

BUSINESS FOCUS

Briefs

Dean and Yates to join Economic Development Board

RALEIGH – Gov. Mike Easley has appointed Dr. Richard Dean of Winston-Salem and Lloyd Yates of Raleigh to the North Carolina Economic Development Board.

Dean is president emeritus of Wake Forest University Health Sciences. He serves as chair of the Winston-Salem Chamber of Commerce



Yates

Board of Directors and is former chair of the Piedmont Triad Research Park Board of Directors. Dean received the 2005 Distinguished Citizen Award from the Boy Scouts of America Old Hickory Council. He received a Bachelor's degree in biology from Virginia Military Institute in Lexington, Va., and graduated from the

Medical College of Virginia in Richmond.

Yates is president and CEO of Progress Energy Carolinas. He is chair of the Triangle Urban League and serves on the First Tee Board and High Five Regional Partnership for High School Excellence Board. Yates received a Bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Pittsburgh and a Master's in business administration from St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia.

The board advises the secretary of the Department of Commerce and the governor on economic policy, industrial recruitment and expansion, trade policy, and travel and tourism. The board has 37 members, each serving a four-year term. The governor appoints 23 members. The Senate President Pro Tempore and Speaker of the House each appoint four members. The lieutenant governor, secretary of commerce, secretary of state, secretary of revenue, president of the University of North Carolina and president of the N. C. Community College system also serve on the board.

Magnum appointed to judgeship

RALEIGH – Ned W. Mangum has been appointed to the District Court bench in the 10th Judicial District in Wake County by the governor. Mangum takes the seat vacated by the retirement of Judge Joyce Hamilton.

"For more than nine years Ned Mangum has prosecuted cases in both District and Superior courts in Wake County," said Gov. Mike Easley. "His excellent reputation for fairness and hard work makes him an excellent addition to the District Court bench."

Mangum began his career in the Wake County District Attorney's Office in 1998. He has prosecuted both felony and misdemeanor cases and developed the Worthless Check Program. Mangum is a member of the Professionalism Committee of the 10th Judicial District and the Wake County Bar Association.

Mangum received his undergraduate degree from North Carolina State University in 1995 and his law degree from the University of North Carolina School of Law in 1998.

More than 300 new jobs coming to Raleigh

Gov. Mike Easley recently announced that Optimal Technologies US Inc., a software and technology provider for electrical utilities and consumers, will relocate its headquarters from Calgary, Alberta, Canada to Raleigh. The new facility, made possible in part by a \$325,000 grant from the One North Carolina Fund, will create 325 jobs and a company investment of \$2.4 million during the next three years.

Optimal Technologies develops next generation technologies to help utilities, businesses and consumers optimize their energy usage. Its products and services are designed to provide a more efficient, reliable and environmentally responsible electricity grid.

The new jobs will include highly specialized circuit designers, software programmers, engineers, management and marketing positions. While wages will vary according to job function, the overall average annual wage for the 325 new jobs will be \$71,250 not including benefits, which is more than the Wake County average of \$40,092.

Roland Schoettle, the company's CEO, said Optimal Technologies chose North Carolina to lead its U.S.-based operations because of the support and enthusiasm from the state and city of Raleigh.

"We have worked hard in the state Senate to put policies in place that encourage companies like Optimal Technologies to see that North Carolina is a place where they can succeed," said state Sen. Vernon Malone (D-Wake), who serves on the Senate Commerce Committee and the joint Committee on Economic Development Incentives.



Malone

TIDE TO THE RESCUE



Ten families displaced by Hurricane Katrina returned to New Orleans last week courtesy of Tide. The company, famous for its laundry products, helped rebuild ten homes for families displaced by the storm. The new homeowners got an extra surprise when actor Taye Diggs, pictured with two residents, showed up to welcome them to their new dwellings. Tide helped reconstruct the homes in partnership with The St. Bernard Project – a grassroots, nonprofit rebuild organization that provides direct support to families living in St. Bernard Parish.

PRNewPhoto/Tide

Former Livingstone leader to head Indiana's only HBCU

Dr. Freeman will start at Martin University the first of next month

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Dr. Algeania Freeman, former president of Livingstone College in Salisbury, has been named president of Martin University, a more than 30-year-old school in Indianapolis.

Freeman succeeds Founding President Rev. Fr. Boniface Hardin, who founded the institution as Martin Center College in 1977. It is Indiana's only predominately African-American institution of higher learning. Hardin is stepping aside shortly after his 74th birthday.

Freeman, 58, will assume her duties on Jan. 1, becoming the school's second president. She brings 35 years of higher education experience, serving in senior administrative positions as a president, vice president of advancement, dean, department chair and professor of communications.

