in this issue:

GROWING PAINS ~ Solutions Save Jobs
ALWAYS ON DUTY ~ Service Dog on Campus
BEING GREEN ~ Sustainability Makes Sense

Not Your Grandparents’ Manufacturing

FORSYTH TECH HAILED AS NATIONAL LEADER IN EDUCATING WORKERS
If You Want to Support Forsyth Tech, Just Raise Your Hand
(Metaphorically, That Is — It’s an Online Auction)

The Forsyth Tech Foundation’s annual online auction begins November 1, and every winning bid goes to support the work we do. The proceeds from the auction will help us fund scholarships, meet vital technology needs and provide professional development opportunities for our faculty and staff.

We invite you to both bid on and donate items. Any item donated should be new and unused, and gift certificates for your business are always welcome. To make a donation, contact Angela Reece 336.734.7618 or areece@forsythtech.edu.

Do your part to help Forsyth Tech, and enjoy being a winner!

Some items are already online for viewing at www.forsythtech.edu/Auction. Be sure to bookmark the page and check it often, because we’ll be adding new items constantly!

From the President On the Move
Dr. Gary M. Green

A year ago, we were excited and proud about the news that Forsyth Tech had played a major role in convincing Caterpillar to build a major new manufacturing plant in our community. Now the work of getting that plant up and running is in full swing. Many people at Forsyth Tech have been working hard to help with hiring, direct training and anything else we can do to make the process a smooth one.

As important as it is, the Caterpillar plant is only one example of how we at Forsyth Tech continue to fulfill our mission of making our region — and our nation — competitive for the long haul. We educate the creative, flexible workforce for the future, and we fill the specific needs of the employers who are in our area now, as well as those who may want to build here. That means, of course, training people in the newer fields such as nanotechnology and biotechnology and keeping up to date with the latest developments in medical fields.

More and more, as the manufacturing climate begins to improve, that also means nurturing advanced manufacturing skills. At Forsyth Tech, we know that there will continue to be jobs for people who have advanced skills. People who have been taught to learn new things, think creatively and solve problems are in demand.

We are pleased that Forsyth Tech continues to be in the national spotlight as a leader in developing advanced manufacturing. Forsyth Tech was featured in June on National Public Radio’s Diane Rehm Show in a discussion of manufacturing and the workforce. We are one of four colleges endorsed skill certifications. I also was honored to be invited by the lead in developing National Association of Manufacturers-National Public Radio’s Diane Rehm Show in a discussion of manufacturing and the workforce. We are one of four colleges

Walk into classrooms, labs and shops around Forsyth Tech’s campuses, and you will see equipment large and small. You’ll see familiar fiery welding and the latest in high-tech computerized devices. There is a buzz around advanced manufacturing that extends beyond campus, into local manufacturing plants where Forsyth Tech conducts specialized training and sends promising students for cooperative education experiences. If a local industry needs expert help, or if a manufacturer wants to build a new plant in the area, Forsyth Tech has the experience and the people to help. There are good reasons why Forsyth Tech has a national name as a leader in educating the manufacturing workers of the future.

Forsyth Tech and its partners in the North Carolina Community College System, with 58 institutions serving more than 700,000 students annually, North Carolina Community Colleges are creating success in our state by:

- Offering hope for a better future through vocational training and education
- Providing opportunities for making higher education available to all citizens
- Creating jobs by training skilled workers for business and industry

For information about our “gainful employment” programs as defined by the Department of Education, please go to www.forsythtech.edu/gainfulemployment.

Forsyth Tech welcomes diversity and is dedicated to meeting the needs of students with disabilities, as mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act. For more information, please contact Sarah Haas, Coordinator, Disabilities Services Office, at 336.734.7155 or shawks@forsythtech.edu.

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The Honor Roll

En Garde!

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During the awards presentation, the national event director said the Forsyth Tech team demonstrated that students from two-year schools can perform at the same level or higher than their four-year student counterparts. This was Forsyth Tech’s first time to enter the competition. Forsyth Tech was the only two-year school in the top three rankings.

Each team had to defend its simulated computer network against two days of relentless computer attacks from a much larger team of hackers.

The Long (Educated) Arm of the Law

If we relied on television to tell us what criminal justice and crime scene investigation are all about, we would think you could crack a case in an hour. The truth is that reality is very different, and those pursuing a criminal justice career need sophisticated training from the best programs and instruction possible.

In February, the North Carolina Criminal Justice Association recognized one of the best in Forsyth Tech’s Kristie Rais. Kristie was presented the 2011 Margaret Land Willis Outstanding Criminal Justice Educator Award for outstanding contributions to criminal justice education.

Kristie joined Forsyth Tech in 1999 after working as a crime scene technician for the Winston-Salem Police Department and as a deputy for the Forsyth County Sheriff’s department.

Such a Wonderful Way with Words

Forsyth Tech Early College sophomore Rose Finger beguiled a statewide group of wordsmiths this spring when she won a spot in the top five out of 9,000 students in the North Carolina Poetry Out Loud competition. Rose memorized and recited “Beautiful Wreckage” by W. D. Ehrhart, “Her Head” by Joan Murray and “The Days Gone By” by James Whitcomb Riley.

Rose was a classroom winner, district winner, state semifinalist and then state finalist. The contest is jointly sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts and the North Carolina Arts Council.

Turning Great to AWESOME

There’s no doubting the quality of a Forsyth Tech education, but the school always welcomes opportunities to make the experience and results even better. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools is providing such an opportunity by asking all its members to create a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) focused on “learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning.”

This spring, Forsyth Tech’s students, faculty, administration and neighbors were asked to offer input on a specific quality enhancement topic. During the coming academic year, the college QEP committee will use that input to choose a final topic and start laying out a course of action. This is only the first step. Because the effort is so important, and because everyone in the Forsyth Tech community is ultimately responsible for implementing the plan, the process will take about six years to complete.

You can learn more at www.forsythtech.edu/qep.

A Legacy of Nursing Leadership

It’s been said that “nurses are angels in comfortable shoes.” Some Forsyth Tech “angels” are extending their legacy of leading North Carolina’s nursing educators. Lead instructor Sue Ellen Miller recently wrapped up her term as president of the N.C. Associate Degree Nursing Council, and now Clinical Education Coordinator Dr. Wanda Douglas has been named president-elect. During her two-year term, Wanda says she would like to expand membership and work to make it easier for nurses to stay up to date in her rapidly changing field.

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The Shugart Women’s Center director, Sherraine McLean, is expanding her educational service to a younger set. Sherraine was elected in January as chair of the Lexington City School Board for the 2011-2012 school year. “It’s more of a calling than a job for me,” Sherraine said. “I believe that education is the key for anyone, and whatever I can do to promote that, I’ll do. I’m sure this will keep me busy for years.”

The Shugart Women’s Center works to promote the educational, personal and professional development of women attending Forsyth Tech with advocacy, referrals, information and resources.

Dr. Greene Leaves Legacy of Progress

We’re so proud to report Dr. Bob Greene, president of Forsyth Tech from 1981 to 1995, passed away on July 14, 2011. Earlier this year, the North Carolina State Board of Community Colleges honored Dr. Greene with the I.E. Ready award. It is the highest honor the Board can bestow.

