

# BUSINESS FOCUS

## Briefs

### BB&T ranks No. 1 among financial services firms in national survey

BB&T Corp. is the top financial services company in the nation based on "customer advocacy," according to a national consulting firm.

In its brand value study "Winning the Changing Financial Consumer" released last year, Forrester Research Inc. ranked BB&T ahead of Merrill Lynch, Fidelity Investments, The Vanguard Group and credit unions on its top-five list.

The Cambridge, Mass.-based firm defines "customer advocacy" as acting in the best interests of the customer rather than the institution.

"We are a client-driven company; we only offer the products and services our clients need," said John Allison, BB&T's chairman and chief executive officer. "Our commitment is to provide the best value in the financial services industry through highly personal and competent client service."

The list was based on the percentage of customers giving their primary bank a score of 4 or 5 on a five-point "advocacy scale." BB&T led the way with a 67 percent approval rating.

In the study, Forrester compiled feedback from quarterly surveys of nearly a million consumers since 1997. Its analysis indicates that advocacy is the strongest predictor of customer satisfaction and retention, as well as investor retention.

Trust in a company, satisfaction with its service, and how it uses advanced technology were also strong predictors of customer and investor loyalty.

### 7-Eleven to offer MLK brochure

DALLAS — 7-Eleven, Inc. is commemorating the 40th anniversary of the "I Have a Dream" speech from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in a free brochure for customers. In January and February, the brochures are available at the front counters of participating stores across the country, while supplies last.



Coretta Scott King

The brochure features a personal introduction from Coretta Scott King, the wife of the late Dr. King. She shares her memory of the night her husband wrote the famous speech and his historic delivery at the March on Washington in 1963.

The "I Have a Dream" commemorative brochures are available through the partnership of 7-Eleven, Inc., The King Center in Atlanta, Ga., and the Education is Freedom (SM), which is a new 501(c)(3) public charity that focuses national attention and resources on students that have shown academic promise and leadership, but need financial assistance and guidance to go to college.

"I've always wanted to have more people read the full text of Martin's 'I Have a Dream' speech because I think the text is very powerful and is very relevant to the concerns of people," said Coretta Scott King. "My husband's vision was one of freedom and opportunity for all. 7-Eleven and Education is Freedom share our passion for creating a better future. True change can only start with education, and The King Center is proud to partner in this effort."

### EEl honors Duke Power with emergency response award

The Edison Electric Institute honored Duke Power as a winner of the association's Emergency Response Award for its recovery efforts from a massive ice storm that wreaked havoc on its service territory in December 2002.

EEl's Emergency Response Award is presented annually and acknowledges outstanding efforts to help restore electric service that has been disrupted by severe weather conditions or other natural events. Winners are chosen by a panel of judges following a national nomination process. This year's awards were presented during EEl's CEO and board of directors meeting in Scottsdale, Ariz.

On Dec. 4, 2002, a 100-mile swath of ice blanketed Duke Power's service area from Anderson, S.C., to Durham, N.C., leaving nearly 1.4 million customers without electricity at the peak of the storm, the worst ever to hit the company. The greatest ice accumulation, damage and power outages occurred in North Carolina.

EEl judges said Duke Power was amply prepared and quickly implemented its emergency response plan, mobilizing employees before the storm hit and requesting assistance from outside electric companies. The first off-system field personnel arrived Dec. 5.

### LSB expands in Guilford County

LSB The Bank is expanding in Guilford County by opening an office in Jamestown.

LSB, North Carolina's 10th largest bank, has agreed to purchase a building at 120 E. Main in Jamestown's business district. The full-service office is expected to open late spring, subject to regulatory approval.

It will be LSB's second office in Guilford County. An office at 200 Westchester Drive in High Point opened in 2001. It will bring to 27 the number of offices LSB operates in Davidson, Forsyth, Guilford, Randolph and Stokes counties.

### Black chamber will meet Jan. 20

The Winston-Salem Black Chamber of Commerce will meet Jan. 20 at 7 p.m. at the Goler Community Building, 600 Chestnut Street. Tommy Hicks, branch manager for Wachovia Bank/East Winston, will be the guest speaker. Danny Freeman, financial adviser, will be the Business Spotlight. The meeting is open to the public. For more information, contact Miriam McCarter at 724-0334.

## N.C. schools will benefit from restaurant's fund-raising union

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Long John Silver's has partnered with the Tom Joyner Foundation to raise money for historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), including two schools in North Carolina.

Throughout 2004, Long John Silver's will donate a portion of the proceeds from each "Tom Joyner Platter" to the foundation, which works aggressively to keep African-American students in school by providing scholarships.

"Long John Silver's is honored to participate in the good work being done by the Tom Joyner Foundation," said Steve Davis, president of Long John Silver's Inc. and A&W Restaurants Inc. "HBCUs are national treasures, and we're proud to help ease their financial pressure. We hope to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars to help ensure these bright, young col-



lege students have a successful future."

Joyner is a nationally syndicated radio host, entrepreneur and philanthropist whose four-hour drive-time show is heard in more than 115 markets by nearly 8 million listeners. Known as the "hardest working man in radio," Joyner is a 1999 Radio Hall of Fame inductee and Savoy magazine's 2002 Person of the Year.

"I'm thrilled to be working with Long John Silver's to help support students at HBCUs,"

said Joyner. "The Tom Joyner Foundation does only one thing: It helps students continue their education at black colleges. All too often students will get into college, and then encounter financial difficulties that force them to drop out. The foundation provides money directly to the HBCUs to help these students complete their education."

