



VISION



RETURNING & RETAINING TODAY'S WORKFORCE

MAY 25, 2023

#VisionNWNC





RETURNING & RETAINING TODAY'S WORKFORCE

MAY 25, 2023

Leon Levine Hall, Appalachian State University

Vision Northwest North Carolina is a one-day summit that brings together thought leaders from across the region to discuss current economic development trends.

Our 2023 event focuses on the ways we approach the training of a modern workforce and the factors that drive people in the current employment market.

As we continue to convene important regional conversations about the growth and potential of our region, the Boone Area Chamber of Commerce is proud to host the 2023 Vision Northwest North Carolina economic development summit, presented by SkyLine/SkyBest & Carolina West Wireless.

The event is organized by a regional partnership that includes the Ashe County, Blowing Rock, and Boone Area Chambers of Commerce, Watauga County Economic Development Commission, Appalachian State Career Development Center, High Country Council of Governments, High Country Workforce Development Board, and the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina.

As businesses manage the day-to-day economic realities of a post-pandemic, pre-recession economy, the ability to hire and retain top talent remains a key measure of success. How do businesses respond to the salary and benefit demands of today's workforce? How are local educators changing their models to provide more efficient and cost effective pathways into the labor market?

Vision Northwest North Carolina: Recruiting and Retaining Today's Workforce continues these important conversations with examples of success from right here in our own backyard. You'll hear directly from businesses using innovative methods to train today's workforce, while also learning about the defining factors that lead job-seekers toward specific positions or companies.

Additional event support comes from Appalachian Commercial Real Estate, Beech Mountain Resort, Blue Ridge Energy, Chetola Resort, DMJPS PLLC, Frontier Natural Gas, Lifestore Bank & Insurance, First Security Peak Insurance, Spangler Restoration, and Truist.

We hope you enjoy this important day of discussion, idea sharing, and cooperation, as we focus on drawing and keeping the top talent working inside our business communities throughout Northwest North Carolina.



David Jackson
President and CEO

Boone Area Chamber of Commerce

8:00-9:00

REGISTRATION, BREAKFAST & NETWORKING

Provided by Chetola Resort

9:00-9:15

WELCOME REMARKS & AGENDA REVIEW

Sponsored by SkyLine/SkyBest

9:15-10:30

MORNING SESSION: TRAINING FOR TOMORROW

Sponsored by DMJPS, PLLC

Keynote Presentation: The Future of Degree & Credential Attainment
Cecilia Holden, President/CEO, My Future NC

Panel Discussion: Creative Credentials
Sponsored by First Security Peak Insurance

How educators are training students of all ages, abilities, and professional backgrounds to positively impact the region's workforce.

Karen Barnes, Interim Director, NC Tech Paths - *Emerging program linking participants to high-wage jobs in the tech sector*

Dr. Mike McKenzie, Vice Provost of Academic Program Development & Strategic Initiatives, Appalachian State University - *Strategic goals of the App State Hickory campus and its tie to professional education opportunities*

Rick Shew, Associate Dean of Business & Career Services, Caldwell Community College & Technical Institute - *Deeper connections between business and industry through skill development and work based learning*

Dr. Katie Wall, Associate Professor & Program Coordinator, Lees-McRae College: Outdoor Recreation Management, Ski Industry & Business Instruction, and Wilderness Medicine & Rescue - *Using location and unique expertise to serve the workforce needs of the region*

10:30-10:45

BREAK & NETWORKING

Sponsored by Spangler Restoration

10:45-12:00

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Sponsored by Truist
(Further information on page 4)

12:00-12:45

LUNCH & NETWORKING

Provided by Blue Ridge Energy

**Panelist
Biographies**



Cecilia Holden
President/CEO, My Future NC

Cecilia most recently held the position as the Director of Government and Community Affairs for the State Board of Education. In this capacity, she served as the principal contact and staff for the State Board of Education with state and federal education policy makers and stakeholders, including the NC General Assembly, the Governor's Office, NC state agencies, and the U.S. Congress.

