

## Consumer confidence up in May

Continued from page 8C  
private employers - to add 215,000 jobs.

Tuesday's report said that consumers continue to rate current conditions as favorable. Those saying business conditions have improved rose to 22.3 percent in May, up from 21.7 percent the previous month. Those claiming conditions have worsened remained unchanged at 21.7 percent. Consumers claiming jobs are "hard to get" rose

to 30.6 percent from 28.0. Those saying jobs are "plentiful," however, also increased to 16.6 percent from 15.6 percent.

Consumers' outlook for the next six months remain positive. Those expecting business conditions to improve in the next six months rose to 22.9 percent from 20.8 percent. Those expecting conditions to worsen, however, edged up to 10.1 percent from 9.3 percent.

The employment outlook

continues to show signs of improvement. Those anticipating more jobs to become available in the next six months increased to 19.2 percent from 18.3 percent. Those expecting fewer jobs dipped to 17.2 percent from 17.7 percent. The proportion of consumers anticipating an increase in their incomes declined again and is now 16.8 percent, down from 17.4 percent last month.

Along with the consumer confidence report Tuesday

came upbeat data from The National Association of Realtors, which reported that sales of previously owned homes in April marked its second-best month on record.

Sales of existing homes clocked in at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 6.64 million last month, a 2.5 percent gain over March.

The pace of April's sales was second only to the all-time monthly high of 6.68 million in September 2003.

## John Deere Inc. fights race charges

Continued from page 8C

with an offer of another promotion and more pay.

Furthermore, Edwards' good works and capabilities in establishing golf and turf dealerships in the U.S. and abroad for Deere were cited by the trade magazine, Golf Inc., as "one of the golf industry's 21 Most Dynamic Movers and Shakers...." and "is leading his firm to the industry's prominence once held by Toro Corp."

The 56-year-old father of four and grandfather of five wonders now if it was all for naught and a ruse.

As Edwards worked his way to prominence and distinction within Deere, he decided to become an owner, not sitting idly by for a monthly pension check. In the summer 2002, Edwards initiated the process to acquire two dealerships in Tuscaloosa that could only benefit the industry from noteworthy experience. Additionally, Edwards wanted to increase Deere's "stated diversity policies and program...(although) the company has failed to attain any notable diversity in its management ranks, dealers/owners, or on its board of directors," according to the lawsuit. "Edwards had hoped and dreamed that through purchasing the two Deere dealerships, he would become the first African-American owner of a Deere agricultural dealership."

John Deere Inc., founded in 1837, is one of the world's largest suppliers of golf and turf marketing equipment. In the continental United States, Deere controls approximately 70 to 80 percent of the agricultural market, with a "large percent-

age" of company income supplied by federal government contracts, thereby, Deere being subjected to U.S. Executive Order 11246, outlining, in essence, business entities participating with the government by contractual means must not consider additional parties on basis of race, religion, ethnicity, as well as impart or encourage minority participation.

The two dealerships Edwards looked to purchase and their "attractiveness" is the selling "70 percent of all goods to the federal government," according to the lawsuit. In 2002, Deere accumulated nearly \$320 million from net sales of \$13 billion gross income. Initially Edwards and his wife filed a September 2003 complaint against a white couple, Don and Joy Rose, and Tractor and Turf of Alabama, Inc. and Skyland Equipment of Alabama, Inc., who were willing to sell the dealerships to Edwards; however, the Roses have since been dismissed as defendants of the lawsuit.

Edwards feels he was denied ownership and the deal process "frustrated...due to his race" and financial demands and terms are "onerous, arbitrary and capricious." Furthermore, the financing terms are a "pretext for racial discrimination to prevent any African-American from owning" Deere dealerships within the U.S., the lawsuit says.

Edwards' lead counsel, Byron Perkins of Birmingham's Wiggins, Childs, Quinn and Pantazis,

P.C., believes plain and simple racism is the mitigating factor that prevented the Lamar Univ. graduate from allowing "his children and grandchildren to inherit his legacy, with birthright being taken away...and (victimized) by malicious and reckless interference in not being able to keep promises to provide for (family) as anticipated."

"How do you explain a company who gets billion\$ in federal contracts... puts restrictions on Edwards (to become an owner) and the dealerships in question had valuable major contracts, why at all were restrictions applied to purchasing the dealerships," Perkins asked.

In a statement two weeks ago, Deere corporate management "believes this lawsuit is without merit," according to Curtis Linke, vice president of corporate communications.

"John Deere Inc. consented to Mr. Edwards' purchase of the dealerships, subject to terms and conditions that were agreed to in writing by Deere, Edwards and the independent owners. The independent owners (Don and Joy Rose) later withdrew the offer to sell," the statement continued.

"If someone has an interest in becoming a Deere dealer, has the business experience, is willing to learn how to become an effective John Deere dealer, and has access to sufficient capital, we are willing to put them in contact with current owners who indicate a willingness to sell," according to Deere's

Worldwide Commercial and Consumer Equipment Division President John J. Jenkins.

Another litigious matter brought to surface is Edwards' allegation no African-Americans serve on the corporation's board of directors, nor on its senior management team. "Very few black managers exist," according to Edwards, and the majority of blacks within the company are in clerical positions. Deere's response in the statement is that "of the two females on the board of directors, one is African-American, along with other members born in India, Germany and Mexico... and it be noted that two of the eight-member senior management team members" are black.