The State Board noted that during his time as Forsyth Tech President, Dr. Greene led the college through a time of rapid growth and change. Physically, Forsyth Tech doubled in size, and enrollment grew to the fifth largest in the state at the time. In 1990, Dr. Greene was named one of the nation’s most innovative community college presidents by the League of Innovation in Community Colleges. In 1991, the Forsyth Tech Board of Trustees named the Bob H. Greene Hall Health Technology Center in his honor.

As one of Forsyth Tech’s greatest supporters and contributors, he will be greatly missed.

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Forsyth Tech’s Cardiovascular/Medical Sonography program coordinator, John Casell, has been named president of the North Carolina Ultrasonic Society. His colleague David Wood, Forsyth Tech’s lead instructor for Cardiac Sonography, was named vice president. Together, they’ll head the largest state-run group of its kind in the United States.

“This gives Forsyth Tech a voice in the future of sonography training,” Casell said. “Our group helps ensure the future of sonography continuing education programs.” Casell said the Ultrasonic Society is growing and may expand to include sonography professionals from all over the Carolinas and Virginia.

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Moving On Up

Construction on Forsyth Tech’s new Transportation Technology Center is well under way and on target to welcome students in the spring of 2012. “Construction is moving very nicely,” said Ken Jarvis, Manager, Facilities & Construction. “In my judgment, it’s going to be one of the most advanced and best transportation technology centers in the entire state community college system. It’s going to be a great environment for our students,” he said.

The new facility being built on Patterson Avenue at the site of the former Pinebrook Shopping Center will house such programs as Automotive Repair, Automotive Systems Technology, Heavy Equipment and Transport Technology, Recreational Vehicle Maintenance and Repair Technology, and the Richard Childress Race Car Technology program. The money to buy the shopping center and create the Transportation Center came from a bond issue approved by voters in 2006. Construction started last summer.

End of an Era

Longtime Forsyth Tech Trustee Robert Joyce chose not to seek reappointment to the board of directors this year. He has served since 1980 when he was first appointed by Governor Jim Hunt. At the time, he was one of the youngest trustees ever named to the board, and he was part of the team that hired Dr Bob Greene as Forsyth Tech president in 1981.

As a result, Mr. Joyce, seated, was part of the group of Forsyth Tech leaders who worked to build the Allman Center, the Stevens Center, the Northwest Forsyth Center in Stokes County and the new Transportation Center. “I’ve been blessed to have been part of the board and know these fine members and students and administration,” he said.

As a fitting tribute to his service, Mr. Joyce was honored in July with the naming of the Robert F. Joyce School of Justice housed at Forsyth Tech’s Northwest Forsyth Center in King.

National Spotlight Still Glowing

Anyone who tuned in to National Public Radio’s Diane Rehm Show on June 7 could hear Forsyth Tech President Dr. Gary Green talking about preparing workers for the advanced manufacturing jobs of today and tomorrow. Dr. Green was featured along with Byron Auguste of McKinsey & Co., a global consulting firm, and Emily DelBecco, the president of The Manufacturing Institute (standing to the left of President Obama above).

It’s The Manufacturing Institute that selected Forsyth Tech as one of four colleges nationwide to take the lead in developing the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM)-Endorsed Skills Certification System.

The next day, Dr. Green had another meeting with President Barack Obama, who had come to Forsyth Tech in December 2010 to make a major speech about national competitiveness and the workforce of the future. At the invitation of the White House, Dr. Green went to Northern Virginia Community College to be on hand as President Obama announced a major effort with The Manufacturing Institute to help make community colleges more responsive to the needs of their area employers.

Vision for the Future

The Forsyth Tech vice president of Planning and Information Systems, Rachel Desmarais, was honored this spring with a 2011 Women of Vision Career Award by the Winston-Salem YWCA.

The YWCA annual Women of Vision Awards were established in 1980 to honor women who use leadership and creativity to serve their community.

Rachel has been with Forsyth Tech for nine years and was previously a department chair and faculty member in the Information Technologies Division. A graduate of Winthrop University with an MBA in business management and a BA in political science, Jewel earned her Educational Specialist degree in higher education from Appalachian State and will complete her doctorate in Educational Leadership in 2012.

Dr. Green, Humanitarian

Recognizing dedication to the promotion of technology and community, the Scott Cares Foundation (SCF) presented Dr. Gary Green with the 2011 Humanitarian in Technology Award. The SCF was founded in 2005 by Scott Abdul-Salaam to advocate the arts, computer literacy, technology and the roles they play in the community.

Dr. Green has been with Forsyth Tech for nine years and was previously a department chair and faculty member in the Information Technology area. “I was surprised and honored when I found out about it,” she said. “What made it special was to know that I had been nominated by my peers.”

Forsyth Tech Student Hits The Big Times

In July, Mark McSweeney, a 34-year-old former welder who recently graduated from Forsyth Tech with an AS degree in Mechanical Engineering Technology, was featured in a story and video on the NYTimes.com website. The story, “Community College as a Bridge to New Skills,” was part of a series focused on the training students are receiving for the 21st-century workforce. A film crew from the video production company Purple States followed Mark as he took classes, went for a job interview (arranged with the help of a Forsyth Tech instructor), then waited to hear if he would get the job — which he did.

Mark is now employed at TE Connectivity (formerly Tyco Electronics) in quality assurance. To read the story and see the video, go to www.NYTimes.com and search for “Forsyth Tech.”

Going Global

This year, Forsyth Tech is taking the stage with five other local institutions to offer a closer look at “Winston-Salem and the World Scene” through a lecture and presentation series. The topic this year focuses on modern issues affecting Africa.

Forsyth Tech’s presentation is scheduled for November and joins similar offerings from Wake Forest University, Salem College, Winston-Salem State University, the University of North Carolina School of the Arts and the Winston-Salem International Business Council.

Congratulations, Jewel Cherry, New VP, Student Services!

After a nationwide search, Forsyth Tech named Jewel Cherry as vice president of Student Services. Jewel was selected over a field of four other candidates. “I’m very excited to continue working toward supporting our students during this time of significant growth for the college,” Jewel said.

Jewel has been at Forsyth Tech since 1977 and has served as dean of enrollment and student services, director of the Student Success Center and program coordinator and instructor in the school’s Business Information Technologies Division.

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This award is a special one to me because of my own background in engineering and the arts,” Mr. Abdul-Salaam said. “Technology is all about connections. Connecting communities and individuals, Forsyth Tech does that by helping the community sustain itself.”

Mr. Abdul-Salaam said he’s glad that Dr. Green accepted the award because it gave him a chance to thank Dr. Green for his service.
There's a myth out there. You hear it many places in the United States and often in the Piedmont Triad of North Carolina. You know how it goes: All the jobs have vanished or gone overseas. There just aren't jobs in manufacturing anymore.

It's a widely held belief. And it couldn't be more wrong. Just ask Beth Agnello. As the cooperative education coordinator for Forsyth Tech, Beth is in a position to know about the state of manufacturing and the availability of manufacturing jobs in the Winston-Salem area. From her perspective, "There are loads of opportunities in advanced manufacturing. I've been at this at Forsyth Tech since 2007, and from what I can see, demand for high-skilled manufacturing jobs, like computer numeric control machining and industrial maintenance, has not slowed down in this area, despite the economic slowdown," she said. In fact, she said, her biggest worry is that there won't be enough people trained in advanced manufacturing to fill the jobs that are going to be available.

It's true, she said, that the jobs in the area that seemed safe a generation ago are largely gone. The common wisdom used to be that if a young person could land a manufacturing job in tobacco, furniture or textiles, he or she would be pretty well set for life.