The announcement of Freeman's appointment was made by Virginia Goodwin, chair of the board of trustees.

"We are fortunate to have found a person with Dr. Freeman's background and experience to lead our university into a new era," Goodwin said.

Hardin, a Benedictine monk who has been a fixture in civil rights, the church, and higher education in Indiana for decades, will remain in Indianapolis and will continue to teach some classes at the institution.

"Dr. Freeman is an excellent choice to assume the duties of President of Martin University," President Hardin said. "She brings an impressive set of skills to her new role that will serve this institution well."

During her tenure as president



File Photo

Dr. Algeania Freeman will soon start her new job.

of Livingstone, from 2001-2004, she successfully completed a \$20 million capital campaign. Also, student enrollment increased 12 percent, GPA averages of entering

freshmen rose, the average SAT entering score increased 100 percent, the retention rate of first-year

See Freeman on A6

Black farmers may again sue Agriculture Department

BY BEN EVANS
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON – The farm bill approved by the Senate last week moved Congress a step closer to reopening a landmark discrimination case against the Agriculture Department.

Like its companion bill in the House, the Senate measure would give thousands of black farmers another chance at seeking compensation over claims that they were denied loans or other crop subsidies because of their race.

Critics have charged that farmers had plenty of time to win claims under the original settlement that USDA agreed to in 1999. Reopening the matter now could cost several billion dollars and reward questionable claimants who may not have suffered losses, they argue.

But advocates for black farmers say the settlement was flawed and that many farmers living in rural areas did not know of the deadline

for filing claims.

So far, the provision – tucked inside the nearly \$300 billion farm bill – has not run into significant opposition on Capitol Hill. Aides said it appears likely to survive in the final version of the bill that Congress sends to President Bush.

"For far too long, this country's hardworking black farmers were discriminated against by our own government, and this legislation offers a chance for us to continue righting those wrongs," Sen. Barack Obama, an Illinois Democrat running for president, said in a statement.

The federal government in April 1999 settled a class action lawsuit from black farmers who claimed they were systematically denied loans and other government aid from local USDA offices. Using a review process that required a lower standard of proof than a civil suit, the department agreed to pay \$50,000 plus tax benefits to farmers who could show they faced discrimination. They also set up a more stringent process for larger claims.

About two-thirds of the nearly 22,500 farmers who filed claims were awarded damages, and the government has paid almost \$1 billion in compensation.

But about 74,000 additional claims were never heard because farmers missed an October 1999 deadline for filing. The pending legislation would allow those claimants to file entirely new lawsuits or to seek expedited payments of \$50,000 under similar conditions as in the original settlement.

To hold down cost estimates, the legislation calls for a budget of \$100 million. But that would cover just a fraction of the real cost. If most of the 74,000 late filers sought expedited claims, for example, it would take fewer than 2,000 successful claims to reach \$100 million.

John Boyd, president of the National Black Farmers Association who has pushed for the measure, said the lack of funding makes its passage "bittersweet." But he said it "gets the cases out of nowhere land."

"We're looking at far more than \$100 million, absolutely," he said. "But half a loaf is better than none."

FTCC getting WIRED

School will host national conference in February

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The National Center for the Biotechnology Workforce at Forsyth Technical Community College has been chosen by the U.S. Department of Labor as the site for a national bioscience conference in February.

The conference, called the WIRED (Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development) Bioscience

Institute, will focus on biotechnology business and workforce development. The National Center

for the Biotechnology Workforce was established here with a \$5 million federal grant.

The Institute, which will be held Feb. 5-6 in downtown Winston-Salem, is expected to draw some 100 attendees from around the country. Organizers describe the event as an interactive "boot camp" that will connect knowledge and resources to the specific business plans each of the participating WIRED regions has developed. Speakers will include subject matter experts and federal agency representatives.

The Employment & Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, chose Winston-Salem for the Institute because Dr. Gary M. Green, president of Forsyth Tech, has taken a strong leadership role in initiating biotech programs and courses.

"The selection of Forsyth Tech and Winston-Salem for this important national conference attests to the national perception of North Carolina and this community as a leader in Biotechnology" according to Green.

Since 2006, 39 areas in the country have become WIRED grant regions, including the Piedmont Triad region. Selection to receive this designation and funding is made on a competitive basis, and to date there have been three rounds of grants. WIRED is a groundbreaking approach to integrating workforce and economic development to drive economic transformation in regional economies across the U.S.

The National Center for the Biotechnology Workforce was established in 2004 by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment & Training Administration to integrate the biotechnology industry's high growth potential with a skilled and ready workforce.



Dr. Green