

TRENDS

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A photograph of a man with grey hair, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and a red and green patterned tie. He is speaking into a microphone at a podium. The background shows a modern interior with wooden beams and a white wall.

22 YEARS

**MSC Director Dan St. Louis
Reaches A Milestone**



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*The only publication that offers
News About The Industry, From The Industry, For The Industry.*

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*The ONLY magazine dedicated to
the hosiery industry*

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legislative column

by PAUL FOGLEMAN, Editor/Publisher

A Raleigh-based think tank with close ties to the N.C. Republican Party is advocating the elimination of the state income tax.

The Civitas Institute, funded by the influential family of Art Pope, concludes that replacing the income tax with a “consumption tax” will stimulate economic and jobs growth in North Carolina. Expanding the sales tax to include services has been discussed in the General Assembly for years.

The Civitas organization reports that elimination of the income tax is being discussed by Legislative leaders and could be on the agenda in the upcoming session which begins January 7. Replacing revenue from the state income tax will

Gillespie will continue to be a top appropriations chair, along with Reps. Linda Johnson, Bryan Holloway, and Justin Burr.

Chairing the Appropriations Subcommittee on Education will be Reps. Hugh Blackwell, a veteran, and Craig Horne of Union and Chuck McGrady of Henderson. Horne and McGrady will be serving their second terms.

Dan Soucek, a second term senator from Watauga, will join veterans Tom Apodaco of Henderson and Jerry Tillman of Randolph as top chairs for the Senate Education/Higher Education appropriations subcommittee.

♦♦♦♦

Gov. Pat McCrory’s first budget for the General Assembly will be a significant event. ... Will it include tax reform proposals?

be a significant change in the code to support a \$20 billion annual budget. Options might include increase in so-called “sin taxes” – on tobacco and alcohol products. Revenue sources also include franchise taxes. The study includes a real estate conveyance fee and closing of loopholes.

Republican legislators have argued that reducing or eliminating income taxes will make the state more competitive in recruiting businesses. Some states including Florida and Tennessee have eliminated income taxes but have high sales taxes.

♦♦♦♦

In years past, the North Carolina General Assembly operated with a seniority system, rewarding representatives and senators who were re-elected for several terms.

The 2013 session will be different, with some legislators serving less than three terms in top positions.

Rep. Nelson Dollar of Wake is an example. Speaker Thom Tillis has announced Dollar will be the senior chair for the budget-writing Appropriations Committee, bypassing Rep. Mitchell Gillespie of McDowell, a veteran appropriations chair and eight-term member.

Other leadership news: Rep. Larry Hall of Durham will be the Minority Leader for the Democratic caucus which has shrunk in the House. Hall will serve as spokesman for Democrats in a Legislature in which Republicans have a veto-proof majority ... Rep. Edgar Starnes, who has served in the House for 10 terms, will be the majority leader, replacing Paul Stam who will be Speaker Pro-Tem ... Robert Brawley of Iredell who is returning to the House after a 10-year absence will serve as a House Finance Committee Chair, along with Reps. Julia Howard of Davie and Mitchell Setzer of Catawba.

♦♦♦♦

Gov. Pat McCrory’s first budget for the General Assembly will be a significant event. It is expected to give some clues as to how his priorities dovetail with the more conservative members of his party. Will it include tax reform proposals? Changes in the education spending programs, i.e. charter schools, maybe even vouchers for those sending children to private schools. As mayor of Charlotte, the governor was a strong advocate for public transportation.

With state’s economy still sluggish, a strong core of the Governor’s party will be pushing for less spending. ■



TRENDS

How to get more impact with your sales activity.

Textiles and hosiery industry vendors have used **TRENDS** magazine to open doors. Multi-national, veteran established manufacturers, and smaller niche players all look at market innovations in **TRENDS**. National and state legislation affecting the industries – manufacturing and distribution – are covered in easy-to-read articles. Happenings within the industries and retailers are included to help marketers and purchasing executives.



* **Paul Fogleman**, a veteran experienced in hosiery and textiles operations, can help you with your advertising and public relations opportunities with **TRENDS**. Contact him at pfogleman@informinc.net

Timing Is Right:

Commerce Officials Endorse Manufacturing Solutions Center

Timing is everything, declared top U.S. and N.C. commerce officials at the recent dedication of the new Manufacturing Solutions Center.

Speaking to the 400 regional and state officials and manufacturers, U.S. Undersecretary of Commerce Mitt Erskine and N.C. Commerce Secretary Keith Crisco cited the role the MSC will play with the current resurgence of American manufacturing.