"No one is saying that anymore," Beth said. "And because of changes in those traditional jobs, people now are nervous about the whole idea of manufacturing. Manufacturing has a bad name. How many parents of high school kids are telling their kids now to think about a career in manufacturing? Nobody." Nor should older workers who have lost jobs at traditional companies think that there are no alternative manufacturing jobs available, she said.

Beth and many of her colleagues at Forsyth Tech are working hard to change that negative perception and get the word out about the many opportunities in manufacturing. They know that there are good jobs now for people with the right skills, and there will be even more opening up in the foreseeable future.
Here Comes Caterpillar

They also know that the area’s economy depends upon the availability of a well-skilled workforce. And Forsyth Tech, increasingly, is in a position to provide that workforce. The best recent evidence of that is probably the decision of Caterpillar Inc. to build a $426 million parts-manufacturing plant in Forsyth County, bringing more than 500 jobs to the area. When the decision was announced in the summer of 2010, state and local political leaders and Caterpillar executives gave Forsyth Tech and its president, Dr. Gary Green, much of the credit. Forsyth Tech’s willingness to be flexible in training workers for Caterpillar’s needs was cited as a key factor.

This summer, a year later, Forsyth Tech has swung into high gear helping Caterpillar get ready for its opening. Dianne Mounce, the project manager for Forsyth Tech’s Caterpillar initiative, described herself as a “jack of all trades,” heading up the effort to do whatever Caterpillar needs to help get people hired and get their on-board training. That has included, among other things:

- Securing grants and incentives for training and equipment
- Leasing and setting up a 60,000-square-foot training facility
- Assisting with the application process
- Obtaining Caterpillar certification to administer online assessments
- Planning and coordinating events with Caterpillar
- Working with local partners (Employment Security Commission and the Workforce Development Program)
- Working with JobLink Career Center to develop courses that will help prospective employees prepare to take Caterpillar’s online assessment, improve their interview techniques and update their resumes
- Helping with initial and future hiring waves
- Working with a Forsyth Tech team to set up temporary office space for Caterpillar at West Campus

Barry Self, training coordinator at Forsyth Tech, is preparing to offer the specific assembly instruction that Caterpillar needs at the new training facility. That will include the Lean Manufacturing/Six Sigma that is an essential part of Caterpillar’s high-quality, order-to-delivery process. Barry earned his Lean Six Sigma Black Belt certification at N.C. State University’s School of Textiles. His certification as an instructor is important, because all Caterpillar employees go through at least the first two levels, or Yellow Belt, of Six Sigma training. With an emphasis on using statistical data to eliminate errors, Six Sigma is an increasingly popular management strategy pioneered by Motorola in the 1980s.

Helping to attract Caterpillar has been a high-profile coup for Forsyth Tech. But school officials look upon that success as more of a beginning than an end. Besides being busy with direct training and other support for Caterpillar as it prepares to open, Forsyth Tech is positioning itself to help recruit companies that...
supply materials to Caterpillar. It also is expanding its advanced manufacturing offerings with an eye toward attracting companies with needs similar to Caterpillar’s.

And while drawing new employers to the area is an important goal, college officials keep in mind the fact that manufacturers that are already here also will be looking for workers with the right kinds of preparation.

“We don’t really even need growth to have lots of job opportunities in our area,” Beth Agnello said. “Something we’re absolutely seeing in all our manufacturing industries is the graying of the baby-boomer population. There are lots of people with loads of experience who are going to be retiring as soon as the economy starts to look a little better. We need to be training folks who are going to take over these jobs for the people who are going to retire after 35 years, or we won’t have enough people with experience to fill those roles.”

The opportunities available in manufacturing these days are not your grandparents’ jobs. The people who design and teach courses at Forsyth Tech know that advanced manufacturing demands technological skills and the ability to think things through.

“We’re not going to have the positions anymore where someone is going to stand around and tell you what to do next, or where people perform menial tasks. Folks today need to have problem-solving skills to figure things out,” Beth said. “You’re not going to be doing the same things over and over. Today’s manufacturing jobs require a lot of technical expertise.

“Our traditional industries may have faded, but now we have the Deere-Hitachi, the Caterpillars and the TurboCares of the world that are making it through and are going to be here,” she said. “And there are many smaller businesses, too, that really need folks with the right kind of education.

“Don’t get me wrong,” she said. “The widespread use of technology does mean a smaller workforce, so people have to have a higher level of skill.” Forsyth Tech’s aim is to help students reach that level of skill.

And, in addition to advanced skills learned in the classrooms and the on-the-job experience gained through cooperative education experiences with area manufacturers, Forsyth Tech students are being taught an important message, Beth said: “Learn to learn. Be flexible. Be ready to change as the jobs change.”

Many people today are working in fields they never dreamed of or are doing things very differently than they did early in their careers, she said. “We are trying to discourage people from thinking ‘Oh, I’m going to learn this exact thing, and that’s what I’m going to do for my career.’ Those jobs don’t exist anymore.”
In welding, Rod Smith says, newer methods are important, but the "old ways" are still essential knowledge. Leonard Kiser, the dean of Engineering Technologies, points out the different but complementary roles of manufacturing training and curriculum education. The Economic & Workforce Development Division provides specific training tailored to the needs of local businesses such as Wieland Copper Products in Pine Hall or R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. Sometimes the training is offered on-site at the business; sometimes employees come to campus.

Curriculum classes in advanced manufacturing offer certificates, diplomas or degrees designed to educate students for a variety of manufacturing jobs. In Engineering Technologies, there are four main areas: Industrial Systems Technology, Machining Technology, Mechanical Engineering Technology and Welding Technology. Sometimes, training requests lead to changes in curriculum. If a number of area manufacturers are interested in particular types of skills, the college might consider adding a class.

Increasingly, Dean Kiser said, employers prefer to hire people with two-year associate degrees, even if they will then want them to get specific training. He said he has found that employers want workers to have computer skills because most machines are computer-driven, but "they also still like for students to know the old ways on mills and lathes and manual machines."

Rod Smith, the Welding Technologies department chair, finds that the "old ways" are essential in welding, even though many companies use more high-tech methods now. "You can't get away from it. There's still a lot of fire, and you have to be willing to take the pain. You have to go in the old-fashioned way to clean things up, and you can't get away from it for repair work," Rod said.

At the busy welding shop on campus, flames might be seen anytime between 7:30 a.m. and 10 p.m. Students can earn a certificate in basic welding or complete a one-year course and earn a diploma. Are there jobs for them? You bet, Rod said. "Last year, we had a total of 64 who came through the welding shop, and there were 65 jobs available for them."

Over in the Mechanical Engineering Technology Department, Todd Bishop, the program coordinator, has similar experiences. "I've got more calls for jobs than I have people to fill them," Todd said. "I'm tired of hearing manufacturing is gone. It's not gone. We may have lost our legacy industries, but many high-skilled manufacturing jobs remain.

As manufacturing becomes more high-tech, he said, manufacturers find that it does not make economic sense to ship work offshore. The overseas labor market doesn't have the level of skill needed to make more sophisticated products, and jobs that require more skill "never really left," Todd said.
“Everything you do... involves something that has been manufactured.”

For example, he said, his program graduated six Computer Numeric Control (CNC) machining students in spring 2011, and all six had jobs. CNC means workers run machines by computer program rather than by hand.

“Everything you do in your daily life involves something that has been manufactured,” Todd said. “It has to come from somewhere. There are jobs for people who want to work. Those who are unskilled need to come back to school and reinvent themselves.”

