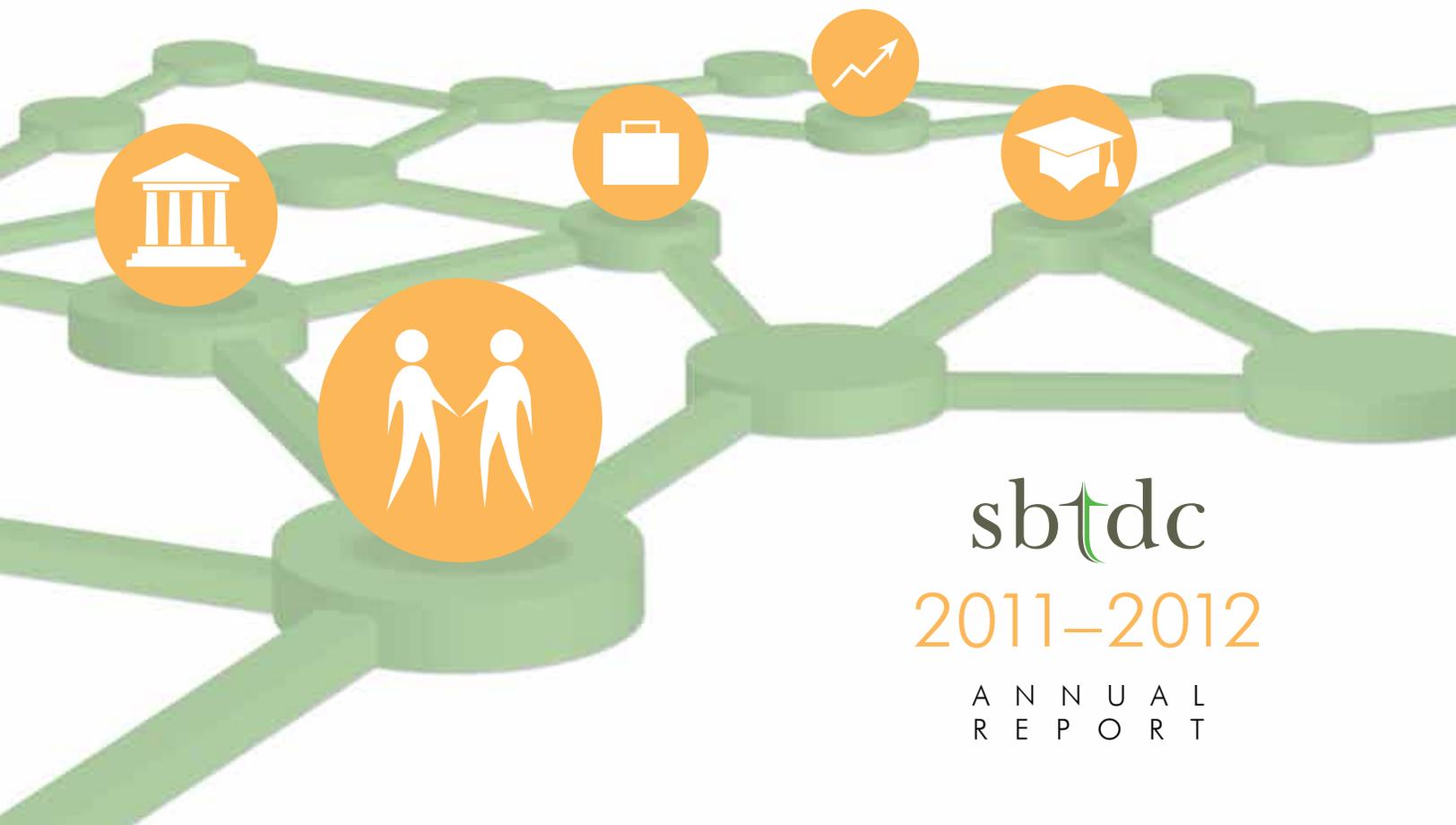


ENGAGE. CONNECT. THRIVE.



sbt^tdc

2011–2012

A N N U A L
R E P O R T

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A MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR



Beverly Eaves Perdue

GOVERNOR
State of North Carolina

Dear Fellow North Carolinians:

For over a quarter of a century, the Small Business and Technology Development Center (SBTDC) has been our leading resource for serving the needs of our state's small to medium-sized businesses, and it has done so with high energy, dedication, and commitment to positive outcomes and impact.

Three years ago, I asked the SBTDC to lead a program initiative aimed at helping this segment of businesses to retain jobs and build strategies to grow their businesses. This initiative, called Biz Boost, is unique in our country and has clearly demonstrated the value of paying attention to sustaining existing jobs as a part of our state's broader jobs and employment strategy.

More recently, the SBTDC has teamed with our Community College System and our Department of Revenue on a Small Business Taxpayer Recovery Program effort. This program is instrumental in helping the state collect past-due business taxes, but more importantly, it is providing participating companies with access to management counseling assistance, which can help them be more successful.

We are proud of the work of the SBTDC and its many accomplishments, and thank the staff for their continued service to our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Beverly Eaves Perdue". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.




JobsNOW
www.jobsnow.nc.gov


Biz Boost
www.sbtcd.org/bizboost


bl^{nc}
www.blnc.gov

MESSAGES



Thomas Ross

PRESIDENT

The University of North Carolina

With its strong outreach presence through offices based on our University campuses, the SBTDC serves businesses in all 100 counties of the state. I'm pleased to have this opportunity to thank the SBTDC for their ongoing and outstanding efforts to help small and medium-sized businesses in North Carolina tackle and overcome the challenges of the economic downturn.

In carrying out its mission, the SBTDC has found ways to effectively partner with our North Carolina Community College System, the North Carolina Department of Commerce, and other organizations committed to economic development. In addition, it has engaged our UNC campuses in a variety of ways – principally by providing nearly 300 graduate and professional students each year with meaningful opportunities for real-life learning experiences through project work with client companies.

Congratulations to the SBTDC, and thank you for all that you do to make North Carolina a better place for business owners to live, work, learn and thrive.



Terri Lomax

VICE CHANCELLOR

North Carolina State University

North Carolina State University is pleased to administer the SBTDC on behalf of The University of North Carolina System. As the State's land grant institution, we have a long history of commitment to the people of North Carolina and the type of outreach and engagement that is evident in the SBTDC's work with small and medium-sized businesses across the state.

The SBTDC is the largest inter-institutional program of The University System, with offices hosted by all of its campuses. Through this structured approach to providing services, the SBTDC is able to leverage the assets of each campus and, in particular, engage large numbers of students in the work of the Centers.

The work of the SBTDC is making a real difference in the lives of business owners across North Carolina. I congratulate their staff on another year of service and outstanding accomplishments.



Scott Daugherty

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
SBTDC**

The past year has been more fun than the prior three. It's been fun because we can so tangibly see and feel the improvements in North Carolina's economy through the success of our clients. It's been a tough recovery and has required enormous focus from our staff as we tried to figure out how best to help our clients manage their businesses through the downturn. Most of our clients succeeded, while far too many other North Carolina businesses did not.

We take great pride in the accomplishments and performance of our clients – you'll see that in the success stories included in this annual report. You'll also see it in the economic impact results. These most recent numbers include client employment and sales growth at levels not seen since 2007, just prior to the recession.

We as an organization have accomplished a great deal in tough times as well. We've enjoyed great support from The University of North Carolina System and the constituent institutions which host our offices. We have had great support and engagement with our North Carolina Department of Commerce, particularly through its Workforce Solutions Division, and we have built a stronger, more collaborative working relationship with the NC Community College System's Small Business Center Network (SBCN) as a key partner in serving North Carolina businesses.

These recent tough times have somehow made us better. We've been more engaged and better connected than ever, and we are now seeing our clients beginning to thrive once again. We applaud them on their success and thank our highly committed staff and partners for all of their tremendous work in support of small to medium-sized businesses in North Carolina.



Lynn Douthett

**DISTRICT DIRECTOR
U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**

Congratulations to the SBTDC on another very successful year of service to North Carolina small businesses. They are a valued partner of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) in providing high-quality business counseling and management education to thousands of firms across our state.

This year, the SBTDC played a major role collaborating with the SBA, the North Carolina Department of Commerce, the North Carolina Rural Center and the North Carolina Bankers Association in fostering an environment to support small business job creation and access to capital. Efforts to expand their Export program and grow their energy and clean technology programs make a significant difference in these critical market segments.

We celebrate the journey and success of their clients – especially those highlighted in this report. They represent the power of small business in our North Carolina economy and serve as a real inspiration to countless other firms.

Many thanks to the SBTDC staff for their leadership, dedication and valued service.

ABOUT THE SBTDC

The Small Business and Technology Development Center (SBTDC) is a business advisory service of The University of North Carolina System. Since 1984, the SBTDC has helped over 125,000 North Carolina entrepreneurs make their businesses better.

