Social Theory," "Interracial Relationships Across the Colorline" and "Interracial Intimacies."

IT'S IN THE BAG



Exclusively Weddings' Christopher Thomas-Moore (far right) presents more than \$6,000 to the United Way of Greater Greensboro's Kathy Cates as other Exclusively Weddings employees look on. The Greensboro-based online weddings superstore raised the money during its recent yard sale, where overstock items were sold to the public.

News veteran promoted at PR agency

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Pam Cook-Longworth has been promoted to vice president at Annese Public Relations. She had been the director of Client Services since joining the company in 2006 and has more than 17 years of experience in media, primarily in television news. Cook-Longworth served as news director of ABC45 and UPN48.

"In the last two years Pam has successfully cultivated new business relationships, as well as provided superior account services, event planning, media planning and media training," said Betsy Annese, president of Annese Public Relations. "Her hard work and breadth of knowledge about communications have helped deliver high levels of service and quality to our clients. She is well deserving of this promotion."

As the company's vice president, Cook-Longworth will focus on nurturing relationships with a diverse client base, including financial institutions, construction companies, home décor manufacturers, non profit organizations.

"I look forward to the new challenges and opportunities that this role will bring," Cook-Longworth said. "Working on the Annese team has been, and continues to be, a great experience."

Cook-Longworth received a bachelor's degree in public relations from Appalachian State University, and began her broadcasting career at WGHP-TV in High Point. That led to jobs with WFMY in Greensboro and WCNC in Charlotte.

Cook-Longworth, a native of Dobson, lives in Kernersville with her husband, Jim Longworth.



Cook-Longworth

AT YOUR SERVICE

Jobs likely for those who excel in banquet servers course

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

In an effort to put more local people to work in these economically challenging times, Goodwill Industries of Northwest North Carolina and Forsyth Technical Community College have partnered with Twin City Quarter to offer a relatively fast certification program for banquet servers.

Those in the profession can make up to \$30,000 a year and certification increases the chance (by 90 percent) that a server will be hired, according to Tempy Albright, job developer for Goodwill.

"I was exploring future opportunities for our clients and found this was a real need in the community because there are many openings and companies no longer hire untrained individuals" said Albright. "They are picky because they can be."

The six-week Banquet Server Certification Course will run Aug. 11 - Sept. 23. Classes will be held Monday through Thursday from 6 - 9 p.m. at

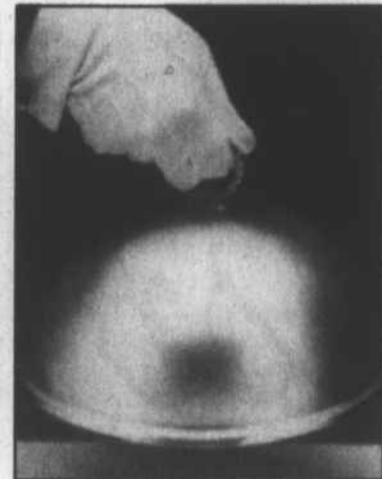
the Marriott Downtown, which is one of the properties managed by the Twin City Quarter.

Albright says the course will be taught in a "real world" setting to teach students to prepare function rooms to meet the needs of banquet guests. Training in quality customer service and the rules and regulations of alcohol service will also be provided.

Students who successfully complete the course will leave with a certificate in both career readiness and in banquet set-up and service.

In addition, graduates of the program are guaranteed an interview with officials at Twin City Quarter, which also includes the Embassy Suites and Benton Convention Center. The Quarter has a great need for certified servers, according to Assistant General Manager Jen Prpich, who said that those that excel in the program will be hired.

The cost for the certification course is \$93, and those interested may register by calling 336-761-1002. Scholarships are available for those who qualify.



Foxx legislation focus on new payment method

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

A piece of legislation sponsored by N.C. Fifth District's Virginia Foxx has passed through the U.S. House of Representatives.

Foxx says the Electronic Pay Stub Act would save taxpayers money by giving federal employees the option of receiving their pay stubs electronically.

"Moving to all electronic pay stubs is a common sense step for the federal government to take," said Republican Foxx. "This legislation gives every federal employee the opportunity to receive their pay stub via a secure web site instead of in the mail. It will save millions in taxpayer dollars, dramatically reduce paper consumption and reduce the risk of identity theft for federal employees."

Many private companies, corporations and state governments like Florida, Idaho, Kentucky, South Dakota and Nebraska already offer the option of accessing employee pay stubs electronically.

Foxx - who will face Democrat Roy Carter in her re-election bid in November - believes that e-stubs are also safer than sending pay stubs via ground mail, since they may reduce the chance of them getting lost or falling into the wrong hands.