Holden's career includes extensive public and private sector experience. Prior to joining the State Board of Education, she served as the Chief of Staff for the North Carolina Department of Commerce. In addition, her North Carolina public service includes serving as the Special Assistant to the Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources and the Director of Networking Technologies for the Department of Public Instruction. She has a proven track record of establishing and implementing creative strategies to optimize operations, return on investments and excellence in customer satisfaction.

Holden served as a middle manager with IBM and the Business Operations Manager for a Registered Investment Advisory firm. During her years with IBM, Holden was a Team Excellence Award winner, IBM Achievement Club recipient and was selected for the IBM Executive Fast Track program. She built a reputation for implementing high standards for customer service while she oversaw a worldwide network of technical support engineers.

Holden began her career working as a Community Detention Counselor with Wake County Juvenile Court. She later served as the Information Technology Implementation Manager with Wake County where she was responsible for the Public Safety and Criminal Justice information technology systems for which she received multiple National Association of Counties awards.

Holden holds a Master's in Business Administration from Duke University, a certificate in Public Administration from the University of North Carolina School of Government and a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Science and Business from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. Holden is married to Tom Holden and they have a son and daughter. They are members of Edenton Street United Methodist Church where Holden served on the Administrative Board and volunteers as a youth leader.

10:45-12:00**BREAKOUT SESSIONS**

Sponsored by Truist

Auditorium | Professional Education: *Continuing education for professionals and discussion on growing business with staffing needs in mind.*

Chris Grasinger, High Country Regional Manager, Mountain BizWorks

Lily Laramie, Small Business Center Director, Western Piedmont Community College

Dr. David Shows, Director of Professional Education, Walker College of Business, Appalachian State University

Room 246 | Training a Digital Workforce: *How regional partners are working to enhance skill development and provide businesses with a tech-savvy workforce.*

Chris Beckwith-Taylor, Founder & Chief Strategist, GREENstick

Nathan Born, Technology Operations Manager, Lowe's Companies, Inc

Carl Gilbert, Sr. Director, Tech Launchpad, Lowe's Companies, Inc

Ariana Williamson, Director of Strategic Partnerships, NC Tech Paths

Room 256 | Work Based Learning: *What's the most efficient way to keep staff current on training, technical updates, and new processes? Hear examples of local providers that are offering industry-specific training inside the workplace.*

Sherry Baird, Curriculum & Instructional Management Coordinator, High School Career Development Coordinator, Internship Coordinator, Wilkes County Schools

Ted Ollis, Director of Industry Training & Career Development, Mayland Community College

Pam Wilson, Center Manager, NCWorks Career Center, Avery, Mitchell, Yancey Counties

**Breakout
Session
Biographies**

12:45-1:00

WELCOME BACK: Sponsor Introductions & Instructions for the Afternoon

1:00-2:15

AFTERNOON SESSION: WHAT ARE EMPLOYEES & CANDIDATES TELLING YOU

Sponsored by DMJPS, PLLC

Small Business Case Study: Booneshine Brewing Co. & Stick Boy Bread Co.

Carson Coatney, Owner, Stick Boy Bread Co.
Michelle Bollman, Manager, Stick Boy Bakery
Tim Herdklotz, Co-Owner, Booneshine Brewing Co.

Panel Discussion: Employer-Led Leadership
Sponsored by Appalachian Commercial Real Estate

Examples from employers in the region working to solve housing, childcare, and workforce culture challenges.

Aaron Dawson, Senior Director of Workplace Development, The Industrial Commons, Morganton -*Employee ownership as motivation and a business succession strategy*

Cassia Dowdy, Director of Human Resources, Design Foundry – *Workplace culture and employee onboarding*

Shane Fox, Town Manager, Blowing Rock - *Childcare option for Town of Blowing Rock employees*

Talia Freeman, Director of Marketing, Beech Mountain Resort - *Housing effort for resort employees*

2:15-2:30

BREAK & NETWORKING

Sponsored by Lifestore Bank & Insurance

2:30-3:45

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Sponsored by Truist
(Further information on page 6)

3:45-5:15pm

Networking Reception

Provided by Beech Mountain Resort

**Panelist
Biographies**

Booneshine Brewing Co.