The SBTDC's statewide team provides personalized management counseling and education services designed to help small and medium-sized businesses:

- Obtain quality business and market information
- Evaluate and improve financial performance
- Access new capital and markets
- Improve management and employee performance
- Make better decisions and achieve goals

Our services revolve around areas critical to sustaining and growing businesses:

Strategy Development and Implementation – SBTDC assessments, strategic performance retreats and ongoing counseling help owners and managers:

- Assess and benchmark company performance and effectiveness
- Develop and implement successful strategies, both short and long term
- Identify priorities and action steps
- Measure and monitor progress

Financing – The SBTDC specializes in helping businesses:

- Analyze revenue and costs, and understand financial data and reports
- Prepare financial projections

- Identify and access sources of capital, including traditional and SBA-backed loans, angel and venture capital, R&D funding, and export financing

Marketing – SBTDC counselors and specialized market research staff help companies enhance their success in the marketplace by identifying:

- Information on industry trends, customers, competitors, and best business practices
- New or expanded markets for existing products and services
- Federal, state and local government contracting opportunities
- Commercialization options for new, innovative technologies

Performance Improvement – The SBTDC's performance enhancement services help clients:

- Link business strategies to workplace learning and accomplishments
- Strengthen leadership and management skills
- Refine internal processes to improve performance
- Enhance communications and teamwork

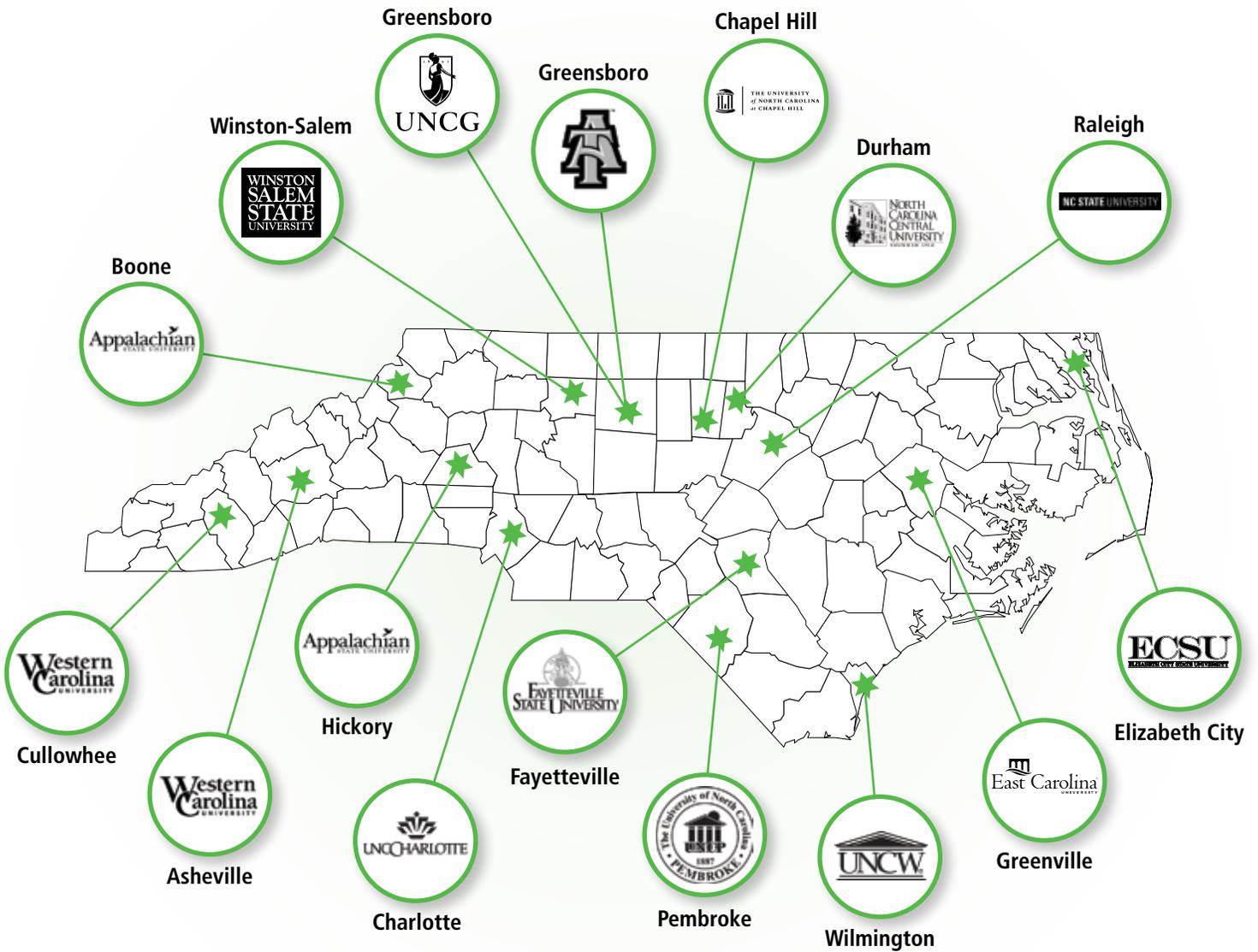
Economic and Community Development – The SBTDC also provides research, planning facilitation and strategy development to public and private sector organizations, leading to enhanced economic opportunities and an improved environment for small businesses and entrepreneurs in their respective communities.

ENGAGE. CONNECT. THRIVE.

Engaging with the SBTDC provides companies with a personalized business coach and connection to a myriad of resources, including access to new markets via government contracting and exporting, and access to financing from banks, investors, and other capital sources. SBTDC clients can tap into tools that help benchmark company performance, lay out a tactical road map, and track accomplishments. As a result, engaged small to medium-sized companies become more competitive and thrive.

This annual report introduces you to entrepreneurs who have engaged with the SBTDC to make their businesses better. Their companies provide a wide variety of products and services, including solar energy, reclaimed furniture, high-end jeans, bicycle sales and repair, and process control systems. They represent the thousands of small to medium-sized companies across North Carolina that are innovating, growing, and both creating and retaining jobs.

SBTDC STATEWIDE OFFICES



HEADQUARTERS

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info@sbtdc.org

UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS

The SBTDC is administered by NC State University on behalf of The University of North Carolina System. We maintain 16 offices across the state, which are each affiliated with one or more constituent institution campuses.

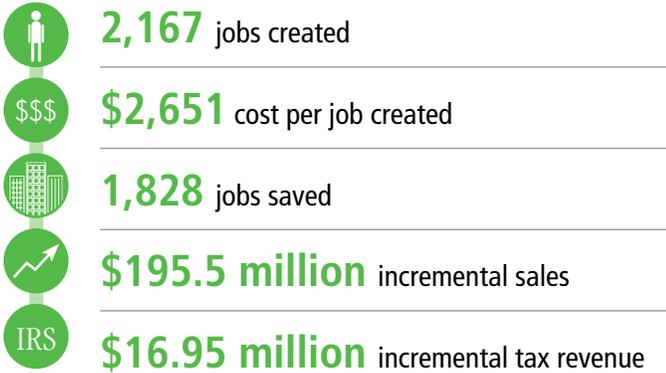
Through the experience and skill of SBTDC staff across this statewide network of university-affiliated offices, we are able to reach and serve a diverse client base and quickly support their changing needs.

THE SBTDC'S IMPACT

By providing entrepreneurs with the direction they need to build and grow successful businesses, the SBTDC positively impacts North Carolina's economy.

*Each year, the SBTDC participates in a national Impact Assessment Study of clients who receive five or more hours of business counseling.**

SBTDC CLIENTS ACHIEVED THE FOLLOWING:



OVER THE LAST 10 YEARS

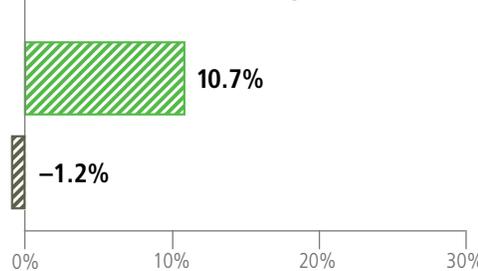
Over the last 10 years, counseling provided to our clients generated **\$3.95** in incremental tax revenues for every **\$1** spent on the SBTDC program.

SBTDC clients significantly outperform the average North Carolina business in the number of jobs created and in sales growth (compared to the previous year's average).

SBTDC clients NC average

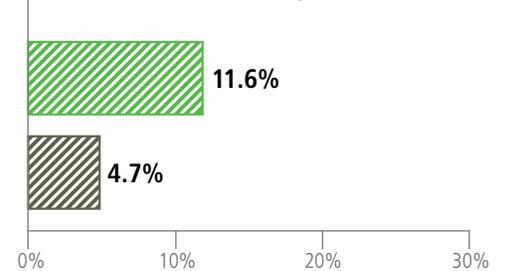
JOBS CREATED

SBTDC clients vs. the NC average



SALES GROWTH

SBTDC clients vs. the NC average



IN 2011, SBTDC CLIENTS:

- Received over 69,000 hours of counseling
- Achieved over \$168 million in sales increases
- Obtained government contracts worth over \$277 million
- Exported their products to over 33 countries
- Gained almost \$60 million in financing
- Created or retained 3,200 jobs

* The 2011 Impact Assessment Study surveyed SBTDC clients that received more than five hours of service in 2009, and reflects results from 2009–2010. It includes federal and state income and sales taxes, but does not include additional taxes such as corporate taxes, property taxes, unemployment taxes or social security payments.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Through student engagement, the SBTDC helps university students gain valuable experience while helping North Carolina businesses succeed.

North Carolina's small and medium-sized businesses often have goals or issues they would like to address, but limited time or resources to tackle them. That's where The North Carolina Small Business and Technology Development Center (SBTDC) comes in. By leveraging student talent across the state, the University of North Carolina System's SBTDC can match qualified graduate students with the needs of its client businesses – and does so on a regular basis.

Confidential to client companies, the SBTDC's student engagement initiative allows graduate and professional students the opportunity to work on real business issues and supplement what they've learned in the classroom. Approximately 300 students participate each year, including business and law students, as well as students from other disciplines. Forms of student engagement include paid summer internships, classroom projects, assistantships, business valuation projects and more. In most instances, the students receive course credit for projects, and their work is completed under the supervision of professional staff. The SBTDC serves as the instructor of record, as well as liaison between clients and students.

