

Young Democrats Convention draws many

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Staff Writer

The Young Democrats of North Carolina (YDNC) hosted their 3-day spring 2004 convention last weekend at the Adam's Mark Hotel in Winston-Salem. The events kicked off on Friday night at 8 p.m. with a Young Democrats' night out on the town in Winston-Salem. Dedicated Democrats then got up early on Saturday morning to attend the women's caucus breakfast and the African American caucus.

The highlight of the weekend was the Leadership Luncheon held Saturday afternoon in the west tower of the Adam's Mark Hotel. The \$20 per plate luncheon featured keynote speaker Erskine Bowles, Candidate for U.S. Senate 2004, and a special visit from U.S. Representative Dennis Kucinich. Allen Jones, Mayor of the city of Winston-Salem, welcomed the group and opened the stage for speeches from Young Democrats officers, including a 'State of the YDNC Address' delivered by Courtney Crowder, president of the Young Democrats of North Carolina.

Bowles engaged his audience with insightful stories about his experiences with North Carolinians who are in need of change. He spoke of women who worked hard and played by the rules but still could not afford to properly care for their children due to the state of the job market and health care in our nation. Bowles endeared his audience with facts and figures about the state of the job market in our nation. He suggested we bring jobs back to the nation by improving public education and strengthening technology, especially our usage of the World Wide Web. "Out of the 20 most developed countries in the world, the United States ranks 19th in math and science", Bowles said. He suggested this could be reversed through focusing more emphasis on math and science

in our public school systems, and stopping the budget cuts that are hurting our students. "Out of those 20 countries, the United States ranks 11th in the use of high-speed Internet technology", Bowles continued. The U.S. has to improve its Internet connections and provide more job opportunities through the use of online networks, Bowles suggested.

Bowles concluded his discussion on the job market by talking about the state of the market in North Carolina. Today one out of three jobs in North Carolina is still related to Agriculture, Bowles declared. He said this indicated that North Carolinians should pay special attention to the state agency of Agriculture when electing a commissioner this year. Tourism in North Carolina is another major representation of our economic future, Bowles stated (N.C. is the sixth most visited state in the nation).

After the closing remarks and dessert, U.S. representative Dennis Kucinich, a Democrat from Ohio, made a surprise appearance at the luncheon. He rushed on stage and quickly freelanced a speech encouraging young Democrats take hold of their futures.

YDNC officers encouraged young people to go out into their communities and encourage their friends to get involved in the 2004 election and vote. If each person could get 20 of their friends to vote, and each one of those friends could get another 20 to vote imagine the turnout we would

have in this election, YDNC president Crowder said.

Several business meetings and then a Final Four party followed Saturday's luncheon at the Adam Mark's Players Sports Lounge. The weekend ended with an YDNC Executive Committee meeting on Sunday morning.

Current and former Young Democrats attended the convention making for a huge turnout and a very fun weekend for all Democrats. Democrats left the convention charged with energy and a new understanding of their responsibilities to their communities, counties, state, and nation.

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