“Todd agrees with the idea that students should “learn to learn,” and he even makes a point of avoiding the word “training.”

“At Forsyth Tech,” Todd says, “in curriculum classes, we don’t train people; we’re educating people. Training is when you teach someone to do a specific job. Educating is when you take the students and explain to them why you do what you do and the theory of it. We educate our students to be able to walk out of here and acquire a multitude of jobs.”

The new approach to educating workers for advanced manufacturing includes teaching students “soft skills” such as communications, personal effectiveness and teamwork, elements that are being incorporated into various courses of study. And Caterpillar is far from the only company that values the Lean Six Sigma training to reduce waste and errors.

Whether it’s in company-specific training or broader curriculum classes, Forsyth Tech is providing educational resources that support the advanced manufacturers in the area and attract new ones. Experience shows that there are good manufacturing jobs available now, and as older workers retire and new manufacturers move into the area, there will be even more.

By 2013, the U.S. will need nearly 5 million new workers with at least a two-year degree.

“In the nation’s capital, when Emily DeRocco, the president of the Manufacturing Institute, was selecting four colleges from across the nation to participate in a pilot program for the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) Endorsed Skills Certification System, Forsyth Tech came immediately to mind. Increasingly, national certification has become important in many manufacturing fields, just as it has been in medical fields and information systems for years. And working with NAM, Forsyth Tech has emerged as a national leader in the certification effort.”

Ms. DeRocco got to know Forsyth Tech and Dr. Gary Green while she was an assistant U.S. secretary of labor. During her tenure, Forsyth Tech had winning proposals in two major initiatives involving community college systems. One had to do with job training for high-growth industries, and the other recognized the important role community colleges play in developing the 21st-century high-performance workforce.

“So I know the institution, I knew the leadership, and I certainly knew Dr. Green and his potential to drive change within community colleges and make the community college a true asset in regional economic development,” she said. “We were completely committed to North Carolina’s transformation as a state that had relied almost totally on textiles, tobacco and furniture. Our personal knowledge of Dr. Green and the entire team at Forsyth Tech made them a very appropriate partner in the early adoption of the manufacturing skills certification system.”

Using a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Forsyth Tech joined colleges in Ohio, Texas and Washington state in the pilot program, offering NAM-endorsed nationally recognized certifications in machining technology, mechanical engineering technology, welding and industrial systems technology. What that’s meant for the nation is that now community colleges in 31 states are following Forsyth Tech’s lead as they begin to offer certifications.

What the participation has meant for Forsyth Tech is that students who pass the tests graduate not only with a certificate, diploma or associate degree but also with nationally recognized credentials. That can mean a big difference when it comes to getting jobs wherever life may take them. Beth Agnello said that about 178 students have received certifications so far, and some have multiple certifications. “We were well positioned for a quick start with the NAM-endorsed certifications. A lot of our programs matched, so it dovetailed nicely,” she said.

In Ms. DeRocco’s mind, Forsyth Tech’s efforts are vital to the nation’s economy and even to its national security. “An educated and skilled workforce is the most important factor in the business success of our manufacturers, so we need to focus on how to educate that skilled workforce for the 21st century,” she said.

“This is where Forsyth Tech has taken such a strong leadership role.”
Partners in Progress

Forsyth Tech knows what it’s doing as it helps Caterpillar get up and running, because it’s tackled similar projects before. Forsyth Tech’s partnerships with area manufacturers are important for the manufacturers and the jobs they provide, which also makes them important for students who want advanced manufacturing jobs. Here’s what some of the partners say about working with Forsyth Tech.

“That’s what they do: Get things done.”

These days, Travis Simpson is the CEO of his own company, Extend Energy, a solar energy firm in Greensboro. But from 2005 to 2007, he had the job of getting the new Dell manufacturing plant in Forsyth County up and running. He started with little but ideas—Dell had no physical presence in the area.

What he did have was invaluable help from Forsyth Tech. “One of the first things we did was meet with Dr. (Gary) Green and Sue Marion (now retired), who was the college’s head of Economic & Workforce Development at the time. They were engaging, open and willing to partner in a very flexible way as we tried to understand how we were going to start up a plant, how we were going to hire the people, how we were going to train them. They worked with us through the whole process because they had the experience,” he said.

Forsyth Tech gave Simpson a place to interview, hire and train people on the West Campus. It helped Dell set up its training programs. Simpson hired a number of Forsyth Tech graduates.

“So often you get used to dealing with people who are very rigid in their approach, who are used to a way of doing things, and you have to fit with their methodology or their timing or schedule.” Mr. Simpson said.

“That was completely opposite from what we dealt with at Forsyth Tech. They were extremely flexible and would turn at a moment’s notice. It was never ‘give us a week’s notice and spit out three kinds of paperwork and then we’ll look at it.’ Dealing with Forsyth Tech is not a bureaucratic process because they had the experience,” he said.

“They provide not only the hands-on but the fundamental training folks need.”

In Rural Hall, at what was once a Westinghouse plant, TurboCare Inc. recently expanded its operations in a move that will ultimately mean 110 new jobs. Mike Dunn, the operations manager, said that TurboCare, which designs, builds and services turbo machinery, has looked to Forsyth Tech when it needs to hire skilled welders and machinists.

Often, he said, TurboCare hires machinists who have gone through Forsyth Tech’s co-op program at the plant. “We bring them in while they are still in school, and they work maybe one day a week in our shop. We get to know them a little better; they get to know us a little better, and when they graduate, we hope we’re in line to get them on board,” he said.

“The key” to Forsyth Tech’s success, Mr. Dunn said, is that “they provide not only the hands-on but also the fundamental training that folks need. I sit on the advisory board at Forsyth Tech, and one of the things that all the industry representatives have been retitrating is how important it is to get people in who have not only hands-on machining experience but communications and teamwork skills, those softer skills that Forsyth Tech seems to do such a good job with.”

The partnership works both ways: TurboCare is a division of Siemens Energy, and a related company, Siemens PLM Software, recently awarded Forsyth Tech a software grant valued at more than $40 million. The software helps Mechanical Engineering and Machining students learn the skills needed at Caterpillar and other leading manufacturers.

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Pauline Morris took the long way home. Her father was English and brought up in Wisconsin. The journey that brought Pauline to North Carolina as director of the Forsyth Tech International Center started during her childhood in the African nation of Cote d’Ivoire (Ivory Coast in English).

Her parents worked as translators there and also taught college. She arrived in the United States, Pauline began work as an emergency room translator at Wake Forest Baptist Health and Forsyth Medical Center. She was drawn to helping people in crisis, but she was also looking for stability. That search led to what was once Winston-Salem’s “Little Yellow House.” — a social service enterprise created by a group of seven Winston-Salem agencies and under the auspices of the ECHO fund of the Winston-Salem Foundation.

“It was marvelous,” Pauline said. “If I can’t stay where my heart is, going out to the people who need help, well, God’s brought the people to me.”

After two years, the grant money for the Little Yellow House ran dry. Forsyth Tech, seeking a need for immigrant support, took the organization under its umbrella and moved it downtown to the International Center’s present location in Forsyth County’s Central Library on West Fifth Street.