"The unique value we bring is that we have relationships with the client companies before, during and after the project," said Mike Seibert, Regional Director of the SBTDC at North Carolina State University. "Once the project is completed, we can work with clients to implement recommendations and move toward their business objectives."

The MBA Learning Alliance, a year-long executive MBA program at UNC Wilmington (UNCW), engages 35–50 students per semester. These students are divided into groups of 5 or 6, and each group is assigned a medium-sized company. The group starts by looking at the company's strategy, marketing, finances and more. Meetings are arranged by the SBTDC throughout the process, and at the end of the semester the students present their findings to the company. The second semester is then driven by the client, and the students evaluate the company's potential in reaching these goals.

"Several clients have been through the Learning Alliance multiple times because it has been so beneficial to them," said Fran Scarlett, Regional

Director of the SBTDC at UNCW. "This is a living case study. Instead of sitting in class reading cases, they are working with a living, breathing company."

The SBTDC at East Carolina University (ECU) is also very active in pairing students with medium-sized companies. One current example is that of a business graduate student placed with a dental supply company wanting to tap into government markets. As a result of student engagement, the intern has helped the company develop marketing narratives, contact local federal bases, and apply for Medical/Surgical Prime Vendor programs with the Defense Logistics Agency. The intern has also completed a competitive analysis in the government market and prepared a presentation for the company to outline next steps.

At ECU, students must complete 150 hours of service with a company in order to receive 3 credit hours toward their MBA or MSA. And with the MBA program now available online, the SBTDC is able to place ECU students with companies statewide.

Scott Daugherty, Executive Director of the SBTDC says, "Companies are almost always surprised at the high quality of work that is provided through student engagement, and students say it's the best experience they have as part of their graduate program. This is a win-win for the company, the student, and the represented university."

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT + THE SBTDC

In 2011, the SBTDC placed a total of 372 students with 357 businesses across the state, yielding over 25,000 hours of service.



372
STUDENTS



357
BUSINESSES



25,000+
HOURS

PARTNERSHIPS

Thanks to its partners, the SBTDC provides innovative and effective services to North Carolina's business community.

Partnerships are key to the SBTDC's success. Through funding, collaboration, alliances and teamwork, the following partners have made the work of the SBTDC possible:



UNC SYSTEM

The SBTDC is administered by NC State University on behalf of The University of North Carolina System, and our offices are each affiliated with one or more constituent institution campuses. As a university-based program, the SBTDC engages hundreds of undergraduate, graduate and professional students each year, effectively enhancing their classroom work with "real-world" business experience. At many campuses, the SBTDC provides a gateway to outreach and engagement in the broader community.



U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (SBA)

The SBTDC has been North Carolina's representative in the U.S. Small Business Administration's national Small Business Development Center (SBDC) program since 1984. As an SBA counseling and training partner, the SBTDC reaches out to NC businesses to assist with SBA financing programs, technology development, contracting, exporting, and a wide variety of other business issues.



DEFENSE LOGISTICS AGENCY (DLA)

The SBTDC has been part of the Department of Defense – Defense Logistics Agency's national Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) program since 1986. NC PTAC educates business associates on how to obtain contracts by providing comprehensive assistance in selling products and services to local, state and federal government agencies.



NC DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE (NC DOC)

The SBTDC works closely with the NC Department of Commerce, and is the state's designated disaster assistance resource for businesses. In 2010, Governor Bev Perdue appointed SBTDC Executive Director Scott Daugherty as NC's first Commissioner for Small Business, creating a strong leadership and advocacy role for the state's small business community within NC DOC. That same year, as part of the Governor's JobsNOW program, the NC Commission on Workforce Development within NC DOC funded the Biz Boost initiative (see article on page 9).



NC SMALL BUSINESS CENTER NETWORK (SBCN)

The SBTDC collaborates closely with the Community College System's Small Business Center Network to assure that there is well-coordinated access to business assistance services statewide for start-up entrepreneurs and existing businesses. The Small Business Centers at the 58 community colleges are community-based providers of training, counseling, and resource information for new businesses.



U.S. EX-IM BANK (EX-IM)

Since 1997, the SBTDC has been the U.S. Export-Import Bank's North Carolina City-State Partner. This initiative brings economic development entities together with Ex-Im Bank in a partnership designed to expand export opportunities.

Additionally, various private sector partners assist the SBTDC as board members, planners, sponsors and expert panelists.

All these university, federal, state and private sector partners enable the SBTDC to leverage resources and provide innovative and effective services for the benefit of North Carolina's business community.

Recent collaborations with North Carolina agencies make a real difference for business taxpayers and management teams.



NC DOR PARTNERS WITH THE SBTDC AND SBCN ON SMALL BUSINESS TAXPAYER RECOVERY PROGRAM

Since July 2011, more than 1,700 businesses have signed up for a program launched by the NC Department of Revenue (NC DOR) aimed at helping those who are struggling with certain tax issues as a result of the weakened economy. The Small Business Taxpayer Recovery Program (SBTRP) offers penalty and fee waivers, as well as longer-term payment plans, to companies that have fallen behind on sales, withholding and other trust taxes. This program helps companies continue to operate and keep their employees working.

Businesses with 200 or fewer employees qualify for the program and must agree to use the counseling services of the SBTDC or the Community College System's Small Business Center Network (SBCN).

Both organizations assist participating small business owners with financial planning and other needs, with the SBTDC focusing on companies with 10 or more employees.

In the first eight months, participating businesses have agreed to repay over \$28 million in delinquent trust taxes. These businesses will save over \$11 million in fees and penalties if they comply with the terms of their installment agreement.

"The SBTRP is one of the ways the Department of Revenue is trying to help small businesses through the economic downturn," said NC DOR Division Director Cale Johnson, "and the SBTDC has proven to be an invaluable partner in this effort."



BIZ BOOST: NC COMMISSION ON WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS WITH THE SBTDC TO ASSIST MANAGEMENT TEAMS

Through the Biz Boost initiative, the NC Commission on Workforce Development has developed an innovative approach to job loss aversion in partnership with the SBTDC. Traditionally, Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funding has been used solely for training of incumbent workers and retraining of displaced workers. With Biz Boost, the Commission on Workforce Development is committing to the retention of existing jobs through the allocation of resources and technical assistance to owners and management teams to help stabilize and improve their businesses, maintaining and growing jobs across the state.

The 1,710 Biz Boost clients served between January 2010 and December 2011 represent 132,411 full-time jobs (average 77 jobs per business),

7,601 part-time jobs, and over \$10 billion in sales. Over one-third are manufacturers (35%); other industries represented include construction (11%), services (10%), retail (7%), wholesale trade (5%), and health care (5%).

These clients have achieved impressive results over the last two years. They have collectively created 5,732 jobs and retained 3,522 jobs. They have raised over \$98 million in capital, and been awarded 1,677 government contracts worth over \$466 million. These outcomes show that the collaboration between the NC Commission on Workforce Development and the SBTDC has made a real difference to small and medium-sized businesses, and ultimately to North Carolina's economy.



FLS ENERGY

Asheville, North Carolina

www.flsenergy.com

Imagine solar energy being a mainstream energy source, as common as running water, with solar panels readily installed on every home in your neighborhood. That was the dream and mission that started FLS Energy, a solar energy company based in Asheville, North Carolina.

Founding partners Michael Shore, Dale Freudenberger, and Hardy LeGwin first brainstormed the idea while volunteering, working on the expansion of a school roof. Dale had gotten out of a previous construction business and was wondering what to do next. He considered several ideas before finally suggesting a solar energy company – and after 6 months of discussion, the three got serious.

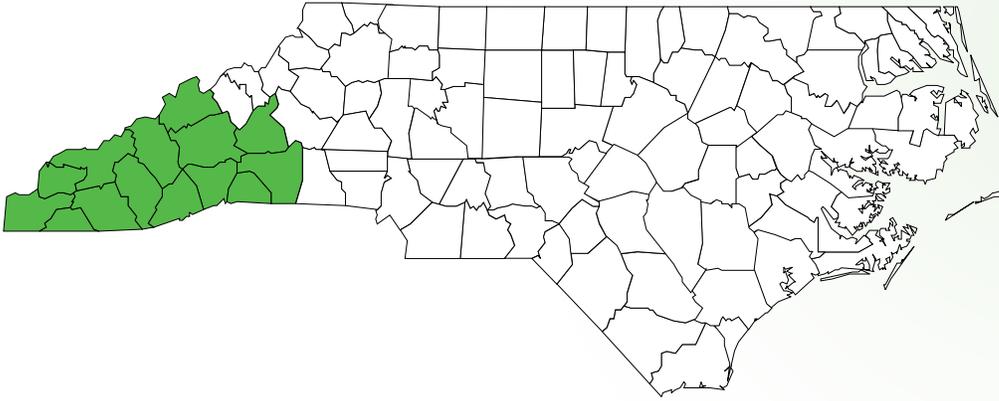
FLS Energy opened its doors in 2006 based on the core values of integrity, craftsmanship, professionalism and service. They first contacted the SBTDC in 2009 with a request to gain access to the GSA contracting schedules and a desire to expand into government procurement.

“We have a contract at Camp Lejeune on the coast where we’re putting solar on houses in neighborhoods. We own those panels, we installed them, maintain them, measure the amount of energy generated that heats the homes’ water, and sell the energy to the housing company. It really can be mainstream,” said Michael.

FLS Energy has received several forms of assistance through Western Carolina University’s Economic Development Administration (EDA) Center for Rapid Product Realization – a collaboration of the SBTDC, College of Business and the Kimmel School. The SBTDC helped FLS Energy obtain workforce development grants for employee training, a Green Fund Award through the Department of Commerce, investment through the Natural Capital Investment Fund (NCIF), and a Department of Defense (DoD) subcontract. SBTDC staff also conducted a financial analysis using ProfitCents. WCU business and engineering student teams were utilized for various projects – such as the SunRex monitoring system, which now has a provisional patent – and separate engineering projects from the Rapid Center focused on product development.

