

6C

BUSINESS

Creative budgeting

Most of us could easily spend every penny we make and more.

Saving doesn't mean making radical changes in your lifestyle. Just becoming



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more conscious of where your money is being spent should help you find ways to save.

Complete a spending plan worksheet to take a look at where you're spending your money over a three-month period. Start taking notes about where your money is going, or consider using your debit card to help you keep track. You'll be amazed at the waste patterns you spot, and recognizing them is the key to changing.

Before you start investing your new savings, make sure you have an adequate emergency fund. Most experts recommend that you set aside three to six months' worth of living expenses in a money market account or CDs that will be easily accessible in an emergency.

Then be creative about ways you can save; view it as a challenge and you may find you're having fun along the way. Here are a few relatively painless ways to tighten your belt a notch or two:

- Raise your insurance deductibles (and drop the towing on your auto insurance - it costs more in increased premiums over time than you'll pay to the tow truck operator). With what you'll save in premiums, you'll usually cover any cash outlay you might have to make.

- Don't over-withhold on your taxes. As nice as it is to get a refund, the government is using your money interest-free while you could have been investing it. If you got a refund last year, adjust your withholding to eliminate it and allocate the extra to your IRA or 401(k). Just be sure not to under-withhold, or you could be liable for penalties and interest.

- Use your 401(k) to save money by cutting taxes and accumulating assets tax deferred. For example, if you're in the 28% tax bracket, one dollar out of every four dollars you put into a pre-tax retirement account is paid for by reduced taxes - not reduced take-home pay. Also be sure to take full advantage of your employer's match by investing enough to qualify for that important benefit.

- Avoid late fees on credit cards or video rentals. It's just money down the drain.

- Avoid ATM surcharges. Use your debit card, plan ahead to use your own bank's ATM or get cash back when you grocery shop.

- Shop around for the lowest long-distance telephone carrier - or better yet - use e-mail when you can.

- Comparison shop among airlines. Watch for sales and utilize e-saver online specials. If possible, be flexible about your departure/arrival cities - 30 miles or less between cities can sometimes save you hundreds of dollars in fares.

- Pay your bills online or use auto-withdrawal to save on the cost of postage.

These are just a few money-saving strategies, and you're sure to come up with many more. Talk to your friends about ways they budget without truly denying themselves.

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Tap into business mindset

Understand that the first order of any entrepreneur is to make and leverage money

In order to build the right infrastructure, you must think strategically - that's having a business mindset. Before you make any decisions in business think about the outcome on all levels:

1. Having a business mindset is knowing that the purpose of business is to make money. Sometimes your hobby is just a hobby. Either you're going to have a hobby that makes you a little extra money or you're going to have a business that requires a higher level of development in order to acquire a higher level of income.

2. Having a business mindset means thinking for yourself vs. letting other people think for you. Don't allow the experts to control your destiny or your dreams, let them help you get there. Take some time to think, document, research your own idea before asking for help - if you do - you will be better equipped to ask for exactly what you want.

3. Having a business mindset means being more strategic about your business activity. Don't just go to any networking event or take on any job, know what results you want before you invest in business activity.

For example, do you know how much it really

costs you to attend a training session or a networking event - money, family time, babysitter, gas, etc? In order to recoup your investment your reasons for investing in the training must be things other than meeting people and "I just want to learn something." Why? That's a given when you go to networking (meet people) or training (learn something).



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4. Having a business mindset is knowing that we need to connect with our businesses and that connection is... profitability. How do you connect with your profitability? By knowing your profit margin, cash flow, competitive advantage, sales goals, and your key profit indicators.

5. Having a business mindset is understanding strategy and implementing it into your business practices. These days we tend to focus on the day-to-day mundane tasks and deadlines, solving short-term problems, and implementing marketing tactics that aren't a good fit for our businesses.

6. Having a business mindset is being open to multiple streams of income and multiple businesses. I met a lady at a conference a while back, and I will never forget what she told me - "I have one business that's my passion that makes me a

good income and I run it I have another business that generates substantial profit for me and I have someone else to run it." The point you don't have to put all your eggs in one basket.

7. Having a business mindset is understanding your emotional ties to your business. Understanding the emotional ties to your business will allow you to break through your personal barriers that prevent you from doing what you say you're going to do and also doing what you want to do.

The point: Every business decision you make today affects your business today, tomorrow, and in the future - so become a good strategist. A good strategist looks at all facets of their business today in context of where they are trying to go. A good strategist reacts to problems positively instead of negatively. A good strategist also welcomes change and turns it into an opportunity. A good strategist can react quickly with the unexpected.

A good strategist has a business mindset.

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CAROLINAS HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

Carolinas HealthCare System, which operates and manages hospitals throughout the Charlotte region, wants to add a 50-bed facility in Mint Hill.

Extra care in Mint Hill

CHS petitions state to build a 50-bed facility

By Herbert L. White

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Carolinas HealthCare System wants to add a hospital in Mint Hill.