Today, the International Center of Forsyth Tech offers education, guidance and orientation for anyone. “We need these new groups of people to be ready and trained to become part of the workforce,” Pauline said. “But that training has to be tailored not only to their needs, but the needs of employers.” She says one of the new challenges is to offer training that goes beyond the basics of learning English. She and her staff work to help newcomers deal with American culture as well as the job market. “At one time the attitude was ‘you’re in America, so you should learn English,’” she said. “Well, now we want people to learn English because that’s the way to move into a job and progress in that job.”

Not Your Average Nana

During her years living around the world, Pauline learned to speak French and Spanish as well as English, and she became an avid hiker.

“When we lived in Spain, my husband and I probably knew more of the trails and hiking areas than any of the nationals did,” she said with a laugh. Recently, she and her grandson went on a week that was a bit long for his hiking. “He told me, ‘Nana, you are not the grandma that people talk about!’ I feel like I’m the only grandma in the world that a 10-year-old grandson can’t keep up with.”

“I would love to see more greenways around here,” she said. “I’m sure it’s all from my African background. I’m just used to open space. I guess I’m just an African with a Spanish heart and an American passport.”

Although he had long wanted to go back to school, Tim says the first thought of stepping into a classroom was intimidating. “I’m 48, and I’d been out of school for a while. I figured I had some catching up to do.” But it didn’t take long for Tim to find success. He’s enjoying the coursework and has already tested out of a few math classes.

A Sensitive Eye

It takes an eye for detail to manage all the precise variables Tim has to juggle while operating high-tech machining equipment. As it turns out, that sensitive eye offers more than just an edge in his future career. It also guides the skilled hand of an artist.

Tim enjoys sketching in charcoal. His injury allowed him the time to explore some of the hobbies he had put aside after high school to earn a living. “You really don’t know what you’re missing by not doing it,” he said. In his art, he concentrates on faces. “I love to focus on the eyes,” he said, “because they tell you what’s going on inside.”
As Forsyth Tech's student population grows, so does the importance of adjunct instructors, who are often professionals willing to share their expertise and personal experience with students. "They do it because of adjunct instructors, who are often professionals willing to share their expertise and personal experience with students. "They do it because

Bruce DeBole is a busy man. He has a career that he loves and a second calling that rivals the first. "Who doesn't like the academic atmosphere?" he says. "It's just a great place to be. These are great students with great minds wanting to learn. I can tell you with class, personal knowledge and experience, why not do it!" Bruce developed his love of teaching in the mid-1990s at a community college in Annopolis, MD. At the time, he was a senior vice president for Bank of America. After Bruce moved to North Carolina to work for Wachovia, he asked Forsyth Tech's business school dean Bernie Yevin about teaching a finance class. Today, Bruce teaches finance and still manages his own business. "The students are great," he observes. "I love the face-to-face classes. You can always tell when a point is well made or if they don't get a point. You can get the feedback fairly immediately. They ask really good questions that deal with how class applies in the world today."

Bruce teaches some courses in person and some via a direct video exchange between classrooms. It's a far cry from the first courses he taught in Maryland, but the students take it all in stride. "They love in a digital world," he says. "It's clear his experiences at Forsyth Tech have made a lasting impression on Bruce. "I think this is one of the best financial education institutions around," he says. "And this has really been a shot in the arm for me. It's invigorating. I really think I'm going to do this for a long time."
Alumni Spotlight

Mark Swaim’s leadership role in a beverage service and vending company doesn’t relate directly to his studies at Forsyth Tech, but his entrepreneurial skills do.

Alumni Spotlight

For Winston-Salem Entrepreneur Mark Swaim, Forsyth Tech Is a Family Affair

College alumni, no matter where they went to school, often think about giving back after they’ve graduated and moved on to their careers. But for Forsyth Tech alumnus and alumni board member Mark Swaim, the reasons he gives back go much deeper than most. He can say that Forsyth Tech is much more than his alma mater. It’s family.
“I had not really thought about it until the 50th anniversary of the college came around,” he said. “The school had asked us to offer some comments for the oral histories. I sat down to talk about the effects Forsyth Tech had on my life, and I thought, ‘Wow, Forsyth Tech really is family.’ You get so busy in your life, you just don’t sit down to think about a lot of these things.”

That “wow” moment began in 1979, when Mark graduated with an Applied Sciences degree in Ornamental Horticulture. It’s not the career he eventually pursued, but his Forsyth Tech experience did prove to be important, professionally and personally. An entrepreneur, Mark has been instrumental in three successful start-ups, culminating today with his job as manager and partner of American Refreshments and Supplies, a beverage service and vending company that he helped establish nine years ago.

“Forsyth Tech is part of our family,” Mark said. “There are nine of us in our immediate family here, and six of us have attended Forsyth Tech.”

Spanning Generations

And the Swaim/Forsyth Tech connection doesn’t end there. Mark has three children who have attended Forsyth Tech – Eric and Laura each took college prep courses before graduating from UNC-Wilmington and High Point University, respectively. Mark’s stepson Jeremy earned a marketing degree at Forsyth Tech and later worked for Bank of America.

Mark said that, among other things, he loves the design aspect of his current career. “I use design infrastructure in my business now in our vending and coffee service business particularly,” he said. “We have to design banks of machines and refreshment areas, and even though it’s a different product and service, you still have to work with architects and do some of that design work sometimes.”

Many times if I’m sitting down with an architect, it will bring back memories of Forsyth Tech and landscape design. It just had a huge impact on me from the standpoint of getting me started, and I still pull from that today.”

His Forsyth Tech years also helped lay the foundation for his personal life. He and his wife Linda didn’t meet on campus, but Forsyth Tech has become an important family connection.

“Linda had always wanted to go into nursing,” Mark recalls. She started nursing school while they were dating and graduated not long after they were married. “I supported that, especially since it was Forsyth Tech. It was very rewarding for both of us.”

After her graduation in 1991, Linda worked as a registered nurse at Wake Forest Baptist Health. Then she saw a Forsyth Tech posting about the opportunity to learn medical case management. “She pursued that,” Mark said, “and it gave her the knowledge to become a self-employed certified case manager. She has that knowledge to become a self-employed certified case manager. She has that entrepreneurial spirit going as well.”

Looking Ahead

Mark said he’s confident that Forsyth Tech and its generations of future students will see great success. “We’re still going through the changes he’s seen over the years, but we expect continued growth and service. Mark said he’s amazed at how Forsyth Tech has been able to adapt rapidly to the needs of the community and local industry. He praised Forsyth Tech’s role in developing the new biotech and nanotech industries in the community.

“In 1979, when I was going here, I never thought that I’d have children and grandchildren who basically came from Forsyth Tech,” he said. “Snyder Hall was the hangout when I went here. That’s where everybody came together and socialized. Of course, things in Winston-Salem have changed a lot, too.”

“My communities and I try to be involved not only here but on other local boards. I believe in community service and trying to make the community a better place for everyone who lives here. That’s much the way Forsyth Tech is. It’s a cornerstone of this community, and it’s touched a lot of lives.”

Mark says he’d like to get the whole gang together for a family photo in the alumni soul. “There would be difficulty because everyone is so busy,” he said. “I think I’ll have to offer to feed them all. I’ll ring a dinner bell, they might all come.”

Green Thumb

Ornamental horticulture is more an avocation than a vocation now for Mark Swain. He loves working with plants.

“Without a doubt that has provided me with a lot of personal camaraderie and friendships. You have in some cases, particularly in our family, a relationship that turns into a marriage and children and grandchildren. There are life-changing experiences that can happen here,” he said.

