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

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*The ONLY monthly magazine
dedicated to the hosiery industry*

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legislative column

by PAUL FOGLEMAN, Director, Hosiery Governmental Affairs Council

Tony Rand, Majority Leader and Rules Chairman and generally recognized as the second most powerful member of the North Carolina Senate, resigned in mid-term to become chairman of the

State Paroles Commission.

David Hoyle, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee and confidant to President Pro-Tem Marc Basnight, has announced he is retiring after 10 terms. Also gone is Sen. David Weinstein who has accepted a fulltime state position. Weinstein chaired the Appropriations Committee that crafted the budgets for the Commerce Department, Labor Department and Parks and Recreation among others.

Other departures at the end of the upcoming short session will include Democrats Sen. Charles Albertson of Beulaville, Sen. Julia Roseman of Wilmington, and GOP Senators Ed-

die Goodall of Union County, and Jimmy Jacumin of Burke County.

Only Rand will be absent during the upcoming session that opens in May. But with the mood of the public wanting change and tough battles ahead in the fall election, there is conversation taking place about a “business friendly” environment for next year. Incumbents and challengers will be presenting their case – and their records – to lobbyists for leading corporations.

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The election of Republican U.S. Senator Scott Brown in Democratic-leaning Massachusetts has prompted game-

changing strategies in both political parties and the 2010 fall elections are likely to have surprises for both.

Republicans are energized. The message from voters was “we’re tired of business as usual.” Democrats will pay the price for ignoring grass-roots opposition to national healthcare. The Democratic leadership in Congress is unpopular in the South and state level candidates will be pushing a different message. It will all be about jobs and what the legislatures can do to foster business growth.

The polls indicate the public is also weary of obstructionist politics and here Republicans will have some explaining to do. In Congress and in the General Assembly, Republicans send amendments after amendments for changes to the budget and then vote almost unanimously against the spending plan. If grass-roots voters understood this, they could hold

as “one of the good guys.” During his 17 terms, the Republican lawmaker worked with members on both sides of the aisle and avoided the bitter partisan rhetoric that sometimes poisons the process.

As chairman of the House Appropriations Committee in the 1990s under House Speaker Harold Brubaker, he guided the budget deliberations in one of the most controversial sessions in history that kept the House in session almost until Thanksgiving.

He was nominated to be Speaker of the House during the historic session in 2003 which saw the election of co-Speakers. He was shut out by members of his own party, but he kept a professional profile in the Chamber.

George Holmes was fair. He was straight-forward. He is remembered with respect.

The Democratic leadership in Congress is unpopular in the South and state level candidates will be pushing a different message. It will all be about jobs and what the legislatures can do to foster business growth.

....

some legislators accountable.

Sen. Brown has gone to Washington insisting he will work with Democrats. If so, his honeymoon will be brief with a majority of his GOP colleagues.

NOTE: For Republicans to gain control of the U.S. House, the party would have to pick up 41 members. In the 1994 “Contract with America” sweep, Democrats lost 54 House seats.

....

REMEMBERING GEORGE HOLMES:

Former Rep. George Holmes of Yadkin County who died recently, was described by fellow representatives of both parties

Democratic and Republican candidates in the North Carolina General Assembly will face more primaries this year before the 2010 session convenes in May. Even U.S. Sen. Richard Burr has two primary challengers, reflecting divisions within his party. Veteran Congressman Howard Coble also has three primary opponents and other members of Congress also are facing opposition within their own party.

Democrat State Senator Clark Jenkins, chairman of the Transportation Committee, has two primary opponents. The turnout for an off-year election promises to exceed expectations. ■

From The Publisher's Desk

The hosiery and textiles industries we once knew were born in the industrial revolution that changed America after the Civil War. There are some people alive today who saw line shafts in textiles mills actually driven by water power. But the arrival of steam power and later electricity fueled these industries that employed over one million people across the South.