The non-profit corporation has filed a certificate of need application with the N.C. Department of Facility Services, to build the \$70-million Carolinas Medical Center-Mint Hill. The facility requires state approval.

"Mint Hill is a vibrant community poised for significant growth," said Dennis Phillips, CHS's senior vice president for operations. "CHS has been providing healthcare to this community for a long time, and we have spent more than a year assembling land inside the town limits on

which to build this new hospital, as well as physician offices. We're very excited about the prospects of continuing to be an integral part of this community's future."

The proposed hospital would be near the intersection of Highway 51 and Truett Church Road. CMC-Mint Hill will be located adjacent to a 60,000-square foot medical office building. The facility would include:

- 38 acute care medical surgical beds including six Labor-Delivery-Recovery-Post partum maternity beds
- 12-bed emergency department
- 10 observation beds
- Radiology, including a 64-slice CT scanner, radiography, fluoroscopy, ultrasound, nuclear medicine, stress testing, portable x-ray and other complementary services
- Two exterior pads capable of MRI, PET scanner, and mobile diagnostic heart catheterization

- Three operating rooms, one OR dedicated to labor and delivery, and one endoscopy suite

- Laboratory services
- Nursery
- Pharmacy
- Respiratory therapy
- Newborn nursery

No new or additional beds are in the state health plan, so the Mint Hill facility would move 50 beds and the endoscopy suite from CMC-Mercy. Operating rooms will move from Carolinas Surgical Center on Randolph Road.

"We're primed and ready to begin a higher level of medical service to Mint Hill," Phillips said. "Our interest in this community is well known. Carolinas Medical Center-Mint Hill will bring the caring of our providers and the service of Carolinas Medical Center even closer to and more convenient for the people of this community."

Survey: Expect hiring boom

By Herbert L. White

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Charlotte area businesses are expected to be in the market for more workers in the fourth quarter, according to a study.

From October to December, 95 percent of Charlotte companies expect to hire more employees, while 2 percent expect to reduce payrolls, according to the Manpower Employment Outlook Survey. Charlotte's anticipated increase was the fourth-highest in North Carolina, trailing High Point (47 percent), Rocky Mount (43) and Greensboro (40). Sixty-three percent of Charlotte companies expect to maintain current staff levels.

"Charlotte-area employers have softer hiring intentions than in the third quarter when 43 percent of the companies interviewed intended to add staff, and 3 percent planned to reduce headcount," said Manpower spokeswoman Jessica Juba. "Employers have more positive hiring intentions than they did a year ago when 38 percent of companies surveyed thought employment increases were likely and 15 percent intended to cut back."

Job prospects appear best in construction, non-durable goods manufacturing, transportation, public administration and wholesale/retail.

Nationally, employers expect to close the year with steady hiring, according to the survey. Of the 14,000 U.S. employers surveyed, 28 percent expect to add to their payrolls during the fourth quarter, compared to 8 percent who expect reductions. Fifty-eight percent expect no change.

For 52 years, entrepreneur a fixture for food and hospitality

By Ken Koonitz

SPECIAL TO THE POST

If you search traditional lists of successful black-owned businesses in Charlotte, Rudean's is probably not on any of them. Yet, Rudean Harris, the restaurant's owner, is considered by many a black business icon whose legacy spans 52 years of service.

On Oct. 8, Harris' friends, family, colleagues, business associates and community leaders are going to pay tribute at the Ramones Temple on Beatties Ford Road.

Harris, commonly known as Miss Rudean or Rudean, was the second

oldest of six children, and the oldest girl. She was 8 years old when her mother died and she committed herself to helping her father raise her siblings.

"When my grandmother died, mama became the little woman of the house doing all the cooking, cleaning and helping the others with their schoolwork," says Harris' daughter, Nichelle, who is organizing the tribute.

"She was also the disciplinarian while granddaddy was out working the farm."

Harris had just finished Teamer High School at age 16 when she started her entrepreneurial legacy with

the help of mentors including now-retired Charlotte policeman William "Bill" Covington, she began selling hot dogs, hamburgers and sodas at the same location where she is currently located at 2228 Beatties Ford Road. It was called West Charlotte Drive-In.

Harris would ultimately change the name and relocate to at least five other locations over the years before returning to the original West Charlotte Drive-In site in the 1990s.

Wherever Rudean's was located, it quickly became a popular social hot spot for a predominantly black clientele.

Ida Johnson has been with Harris

longest - 15 years as a cook, cashier, manager, and close personal friend.

"I know Rudean has a special soft spot in her caring for people," Johnson said. "She has been through some of the problems they face and she truly understands them. She listens or whatever she can do and her client base loves her dearly."

Jeannette Robinson was Harris' first landlord and she is again at the current location.

"She has been very businesslike and very cooperative," says Robinson. "She has rented from me many years and there has never been any difference or problem with her."