And what about education for those three grandchildren? “Well, they’re young, but if Forsyth Tech is where their paths lead them, that would be great.”

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Green Thumb

Mark’s degree in Ornamental Horticulture still comes in handy. “I still love to do stuff in my personal yard,” he said. “A lot of my professional acquaintances and colleagues have no idea I have that kind of background.”

Those who do know can sometimes treat him like a walking green database. “Particularly my family members come to me and ask green thumb questions,” he said. “They ask, ‘What’s wrong with this plant? What do I need to do?’ And I help them with that. My wife is forever asking me, ‘What’s wrong with my plant? What do I need to do?’ And I help them with that. My wife is forever bringing a houseplant to me and asking, ‘What’s wrong with this thing?’”

Green thumb or no, Mark is a lot like anyone else when it comes to his yard. “It’s not where I’d like it to be,” he smiled. “You always can find something to do a little bit differently to make it a little bit better.”

Alumni Spotlight
Teacher’s Pet

Learning to Live with RSD and Seizures with the Help of a Loyal Service Dog

Night Classes

Charlotte “Charli” Angell, in bed for the night, was about to have another seizure. Medicated and in a deep sleep, Charli lay curled in the fetal position with her face in the pillow, the risk of suffocation all too real.

Charli’s mind became conscious of a distant sound, muffled at first, then breaking clear, a sharp bark, and then another, louder still. Charli roused, opened her eyes and rolled over onto her back. She lay helpless, staring at the ceiling as the entire right side of her body began a seemingly endless succession of twitches and convulsions. She could hear the dog whimpering.

“I’ll be okay, Kima,” she thought.

Finally, the seizure passed. Charli turned slowly to Kima, who lay faithfully by her side; fixed on her every move. “Good girl,” she whispered with a faint smile, “good girl.”

Fallen Angell

Charli arrived on the campus of Forsyth Tech in the fall of 2004 to take a biology course required for a degree she was working toward at Salem College. Because Charli was an academic standout, her instructor, Alice Adams-Rudolph, recommended her to the Learning Center as a biology tutor. There, she was noticed for her tenacity and hands-on approach with students. As Forsyth Tech prepared to open the new Mechtild Montgomery Language Lab in January 2008, Randy Candelaria, dean of Library and Learning Resources, offered Charli a position as one of the lab’s first technicians, the position she holds today.

Because Charli was an academic standout, her instructor, Alice Adams-Rudolph, recommended her to the Learning Center as a biology tutor. There, she was noticed for her tenacity and hands-on approach with students. As Forsyth Tech prepared to open the new Mechtild Montgomery Language Lab in January 2008, Randy Candelaria, dean of Library and Learning Resources, offered Charli a position as one of the lab’s first technicians, the position she holds today.

One day in 2006, a step down a stairwell, Charli lost her footing and went down hard. Sprawled across the landing, twisted among her things, Charli remained motionless as she realized the accident in the event was a separate from her. She had made a decision.

“I was talking with a friend who had seen a program about service dogs and how they helped disabled people lead a relatively normal life,” says Charli. “I did some research and decided to adopt a dog in January 2010. I didn’t know if learning to live with RSD wasn’t enough, Charli’s seizures began.

“Although the injuries were mainly sprains and strains, I wasn’t healing properly. I was finally diagnosed with Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy (RSD), also known as Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS),” says Charli. “It’s a sort of disconnect in the communication between the brain and the body that causes a loss of balance and grip strength due to a lack of sensation in the extremities. It also results in a lot of pain as sensory signals are misinterpreted.”

As debilitating as RSD can be, Charli learned to live with it as best she could. Still, her close friends knew how hard it was for her to function at home alone.

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A New Lease on Life

Kima was a six-month-old puppy that had been found living on the streets just days before Charli showed up at the Forsyth County Humane Society. A mix of Labrador and Karelian Bear Dog, Kima was black and white and cute all over, and the two bonded immediately.

“Kima is in the Lab Now”

A sign on the door to the Language Lab announces, “Kima is in the lab now.” While the dog has become a familiar sight for students and staff on campus, people can still be startled when they encounter Kima. “For some students, it’s a novelty to see a dog on campus,” says Charli. “They don’t expect to walk into the Language Lab and see Kima lying on my feet under the desk or enter the elevator and see her sitting in the corner.”

“The best compliment I can get is to hear people remark that they didn’t even know Kima is in the room,” says Charli. “Looking at Kima quietly resting under the desk, you’d never know she was working, ready to spring into action, on call 24/7.”

A BREED APART

The Karelian Bear Dog, a Finnish breed known for its courage in dealing with large prey animals such as bears, is regarded as a national treasure in its home country. Believed to be the descendants of Viking Age spitz-type hunting dogs, this breed is commonly used to hunt bear, moose, elk and wild boar. With quick reflexes and a fearless nature, a Karelian Bear Dog will sacrifice its life to protect its master and is known for its ability to work independently in difficult conditions. In the United States, this breed is sometimes used for bear control.

In addition to her harness, Kima sports her Ferplastic Forsyth Tech Staff ID badge and a back of information about that includes, among other things, directions to Kima’s home. She is a Finnish breed known for its courage in dealing with large prey animals such as bears, is regarded as a national treasure in its home country. Believed to be the descendants of Viking Age spitz-type hunting dogs, this breed is commonly used to hunt bear, moose, elk and wild boar. With quick reflexes and a fearless nature, a Karelian Bear Dog will sacrifice its life to protect its master and is known for its ability to work independently in difficult conditions. In the United States, this breed is sometimes used for bear control.

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A sign on the door to the Language Lab announces, “Kima is in the lab now.” While the dog has become a familiar sight for students and staff on campus, people can still be startled when they encounter Kima. “For some students, it’s a novelty to see a dog on campus,” says Charli. “They don’t expect to walk into the Language Lab and see Kima lying on my feet under the desk or enter the elevator and see her sitting in the corner.”

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Frank, we hear a lot about environmental problems. Can ordinary people do anything in our daily lives to be “greener”?

Yes. This is a timely question. In the 1970s and ’80s, the buzzword was “environment.” Now the buzzword is “sustainability.” We don’t want the environment to get any worse; if anything, we want it to get better. It is our moral obligation to sustain the Earth for our grandchildren and those to follow. There are a number of things we all can do on a daily basis.

What exactly do you mean by sustainability?

It all comes down to conservation. I talk about three main areas in which we can conserve resources: water, energy and waste. It doesn’t take much — just a little change in our lifestyle. If all of us were to do one or two things a day, it would make a real difference.

Is sustainability as big a problem here in North Carolina as it is in some other places in the world?

Environment and sustainability are global. What we do here affects those around the world, and what people do elsewhere affects us. There are no walls. Think about radiation from the nuclear disaster in Japan coming to the United States. What we do in one part of the world affects all the world. We have to do our part.

You were talking about water. Is that a problem here?

Here in the Southeast, we don’t value water as much as we should. If we were in other countries, we would value it more because of how polluted it is in some countries, and how scare. The water that our great-great-grandparents used is the same water we use today. It’s just been recycled. We’ve had plenty of water as a luxury, just as we did for a while with our gasoline. But the price of water will be the next commodity to go up, because the cost of the chemicals and the process to clean it will go up.
So what can we do to save water?

I could talk about that all day. For example, if you turn the shower on and let it run to get warm enough, you are wasting water. If you put a plastic container in the shower to catch that water, you can use it to water your plants, for cleaning, to water the pets. The same goes for water you waste when brushing teeth or shaving. Collect that water and use it instead of letting it run down the drain.

