



**For Immediate Release  
June 21, 2007**

**Moore County, NC**

### **Appreciation Luncheon Held for Local Industries**

Leaders from several of Moore County's manufacturing industries and knowledge-based service companies took a breather from their busy plants and offices to enjoy a luncheon in their honor last week at National Golf Club. Co-sponsored by Moore County Partners in Progress and Dixon Hughes PLLC on June 15<sup>th</sup>, the luncheon was the third such annual event hosted by Partners in Progress to bring the owners, presidents and plant managers of the County's existing industries together to network with each other and hear relevant guest speakers.

Representatives from almost 20 different types and sizes of industries throughout the County attended the luncheon and were welcomed by Scott Brewer, CPA with Dixon Hughes. Ray Ogden, Executive Director of Partners in Progress, expressed appreciation for the presence of these companies in the County. "While all of our existing businesses are significant to the community, we want to focus on our 'primary' industries today – those that make a product or provide a service that brings outside dollars into Moore County", Ogden explained. "All of you here are a vital part of our local economy and your companies contribute greatly to the economic wellbeing of our citizens. Thank you for being in Moore County and for all you do."

Larry Caddell echoed Ogden's sentiments as he addressed the group. Caddell, a local business owner himself as CEO of Southern Software, Inc. in Southern Pines, is also Vice Chairman of the County Board of Commissioners. He expressed that Moore County and the Board of Commissioners are supportive of local existing industries. "I know what it means to be an entrepreneur and what's involved in keeping a business running", he said. "We (the County) want to do whatever we can to help our industries grow and thrive".

The luncheon also featured 2 guest speakers who spoke about readily-available programs that can help area companies save money, streamline operations and hire qualified employees.

Mitch Poteat informed the group about NC State University's Industrial Extension Service (IES) whose programs historically were geared toward manufacturing entities, but have been broadened to include service, administrative and other types of organizations throughout the state. Poteat is an IES Account Manager based in Raleigh, and his service area is the 13-county Research Triangle Region including Moore County.

Poteat explained that through workshops, training and working directly with IES staff, companies can address a multitude of operational issues, such as improving workplace safety, improving service and product quality through ISO Management System certification, increasing productivity through lean manufacturing applications, decreasing waste and process defects through implementation of Six Sigma, and conducting energy and environmental assessments for efficiency and compliance with governmental regulations.

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The second speaker was Alan Duncan, Senior Director of the Dedman Center for Business at Sandhills Community College (SCC), who discussed the WorkKeys program. WorkKeys, a national job analysis and skills assessment system, is one of many resources available through the college to help local industries with their workforce needs.

Duncan explained that through the program, an industry's job positions are 'profiled', meaning a WorkKeys facilitator works closely with the industry's employees to define the specific tasks and skills needed to perform each job. Then, the skill levels of job candidates and incumbent employees are measured in basic areas such as applied mathematics, applied technology, reading comprehension and business writing, as well as interpersonal skills.

Utilizing these job profiles and skills assessments, the employer is better equipped to either match the individual to a job position requiring those skills the individual already has, or to create a specialized training program to bring the individual's skill levels up to those required by the position. Either way, the company ultimately has a qualified workforce to meet its needs.

Each attendee left the luncheon with a canvas tote bag in hand from the College, filled with resource information and goodies from both SCC and Dixon Hughes. "A good portion of residents probably don't even realize that some of these industries are here and operating in Moore County. Nevertheless, these companies deserve a pat on the back. We want them to know how important they are and we want them to always call Moore County home", said Ogden.

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