

CAREERS

Briefs

Bank receives honor for redesigned Web site

Southern Community Bank and Trust has received the Model Bank 2009 Award in the "Online Banking Experience" category from Celent, a global financial research and consulting firm.

The bank was named a model bank for its effective use of technology to enhance customers' online banking experience through the redesign of its Web site, www.smallenoughtocare.com.

Celent recognized Southern Community's Web site for its ability to strategically reinforce the bank's "small enough to care" branding through a live chat feature, a call center with extended hours, easy-to-use new account opening procedures, and the introduction of the ME Banking (Maximum Earnings Banking) initiative that rewards customers with a premium interest rate and other perks if they meet specific criteria for electronic banking and debit card usage.

Among the small pool of 18 banks recognized internationally in the Celent Model Bank 2009 report, Southern Community, which is based in Winston-Salem, was the only community bank to receive an award.

Promotions in WFU's legal wing

Three staff members in Wake Forest University's Legal Department have received promotions.

Donna H. Hamilton has been named associate vice president for legal administration. Hamilton will continue to serve as counsel for Wake Forest and Wake Forest University Health Sciences, a position she has held since 1999. She joined the Legal Department in 1988. Before joining Wake Forest, Hamilton was a senior attorney with Piedmont Aviation Inc. In addition, she was a law clerk in the United States District Court for the Middle District of North Carolina in Greensboro. Hamilton received a Bachelor of Arts degree at Drury College and a law degree at Wake Forest School of Law.

K. Carter Cook was named associate counsel. Cook was previously assistant counsel, a position he has held since 2004. Before coming to Wake Forest, he was an associate at Parker, Poe, Adams & Bernstein, a law firm in Charlotte. He has also served as an associate at Poyner & Spruill, a Raleigh law firm, and was a law clerk for the North Carolina Court of Appeals. Cook received Bachelor of Science, Law and Master of Business Administration degrees from Wake Forest.

Melanie Harkey was named coordinator of board support. Harkey had been a legal secretary at Wake Forest since 2007. Previously, she worked as a legal assistant for Maynard & Harris, Attorneys at Law and other law firms in Winston-Salem. Harkey has a Bachelor of Arts degree from Wake Forest and a paralegal certificate from the American Institute of Paralegal Studies.

Spending up in June

WASHINGTON (AP) — As gasoline prices rose, Americans spent more in June than the previous month — despite falling incomes. For the rest of the year, economists expect falling wages and rising unemployment to act as a drag on spending.

Consumer spending is closely watched because it accounts for about 70 percent of total economic activity and has helped lift the economy out of previous recessions. While analysts expect the economy to grow in the second half of this year, consumers aren't likely to lead the way.

Americans boosted their spending 0.4 percent in June, the Commerce Department said Tuesday, the second consecutive monthly increase. But adjusting for inflation, spending fell 0.1 percent, following a flat reading in May. Inflation-adjusted spending hasn't increased since February, the department said.

Personal income, meanwhile, dropped 1.3 percent in June, the eighth straight decline and steepest fall in four years. Incomes were inflated in May due to one-time payments from the Obama administration's stimulus program. But wages and salaries also fell 0.4 percent in June.

"The key message is that ... income remains weak" and consumers are likely to keep saving more, Paul Dales, U.S. economist at Capital Economics, wrote in a note to clients. "Under those circumstances, we expect spending to remain muted for some time."

Consumer spending may increase in July and August due to the government's "cash-for-clunkers" program, economists said, but will likely level off afterward. The program has spurred thousands of Americans to trade in old cars for newer vehicles.

Retailer opens eight new stores

Low cost retailer Citi Trends is doing pretty good in this tough economy. The Savannah, Ga., company announced last week that it has opened eight new stores in the southeast and California.

Citi Trends, Inc., which has two stores in Winston-Salem, now operates over 360 stores in more than 20 states. The value-priced retailer sells a large selection of urban fashion apparel. The items offered at the store are generally 30 to 70 percent below specialty and department store prices.

Reynolds gives \$10,000 to help fire victims

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

Reynolds American Inc. has donated \$10,000 to the Northwest North Carolina Chapter of the American Red Cross to aid in providing emergency assistance to almost 150 Winston-Salem residents whose homes have burned in the last several weeks.



Ivey

"All of us need a place to call home, and the Red Cross is stretching its already limited resources to help families who've lost everything put their lives back together," said Susan M. Ivey, chairman, president and chief executive officer of Reynolds American. "Our companies and our employees are pleased to be in a position to step up and help when help is needed the most."

July was bad month for fires at local apartment complexes. On July 14, a fire at Alders Point



Photo by Todd Lack

A fire damaged Alders Point on July 14.

Apartments in the Happy Hill community was apparently started from a discarded smoking device. A fire at Colony Arms Apartments, which has been blamed on arson, soon followed. A week later an electrical problem caused a fire at Countryside Villas, and just this past week, a unit was damaged by fire at Eastgate Apartments.

Hugh Quinn, executive direc-

tor of the Red Cross, praised Reynolds American for its support.

"Reynolds American and R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company, as companies, and their employees, as individuals, have long demonstrated leadership in this community when there was a critical need for support," said Quinn. "These back-to-back fires displaced 146 people, including

children and seniors, two of our most vulnerable populations. The Red Cross will spend more than \$50,000 to provide shelter, medication, food, furniture, clothing and other items for these families.

"We are grateful that Reynolds American and other organizations have quickly responded to help us help those who desperately need support right now," Quinn said.