"Many Long John Silver's customers are also avid Tom Joyner listeners, so this is a wonderful partnership," said Mike

Baker, chief marketing officer, Long John Silver's Inc. "We'll be able to reach millions of loyal Tom Joyner fans with an innovative offer that will make a positive difference in their communities."

The promotion between Long John Silver's and Joyner kicks off this month and runs through the end of 2004. Joyner's image is featured on Long John Silver's point-of-sale materials at participating restaurants. The "Tom Joyner Platter" includes Crunchy Shrimp, two pieces of fish, one Chicken Plank®, corn, fries, slaw and two hush puppies, and sells for \$6.99.

The historically black colleges and universities that will benefit from this partnership are Allen University (Columbia, S.C.), Barber-Scotia College (Concord, N.C.), Coppin State College (Baltimore, Md.), Huston-Tillotson College (Austin, Texas), Lane College (Jackson, Tenn.), N.C. Central University (Durham, N.C.), Prairie View A&M University (Prairie View, Texas), Rust College (Holly Springs, Miss.), University of the District of Columbia (Washington, D.C.) and Virginia State University (Petersburg, Va.).

## EEOC says class of woman subjected to sexually hostile work environment

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The Charlotte District Office of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) recently filed its second sexual harassment suit within two weeks. The federal agency's latest suit, brought under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, was filed in U.S. District Court for the Western District of North Carolina in Asheville against Ryan's Family Steak Houses Inc.

The suit charges that from October 1998 through February 2000, Christina Scruggs and other female employees were subjected to a sexually hostile working environment at the company's Shelby, N.C., restaurant. According to the suit, Scruggs was verbally,

physically and sexually harassed on an almost daily basis by a male manager. The women who were sexually harassed worked as servers and cashiers at the restaurant.

The EEOC filed the lawsuit after its efforts to voluntarily conciliate the matter without litigation were unsuccessful.

Reuben Daniels Jr., director of the EEOC's Charlotte District Office, said: "Every woman is entitled to a workplace that is free from sexual harassment. The protections of Title VII are extended to women, such as those allegedly victimized in this case, so they can remain productive employees."

"Sexual harassment, whether it involves physical

touching or unwelcome comments and requests for sexual favors, cannot be treated as the price of admission women pay for participation in the workplace. The lawsuit seeks a permanent injunction against the company and compensatory and punitive damages.

Lynette A. Barnes, acting regional attorney for EEOC's Charlotte District Office, said, "The EEOC is resolute in its commitment to ensuring that American workplaces are free from the type of conduct alleged by the women in this case. Hopefully, this lawsuit can be resolved quickly so that the women subjected to the alleged harassment can put this experience behind them."

## Neo-Nazi billboard still up in Fla. town

Billboard company says it is free speech

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ORLANDO, Fla. — A billboard advertising a white supremacist group continues to stand along Florida's Turnpike in Sumter County despite residents' complaints and the removal of similar signs elsewhere in the state.

With a plain black lettering and big block letters, the sign appears to mimic the style of the "Got Milk?" advertising campaign, and reads in part: "WHO RULES AMERIKA?"

The sign gives the Internet address of the National Alliance, a neo-Nazi group based in West Virginia.

"Obviously we don't want people associating Sumter County with this group. I'd be a fool if I wasn't concerned," said Benny Strickland, chairman of the Sumter County Board of Commissioners. "But I don't think we have the power to do anything."

National Alliance billboards were removed in Old Town last April and in Tampa in 2001 after advertising companies found out that the group advocates an all-white, non-Jewish society.

But Jerry Sullivan, president of Micanopy-based Sunshine Outdoor Inc., which put up the sign about 35 miles from Orlando in August, said he had no intention of taking down the sign as long as it is paid for.

"It's free speech. Do you know what free speech is?" he said, adding "I don't believe in Nazis, but no, it don't bother me none. There's no law against it."

Robbie Rogers, Sumter County's director of planning, said that despite numerous complaints received by the county office, advertising for a club — even an unpopular one — is not against the law.

Shaun Walker, chief operations officer for the National Alliance, said the sign's purpose is: "To raise public awareness of the political reality we live in today."

"I'm a white American and we'd like to return the reins of control to white people," he said.

## West Salem residents name business owner of the year

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The West Salem Neighborhood Association honored Myoung W. Song with its first Business Owner of the Year Award at its meeting Jan. 5.

President Dennis Wiggins cited Song for his consistent positive support of the neighborhood and its community enhancement projects.

"Mr. Song assumed management of the Fairway One-Stop # 7 CITGO on Broad Street in January of 2001, and quickly turned it around — making it a place where neighbors can conveniently shop," Wiggins said. "Besides creating a safe and clean business site, he regularly supports our neighborhood organization with generous gifts."

Other members praised the sprucing up of both the "look" and the "feel" of the site where Broad Street crosses Business 40. Song has voluntarily donated funds to such causes as the monthly WSNA Newsletter and flower plantings at public spaces within West Salem.

Community response has been evident in loyalty as one member declared, "I'll drive 25 miles on an empty tank to get my gas from Mr. Song and



Myoung W. Song accepts the award from Dennis Wiggins.

his friendly employees!"

West Salem neighbors have been active in the area roughly bounded by Business 40, Marshall Street, Washington Park, and Peters Creek Parkway, planting flowers at the CITGO station and other sites and also organizing regular trash-pickup walks and neighborhood watch patrols in the area.

In cooperation with the West Salem Civic Club, the WSNA is pursuing Historic District status for the neighborhood — which was the site of orchards and manufacturing as the early "west of Salem" extension of the planned Moravian settlement of Salem.

For more information, visit the WSNA web site: <http://www.westsalemneighborhood.org/>.