Tim Herdklotz
Co-Owner, Booneshine Brewing Co.

Tim Herdklotz is the co-founder and president of Booneshine Brewing Company, based in Boone, NC. Booneshine Brewing is a microbrewery, tasting room, and restaurant located in East Boone. Prior to Booneshine, Herdklotz spent 20 years working in the electronic payments industry. Tim's corporate experience includes software development, product management, technical sales, business development, and business unit management.

Stick Boy Bread Co.



Carson Coatney
Owner, Stick Boy Bread Co.

An idea to start a bakery. A fun and silly logo with a stick boy on it. A constant search for better products made with better ingredients. A fresh cup of coffee made with organic fair trade beans from a local roaster. A loaf of naturally fermented Carolina Sourdough made with only NC grown organic flour, water and salt. A warm magic cookie or sticky bun. A new café location across town called Stick Boy Kitchen. We have 21 years of history give or take. We could tell a long story about ourselves. We could tell lots of stories.

The story that I am most interested in telling though is the story of us. When people come to work at Stick Boy we ask a lot of them. We ask them to work really hard all hours of the day and night, to be creative, to solve problems, and to be honest and challenge each other. We know that work isn't their first priority though and we don't want it to be. In the balance of working hard and studying, or leading campus groups, or climbing, or cycling, or raising families or just hanging out with friends, Stick Boy employees manage to squeeze every minute out of a day and somehow do it all again the next day. We have a remarkable team at Stick Boy and we hold each other up and push each other forward every day. Everything you experience when you walk through the doors of Stick Boy is a product of that.

When we do it well, I think you'll catch a glimpse of the Stick Boy story. When we don't do it well I hope you give us a chance to say we're sorry and let us try again. We love what we do. We are passionate about the food that we make. We choose to work in the service industry because we find value in serving people and I hope you find value in that too. We spend time connecting with each other and with our customers because relationships matter to us. We are crazy about this community we have in the mountains because there is no other place quite like it. And we are really proud and really honored to be a part of it.

Michelle Bollman
Manager, Stick Boy Bakery



Michelle Bollman is the General Manager of Stick Boy Bakery and Stick Boy Bakehouse production facility. She began her journey in 2011 as a part-time pastry baker and through a series of opportunities and growth, was able to take on a leadership role within the business. She thrives on the joy of building cohesive teams and fostering success through collaboration. Michelle's particular interest lies in creating adaptable systems ensuring sustained growth over time.

Married to Jeremy Bollman, former Stick Boy Bread Baker and founder of Hatchet Coffee, she cherishes her role as a mother to three beautiful daughters. Embracing the mountains of North Carolina, Michelle firmly believes in fostering a strong sense of community in this place she calls home.



2:30-3:45

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Sponsored by Truist

Room 246 | Friendly Workspaces: *Policy discussion around family-friendly and recovery-friendly workplaces.*

Lisa Finaldi, Community Engagement Leader, The North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation

Devin Lyall, Executive Director, Wilkes Recovery Revolution

Lindsey Sullivan, Health Strategist, STABLE Workplaces, AppHealthCare

Room 256 | Prioritizing Professional Development & Workplace Culture: *What are the genuine circumstances and opportunities that motivate people to grow within your business?*

Danielle Stilwell, HRD & Recruitment Manager, Columbia Forest Products

Leah Perkins, Human Resources Manager, Watauga Opportunities, Inc

Thea Young, Executive Director, Footsloggers

Auditorium | Experiences from the Front Lines: Hear directly from recently hired young professionals in the region about what they prioritized when seeking employment.

Kelsea Dixon, Team Coordinator WNC, Spangler Restoration

Allison Dodson, Chief of Staff, Mananalua, LLC

PJ Hennessey, Senior Risk Advisor, Granite Insurance

**Breakout
Session
Biographies**

VISION 20 23

TITLE SPONSORS



SPONSORS



PARTNERS



#VisionNWNC