Then came the knowledge industry and its outburst of technology, including computers. Now, our leaders are saying, it is the Creativity movement that will make America globally competitive. New ideas. Innovations. Anticipating market expectations.

The communications revolution has shown us the way. Apple stands as the main example. But do traditional manufacturers, including hosiery and textiles, assume the role of dinosaurs? The leaders of our research and testing centers say absolutely not. Innovations are keeping some of our hosiery and textiles companies humming.

The recent Emerging Issues Forum under the leadership of former Gov. Jim Hunt this year picked Creativity as the issue which will determine the future of business, government, and non-profits. This issue of *TRENDS* looks at how it applies to our future and the future of thousands of people who are employed in our operations.

– Paul Fogleman

CREATIVITY inc

A Challenge For Our Manufacturers In A New World Economic Order

By Paul Fogleman

Political leaders, government officials and business executives gathered in Raleigh last month to envision a future that depends more on creativity than strong backs.

The occasion was the 25th Emerging Issues Forum, itself a creative undertaking by former N.C. Governor Jim Hunt. Gov. Hunt remains the central figure in the forum which

this year attracted more than 1,000 people, including legislators, educators, business people and gurus trying to find the roadmap for a challenging economy.

***“You can’t have a nation with one-third of the team on the bench
– Gov. Tim Pawlenty***

Pie-in-the-sky thinking? Consider the presentations that looked at manufacturing, entrepreneurs, and the role of government in the future of the U.S. economy. They all suggested that a culture of innovation will be the key to an economic turnaround.

Also consider that the Manufacturing Solutions Center, the new parent of the Hosiery Technology Center, is a near-perfect fit for the world of innovation. The hosiery center – and the Textile Technology Center in Belmont – could be the catalyst for steering entrepreneurs to redesigned operations with more creative decisions coming from personnel and management.

According to Roger Martin, dean of the Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto, the payoff could be big. Average earnings for creative-oriented personnel in clustered industries – i.e. hosiery and textiles – are \$70,000 compared to \$32,500 for “routine-oriented” jobs.

Additionally, Martin said that in manufacturing sectors, routine-oriented jobs are declining significantly, while creativity-oriented positions have grown by 30 percent a year. Martin defined creative jobs as those requiring analytical skills and “social intelligence.”

In his keynote address, Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty, a progressive Republican, asserted that his state is taking advantage of opportunities to implement change to encourage creativity

and entrepreneurship. Working craftspeople and artists are at the core of the new economy for the state, contributing \$800 million annually.

Gov. Pawlenty’s view of the future is one of “radical decentralization”: online learning to replace the need for expensive educational facilities; delivery of healthcare services by internet, marketing and distribution with more social networking. “Technology will force this,” he insists.

The governor, however, warned that the nation will have to come to grips with the role of education in the transition. “You can’t have a nation with one-third of the team on the bench – one-third school dropouts ... one-third college dropouts because they are not prepared ... one-third lacking skills to connect with the jobs of tomorrow.”

Changes occur under three circumstances, Pawlenty concluded. They come to nations in times of crisis or under inspirational leadership, or in a culture of innovation. North Carolina – indeed the United States – will respond to one or more of these forces, he said. ■

Textiles Center

In Critical Role For Industry Growth Concept Plus Research Equal Renovation

*By John Anderson
TCC Director*

Creativity and innovation is the key to the future of the textile industry. Andy Warlick, President and CEO of Gastonia based Parkdale Mills was recently quoted in the Charlotte Observer saying: “You’ve got to have innovation. That’s the lifeblood”

Ever since we were chartered as a “Center of Excellence” by the North Carolina Legislature in 2005, the Textile Technology Center at Gaston College (TTC) has continually evolved to become the premier enabler of new fibers, yarns, fabrics and methods to help the industry in North Carolina respond quickly and creatively to change and opportunity. While chairman of the Advisory Board for the Center, Warlick and other North Carolina textile industry leaders helped the Center to grow and continually expand capabilities.