As a result of these combined efforts, FLS Energy’s gross profit grew from \$8.1 million in 2009 to \$18 million in 2010 to \$35 million in 2011. The company expects gross revenue to double again in 2012 and also expects to hire another 30 employees.

When giving advice to others who may be considering starting a business of their own, Michael says, “Definitely take advantage of services that are out there like the SBTDC. For me, I advise people who are going into business to go into business with partners and people that they trust.”



HOST CAMPUS:
WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY



CENTER DIRECTOR:
Wendy Cagle



FLS has utilized WCU's EDA Center for Rapid Product Realization — a collaboration of the SBTDC, College of Business and the Kimmel School.

HOW DOES FLS ENERGY DESCRIBE THE SBTDC?

- Customer-service oriented
- Empowering
- Supportive
- Caring
- In-the-know



GROWING FARM RECOGNIZED AS “COMPANY TO WATCH”

Hickory Nut Gap Meats provides grass-fed beef, pork and poultry to restaurants, tailgate markets and grocers, including 24 Earth Fare locations. The family-owned company also sells at their farm store and online. Hickory Nut Gap welcomes the public to the farm for activities like corn mazes, berry picking and school tours.

In 2006, owners Amy and Jamie Ager came to the SBTDC for assistance with financial analysis, including costing and profitability. The SBTDC has since assisted with marketing, branding, human resources, and strategic planning resulting in expanded products, new markets, agritourism

expansion and the addition of on-line sales. The SBTDC also guided students who developed a business plan as a basis for a future funding proposal for a USDA Value Added Producer Grant.

They have grown from 2 full-time employees in 2006 to 7 full-time and 3 part-time employees, plus student interns. Sales have increased from \$200,000 to close to \$1.3 million in 2011. They were also recognized as a 2011 NC Companies to Watch winner — the only farm recognized.

Visit Hickory Nut Gap Meats at www.hickorynutgapfarm.com.



RECLAMATION, LLC

Hickory, North Carolina

A start-up furniture business in Hickory, North Carolina, Reclamation, LLC manufactures tables from reclaimed wood. The business started in February 2011 with self-funding from its four principal owners: Pete Zagaroli, Ryan Lovern, Rick Barry and Clay Neill.

Reclamation began producing furniture from wood that was reclaimed from old buildings. They saw a niche where they could find their own raw material by harvesting reclaimed wood from several old factories and mills in the area, and set up a production facility to convert the material into marketable pieces of furniture.

"We're a full repurposing company," says Pete. "When we go onto a site, most facilities have old and contemporary portions. We tear down the old and redevelop. We want to reuse, recycle and repurpose everything involved in the project."

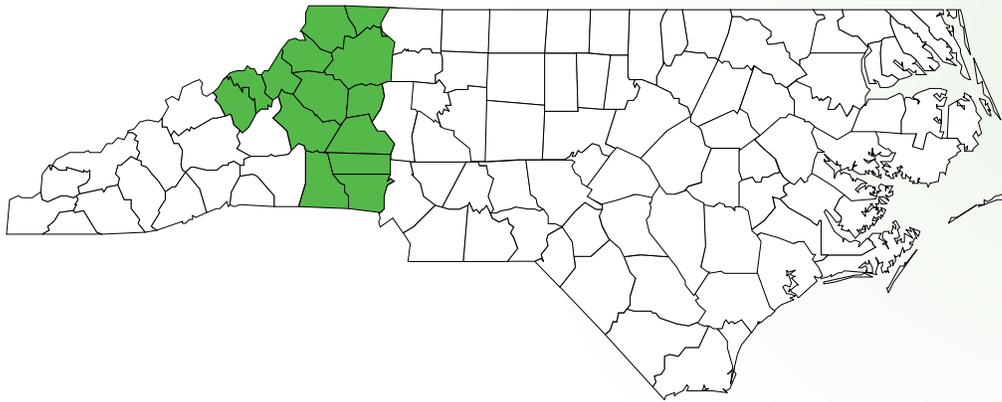
Reclamation first got in touch with the SBTDC in May 2011, seeking advice on setting goals as well as help with financial projections. "I'm on the board for the City of Hickory Small Business Council, and the SBTDC's Bill Parrish spoke at a meeting," says Ryan. "At the time, we had a consultant that we were paying all this money. It was difficult to see thousands of dollars going out the door. Bill got us in touch with SBTDC business counselor Byron Hicks, and we put him on speed dial."

Byron assisted Reclamation with long-range planning – where they are, where they have to go, and looking beyond getting the next 120 tables made. Helping Reclamation set and meet goals has been monumental in the business's success. "We can't believe more people don't utilize the SBTDC. The things they advise us on have been extremely helpful. When you look at our bottom line, it makes a difference whether we would have made it or not," says Pete.

Meeting their goals allowed Reclamation to replace their contract labor with full-time employees. They have also relocated to a larger facility, which will allow them to grow and eventually double production. "It is exciting to see a new manufacturing business open in this area, since many have closed during the recession," says Byron. Reclamation now sells to several leaders in the industry, including Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams, an internationally acclaimed home furnishings company.

The SBTDC also engaged an ASU graduate student to use Reclamation for a research paper on supply chain management. The paper outlined the current supply chain and suggested efficiency improvements.

With the help of the SBTDC, Reclamation has grown from a furniture builder into a sustainable furniture manufacturer. They believe that the need for American-made products is continuing to grow, and that "Made in America" is starting to mean something again.



HOST CAMPUS:
APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY



CENTER DIRECTOR:
Bill Parrish



The SBTDC engaged an ASU graduate student to use Reclamation, LLC for a research paper on supply chain management, which suggested efficiency improvements.

HOW DOES RECLAMATION, LLC DESCRIBE THE SBTDC?

- Non-judgmental
- Focused
- Experienced
- Guiding
- Necessary



COMPANY BENEFITS FROM MBA BUSINESS VALUATION PROJECT

Established in Wilkes County by Steve and Sandy Forrest in 1977, Brushy Mountain Bee Farm (BMBF) provides a wide array of products for beekeeping, candle and soap-making hobbyists. BMBF is both a rapidly growing company and a company in transition.

In 2007, Steve and Sandy negotiated a deal to transfer ownership to Shane Gebauer, the General Manager, over a period of years provided certain performance terms were met. As part of the transfer of ownership, BMBF was concerned about the trajectory of their company's growth and reached out to the SBTDC.

Following an assessment of their situation, the SBTDC identified an opportunity to engage a team of MS Accounting students from Wake Forest University, within the context of a business valuation class.

The team's task was to provide a business valuation in modeling the *Statement of Standards for Valuation Services No. 1* of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. The team reported their findings in March 2011. For the students, this was a real-world application of their coursework, and for the client it represented an objective assessment of the firm's potential range of values, as well as a valuable financial planning tool.

Today, with assistance from the SBTDC, BMBF reports significant increases in sales and gross margin, a dramatic improvement in profitability, and most importantly, a highly focused plan to achieve their personal and professional goals.

Visit Brushy Mountain Bee Farm at www.brushymountainbeefarm.com.



BEYU CAFFE

Durham, North Carolina

www.beyucaffe.com

Prior to opening and operating Durham's Beyu Caffe, Duke Alumnus Dorian Bolden was a successful financial advisor in New York; however, 2004 proved to be a rough year for Dorian when he experienced the loss of his father as well as a merger at his company. Though he survived the merger, he realized that tomorrow isn't guaranteed, and made the life-changing decision to walk away from Corporate America and follow his own entrepreneurial dream.

Combining his love for coffee, food, live music and entertainment, the vision for Beyu Caffe (pronounced "be you") was born. Prior to opening up shop, Dorian returned to North Carolina, performed extensive research, and worked hands-on in the industry to learn the ins and outs of operating such a business. Taking the time to work for other food-industry businesses allowed him to see how they handled various situations, which made the process easier.

Internet searches eventually brought Dorian to the SBTDC's website where he found information on a pre-venture orientation seminar in 2006. The seminar was conducted by the SBTDC's Mary Speight, who became Dorian's business counselor. Mary assisted Dorian with the development of his business plan and a loan package to ensure additional funding for the opening of the business. "It's a huge step to take your business plan to something that's reality," he says. "That's something Mary and the SBTDC really helped me with."

After raising \$500,000, Beyu Caffe opened its doors in December 2009 during the economic downturn. The business blew past its first year projection by 70%, and at the end of 2011, Beyu Caffe was just shy of becoming a million dollar business.

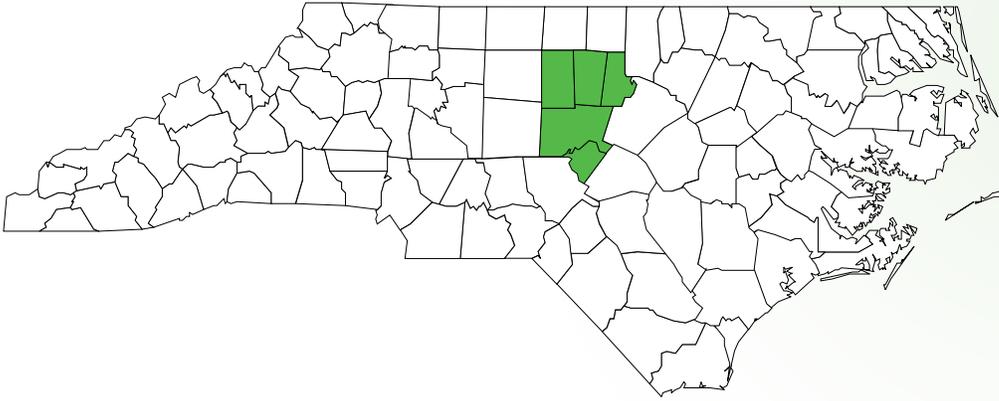
Dorian currently employs a staff of 28, and Beyu Caffe is also the official coffee of the Carolina Theater. Other achievements include 2010 Retail Business of the Year for Downtown Durham and 2011 Triangle Space Award by the Triangle Business Journal.

