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— Mary Vickers-Koch
Dean, Harris Campus
Central Piedmont Community College

GLOBAL LEADERSHIP ON DISPLAY AT GLOBAL CAROLINA CONNECTIONS 2014

CHARLOTTE, NC – The 2nd annual Global Carolina Connections conference on international investment was held in Charlotte at the Harris Center of the Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC) on August 11, 2014. Over 140 attendees engaged in the global business community in the Carolinas – representing organizations from various countries including the United States, Japan, France, India, Israel, Germany, Belgium, Spain, Austria, and Italy – assembled to address topics of importance to foreign-owned businesses located in the Carolinas.

The conference featured a number of distinguished speakers, including Harris Center Dean Mary Vickers-Koch, CPCC President Dr. Tony Zeiss, Charlotte Mayor Dan Clodfelter, and North Carolina Secretary of Commerce Sharon Decker. “The theme of Global Carolina Connections is a fantastic one, as it reflects exactly what we need to be doing in this region,” Vickers-Koch stated in her opening remarks. “It also holds well for the vision of Charlotte as a global hub of commerce – a vision that, through maintaining connections to and between foreign-owned and local firms, can be extended to both Carolinas as a whole.”

A major theme that emerged was the dynamic, changing role that the Carolinas continue to play in global business – growing from a region of individual clusters into a “mega-region” of global activity that crosses both industry sectors and state borders. “We must think of ourselves as a mega-region, extending from its center in Charlotte to Raleigh-Durham-Chapel in the north to Atlanta and from Columbia to Charleston in the south,” Vickers-Koch continued. According to Vickers-Koch, the notion of the mega-region, or a metropolitan revolution, is something that is happening all over the world, and must be seized if our region is to keep pace globally. Dr. Zeiss agreed, reinforcing the idea that, “The metropolitan areas understand how to survive, where to go, and what to do in order to grow, and Charlotte is working hard to lead the way toward future prosperity in this global economy.”

Charlotte Mayor Dan Clodfelter’s welcoming remarks echoed the vision of Charlotte as a center of global commerce in the Carolinas that continues to play various emerging leadership roles. “This is a city that is constantly

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NC Department of Commerce

reinventing itself," stated Clodfelter. "Now we are on the cusp of a major new transformation in the life and economy of Charlotte: that into a true leader of global commerce." Mayor Clodfelter then introduced the conference's keynote address, delivered by North Carolina Secretary of Commerce Sharon Decker.

Decker welcomed the opportunity to focus on the important contribution foreign-owned businesses make to the Carolinas' economy. "The opportunity to talk about international business and investment in the Carolinas is something I am very excited to be a part of," Decker began. "As private enterprise, as public enterprise, as educational leadership, and as service providers, we all need to be engaged in this important, leading sector of our states' economies."

Sec. Decker emphasized that both North and South Carolina are part of what she referred to as an "urbanizing economy," or one where not only metropolitan areas experience growth, but where "urban corridors" connect these traditional centers of commerce with more rural areas, to the eventual benefit of all the states' residents. "Unless we embrace the reality – and philosophy – of an urbanizing economy," Sec. Decker stated, "we will likely be left behind on a national, and a global scale."

A centerpiece of the Global Carolina Connections conference is the hosting of panels on critical topics currently facing foreign-owned businesses in the region. This year's featured panel discussions focused on healthcare and the Affordable Care Act, energy efficiency and sustainability, and workforce development. The hour-long discussions led to dynamic exchanges not only between the various foreign-owned company representatives directly participating on the panels, but also between audience members as well. Attendees received a wealth of information on these topics, including what challenges foreign-owned companies face and what strategies those companies are deploying to overcome those challenges. Extensive networking opportunities allowed participants to make the types of connections essential for driving the global vision, and the future, of the region.

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firms in our region,” explained Sam Moses, co-organizer of the conference and Partner at Parker Poe law firm, which co-hosted the event with Rödl & Partner and Global Carolina Communications. “The Carolinas have written the book on how to recruit foreign investment to the region, and both states are envied around the world for this,” Moses continued. “But what we are also doing is writing the book on how to keep those companies here and keep them expanding. This forum is intended to be just one of many successful efforts in the region to accomplish this goal, and we are glad to contribute to this effort.”

Oliver Hecking, Partner at Rödl & Partner’s Charlotte office added, “As a foreign-owned company, Rödl & Partner is keenly interested in helping our foreign-owned clients in the Carolinas and beyond to learn from other such companies in the area to develop innovative ways to grow. Hosting this conference has been essential in helping make that possible.”

Global Carolina Communications’ founder, Scott Evan Burgess, shared this enthusiasm, and described plans for the 2015 conference. “We are very pleased with the reception to this signature event,” he added. “Building on our momentum, we will host the conference next year in the Greenville-Spartanburg area – a long-recognized hub of international manufacturing activity.” Future plans are to rotate the conference back to North Carolina in 2016.

GLOBAL CAROLINA CONNECTIONS



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— Scott Evan Burgess
Founder and CEO
Global Carolina Communications

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About Global Carolina Communications

Global Carolina Communications (GCC) provides a full range of custom collateral, marketing, and PR services to global enterprises throughout the Carolinas and beyond. GCC helps companies like yours reduce marketing spend, increase leads, and boost revenues. Our custom press releases, executive profiles, translations, and sales collateral are published on our Web site, the Global Carolina Business Journal, which receives 30,000 visits per month from more than 30 countries. GCC's success stories, case studies, and white papers provide your business development team with powerful third-party endorsements of your company's products, strategies, and services. These highly effective sales tools give customers and prospects rapid, persuasive insight into how your company addresses or solves a particular industry issue or business challenge. For more information, visit www.gcbusinessjournal.com