What about toilets?

Some people have low consumption toilets that save almost four gallons per flush. If you have an older toilet, you can still save water by putting bricks or jugs of water into the tank so the tank won’t fill as much. It will still flush just fine.

Can we save on water when we do laundry and dishes?

Sure. We need to wait until we have a full load of clothes or dishes before we think about washing. If you wash dishes by hand, fill the sink with water rather than running it constantly.

Are there other ways to save water?

If you have a swimming pool, keep it covered whenever you’re not using it for a while. It’s amazing in summertime how much water evaporates out of a pool. And if you reside in a house, channel the water from your gutter into a rain barrel, and then use that water for pets, gardening, flowers, all kinds of activities.

You mentioned waste as another area ripe for conservation. What can we do to reduce waste?

Instead of putting something out for the garbage truck to pick up just because it has a little wear, give it to some organization that might be able to get it to somebody who can use it. Once we put it into the waste stream, it’s gone forever. Remember, one person’s trash is another person’s treasure.

What about packaging?

Overpackaging is a huge problem. If you travel to other countries, as I did during my career in the Navy, you see that nobody overpackages like we do in the United States. The government may have to step in on that. But there are things you can do. Instead of paper or plastic bags, choose neither. Cloth bags that can be washed and used over and over is the way to go. And insist that the folks who work at stores use them and don’t push plastic bags on you.

What can we do at work to cut waste?

Instead of throwing away disposable cups, take a mug from home and use it when you take a break. Encourage coworkers to do the same. And don’t print out everything. Computers have increased the amount of paper we waste rather than reduced it. You don’t need to print everything out. Use the folders on your computer instead. When you must print something, save it and use the back of the paper for printing other things.

What about the environment?

When you mow the lawn, don’t take the clippings up and discard them. Clippings are almost like fertilizer for your yard. Leave them to fertilize the yard.

Okay, energy is the third big area you mentioned. What are some easy fixes?

Turn things off. Those screen savers may look beautiful, but if we leave our computers on with a screen saver, they are using as much energy as if we were using the computer. Switch them off if you’re going to be away any amount of time. The same with all those chargers for phones and devices that’s plugged into the wall is using energy. When you travel, unplug as many appliances as you can — washer, dryer, etc. Even when you’re not using them, if they are plugged in, they are consuming energy.

Are those energy-saving lightbulbs worthwhile?

These things really, really work. Some people say they don’t illuminate as well, but they are saving money all over your house. They save about a quarter of the electricity used by the bulbs we normally use. And don’t wait for the old bulbs to burn out before you put the new ones in. That’s an easy call. Start saving right away.

What about heating and cooling?

Little things can help. In the heat of summer, close the curtains to block out some of the heat. In the cold of winter, close the curtains to keep the heat in. And in winter, when you’re ready to go to bed, turn the heat down. You’ll be under the covers, so turn the thermostat to a minimum.

Gas prices are a big problem now. Aside from driving less or buying a hybrid or electric car, what can we do to use less gas?

If you are driving a 1998 or later model, you have fuel injection. As soon as you start that car, fuel injection kicks in. You don’t need it to get there and let your car warm up anymore. And when you’re sitting somewhere with your car idling, you’re using almost as much gas as when your foot is on the pedal. If you’re waiting to pick your child up at school, turn that car off. It’s no longer the case that it takes more energy to turn it off and on than to keep it running. Also, keep your car serviced. Keep it tuned up, change the oil, keep the tires properly inflated, and you’re going to use less gas.

There are great ideas, Frank. Do you deal with these issues in your classes at Forsyth Tech? And where did you learn all this?

Yes, we stress conservation and sustainability in our classes. We deal with water quality, pollution, humans and the environment, and all sorts of environmental issues. I’m a retired captain in the U.S. Navy, where I was an environmental health officer. I guess I’ve been in education most of my life. Just over a year ago, I was hired to come in and coordinate a brand new Environmental Sciences Technology program at Forsyth Tech. I’m still learning — I learn from all my classes, and especially from my environmental issues class, where we deal with everything that pops up, locally as well as globally.

Go Green > It’s Easier Than You Think!

Get started now by learning how you can live a greener life. Simply visit these websites to learn more about conserving electricity, water and household waste:

- [Blash useful videos about how you can conserve electricity in your home](www.blashidy648tc.com)
- [Click on energy-saving videos](www.blashidy648tc.com)
- [Learn over 100 ways you can save water at home](www.blashidy648tc.com)
- [Energy saving household waste reduction tips](www.blashidy648tc.com)

Students in Frank’s Environmental Sciences Technology program discovered that in learning how to promote a more sustainable future, their experience is as big an education as their coursework.
This May, Forsyth Tech graduated 36 percent more students than May 2010. That accomplishment hasn’t gone unnoticed. This year’s commencement speaker, Hilda Pinnix-Ragland, vice president of Corporate Public Affairs for Progress Energy, said that increase says a lot.

“Forsyth Tech really sets the stage as a world-class community college,” Pinnix-Ragland said. “When you look at the Allied Health program, the 100 percent nursing pass rate and the Forsyth Tech partnerships with Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center and more, it’s just world-class. It’s an example for others to follow.

“Take a look at the other programs too,” she continued. “Caterpillar said it best. If it hadn’t been for Forsyth Tech, Caterpillar would not have chosen to come here. It’s proven that there are Forsyth Tech accomplishments everywhere. It sets a stage for the future.”

Pinnix-Ragland is no stranger to the North Carolina community college system. During her 10-year association with the system, she was elected chair of the North Carolina State Board of Community Colleges in 2005, the first woman and first African-American to have held that title. In other public addresses, Pinnix-Ragland has promoted the importance of community involvement, leadership and the crucial elements of confidence, competence and courage. In her Forsyth Tech commencement address on May 12, she also highlighted commitment.

“When I was preparing for this speech,” she said, “I thought about Mark Perew, a new Forsyth Tech graduate. He told me how he had dropped out of college in 1978, and how that mistake had haunted him and cost him opportunities as time went by. But Forsyth Tech gave him a place to start over. After walking across the stage on graduation night, he put that mistake behind him and his future before him. That speaks volumes.” Pinnix-Ragland said that Mark plans now to pursue a master’s degree so that he can come back to Forsyth Tech to teach. “He plans to give back and pay it forward,” she said.

Pinnix-Ragland said 2011 is a pivotal year for her in underscoring the richness and value in the community college system. Earlier this spring, three of her Progress Energy employees earned their bachelor’s degrees, but only after having earned their associate’s degrees two years before. She had challenged these three line technicians to return to school. “I think they’re waiting for me to challenge them again,” she said, with a chuckle. “But look at their success by way of the associate’s degree. That defines the value of the community college system.

“None of this happens without leadership,” she said. “Forsyth Tech is so fortunate to have been led in the past by Dr. Bob Greene, who received the I.E. Ready Award earlier this year, which is the highest honor the community college system can offer, and today by Dr. Gary Green. Both of these leaders have guided the college through times of tremendous growth and change.

“President Obama really said it best after his visit to Forsyth Tech late last year,” she said. “I saw him at an event in Georgetown where he mentioned Forsyth Tech again. He said Forsyth Tech reflects what the future can look like.” Pinnix-Ragland called that high praise. It reminds her, she said, of a quote from Ralph Waldo Emerson that she often uses in end speeches: “This time, like all times, is a very good one, if we know what to do with it.”
Winston-Salem Industries for the Blind had a problem. It was what you’d call a good kind of problem: growing pains. But the problem needed to be dealt with, and Forsyth Tech had the answers.