"I'd give other entrepreneurs the same advice Bill Cosby gave me: 'Decide that you want it more than you're afraid of it.' That was the first quote I read that got me through in the beginning," says Dorian. In September 2011, Dorian was a speaker on the panel of the "Brave New World of Marketing" session at the NC Entrepreneurship Summit.

Most recently, through his connection with the SBTDC, Beyu Caffe began working with NCCU graduate students on a Google Practicum project. Utilizing Google Ads, students write a pre-campaign strategy to increase the business's customers and a post-campaign summary for each of the ads used. Beyu Caffe may continue to use the ads with the most success.

Dorian continues to streamline and perfect the Beyu Caffe business model, with plans for expansion in other locations within the next two years.

CHAPEL HILL + DURHAM



HOST CAMPUSES:
UNC-CHAPEL HILL
NC CENTRAL UNIVERSITY



CENTER DIRECTOR:
Dr. Ron Ilinitch



Through the connection of the SBTDC, Beyu Caffe is working with NCCU graduate students on a Google Practicum project. The goal is to increase traffic with Google Ads.

HOW DOES BEYU CAFFE DESCRIBE THE SBTDC?

- Persistent
- Knowledgeable
- Resourceful
- Understanding
- Caring



SBTDC ENGAGES UNC LAW STUDENT TO ASSIST EDUCATION FIRM

Started in 1992, Invision Services aims to meet the needs of visually impaired students throughout the state of North Carolina. The business contracts with public school systems to provide professionals who work within their schools to meet the special education and related services needs of students in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade.

Referred by BB&T bank, Invision Services first contacted the SBTDC for help with developing a business plan in order to obtain a line of credit. The SBTDC also assisted Invision Services with a financial assessment, resulting in increased sales, and discussed ways to market and communicate services to new and existing clients.

The SBTDC also connected Invision Services with a law student from UNC Chapel Hill. The student focused on issues including employee vs. contractor classifications, development of an employee manual, employee contracts, and a review of corporate documents.

With the assistance of the SBTDC, Invision Services has grown to a staff of 27 teachers working around the state. Time management, financial planning and future goals have been enhanced, and Invision Services has expanded into adult services such as visual and functional abilities, with instructional programs that fit their unique needs and daily living goals.

Visit Invision Services at www.invisionservices.info.



RHINO ASSEMBLY CORPORATION

Charlotte, North Carolina

www.rhinoassembly.com

Dan Brooks and Leif Anderson developed a strong business relationship through their work with a specialty assembly tool distributor. After three years of success in growing the business together, a shift in the market created an opportunity to branch out on their own. They started Rhino Assembly Corporation in July 2000.

Rhino Assembly Corporation is a specialized industrial distributor, focusing primarily on the automotive and aerospace sectors, as well as heavy off-road equipment and electronics. The name of the business is unique and intentional – Dan and Leif see the rhinoceros as a symbol of strength, moving forward, and being thick-skinned – and their pride is evident throughout their office in Charlotte, North Carolina.

The first two years were rough for Dan and Leif. Both had backgrounds in sales and even though they had managed a division, running a business was very different. It wasn't until January 2002 that Rhino Assembly first reached its sales goal – and continued to reach its goals every month for the next four years. That's when things finally started taking off.

Rhino Assembly's first meeting with the SBTDC was arranged through Stuart Hair, Existing Industry Coordinator for the North Carolina Department of Commerce, as part of the Biz Boost Program. The company was experiencing rapid sales growth and wanted to expand

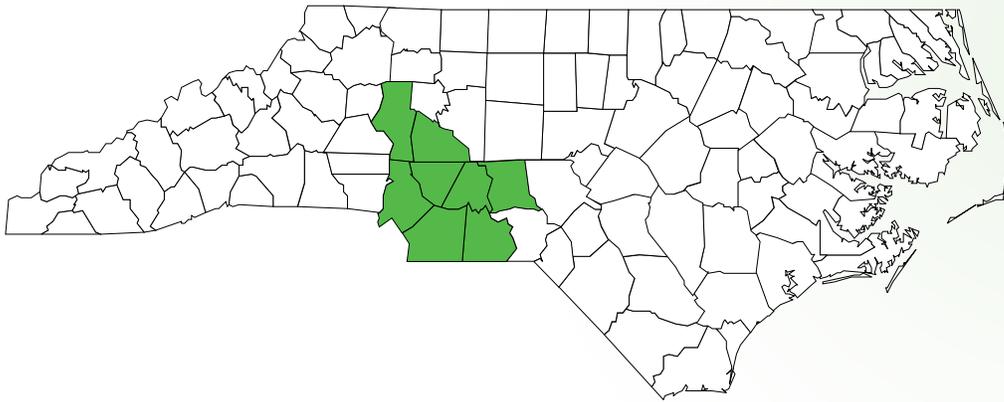
its exporting business. Since the initial meeting, Rhino Assembly has utilized several SBTDC services, including a strategic organizational assessment, a ProfitCents sales analysis, and International Business Development (IBD) counseling. "It's easy for us to participate because of the low cost. The SBTDC can point you in the right direction and make resources available to you," says Leif.

An MBA student intern team from Montreat College was also assigned during the fall 2011 semester for a marketing project. The team identified opportunities through their research by utilizing a SWOT analysis.

After starting with just 4 employees, Rhino Assembly now employs a staff of 20. They are also planning for a 20% sales increase in 2012.

Rhino Assembly was a semi-finalist for a 2012 Small Business of the Year award, given by Business North Carolina magazine. However, their most notable recognition may have occurred during President Obama's weekly address, when he cited Rhino Assembly as a small business successfully exporting to South America.

"We love having our company here in North Carolina, a place we will stay and grow," says Leif.



HOST CAMPUS:
UNC CHARLOTTE



CENTER DIRECTOR:
George McAllister



Rhino Assembly's first meeting with the SBTDC was arranged through Stuart Hair of the North Carolina Department of Commerce as part of the Biz Boost program.

HOW DOES RHINO ASSEMBLY DESCRIBE THE SBTDC?

- Knowledgeable
- Caring
- Responsive
- Passionate
- Energetic



MBA TEAM HELPS CALIBRATION COMPANY GROW

Since 2000, Calibration Solutions has been providing service to customers either on-site or in their own state-of-the-art laboratory. An A2LA-accredited calibration laboratory, the company provides sales and calibration of test and measurement equipment specializing in electronics, temperature, pressure, torque, and new parameters such as dimension and vibration.

Owner Robert Ray contacted the SBTDC for assistance in identifying growth opportunities and developing marketing strategies. He also wanted to expand government contracting capabilities and learn about financing options to expand the company's operations to other parts of the state.

SBTDC counselors performed a financial analysis and benchmarked the competition, and market research indicated growth potential in the

southeast region. Strategy & Organization Development services staff provided a tactical road-mapping session focused on website content improvements along with overall marketing strategies. Members of the company's sales force attended SBTDC-sponsored sales training and an MBA team from Montreat College was assigned a project to recommend operating and growth strategies and data analysis reports.

In late 2010, Calibration Solutions relocated to a larger facility and sales have grown 20% in 2011. The company has updated a competitive report that lets them identify niche opportunities in the marketplace, and also initiated productivity improvements based on the MBA team's recommendations.

Visit Calibration Solutions at www.calibrationsolution.com.



ISLAND CYCLES

Avon, North Carolina

www.islandcycles.com

Island Cycles, a bicycle sales, rental and repair store, was started 19 years ago in Avon, North Carolina by John Lettieri. The idea for the store first came to John when he learned that his pastor at church had to go all the way to Nags Head to get his bike fixed. A light bulb went off and the business was started with just five bicycles and a handful of accessories. All sold immediately, tourists came in for rentals, and things took off.

The atmosphere of Island Cycles is friendly and customer-focused. John's personal and professional customer service has been a driving force, and he often works late repairing bikes. "People are only here for a limited time on vacation. I am either doing a customer's repair or working on our rentals," he says.

"Most people don't bring their bikes with them on vacation and we're the only place in the area that offers a variety of bikes for rent – not just single-speed beach bikes," adds Jill, John's wife. "Even if people bring their own bikes, they often need a repair or an accessory. We have customers from around the country who only bring their bikes to John for service."

