

'Retraining at workplace is critical,' speaker says

By LAURIE MARTIN
Staff Writer

"We are in a state of economic transition, and right now the need for retraining at the workplace is critical," said Hilary Pennington, of Jobs For Connecticut's Future.

On Tuesday Pennington spoke to a group of about fifty executives on "Jobs for the Future: Education, Training, and Retraining" as part of the UNC School of Business Administration's symposium "Managing in the Nineties."

Pennington used the Connecticut program to illustrate the research in progress. She said surveys in Connecticut had shown that only one-fifth of today's laborers said they were working to their potential. Workers' values have changed, but one reason for this lack of productivity is that workers do not feel

rewarded, she said.

"I think most people want to work hard," she said. "We just have to ignite that."

Profit-sharing was one solution offered in discussion, as was retraining workers for jobs they enjoyed. Pennington said she saw the solution in the partnership of public and private sectors who considered "dramatic and extensive change."

Pennington said Connecticut could be considered a model for the whole country in that it had a shortage of qualified workers, and the state was shifting from manufacturing to producer services. In Connecticut, the competence of the workforce is not equal to the job requirements, she said.

"The competencies needed in today's workplace are technical, thinking, interpersonal, and motivational," Pennington said. "This is what

distinguishes effective performance."

The strong growth in producer service jobs requires a retraining of the workforce, even for only more innovative manufacturing, she said.

Pennington said a change in the educational system was necessary to produce people with those basic skills.

"Teachers focus on mastery of subject content with a lecture-oriented method," she said. "Problem-solving ... and ways of thinking and interacting are not stressed."

She noted, however, that resistance to change in education could be because of the mixed signals it received from business and other areas.

Business, therefore, is faced with what Pennington called "a critical challenge to share information." Schools need this information for planning, she said.

"Sharing information with employees about jobs and job security is critical in the 1990s," she said.

Businesses should also inform government and other businesses of changes in labor needs to increase the possibility of state- and business-sponsored retraining for workers, she said.

Pennington said an important challenge to students was getting involved in the community. Many students forget the community during their undergraduate years, she said. "That experience can be a great incubator for their future," she added.

This is especially important, she said, so students see that there is much more to business than what is in the textbook.

"IQ, SAT, or GPA don't correlate with job success," Pennington said. "The ability to think and deal with others does."

Businesses prepare suggestions

By LORRY WILLIAMS
Business Editor

RALEIGH — More than 550 small-business men and women from across the state gathered Tuesday to voice concerns about problems they face today as small entrepreneurs.

"Over 99.4 percent of all North Carolina businesses are small businesses," said Jack L. Courtemanche, executive director of the White House Conference on Small Business.

North Carolina's White House Conference on Small Business was the 31st of 57 open forum conferences scheduled before the national conference in Washington, D.C.

At Tuesday's conference participants elected 26 delegates to attend the national conference.

The White House Conference is designed to identify problems in small businesses and develop recommendations for government action.

Procurement and innovation, business education and training, regulation and paperwork, taxation, payroll costs, finance, international trade and economic policy are the specific areas of concern for the 1986 conference.

The 45 recommendations North Carolina participants identified as their major concerns will be brought up at the national conference.

The list of recommendations included consolidation of all existing taxes for small businesses into a single consumed base tax, limitation of government and non-profit competition with private enterprise and continuation of an agency for small business but a redefinition of the size of a small business.

Presently, a small business is defined as a firm which has fewer than 500 employees. Emma Goza, owner of a small retail store in Raleigh, said there was a big difference between a firm with six or seven employees and one with 500. She suggested two categories of small businesses be established.

"A firm with 6 or 7 employees and \$75,000 or \$100,000 in income is a different kind of small business," Goza said.

Delores Weaver, owner of U.N.I.D.I., Inc. in Greensboro, said she was pleased with the recommendations that came out of the conference.

"I was also very pleased that a lot of us have the same issues (on our minds)," Weaver said. "We don't have to feel like we're just tooting our own horn."

An issue on the minds of many attending the conference was liability insurance, and the conference as a whole decided to take action on it.

One of the recommendations for the national conference to consider is limiting the amounts of punitive damages awarded in liability suits and limits on the statute of limitations.

Participants also made recommendations geared toward international trade, specifically balanced trade and fair trade.

They suggested a Gramm-Rudman type bill for international trade that would bring about balanced trade within a specified period of time. They also said they wanted Washington delegates to push for stronger enforcement of existing fair trade laws.

Government procurement policies and the way small businesses fit into the procurement procedure were also brought up and acted upon by the conference.

These and the other conference recommendations can have an impact on Washington, Director Courtemanche said. "Over half of the 1980 recommendations have been enacted."

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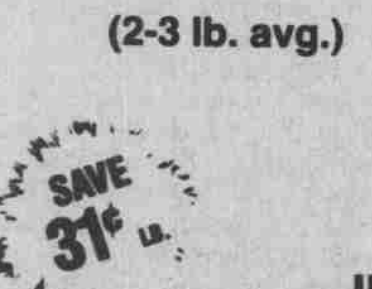


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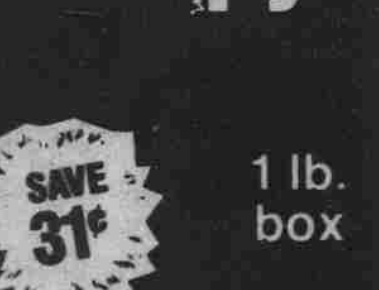


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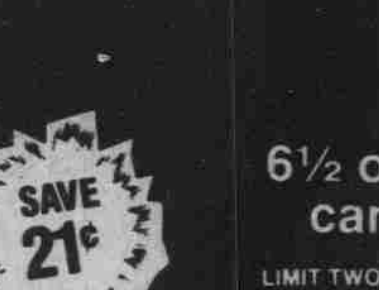


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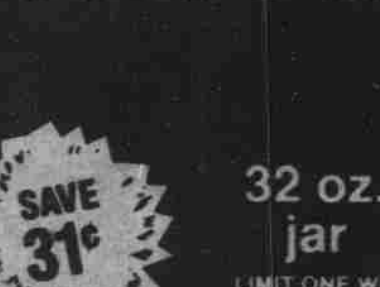


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