The business had been growing so fast—as much as 21 percent per year for the past 15 years—that it was hard-pressed to handle the demand. “We are a very entrepreneurial organization,” Dan Kelly, the vice president for Operations, said recently. “Our growth had definitely outpaced our infrastructure, so we needed to get with the 21st century in terms of technology. We had to modernize to be able to manage that growth so that we could continue to employ people who are blind.”

When Industries for the Blind (IFB) took its problem to Forsyth Technical Community College, the college used a grant from Duke Energy to hire Barry Self, who had recently retired as an executive with R.J. Reynolds International. Barry became the project manager in an ambitious partnership in which Forsyth Tech worked with Industries for the Blind to streamline and increase manufacturing capacity, making it possible to hire even more people who are blind.

Providing Jobs – and Hope
Winston-Salem Industries for the Blind has grown and changed dramatically since 1936, when the Lions Club established it to provide job opportunities for people who were blind or visually impaired. At first, six workers who were blind made brooms and mattresses and caned chairs in a two-room shop on Fifth Street.

Since then, Industries for the Blind has ventured into other products and other areas. Today, it has facilities in Asheville and Puerto Rico as well as Winston-Salem. While its workers still make some cleaning products and mattresses, it has added other lines, including office supplies and apparel. A major area of growth has been in providing a variety of specialized products to the U.S. military and government—things such as uniforms, parachutes, specialty clothing and equipment items, and even prescription lenses for Veterans Administration hospitals.

Winston-Salem Industries for the Blind is now the United States’ largest employer of people who are blind, with more than 400 blind employees. By 2009, its annual sales had soared from a few hundred dollars in 1936 to more than $100 million.
Barry Self works with a group of dedicated colleagues at Forsyth Tech to provide IT services to its clients. He has been instrumental in helping Industries for the Blind secure a major contract with the Department of Defense (DOD). The project involved the development of software to help Industries for the Blind manage their inventory. Barry worked with DOD to develop a system that met their needs, and the result was a system that was not only cost-effective but also highly successful. Industries for the Blind was able to cut their inventory costs by 99% and improve their overall performance. Barry’s dedication to his work and his ability to work collaboratively with others have made him a valuable asset to Forsyth Tech.

Barry’s work with DOD has also benefited other organizations in the community. He worked with Winston-Salem Industries for the Blind to secure a grant from the Golden LEAF Foundation, which helped the organization purchase the necessary equipment to implement the new system. Barry’s efforts have helped Industries for the Blind become more efficient and successful, and he has been recognized for his contributions with a scholarship from the Foundation.

Barry’s commitment to helping others is not limited to his work at Forsyth Tech. He is also involved in community service, and his efforts have been recognized with a scholarship from the Foundation. Barry is a role model for others, and his dedication to his work and his community is an inspiration to all who know him.

The Important Things

Since the implementation of the changes, Industries for the Blind has added 68 new jobs. “We’re humbled by all this,” Kelly said, “and all this would have been impossible to manage without the new system. We’ve been able to grow without having to add a lot of staff to the supply chain operations. Instead, we’ve been able to add value-added activities such as production, shipping, and inspections. Our employees are able to focus on what’s important.”

Barry’s work with Forsyth Tech now focuses on helping Caterpillar Inc. gear up its new plant in Winston-Salem, but he still visits Industries for the Blind if a problem arises. “I love working at IFB,” he said. “They are fabulous people. One thing I learned during my months there: They love what they do.”

Why I Support Forsyth Tech

Murray Greason, a respected Winston-Salem attorney and one of the city’s most active civic leaders, says he became interested in Forsyth Tech through the side door. Several years ago, when Forsyth Tech mounted its first capital campaign, Mr. Greason perked up his ears. “My entire life has been dedicated to Wake Forest University and to economic development,” he said. “When Forsyth Tech started a capital campaign to raise money to put up a building in Piedmont Triad Research Park to train technicians, it occurred to me that we needed physical evidence that we had partners in the Research Park, and that it wasn’t all about Wake Forest. I made a substantial gift to the capital campaign.”

Mr. Greason got both his bachelor’s and his law degrees from Wake Forest, and was ranked first in his class in law school all three years. A partner in Wrinkle Carley Sandridge & Rice, PLLC, he has served over the years as a trustee of the university and a member of the law school’s board of visitors, among many Wake Forest boards.

But when Mr. Greason was elected to the Forsyth Tech Foundation board, the Wake Forest connection ceased to be his only passion. “Once I got on the board, I was educated. I was amazed at all the good Forsyth Tech does on its own. And after five years on the board, I’m more convinced than ever that Forsyth Tech is one of the most valuable institutions in our community.”

Mr. Greason, who has just completed a term as the foundation board’s chairman, said he has learned through well-organized presentations at board meetings about the many effective programs at the school. “At any moment in time, literally thousands and thousands of people are being served by Forsyth Tech — in GED programs, in college transfer programs, in high-tech manufacturing programs and in whole new programs for new industries, among others.”

“When you listen to somebody from Caterpillar talking about how Forsyth Tech was a major, major factor in their selecting Winston-Salem for their new plant, when the president of the United States comes to say you’re doing something right here, when Dr. Gary Green goes to Washington — it’s very easy to be enthusiastic about supporting Forsyth Tech. It’s very easy to be enthusiastic about raising money for scholarships, faculty development and equipment.”

How You Can Support Forsyth Tech

Forsyth Technical Community College serves more than 50,000 students annually in degree, diploma and certificate programs, as well as in continuing education courses. To make educational opportunities widely available, and to meet the needs for a well-educated, skilled workforce, Forsyth Tech depends on private contributions from individuals, corporations, foundations and other organizations.

The Foundation of Forsyth Tech, a nonprofit organization, is the fund-raising arm of the college. Your gift to Forsyth Tech through the Foundation will support:

> Scholarships for deserving students
> Technology for classrooms, labs and shops
> Professional development grants for faculty and staff

Your Gift Creates a Strong College and a Strong Community

Choose your level of support:

- President’s Club $10,000 and up
- Pinnacle Club $5,000-$9,999
- Pacesetter’s Club $1,000-$4,999
- Directors $500-$999
- Leaders $250-$499
- Champions $100-$249
- Friends Up to $99

Give online: Use your credit card to make a secure donation at www.forsythtech.edu/support/giving-to-forsyth-tech.

Send a check: Make your check payable to Forsyth Tech Foundation. Mail to The Foundation of Forsyth Tech, 2100 Six Mile Road, Winston-Salem, NC 27103-5197.

Get more information: Learn about gifts you can make in honor of or in memory of individuals, matching gifts, charitable trusts and bequests, and gifts of stocks and property. Call Dr. Deborah R. Cline, Executive Director, The Foundation of Forsyth Tech at 336.734.7520 or email scovitz@forsythtech.edu.
The Dog Days of Summer... Cody, a nine-year-old mixed breed, knows how to take it easy on a sultry summer day. When he was a five-week-old pup, Cody wandered into One Way Architectural Antiques in King and never left. He found a loving home among the garden art, antiques and artifacts at one of the oldest homesteads in the area. Patty Byrd, Printing Specialist in Forsyth Tech's Marketing and Public Relations Department, snapped this shot of Cody on one of her frequent visits to One Way.