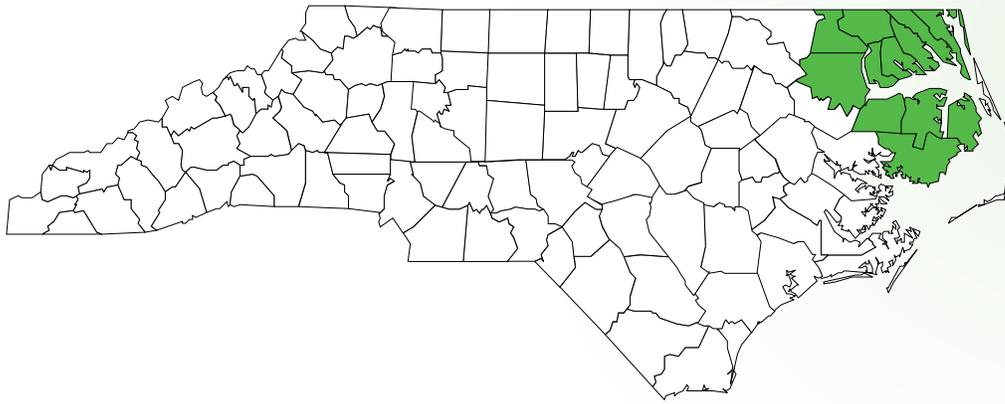
Island Cycles was referred to the SBTDC through the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) after Hurricane Irene hit in August 2011 – a crucial time for seasonal, tourism-focused businesses. A portion of highway 12 was lost in the Outer Banks, making it impossible to access Avon. John and Jill had evacuated, but it was more than two weeks before they were able to get back to Island Cycles to assess the damage.

The business did indeed suffer physical damage, as well as significant economic injury in lost sales due to the hurricane. The SBTDC's Michael Twiddy assisted Island Cycles with preparing the application for an SBA disaster loan, and together they developed a loan strategy.

After submitting the loan application, the Lettieris needed to submit a letter of good standing from the NC Department of Revenue. "It takes 45 days to get this letter saying you are current with your taxes," says Jill, "but the SBA application would expire in 14–21 days." With much persistence, a call to the governor's office, and help from Michael, Island Cycles received its letter in just 2 days. The business was approved for special SBA disaster financing. "The Governor did an excellent job through all of this disaster. I wrote her a letter thanking her for her support."

Working with Michael and the SBTDC has allowed the Lettieris to feel more confident after enduring the hardships of Hurricane Irene. "Michael helped clarify the process, walk us through the steps, and ultimately survive the financial disaster," says John. "We can look at our books and understand what all of it means. He put a lot of things into perspective."

Now, equipped with the peace of mind that the SBA disaster loan provided, the Lettieris are faring well through the slow season and are ready for business to pick up in the spring. "Budgeting and planning is key," says John. "With a seasonal business, it's so important to have emergency funds. You never know what could happen."



HOST CAMPUS:
ELIZABETH CITY STATE UNIVERSITY



CENTER DIRECTOR:
George Brown



Island Cycles was referred to the SBTDC through the SBA after Hurricane Irene hit in August 2011 – a crucial time for seasonal, tourism-focused businesses.

HOW DOES ISLAND CYCLES DESCRIBE THE SBTDC?

- Hopeful
- Proactive
- Results-oriented
- Responsive
- Empathetic



SBTDC EXPERTISE ENERGIZES GREEN BUSINESS'S DEVELOPMENT

Sprout Energy was referred to the ECSU SBTDC by the Currituck County Economic Development Commission for help with their business plan, including developing an organizational road map and determining focus areas. Their Sprout Kiosk product has a built-in wind turbine, solar panel and weather station, and is used to educate people about wind and solar-powered energy and the relationship of those energy sources to the changes in weather.

In addition to business plan development assistance, the SBTDC's Technology Commercialization team provided assistance and helped hire a consultant to review technical aspects of their plan through specialized Energy Efficiency/Clean Technology funding. Students were engaged

to assist the business, including a graduate student intern to develop financial projections and budgets, and a law student to conduct a legal audit of sales and warranty documents.

With the SBTDC's guidance, Sprout Energy completed an effective initial business plan. They have also sold, built and installed two Sprout Kiosks – one in Washington, North Carolina and the second at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. With more effective business operations and communications, the partners can now see new markets developing for the sale of their kiosk product.

Visit Sprout Energy at www.sprout-energy.com.



ROGERS' SCREEN PRINTING

Lumberton, North Carolina

www.rogersseinc.com

Keith Rogers, along with his family, started his business by selling blank T-shirts and hats out of the trunk of a car. Everywhere he went, people asked if he screen-printed or embroidered. After looking into his options, Rogers' Screen Printing was born. He expanded and diversified the business by identifying market gaps in the area and offering stellar customer service.

The business started in a small 24' x 60' building. Rogers' first major client was Campbell University, who supplied more work than he was able to keep up with, so another company let him use their machines after hours. Even after building an addition onto the existing building, Keith found himself at capacity.

Rogers' first contacted the SBTDC for assistance with funding for further expansion. Keith had found a vacant building and its size and location were perfect; however, he was concerned about obtaining a loan.

The SBTDC's Beth Wilkerson told Keith about the Building Reuse Grant through the NC Rural Center, and the City of Lumberton agreed to apply on behalf of Rogers'. Beth assisted the business with putting together a business plan and financials, and after approaching various lenders, Rogers' received a loan through Lumbee Bank. "When Lumbee says

they're a hometown bank, they really are. They helped us when nobody else would," says Keith.

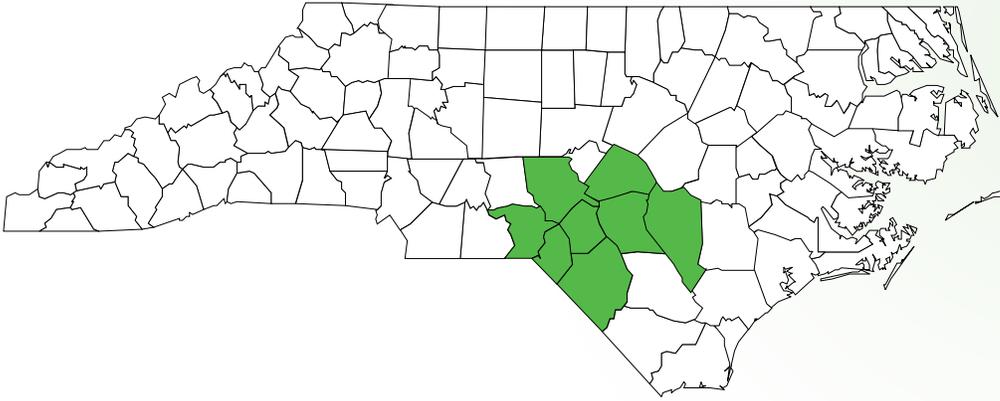
Beth then helped Rogers' and the City of Lumberton with the grant application. Rogers' was awarded Reuse funding and moved into their current location in July 2011.

The business has since hired additional employees, and with room to grow, Rogers' now produces trophies, signs, screen printing, embroidery, wide-format printing and stationery. Rogers' wants to be a one-stop shop that is able to do a business's windows, ink pens, signage – the whole nine yards. Keith says, "We would like to have a bunch of retail spots and do what we're doing now, manufacturing everything in a centralized place and then shipping to the various stores."

Rogers' has also added an indoor batting cage – the first in the area. It has been very successful, giving the area's youth something physical to do while keeping them out of trouble.

Aside from the SBTDC, family support is the strong foundation of Rogers' customer service and work ethic, and has gotten the business to where it is today. "If you expect something, we get it done," says Keith. "People know they can count on Rogers'."

FAYETTEVILLE + PEMBROKE



HOST CAMPUSES:
FAYETTEVILLE STATE UNIVERSITY
UNC-PEMBROKE



CENTER DIRECTOR:
Johnnie Marshburn



The SBTDC's Beth Wilkerson told Rogers' about the Building Reuse Grant through the NC Rural Center, and the city agreed to apply on behalf of the business.

HOW DOES ROGERS' DESCRIBE THE SBTDC?

- Educational
- Helpful
- Supportive
- Eye-opening
- A blessing



PEMBROKE FIRM ON SECURE FOOTING

R&R Protective Services, led by Randolph Eddings, is a Pembroke-based provider of armed and unarmed security services for businesses. The SBTDC originally assisted the client with his initial need of obtaining workers compensation and a certificate of insurance to help obtain a contract.

R&R received the contract, and the SBTDC continued to help the client to improve other areas of the business by advising them through the

development of human resources policies and procedures, marketing materials, and strategies for pursuing clients.

The SBTDC's Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) also assisted the client with registrations and government contract bidding. Since working with the SBTDC, R&R Protective Services has grown from 8 to 13 full-time employees, and revenues have increased by over \$100,000.



CROSS COMPANY

Greensboro, North Carolina

www.crossco.com

Cross Company is a 100% employee-owned ESOP (Employee Shared Ownership Program), providing solutions to improve the performance of their customers' industrial equipment, machines and manufacturing processes. They have specialized sales and engineering teams supporting a wide spectrum of technologies, including factory automation, process control, fluid power, process instrumentation and fluid conveyance.

Founded in 1954, Cross has grown into a leading southeastern regional technology solution provider covering nine states with 195 employees. They became an ESOP in 1979 and became 100% employee-owned in 2006.

Like many companies, Cross was challenged during the latest recession with dramatically reduced sales levels, necessitating painful reductions in operating expenses. Additionally, they asked their sales teams for ideas on what could be done to generate higher sales results than were forecasted. The outcome of these activities was the basis of their four-phase "Path to Prosperity": Survive, Outperform the Revised Forecast, Return to Profitability, and Diversify into Higher Growth Markets.

Fortunately, the actions they implemented in each phase were successful, and Cross was able to weather the recession better than many other companies; however, they also decided to reassess their current business structure and direction, and develop a comprehensive strategic plan for the future. That's when Cross first met the SBTDC.

When seeking strategic planning consultants, Cross' CEO Steve Earley was referred to the SBTDC by Gaston County Economic Development Chair Donny Hicks. Steve learned that the SBTDC's Strategy and Organization Development Services (SOD) were exactly what Cross Company needed.

After assessing the knowledge, experience and professionalism of the SBTDC team, Steve felt they could get a high-quality strategic plan for a fraction of the cost of a high-powered private sector consultant.