“Your timing is good...manufacturing is coming back but in a new form,” Crisco affirmed. He said future manufacturing will utilize sophisticated technology with skilled personnel. Companies will be lean, efficient, and highly-focused, Crisco continued.

Erskine also predicted manufacturing will continue to grow as a component of the U.S. economy. He noted that manufacturing creates more jobs in the supply chain and community than any other segment.

Both Erskine and Crisco paid tribute to Dan St. Louis, director of the center, and his staff for their determination to develop a new state-of-the-art service facility to support manufacturing.

The \$3.5 million project was undertaken by the City of Conover with the support of Catawba Valley Community College. Major sources of funds came from national and state Departments of Commerce, the Golden Leaf Foundation and N.C. Rural Development Center.

The 30,000 square foot building houses the Hosiery Technology Center,

(continued on page 9)

Opposite page: Shelby Mason, upper left, relates how the MSC helped her launch her new business; Catawba Valley Community College President Garrett Hinshaw, upper right; center: Darrell Frye, vice president of Harriss and Covington Hosiery Co. and chairman of the Hosiery and Textiles Governmental Affairs Council; lower left: Rep.-elect Andy Wells of Hickory; lower right: Sen. Andrew Brock of Davie County.





Timing Is Right: Commerce Officials Endorse Manufacturing Solutions Center

..... from page 6

its testing laboratories, new testing operations for furniture manufacturing, and research and development personnel engaged in helping manufacturers with prototyping and marketing.

More than 10,000 square feet in the building will be used as an incubator for emerging businesses. St. Louis insists that entrepreneurs will be the job creators and new start-ups will be able to operate under the wing of the MSC for the first year or so.

Conover Mayor Lee Moritz shared the stage with CVCC President Garrett Hinshaw, and Secretaries Erskine and Crisco. Moritz underscored the city's commitment to a pro-business strategy. A former hosiery company executive, Moritz recalled the role the center played in saving the company millions of dollars in problem solving and prototyping.

Among the participants at the opening were advisory board members for the Textile Technology Center, a division of Gaston College. The advisory board held a meeting at the MSC prior to the luncheon and opening ceremonies and received and update on issues and trends from Director Sam Buff. Buff noted that while income for center services are below those for 2011, the number of invoices has increased. More companies are using the textile center, but jobs are smaller. Like the MSC, earned income underwrites a major part of operations.

Both the MSC and textile center receive funds from the N.C. General Assembly and are line items in the Community Colleges budget. Dr. Scott Ralls, president of the N.C. Community Colleges, attended the MSC opening, accompanied by Kennon Briggs, vice president.

During a luncheon sponsored by the Hosiery and Textiles Governmental Affairs Council, Darrell Frye, vice president of Harriss and Covington Hosiery Co. council chairman, emphasized the importance of state support. "It's all about jobs and our ability to compete globally," Frye insisted.

Since St. Louis was employed as the hosiery center director 22 years ago, the MSC staff has grown to 18 fulltime technicians and 12 part-time people in the hosiery testing center. 

Opposite page: Upper left: N.C. Commerce Secretary Keith Crisco, MSC assistant director Tony Whitener, and U.S. Undersecretary of Commerce Mitt Erskine; THA President Sally Kay chats with visitors, upper right; center: HTGAC luncheon for guests at MSC opening; Ms. Mason, Erskine, Kevin Boyle, vice president, Century Furniture Co., Secretary Crisco, left to right, bottom.

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22 Years ... MSC Director Dan St. Louis Reaches A Milestone



Dan St. Louis, shortly after accepting the position as head of the Hosiery Technology Center.



When the Hmong arrived in the Catawba Valley area, Dan St. Louis created a program to integrate them into the hosiery manufacturing workforce in 1996.



Addressing the annual meeting of the Carolina Hosiery Association in 1998.

In 1990, hosiery manufacturers and the president of Catawba Valley Community College made a decision with implications they could not foresee. They hired Dan St. Louis to start up a Hosiery Technology Center.

St. Louis was a rising star with a leading textiles company. He was taking a chance. With a special grant from N.C. College President Bob Scott and matching funds from Catawba County commissioners, the program was launched with less than \$80,000. Almost another \$20,000 was raised from manufacturers.

After the first year, the manufacturers from the Carolina Hosiery Association again approached the N.C. Community Colleges. Scott was ill, recovering from a severe heart attack. The administration insisted no funds were available.