Warlick completed a four year term as chairman in July of 2009. He is succeeded by Jim Booterbaugh; Vice President of Washington, NC based National Spinning.

To use a simile, the center is like the artists studio where new ideas are

manifested into tangible materials for evaluation and demonstration. Think of the Textile

Technology Center as a “smart canvas”, where the staff professionals bring their substantial experience base and creativity into play to make things happen for North Carolina’s textile related industries.

The Textile Technology Center is now capable of supporting new ideas all the way back in the polymer area, thanks to generous donations of equipment from the industry. A batch autoclave allows scientists, fiber and polymer companies to look at new synthetic raw materials that can become the building blocks for entirely new textile products. Established man-made fiber and polymer producers with facilities in North Carolina like DAK, Invista and Wellman all utilize this capability. Start ups and research companies like Union County based – Marvin Research also access the polymer capabilities to do fundamental research on fibers from by-products of the soybean industry. This is funded by industry grants.

The Textile Technology Center has just added the capability of changing the molecular orientation of polymers (solid state and crystallization), as well as the

ability to spin filament yarns and to draw, crimp and cut staple fibers.

The principal facility at the East Campus of Gaston College, the Textile Technology Center has a fully-equipped yarn spinning mill. Individuals and companies with a new concepts come to the Center with or without fibers, and here they can get the yarn made that supports their innovation. In addition, the specialists in the process area carefully document machine settings and speeds and present the innovator with a “cookbook” that details how to commercialize a scale up.

Sometimes, as with Enka NC-based Basofil Fibers LLC, there is a totally new learning experience on a product that has never been used before on textile processing equipment.

The Center prides itself on a “can-do” attitude and invites collaborations with the idea originators who are welcomed to be present while their idea is executed.

It often takes an equal amount of creativity from the Center’s specialists to develop a process to produce the product as the innovation itself. A case in point involved weaving a sample filtration fabric for a nuclear power plant. North Carolina State University researchers had produced a special monofilament warp yarn and called on the center to weave a fabric that required hundreds of picks per inch of 30-micron wire. The wire filling was difficult to handle. Fabric specialist John Fowler creatively rigged a vacuum tensioning system using a “shop-vac” and duct tape to hold the individual wires in place long enough to be cut.

Mount Holly, NC based American and Efirid collaborated with the Textile Center’s laboratories to develop a predictive performance test for a new raw material. While the details are confidential, Sam Buff, manager of the Textile Center’s six laboratories put his creative juices to work and developed a new testing protocol. He then fabricated a piece of equipment (fondly nicknamed “the Buffometer”) that met the client needs and ultimately enabled them to enter a new business area.

Unlike major universities, where the primary mission is the education of students, the Textile Technology Center exists to serve industry. With that in mind, the only agenda at TTC is the support of the clients’ innovation in a timely fashion. The Center understands

urgency and confidentiality, and conducts nearly all of its work under non-disclosure arrangements.

TTC has the capability of executing a fiber innovation from raw chemicals through finished end use prototypes, with each step carefully documented for future commercialization. The presence of fiber, yarn, fabric, analytical chemistry, defect and microscopy labs on site helps to keep the process flowing and provides innovators with the data they need to bring their idea to market.

While new synthetic fibers represent one area of focus, TTC also works extensively with cotton and other natural fibers. Cotton Incorporated uses the center’s sample weaving capability to demonstrate and test new applications for cotton. The Center recently added capability to spin longer fibers like wool, alpaca and angora, to support North Carolina’s animal fiber growers and craft industry. At the same time, this same equipment supports exciting innovations in plant fibers like flax, knapf, bamboo and hemp which should mean new options for North Carolinas farmers.