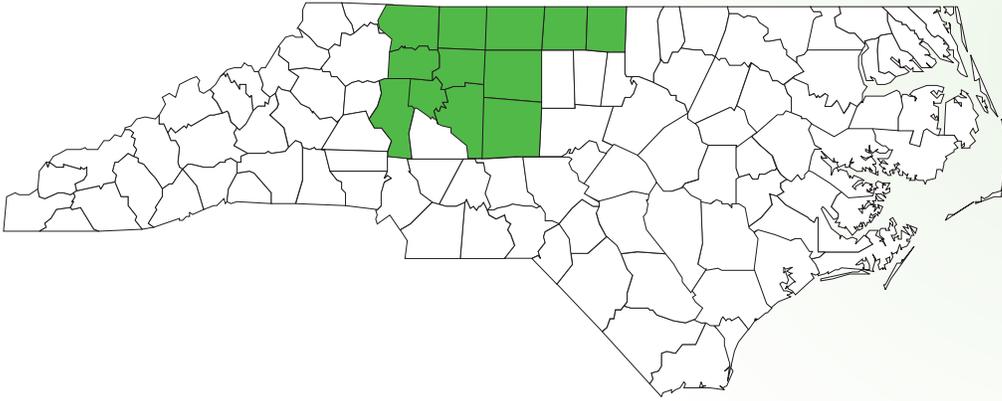
In 2010, SBTDC SOD Director Dan Parks, his team, and Cross Company leadership engaged all employees throughout the strategic planning process by conducting employee surveys, sharing key issues on various areas of the draft plan, and giving a copy of the final plan to each employee.

Since implementing the strategic plan, Cross Company has continued to outperform others in their industry. They have experienced a 32% sales increase, added 15 new jobs (with 12 more budgeted for 2012), eliminated their bank debt, and increased profit by 661%.

"Without the plan, we may not have been as effective as we are today," says Steve. "Cross Company will continue to work with the SBTDC for thorough strategic planning for different business units and departments within the company."

Steve is sure working with the SBTDC will help keep Cross Company and its employees strong for years to come.

GREENSBORO + WINSTON-SALEM



HOST CAMPUSES:
NC A&T STATE UNIVERSITY
UNC-GREENSBORO
WINSTON-SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY



CENTER DIRECTOR:
Blair Abee



When seeking strategic planning consultants, Cross Company's Steve Earley was referred to the SBTDC by Gaston County Economic Development Chair Donny Hicks.

HOW DOES CROSS COMPANY DESCRIBE THE SBTDC?

- Professional
- Knowledgeable
- Thorough
- Organized
- Interpersonal



BIOMATERIALS SPINOUT LEVERAGES SBIR AWARDS

Piedmont Triad Research Park's KeraNetics is a global leader in purifying keratin proteins for use in therapeutic and research applications. A spinout of Wake Forest University's School of Medicine, the business and school collaborate to develop innovative products for wound healing, hemostasis, bone and nerve regeneration and resuscitation fluids.

The KeraNetics management team has actively pursued Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) grants from the National Institutes of Health and Department of Defense to continue developing lifesaving therapeutic products. The SBTDC has supported their goal of obtaining SBIR Phase I and II grant funding by giving expert advice throughout the

proposal process, providing MBA Summer Consulting Program students to assist with projects, and making sure they attended SBTDC SBIR proposal preparation workshops.

KeraNetics has since received a \$750,000 SBIR Phase II grant from the Office of the Secretary of Defense to continue their research and development. This project will build upon their Phase I work to provide solutions for craniofacial injuries like those experienced by U.S. combat troops.

Visit KeraNetics at www.keranetics.com.



TECHNICAL CONTROL CONSULTANTS

New Bern, North Carolina

www.tc2.us

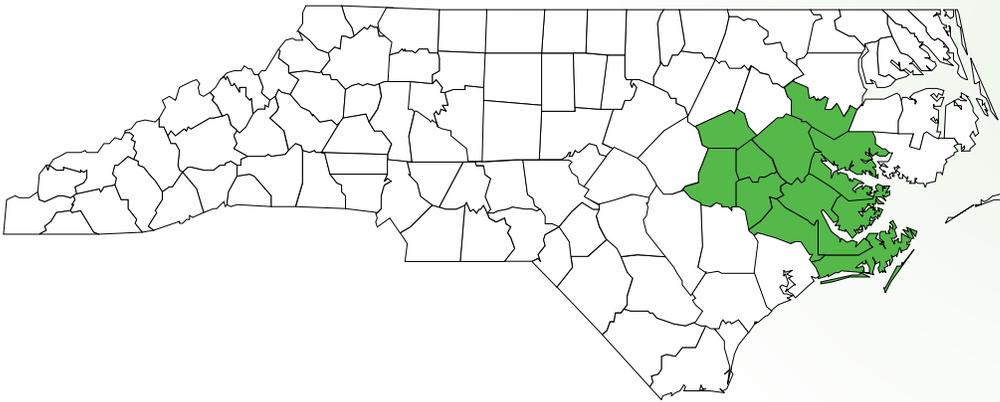
Technical Control Consultants (TC2), a provider of U.S. military communications consulting, supports operations on battlefields around the globe including Afghanistan, Africa and Iraq and operates out of Craven County. Kevin Helmick, a U.S. Marine Corps Systems Planning Engineer, started TC2 after he retired in 2007. Since then, Kevin has actively recruited military communications experts to join TC2's staff. The business has the most experienced personnel in military communications; they literally wrote the manual for how modern military communications are executed. In addition to government projects, the business has expanded to include home theater installation and fiber-optic assembly for the civilian sector and holds a patent for a new communications technology.

Kevin was referred to the ECU SBTDC office by the Jones County economic developer for assistance with access to financing for expansion. Kevin was interested in expanding operations and adding fiber-optic assembly, but also wanted to expand the consulting business by moving into a HUB Zone and bidding on more federal contracts. TC2 was already in the process of applying for an SBA 504 loan with Neuse River Development Authority, a local community development corporation (CDC), although they had not yet found an interested bank.

SBTDC business counselor David Mayo assisted the client with projections for their expanded operations and reviewed loan applications, as well as attended meetings and acted as a liaison between banks, the economic developer, and the CDC. PTAC counselor Cindy Baldwin was able to assist the client with best practices for government sales. An ECU student intern was placed with the business to assist with detailed labor cost projections for the new assembly operation. PTAC has helped the client expand sales in the defense sector, and the student intern's calculation of labor load rates for the new assembly operation allowed certainty for pricing and satisfied government regulators.

After working with the client for over a year on an SBA 504 loan application and meeting with eight banks, the loan was finally approved for \$1.5 million, including a \$150,000 loan guarantee from Jones County during the construction process. TC2 will relocate from a Tier 3 county to a Tier 1 (economically depressed) county where they will add 38 new jobs. Committed grant funding for infrastructure will pass \$1,093,333 to the project, allowing for the creation of a new Defense Industrial Park in the community.

HOST CAMPUS:
EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY



CENTER DIRECTOR:
Carolyn Wilburn



An ECU student intern was placed with Technical Control Consultants to assist with detailed labor cost projections for their new assembly operation.

HOW DOES TC2 DESCRIBE THE SBTDC?

- Professional
- Productive
- Knowledgeable
- Resourceful
- Efficient



AFTERGLOW LIGHTS UP JONES COUNTY

AfterGlow provides photoluminescent products used as safety markings in buildings, as well as air, land and sea vehicles. In 2005, their strategic partner and long-term SBTDC client, Defense Holdings, Inc. (DHi), sought market research assistance and later funding to open the Trenton facility where AfterGlow is now located. In 2007, AfterGlow moved into the facility to manufacture, warehouse and distribute their innovative photoluminescent safety materials for DHi and other commercial, federal and military sector clients.

The SBTDC's PTAC connected AfterGlow to a prime contractor to find opportunities on a large construction project, as well as local military

base small business specialists and Jones County officials to whom they could market their products. Since 2011, the business has been awarded three DoD contracts, as well as a contract to provide and install photoluminescent exit signs in all Jones County schools and county buildings.

As a result, AfterGlow has created two part-time jobs, opened new markets due to national press, and grown sales, bringing economic improvements to Jones County, an economically depressed area.

Visit AfterGlow, LLC at www.afterglowdirect.com.



RALEIGH DENIM

Raleigh, North Carolina

www.raleighworkshop.com

In 2007, Victor Lytvinenko was unhappy with the fit of designer jeans that he found on the market, so he and his wife Sarah started sewing their own jeans. After seeing that their jeans were a better fit and quality, they began a design, cut and sew operation in their apartment. It was there that Raleigh Denim was born.

They were soon making a pair a day and quickly sold them to friends. Before long, word of mouth, local store sales and unsolicited press created a need for a larger workshop. They moved operations to a small Raleigh warehouse, and started their mission to build the ideal pair of jeans and continue North Carolina's rich history of making finely crafted American-made jeans using local materials and traditional construction methods.

When Victor sought business financing, Evans Lackey of Coastal Federal Credit Union referred him to the NCSU SBTDC for business plan assistance. Business counselor Dan Blankenship helped Victor write and review his business plan and shared cash flow templates, which helped get financing. Since then, Victor has gone to the SBTDC for advice and direction on every growth-related issue they have experienced. Since Dan's retirement, Victor has worked with SBTDC Biz Boost counselor David Park on all aspects of the business.