The manufacturers walked down Jones Street the N.C. General Assembly Building. That launched 21 years of lobbying to protect the fledgling center and thus preserve hosiery manufacturing in North Carolina.

A significant breakthrough occurred when the executive director of the CHA was named to the board of the N.C. Alliance for Competitive Technologies. The CHA was given funds to create a strategic plan to pursue a partnership with state agencies. In the meantime, St. Louis was broadening the outreach to include in-plant training, the integration of Asian and Hispanic employees, and in 2000 the establishment of the nation's only testing center devoted exclusively to hosiery.

As globalization changed the environment for U.S. hosiery

manufacturing, St. Louis turned to marketing services. Now he was knocking on doors in Washington DC.

Modest grants from the U.S. Department of Commerce gave St. Louis the resources to

Promote exporting for manufacturers across the United States.

Now 22 years after taking on the center, he has realized one of his most cherished goals: development of a freestanding center to help any traditional manufacturer. Furniture, niche supply chain businesses, plastics... all are turning to the MSC for support. Hosiery manufacturing and testing still remains a core business.

In 1992, there were two people on the center payroll. Today there are 18 fulltime technicians and support people and 12 part-time associates. They are working in a sophisticated building that also will house start-up companies under St. Louis' guidance.

The \$3.2 million facility is provided by the City of Conover. St. Louis participated – even led – the recruiting of funds from state and federal agencies to give Conover the resources to build the 30,000 square foot facility.

A hands-on manager, St. Louis insisted his office be located in the back of the building adjacent to laboratories and work stations. "I want to be where the action is," he has insisted.

Manufacturing is alive in North Carolina and is growing in the Northwestern area of the state, he asserts. The 400-plus people who came for the opening of the center realize that his commitment directly is linked to the health of manufacturing. ■




N.C. Hosiery Companies Help Storm Sandy Relief

North Carolina hosiery manufacturers sent more than 1,000 dozens pairs of socks for the relief efforts following devastation of Hurricane Sandy.

The effort was triggered by a request from Robin Hayes, owner of Mt. Pleasant Hosiery and chairman of the N.C. Republican Party. Hayes contacted the Hosiery and Textiles Governmental Affairs offices the day after the 2012 elections to request socks for National Guard troops in the New Jersey, New York and Connecticut areas hit hard by the storm. Damages to homes and businesses is estimated at \$100 billion. Thousands were left homeless.

Representatives of the USO in New York City said the flow of socks met the needs of the troops on the scene. Also, there were enough socks to help victims of the storm.

Among companies sending socks were Robinson Hosiery Mill in Valdese, Hickory Brands in Hickory, Thorlo Inc., Statesville, and Royce Socks. 

Textile Technology Center Serving More Companies


More companies are turning to the Textile Technology Center in Belmont for testing, prototyping and research and development. The number of companies that were invoiced for services was up 17.5 percent in 2012.

But...the revenue from those companies during the 12-months period was down by 8.5 percent. Explained Textile Center Director Sam Buff: more customers with smaller assignments.

During the Advisory Board meeting in Conover November 29, Buff reported that earned income from services has given the center a funds balance of \$384,000 which can be used for acquisition and maintenance of equipment.

Board chairman Dan Nation reported on the center's state appropriation which is \$834,924. But \$487,436 is allocated to Gaston College for administration, the East Campus Dean, Admissions, the Library and other costs. Left for Textile Center salaries, plant operations, and equipment is \$362,783.

Like the Manufacturing Solutions Center and its hosiery and furniture programs, the Textile Center is a line item in the N.C. Community Colleges budget.

Buff told the board during its meeting at the MSC that the trend indicates the center will be involved with more companies in 2013. 

BREAKING THE SOUND BARRIER

The Hosiery and Textiles Governmental Affairs Council looks forward to working with legislators in Raleigh in 2011. Republicans with a pro-business agenda will set priorities for state government, including how state finances are invested. Emphasis will be on smaller government and the best return on dollars invested by the state.