The Center also utilizes partnerships to supplement its own capabilities. Unifi, Inc. of Yadkinville recently had fabrics of their Repreve recycled polyester demonstrated on the Centers sample weaving system and dyed in the TTC lab. TTC then had 40 yard demonstrations woven via their partnership with Burlington Labs facility in Rockingham, NC and dyed at a partner Textile Piece Dye in Lincolnton, NC. The Manufacturing Solutions Center in Hickory is a major collaborator on innovations targeted at hosiery and seamless garments, or that need anti-microbial testing. NC State College of Textiles capabilities are often brought to bear on innovations that require sophisticated flammability testing. TTC has taken the approach of offering innovators “one-stop-shopping.” The “creative toolkit” of capabilities and services that TTC offers to clients is detailed on the website at textilecenter.gaston.edu/testing/pricelist.php.

At TTC, we realize that we are in a unique position to help companies and individuals with new ideas because of our knowledge, capabilities and network of clients. We always tell innovators “if you don’t see something you need on our list, don’t assume we don’t do it. One way or another, we’ll get it done.” ■

Green Trend Gets Attention In Hosiery 101, 102 Classes

Retail buyers and merchandising personnel want to know what makes a sock or pair of tights “green.” Merchandisers and marketers are trying to “get their arms around green products,” reports Dan St. Louis, director of the Manufacturing Solutions Center.

Recently reflecting on the changes that have affected Hosiery 101 and 102 courses at the center, St. Louis said participants are wanting to learn more about “hot” yarns and how they play into the rising demand for green products.

Anywhere from 18 to 20 people enroll in the Hosiery 101 and 102 courses which are held four times a year at the manufacturing center in Hickory. They typically represent some of the nation’s leading retailers, brand operations, and hosiery sales organizations.

The biggest change in the two-day curriculum is the emphasis on quality, St. Louis observes. “They want to know what makes a good product and why,” he continues. There is more discussion of the testing components and recently more interest in tights and sheers, he continues.

The classes deal with anti-microbial properties in yarn, and performance issues. “We have a hard time covering all the issues and questions in two days when we used to wrap up sessions in a day and a half,” St. Louis said.



The class schedule for 2010:

Wednesday and Thursday, March 3 and 4; Tuesday and Wednesday, May 4 and 5; Tuesday and Wednesday, September 21 and 22; Tuesday and Wednesday, November 16 and 17.

All classes are held on the East Campus of Catawba Valley Community College where the center is based. ■

Testing Laboratories Receive Designation From ISO

The testing laboratories at the Manufacturing Solutions Center has received an ISO 17025 certification, ranking the facilities and services among the best in the world.

The designation from the International Standards Organization (ISO) identifies the center’s proficiency in testing from flammability, anti-microbial, and lead properties, according to Dan St. Louis, manager.

As a result of the ISO sanction, the center is attracting clients from companies specializing in automotive textiles and

upholstery fabrics, St. Louis said.

Criteria for receiving the ISO approval included consistent and approved testing methods, written standards for testing procedures, and a strategic plan for improvement.

The center is nationally-recognized for its hosiery testing services. In recent years it has expanded its outreach to traditional manufacturers. The center is based on the East Campus of Catawba Valley Community College. ■

Analytical Thinking vs. Creativity

Both Approaches Have Value

By Paul Fogleman
Publisher

Sorry, Yogi Berra. Déjà vu all over again is over in the 21st century U.S. economy.

It's vuja de. Translation: looking at our social and business behavior with fresh eyes.

The author of this principle is Tom Kelly, general manager of IDEO, ranked by Fast Company as one of the World's 50 Most Innovation Companies. A hard-driving entrepreneur, Kelly helped manage the company as it grew from 20 designers to a staff of more than 500.

For Kelly, a speaker at the Creativity Forum in Raleigh last month, the future is all about fostering a culture of creativity and developing processes for continuous innovation. He calls this "design thinking."

The process of design thinking, Kelly says, involves determining if the product or service through three lenses: is it people desirable, is it business viable, is it technological feasible. All old assumptions have to be thrown out the door, he alleges.

Of all the assumptions to be discarded, one that assumes markets and environments will remain stable is at the top. The loss of furniture manufacturing in the last decade, the erosion of hosiery

and textiles to off-shore sources, and the jobs 20th century manufacturing created – mostly gone.