Nationwide publicity has been rendered Deere Inc. to enter into improving diversity efforts. Rev. Jesse Jackson and former SCLC President Martin Luther King 3rd are talking to top executives. Syndicated radio and PBS talk show host Tavis Smiley has also brought attention to the lawsuit that could enter U.S. District Court in about two weeks, according to attorney Perkins.

Although the lawsuit signifies and "demands a jury trial," Perkins stated last week via telephone that mediation is possible. However, he feels Smiley's television efforts have warranted the only mediation Deere managers are willing to initiate. "We've tried to begin constructive talks on numerous occasions."

## Support growth with strategic hires

Continued from page 8C

right start for the new employee.

Scoring: Give yourself one point for every check above, and then calculate how effectively you are using strategic hiring to support successful business growth.

9 to 10 Excellent. I'm guessing that your organization gets better with each new team member.

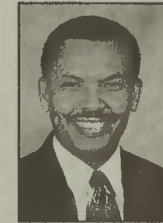
6 to 8 Good: Increase your chances of future success by addressing missed items.

0 to 5 Poor. Warning - rapid growth will be hazardous to your business health.

MARY BRUCE is founder of Kaleidoscope Business Options, a management and volunteer leadership consultant to small and medium-sized businesses. She can be contacted on the Web at [www.kboptions.com](http://www.kboptions.com).

**Have You Been Following This Column? Have You Had The Opportunity to Use Any of Dr. Arrington's Advice? If so, please give him a call and tell him how he's affected your life or business.**

**704-591-1988**



Dr. Carl Arrington, Licensed Presenter

**-Say Yes To Success!**

"Dr. Arrington is a recognized Fast-Start Distributor with EcoQuest International. He has spent years helping others reach their personal and professional dreams."

### Life Is Not An Emergency

In the extremely busy lives that most of us have created for ourselves, we find ourselves going breathlessly from one activity to another. At work it may be that we find ourselves under pressure to go from one project to the other. There seems that there is barely breathing room between the time we finish one project and another is due.

In our personal and family lives, it seems to be no better. We stay late at work and then rush home to try to prepare something for dinner. If there are children, there are often times after school activities, perhaps sports, dance or piano lessons. You would think that on weekends there might come a break, but this is not necessarily so. There are weekend sporting events that involve the children. This may be time that is set aside to do all the chores around the house that you cannot get to during the week. By the time Monday rolls around, the cycle of busyness starts all over again.

When we find ourselves caught up in such a cycle of activity, we can fall into a way of living in which it seems that we are going from one emergency or crisis to another. Everything seems so important. With this approach to life, there is never a time that things let up for you either physically or emotionally. **We are in essence in overdrive 24 hours a day.** Not even our sleep time gives us a break because we are wound up so tightly.

**But life really is not an emergency. Life is a gift to enjoy and reach the potential of realizing and living out the talents and joys that brings us fulfillment in life.**

We are the only ones who can change this. As you examine the activities in your life, they may seem urgent, but are they really important? There may be some things that you can actually let go. It may be that you can continue to do all you do but that you may simply need to approach them with the attitude that if they do not get done it is not a disaster.

Refuse to make life an emergency. Make it instead a beautiful journey filled with wonders and interesting stopping places along the way.

Be sure to visit Dr. Arrington's website at: [www.freshairliving.com/cla](http://www.freshairliving.com/cla).

**SPECIAL BONUS: As reader of this column, enter the passcode: "guest." to visit the VIP SECTION.**

Contact: **Dr. Carl Arrington**  
by calling

**Maximum Potential**  
704-591-1988

[www.maximumsuccess.com/cla](http://www.maximumsuccess.com/cla)

INFORMATION REQUEST FOR MORE DETAILS

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

## Krispy Kreme reports loss

Continued from page 8C

tom line.

"This is not an excuse. It's what it is," he said, reiterating Krispy Kreme's claim that the low-carb diet trend was hurting the company's sales. "What is important now is what we are going to do about it. We are taking it extremely seriously."

The first quarter earnings included an asset impairment charge of 7 cents per share for seven stores that had closed or were scheduled to close, the company said. The company also reported a loss from discontinued operations of about \$34.3 million, or 54 cents per share, related to the Montana Mills operation.

"In spite of the changing industry dynamics, we delivered 24 percent systemwide sales and revenue growth for the quarter," said Livengood. "We are focused on our core business and improving company store operations. We remain excited about our growth prospects, both domestically and internationally."

The company now expects

# Rejoice

## RADIO

1370 AM 94.7 FM 1490 AM

The Best Variety of Christian Music in the Carolinas & Georgia

[www.RejoiceNetwork.com](http://www.RejoiceNetwork.com)



Frank & Emma



Larry Anderson

### Tune In For Our Live Broadcast Partners



**New Hope Missionary Baptist Church**  
8:30 - 9:00 AM



**St. Luke Missionary Baptist Church**  
9:00 - 10:00 AM



**St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church**  
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

**Tune In With Reeder Memorial From The Pulpit**  
12:00 - 1:00 PM

To Partner, Call  
803-329-2760 or Fax 803-329-3317