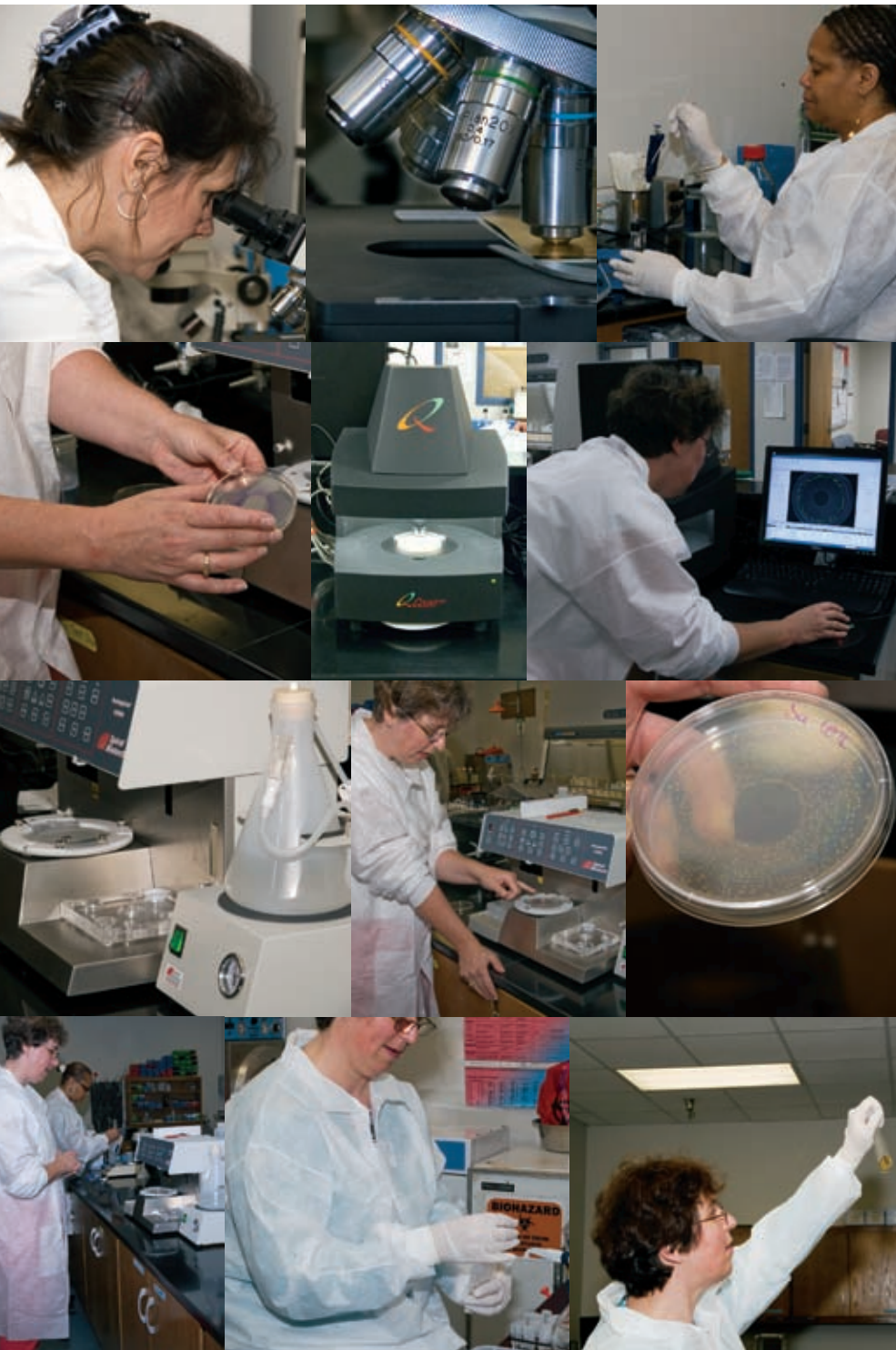
We congratulate the new leaders in the House and the Senate. Also we look forward to working with new members of the General Assembly as we present our case for the continued support of the Textile Technology Center and the Manufacturing Solutions Center with its successful hosiery industry testing and research programs.

There will be a lot of noise with competition for state money. We invite textiles and hosiery companies that continue to employ over 100,000 North Carolinians to join us in support of the value-added services of our centers.

Hosiery and Textiles Governmental Affairs Council
P.O. Box 1708 415 First Avenue NW, Hickory NC 28603
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People now call us the 'Manufacturing Solutions Center'

and that's OK.



Officially we have been the Center for Emerging Manufacturing Solutions. (CEMS). Our mission is to help traditional manufacturing in North Carolina succeed in a changing environment. The Hosiery Technology Center remains a core service. But furniture, packaging, plastics, and other industries that helped build North Carolina's economy are now priorities.

If our official name is too much to remember, just call us the Manufacturing Solutions Center. We are ready to assist you with new products, new manufacturing strategies, new markets.

Traditional manufacturers have an old history with our state. But they are an important force in the new economy.

Dan St. Louis, Director • Catawba Valley Community College

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