Joining Kelly in his conclusions was Dean Roger Martin of the Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto. Martin's research analyzed the jobs trends in the U.S. over the past 10 years.

Unemployment for jobs requiring design thinking skills and creativity has rarely been over 4 percent. Unemployment for routine jobs has never dipped to as low as 4 percent.

Martin and Kelly agreed that management of contemporary companies tend to emphasize "analytical thinking" over the out-of-the-box approach or creative problem-solving.

"We laud analytical thinking over creative, but not one new idea in the world came from analytical thinking," Martin insisted.

Expanding on the idea theme, John Denniston, partner in Kleiner Perkins Caufield and Byers, an international venture capital company, said he looks for firms driven by new ideas and innovation.

Denniston opened his comments with a historical perspective, suggesting that the Industrial Revolution that began 200 years ago should be redefined as the

"Energy Revolution." The use of fossil fuels literally electrified the world and manufacturing, he continued.

Today the energy industry is a \$6 trillion a year contributor to the global economy but it is changing and offering opportunities for economic growth. He cited innovations in renewable energy and said the race "will bring spoils to its leaders." Sustainable energy, he asserted, is on the right side of history.

Denniston said the U.S. remains the world capital of innovation but other countries are gunning for top prize. Only 17 percent of the world renewable energy companies are U.S. firms, he observed. In China, so-called Science Parks are mushrooming with energy produced by solar panels, wind and other sustainable sources.

For the North Carolina legislators in the room, the global business executive had this advice:

Create incentives for attracting innovative energy firms as a new cluster.

Support policies to bring more venture capital to the state.

Encourage a range of green policies across the state.

Go to Washington and urge Congress to increase funding for sustainable energy research. ■

Services for Joan Helene St. Louis

Mrs. Joan Helene St. Louis, mother of Dan St. Louis, manager of the Manufacturing Solutions Center and its hosiery center, died at her home in Morganton NC on January 29 following an extended illness.

In addition to her son Dan, she is survived by her husband Ernest E. St. Louis, sons, James Myles and Doug, and daughter, Karen and 23 grandchildren and great grandchildren.

A memorial service was held Saturday, February 20, at St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church in Morganton and a special memorial service will be held in June at Seven Devils N.C. where the family maintained a summer home. ■

Hosiery Makers Respond To Appeal For Haitian Aid

Hosiery manufacturers across North Carolina were preparing shipment of socks to Haiti victims with hours after details of the earthquake disaster emerged.

Sally Kay, president of The Hosiery Association based in Charlotte, and Paul Fogleman, legislative consultant and lobbyist, contacted manufacturers for contributions of products for shipment to Port au Prince, capitol of the devastated island nation.

The undertaking highlighted the continued strength of hosiery manufacturing in the state despite challenges of the global economy, Fogleman stressed. ■

At Retail

Retail Group Predicts 2.5 Percent Increase

The National Retail Federation (NRF) predicts that retail sales will rise 2.5 percent this year as chain stores recover from the depth of the worst recession in 70 years.

In 2009, retail sales were down 2.5 percent and in 2008, the drop was 1.8 percent, the NRF reported. Excluding these two years, the projected growth for 2010 will mark the lowest year-over-year increase since 1995. The federation's chief economist Rosalind Wells said in an interview there will be "a slow return to a more normal level."

In 2010, Wells expects consumers to keep a frugal mind-set with a focus on values. That should help off-price retailers like Wal-Mart Stores, Costco, and TJX Companies Inc.

Wells said high-end retailers are seeing better business because their customers are less worried about losing their jobs.

Wal-Mart Reorganizes With 3 New Divisions

A year after getting a new chief executive, Wal-Mart Stores is undergoing a major reorganization.

The world's largest retailer is consolidating some of the U.S. operations, while dividing the country into three regions, each with a president. The goal is to more effectively manage 3,700 stores in the country.