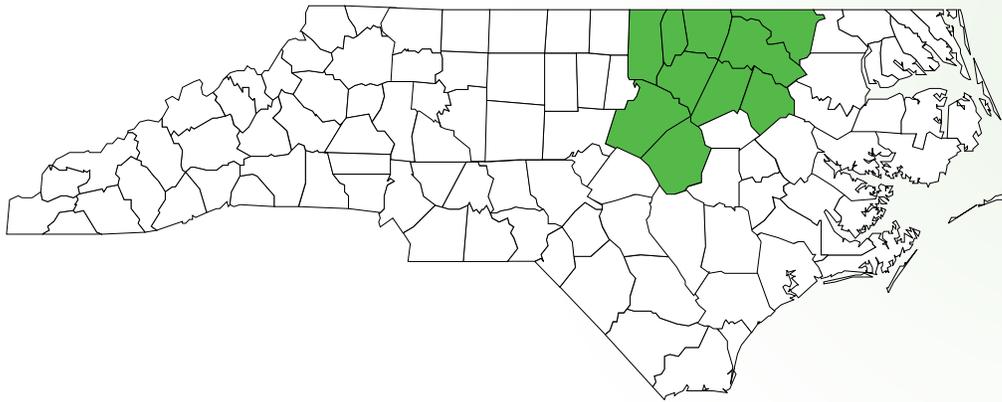
The SBTDC has helped Raleigh Denim receive seven SBA loans to purchase equipment, move to a larger space and grow their business.

One of the loans came just as President Obama's stimulus plan passed, which allowed Raleigh Denim to take a large order from Barneys New York – an opportunity they may have missed otherwise.

Today, Raleigh Denim's small team of artisans is revered for the outstanding fit, quality and detail of their jeans. True to their desire to maintain a contemporary fit and style with traditional construction, Raleigh Denim's patterns are all handmade, primarily by their 78-year-old pattern maker who worked for Levi's and has 50 years' experience. Each pair of jeans is sewn on vintage sewing machines by experienced jeans crafters.

Raleigh Denim is thriving with 24 employees, and revenue that has more than doubled each year. Their downtown Raleigh storefront, The Curatory, sells their jeans and accessories as well as products by local designers. They also presented during the 2012 New York Fashion Week with fashion editors from the NY Times, Elle, Harper's Bizarre, Times, Teen Vogue and GQ in attendance. In fall 2012, a Raleigh Denim store will open in New York.

"The SBTDC has been integral, paramount, to Raleigh Denim's success," says Victor, "At every stage of difficulty, the SBTDC has been involved, given us good direction, advice and guidance. I don't know if we'd be here without the SBTDC."



HOST CAMPUS:
NC STATE UNIVERSITY



CENTER DIRECTOR:
Dr. Mike Seibert



The SBTDC has helped Raleigh Denim receive seven SBA loans, one of which allowed the company to take a large order from Barneys New York.

HOW DOES RALEIGH DENIM DESCRIBE THE SBTDC?

- Paramount
- Integral
- Good listeners
- Helpful
- Kind



CATERING WORKS “COOKS” WITH FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

Established in 1989, Catering Works is a special event planning company owned and operated by Jill Kucera. The company is located in Raleigh and offers turnkey event planning services, including award-winning food and beverage service, custom cakes and desserts, and floral design for corporate and private events. Catering Works employs 28 full-time and 50 part-time staff.

Catering Works first contacted the SBTDC in 2001, and counselors assisted with procurement services and human resources management. In 2011, SBTDC counselor Pete Donahue and ECU distance-education MBA candidate Caroline Hinkle assisted with a financial review and analysis.

While Pete conducted a ProfitCents analysis, Caroline spoke with different members of the Catering Works staff to gauge what was working well and identify areas of improvement that might contribute to overall financial performance.

Thanks to the SBTDC's assistance, Catering Works has an increased understanding of finances, identified potential areas for cost reduction, and stabilized core staff while increasing efficiency.

Visit Catering Works at www.cateringworks.com.



EDGE OF URGE

Wilmington, North Carolina

www.edgeofurge.com

After earning a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Jessie Williams started creating handmade items and garments. Her creations were so popular among friends, she wondered if she could sell them. She talked to several local boutiques, but as an up-and-coming designer, received little support simply because she was unknown. Then she received a call from her mother, who told Jessie about a small 350-square-foot storefront in her home state of North Carolina. Jessie packed her things, moved to Wilmington, and never looked back.

Edge of Urge first opened in 2002, featuring Jessie's handmade pieces as well as those from friends in North Carolina and Chicago. The store then began accumulating pieces from Wilmington artists. Edge of Urge now finds itself in its third location – on popular Market Street in downtown Wilmington – selling men's and women's shoes, clothing and accessories from independent designers all over the world. Edge of Urge continues to build their own collection, with Jessie's designs featured on the cover of Seventeen Magazine to the pages of InStyle, the NY Post and the NY Times – all while becoming a launching pad for up-and-coming designers.

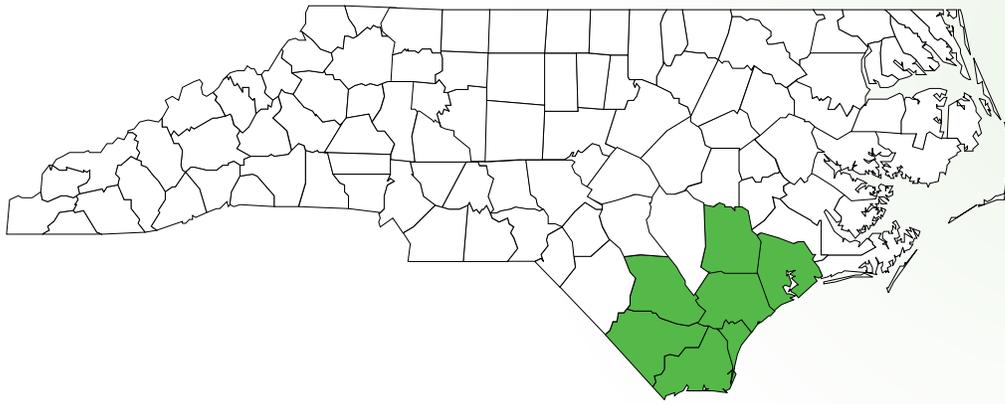
Jessie first contacted the SBTDC in 2007 for assistance with a growth spurt, marketing, and website development. She returned to the SBTDC again in 2011 for assistance with growth and production volume changes. With the help of business counselor Janis Mueller, Jessie has been able to increase production and streamline EOU's inner-workings, from inventory control to human resource management.

Janis also helped plan out the space to create a production and design area, and enlisted textile and production assistance from the SBTDC's Fayetteville office to help Jessie plan for small batch cut-and-sew operations in 2012 and beyond. "They've connected me with people that can help," says Jessie. "Outsourcing some of the production has freed up time and increased sales tremendously."

Jessie has also utilized UNCW's MBA Learning Alliance. This 2-phase, 18-month student engagement project has assisted Edge of Urge with marketing, ideas for commercials, and more. "The MBA team is helping with a marketing plan. They're professionals, and you get to bounce your ideas off of them. It's priceless."

Edge of Urge's sales have grown 37% in the last year, and Jessie has focused on making the Edge of Urge brand a unique, collaborative culture. "Employees model for the website and design jewelry. Some are incredible writers and write for the website. Everybody has a creative piece of the pie," she says. Jessie credits Janis and the SBTDC with giving her the tools she needs to pull it all together.

What advice would Jessie give to others considering a business of their own? "Don't even consider it if it's not something you are 100% truly, madly, deeply in love with. Be able to live with uncertainty, and don't be afraid of mistakes – they're going to happen. The more you know, the easier it is to live with uncertainty. Also, utilize the SBTDC; it's amazing."



HOST CAMPUS:
UNC-WILMINGTON



CENTER DIRECTOR:
Fran Scarlett



Edge of Urge has utilized UNCW's MBA Learning Alliance.

This 2-phase project has assisted the business with marketing, ideas for commercials, and more.

HOW DOES EDGE OF URGE DESCRIBE THE SBTDC?

- Motivating
- Challenging
- Empowering
- Rejuvenating
- Effective



GLOBAL COMPANY PARTNERS AND GROWS

Started in 2002 as a computer software systems supplier and hardware retailer and repairer, GeniSys Global now offers full-service networking, communications, hosting and more. The company serves national and international businesses, large and small, as well as the government.

Deficiencies in accounting and cash management first led GeniSys Global to the SBTDC. The SBTDC helped GeniSys Global create cash-flow projections, a chart of accounts, and a financial reporting system.

Marketing techniques and systems were also reviewed by the SBTDC's Strategy and Organization Development team, who explained how a possible internship program with specific goals could be started and

managed using qualified university students. As a result, GeniSys Global was introduced to UNC-Wilmington's Cameron School of Business and became a participant in the school's MBA Learning Alliance program.

GeniSys Global has grown both in revenue and employment and is situated to grow even more given new partner relationships with New Hanover County and the City of Wilmington. Moving forward, the SBTDC continues to assist GeniSys Global with growth, acquisition, and strategic and tactical issues.

Visit GeniSys Global at www.genisysglobal.com.

ADVISORY BOARD

The Statewide Advisory Board has played an important role in supporting SBTDC leadership since 1985 and is comprised of both at-large and regional center representatives.

Board members are selected to enhance the SBTDC and its capacity to provide high-quality services to stimulate business growth and economic development throughout North Carolina. In addition to advocating on behalf of the small to medium-sized business community, board members help develop the SBTDC's strategic plan and annual work plans, identify new resources, and provide feedback and recommendations on SBTDC programs and services. Many board members have offered guidance to SBTDC counselors and clients, spoken at SBTDC conferences and events, and worked on special projects, including the development of Inception Micro Angel Funds across the state.

The following individuals are currently serving on the SBTDC's Statewide Advisory Board, and we thank them for their generous commitment to the SBTDC and small businesses across North Carolina.

Wendy Banks

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