Churches and other organizations have joined the Red Cross and Goodwill to help those displaced by the fires. Through Friday, Aug. 14, Goodwill and the Red Cross are asking the community to donate gently-used furniture to help fire victims get back on their feet. Items such as dressers, dinette tables and chairs, couches, sitting chairs, nightstands, coffee tables, lamps and full-size bed frames are needed.

Furniture donations can be made at the Goodwill Store at 2701 University Parkway. Donors must specify that their furniture donation is intended for the Red Cross.

CLOSE, BUT NOT THERE YET

Study finds NCDOT misses goals for minority business participation

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

The N.C. Department of Transportation held a pow-wow last week with disadvantaged minority and women-owned business owners to assure them that state is working hard to make more opportunities available to them.

The roundtable discussion — held at N.C. Central University in Durham — was held to discuss the findings of a state-commissioned study that analyzed the Department's efforts to support and include these businesses from July 1, 2003 to June 31, 2008.

Led by Georgia Tech Professor Dr. Thomas Boston, the study shows the state has work to do in order to make the playing field for minority businesses more balanced.

Among the findings:

- While disadvantaged businesses represented 15.1 percent of contractor capacity in the market, they received 9.4 percent of the total value of state jobs and 8 percent of federal jobs awarded by NCDOT;

- NCDOT almost reached its annual goals for participation of disadvantaged businesses in both state and federal contracts. In 2008, disadvantaged businesses obtained 9.4 percent of state contracts awarded, compared to a NCDOT goal of 11 percent. They obtained 8 percent of federal contracts awarded by NCDOT, compared to a goal of 10.1.

Boston, who is also CEO of the Atlanta-based economic consulting firm EuQuant Inc., had praise for NCDOT's efforts to implement "an impressive number of race- and gender-neutral programs" that are "among the most extensive this consultant has encountered at the state and local agency level."

He particularly cited NCDOT's Small Business Enterprise Program, aimed at creating contracting opportunities for small businesses, saying that it "represents a best in class race-neutral program that can serve as a model for other state and local programs."

Since the time period covered by the study, NCDOT has conducted extensive outreach to disadvantaged businesses in conjunction with the awarding of contracts funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. These efforts include holding meetings with contractors across the state to detail opportunities available through the Act and explain the contract-bidding process.

"NCDOT continues to work hard to provide disadvantaged businesses with the resources they need to be successful in the transportation industry and create a level playing field," Transportation Secretary Gene Conti said. "This study and roundtable discussion play an important role in helping us determine what we are doing well and how we need to improve in the future."

The roundtable discussion also featured Andrea Harris (North Carolina Institute of Minority Economic Development); Curtis Wynn (United Minority Contractors of North Carolina); Shelby Moorman (N.C. M/WBE Coordinators Network); Niveen Kattan (Atlantic Contracting Company Inc.); and the Rev. William Barber II (N.C. NAACP).

The 2009 disparity study's executive summary, which includes its findings and recommendations, can be viewed at <http://ncdot.gov/business/ocr/newsupdates>.



Boston



Conti

FIRST-CLASS CARGO



PRNewFoto/Porsche Cars North America, Dirk Michael Deckbar

Thirty-one brand new Porsche Panameras await their flight to the U.S. at a German airport last week. Having just rolled off the assembly line at the nearby Porsche production plant, each car was carefully lifted, secured and then placed on the 747 cargo plane. The wraps will come off at the Monterey Peninsula Automotive Festivals, which will be held the week of Aug. 9, in Southern California.

First Community to sponsor cycling event

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

First Community Bank has signed on as the title sponsor of the 32nd annual Hanes Park Classic, which is set to take place in on Sunday, Aug. 9. Organized by CycleSafe.org, the Hanes Park Classic is a professional cycling criterium and features a number of free, family events in addition to the competitive races.

"We are delighted to be sponsoring this world-class race, which takes place right here in Winston-Salem each year. We think it is important to support events like these, which not only bring a high quality professional sport to our community but also raise awareness of our beautiful city and

benefit our local economy. What makes the Hanes Park Classic even more exciting is all the free, fun, family-oriented events that go on throughout the day in addition to the professional bike races," said Skip Brown, First Community's president of the Triad Region.

The Hanes Park Classic is comprised of a 1.3 mile tree-lined circuit around Hanes Park in the city's historic West End neighborhood and has become widely known as one of the highlights of North Carolina's cycling scene.

To find out how to participate or for more information, visit www.hanesparkclassic.com.



Brown

Reidsville gets stimulus funds to do a downtown makeover

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

The City of Reidsville plans to spruce-up its downtown with a \$75,000 federal grant.

The money comes from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act — the economic stimulus package pushed through Congress and signed by President Obama earlier this year. U.S. Senator Kay R. Hagan announced the grant for Reidsville, which is in neighboring Rockingham County, last week.

"This grant will give Reidsville resources to start revitalizing its downtown," Hagan said. "It is an investment in our community that will create jobs and spur our economy."

The money allocated to the city is

part of Rural Business Enterprise Grant Program (RBEG) funding included in the Recovery Act, which is administered under the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The RBEG program helps finance new and existing businesses in rural areas and supplement employment education programs. The money can be used for loans, building and plant renovations, transportation improvements, and project planning.

"This money is a very important part of the package that we are trying to put together to revitalize downtown and to help small businesses survive and flourish," said said City Manager Kelly Almond. "It is going to create new jobs and help new businesses get started. Our hope is in these small businesses right now, and they are the key to economic success in Reidsville."