Andy Barron will oversee store merchandising execution which will develop merchandising strategies for its three new business units: Walmart West, Walmart South, and Walmart North.

The changes came a year after Mike Duke succeeded Lee Scott as Wal-Mart's chief executive.

Wal-Mart said it is looking at ways to stock stores with merchandise that is tailored to local tastes. The chain has gained market share during the economic downturn. ■

Catawba Sox Inc. Sold To Mills Family

Catawba Sox Inc., a mainstay among Catawba Valley area hosiery manufacturers, has been acquired by the former owners of Ellis Hosiery Mills.

John T. Mills and his son, John W. Mills, are the managing partners of Catawba Sox LLC, which acquired the firm from a corporation owned by George Clark, longtime president, and his family. The agreement calls for Clark to remain

with the company for one year.

Unlike many domestic manufacturers, Catawba Sox has maintained its knitting operations, producing socks for men and women on equipment ranging from 84 to 168 needles, according to John T. Mills.

Catawba Sox has focused on regional chains and specialty stores as a vendor for sports and casual socks. It was founded in 1946 by the late E. Fielding Clark Sr. who

was active in the Catawba Valley Hosiery Assn. which later became the Carolina Hosiery Assn. George Clark served as a director of the organizations.

Ellis Hosiery Mills was a manufacturer of branded and private label socks for the nation's leading mass merchandisers. It was sold to the International Legwear Group (ILG) in 2003. ■



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Our 2010 Editorial Calendar

JANUARY

State of the industry. As manufacturing continues to re-invent itself, we look at profiles of companies that may be the wave of the future. We talk to executives that have been part of the transition. We are here, but we are different.

FEBRUARY

Are textiles and hosiery companies keeping pace with the green economy? Or is it business as usual. Why? Yarn suppliers are interviewed to analyze the demand for sustainable products. Manufacturing Solutions Center activities on behalf of new, green initiatives reported.

MARCH

Government procurement opportunities and the Berry Amendment. Some industry people tied to the global economy have doubts about the provisions, but domestic niche manufacturers support the initiatives. Stories from companies with contracts for military socks and apparel and other textile products.

APRIL

State legislators grapple with higher demands for services and shrinking revenues. Cut spending and reduce waste, say taxpayers. But how do you protect schools, healthcare services, and business support such as the Manufacturing Solutions Center? And what can states do to help small businesses? Our legislative agenda is outlined.

MAY

Manufacturers that have adopted successful strategies in a challenging environment are featured. What has been the role of suppliers in their success? Also, what happened to trade associations serving the supply chain?

JUNE

Internet sites are changing the landscape. We could have said this in 2000, but the web is a totally new place. Sites like matchforce.com and hundreds of others are making virtual manufacturing a reality. But they also are making the supply chain more efficient and cost-effective.

JULY

The hosiery and apparel industry has been changed by the growth of sports socks and clothing. Generation X also is embracing the sustainability movement. What is the result when these two trends merge?

AUGUST

How are retailers reading consumers for back-to-school and fall shopping? Is there a trend that will drive fashion and what is considered essential for the practical shopper?

SEPTEMBER

What will the manufacturing company of the future look like? And what will the people in those operations be doing as new technologies emerge. How are domestic manufacturers using new strategies to reduce production costs? Will marketing change priorities for packaging?

OCTOBER

The Textile Technology Centers and the Manufacturing Solutions Center are now the focal points for industry services. Research and development, marketing, and personnel training continue to be priorities. In-depth reports on their activities and projections for the future are included in this special issue.

NOVEMBER

Packaging innovations and retailer SKUs are examined. Trends that are driving women's hosiery including socks and sheers are the subject of background reports.

DECEMBER

Outlook for 2011 and state of industry from domestic and international perspective. The impact of mid-term elections as it relates to industry initiatives and funding for technology centers.

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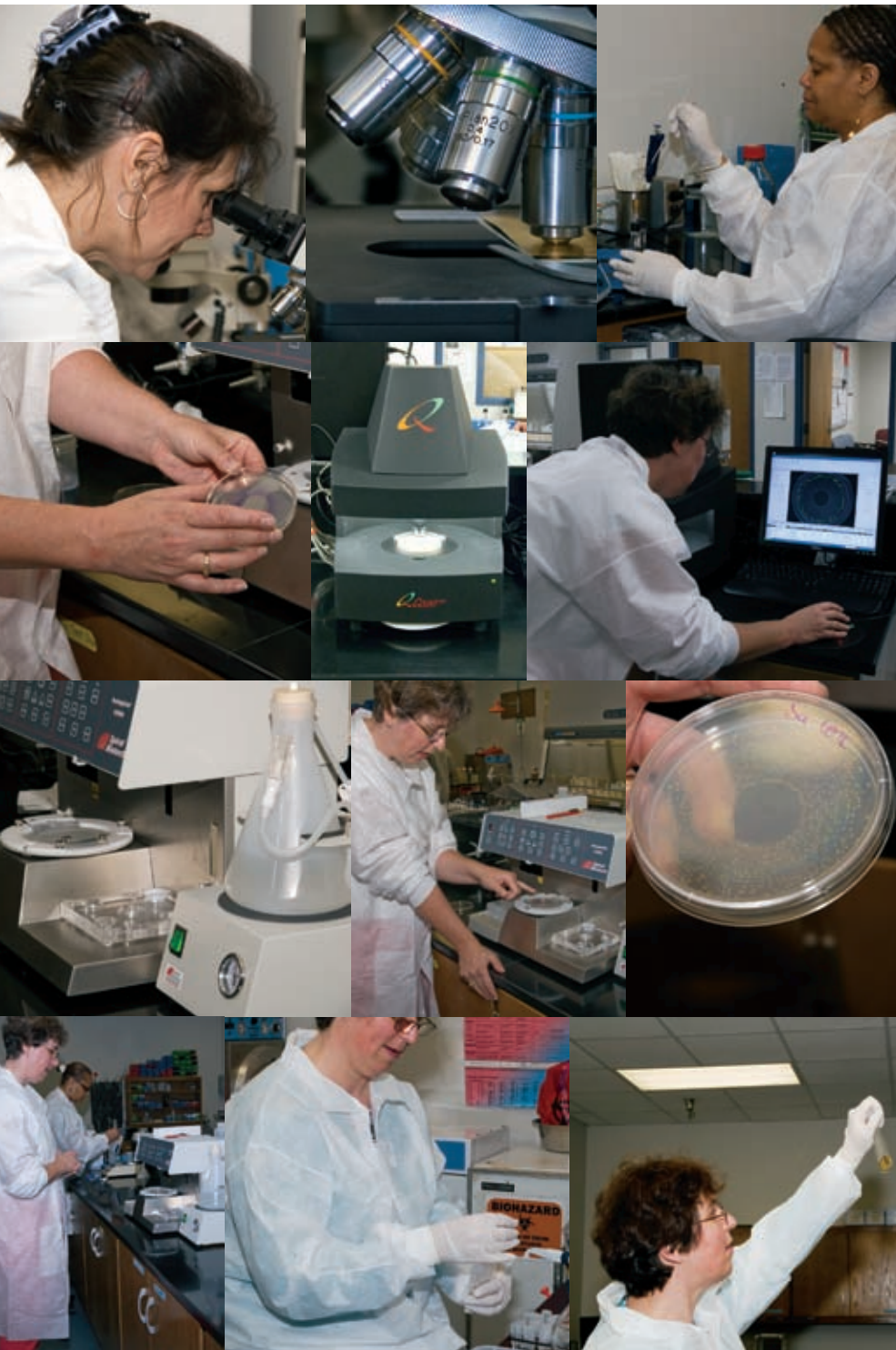
People now call us the 'Manufacturing Solutions Center'

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.



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