Various Pitt County agencies discussing swine flu
Thursday

The Daily Reflector
Tuesday, July 28, 2009

Officials from various Pitt County agencies will gather Thursday to discuss the status of the H1N1 swine flu pandemic.

The three-hour roundtable discussion hosted by Pitt County Emergency Management and the Public Health Department is intended as an opportunity to consider refining local plans that would be initiated in the event of a flu outbreak.

"We've got a pandemic plan," Emergency Services Director Noel Lee said. "What we're trying to do is go in ... and look at some of the worst-case scenarios."

Pitt County has recorded 10 confirmed cases since the outbreak began, according to Pitt County Public Health Director Dr. John Morrow. He said that number is likely too low, because health officials were directed to stop counting cases by the Centers for Disease Control and the World Health Organization. Anyone with an influenza-like illness is suspected to have H1N1 because it's the most prevalent form out there, he said. They are only monitoring to see if the disease changes.

Representatives from Greenville, East Carolina University, the Greenville Utilities Commission, Pitt County Schools, Pitt Community College, Pitt County government, Pitt County Memorial Hospital, the Pitt-Greenville Chamber of Commerce, N.C. Emergency Management, the Industrial Development Commission, the American Red Cross will attend the discussion.

A news release about the meeting indicated they hope to improve communication and information sharing among those entities. Manpower and the ability to distribute vaccinations in the fall months also will be discussed, as well as identifying possible alternate care facilities.

"We'll talk about what we are anticipating might happen this fall in our community," Morrow said.

"We don't know what might happen. It may not return at all. It's in our community right now."

The public and the press are not invited to attend the discussion. Lee said the Pitt County Emergency Operations Center is too small to include additional people. He said the occupancy is 49 people, and 46 already have signed up.

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ECU track earns academic laurels

By
The Daily Reflector

Tuesday, July 28, 2009

Brittany Copeland, Matthew Dennish, Danielle Eiler and Jarrett Newby were selected to the United States Track and Field and Cross Country Coaches Association Division I All-Academic Team, according to an announcement by the organization this week.

Copeland, a rising junior, holds a GPA of 3.36 as a recreational therapy major. She qualified for the NCAA Outdoor East Regional by posting a school-record time of 16:33.18 in the 1,500-meter event at the the Penn Relays. Copeland also competes for the Pirates as a cross country runner.

Dennish recently completed his eligibility, obtaining his bachelor's degree in exercise and sport science with a GPA of 3.53. He turned in a time of 1:49.93 in the 800 at the High Point Invitational before clocking in at 1:50.15 at the Conference USA Outdoor Championships to claim his spot in the NCAA East Regional.

Owning the school record in the discus, Eiler's career culminated with a third-place showing in the event at the C-USA Outdoor Championships, solidifying her place at the NCAA East Regional. The McHenry, Ill., native earned her bachelor's degree in psychology and graduated with a GPA of 3.30.

Newby, a rising senior, qualified for the NCAA East Regional in the 800 with a time of 1:50 at the High Point Invitational. The physical therapy major currently owns a GPA of 3.62 and will return next season as a team captain.

To qualify for the all-academic team, student-athletes must compile a cumulative grade point average of 3.25 or higher and meet either the NCAA Division I Indoor automatic or provisional qualifying standard, or the NCAA Division I Outdoor regional or national qualifying standard in their respective events.

— ECU Media Relations

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ECU elects new chairman for board of trustees

Chris Lavender
2009-07-27 10:42:12

GREENVILLE — David Brody, a Kinston developer, has been elected chairman of the East Carolina University Board of Trustees.

“David Brody has a long and distinguished history as a friend and leader of East Carolina,” ECU Chancellor Steve Ballard said. “His contributions during his first six years on our Board have been impressive, and I look forward to working with him during his term as chair.”

Brody, 58, said Monday that ECU is facing a tough budget year because of state funding cuts.

“All of the trustees are dealing with a reduction in the state budget,” Brody said. “It’s going to be a real challenge for us to make productive reductions that don’t impact the quality of education.”

Brody had served two years as ECU Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees and is a longtime civic leader in eastern North Carolina. Brody moved to Kinston in 1976 and is currently self-employed.

He is a former chair of Pitt County Memorial Hospital Board of Trustees and is part of the family for whom the Brody School at ECU is named. Brody was elected chairman of the ECU Board of Trustees on July 23.

During his career, Brody also helped operate a local department store chain named Brody’s. The chain was sold in 1998 after 70 years in business.

During the July 23 meeting, Selma attorney Robert Lucas was re-elected as ECU’s vice chairman of the Board of Trustees while David Redwine of Ocean Isle Beach was re-elected as the board’s secretary.

Four new members of the ECU Board of Trustees were also sworn into office. The new members include Danny Scott, Steve Jones, Ken Chalk and Brad Congleton.

The ECU Board of Trustees has 13 members. All serve four-year terms.

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County accepts grant to boost community development

By Geoffrey Cooper
Rocky Mount Telegram

Sunday, July 26, 2009
TARBORO —

Edgecombe County has received new funding from state agencies to receive training in grant writing and housing needs studies throughout the county.

The Edgecombe County Board of Commissioners recently accepted a $75,000 Talent Enhancement Demonstration Grant from the N.C. Department of Commerce’s Office of Rural Development Programs.

The grant will help Edgecombe County pursue new county-wide projects put on hold due to a lack of funding.

According to the Office of Rural Development Programs, the goal of the TED Grants Program is to enhance the capacity to develop strategic and competitive Community Development Block Grant proposals and grant administration throughout Eastern N.C. Tier 1 counties and local governments in 21st Century Communities.

Enhancement tools include community survey research, economic impact analyses and training in design, grant administration and writing and feasibility study preparation.

East Carolina University’s Office of Engagement, Innovation and Economic Development is a partner of the program, and grants were awarded to seven other counties and towns on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Edgecombe County Manager Lorenzo Carmon said county officials have not implemented any projects as of yet and are still developing a budget of how to use the grant.

He said one part of the grant will go towards initiating a county-wide housing needs survey, which would start in either September or October.

County officials would collaborate with local public officials, realtors, contractors and appraisers on fair housing law education and gathering housing discrimination complaints from residents.

Another portion of the grant would assist the county with an economic analysis and feasibility study on how to use a shell building for industrial recruitment.

“I see this grant as another tool used to enhance the quality of living for our residents in Edgecombe County,” Carmon said.

Along with research and feasibility studies, ECU faculty will offer Edgecombe County officials broad based grants management and administration training courses.

In the first year, officials will take training courses and for the second year, ECU officials will offer hands-on technical assistance and intervention, via graduate assistants and ECU Outreach Network director, to catch each community up to speed. Classroom training will begin in September.

“We want to find those communities with low resources, and help them build a stronger foundation for economic development,” Kenny Flowers said.

Flowers said he hopes the grant program will bridge a strong working relationship with ECU and provide an outlet for the county to save money.

“It’s very difficult for some communities to get the money for proper training,” Flowers said. “This would give
them another avenue to venture. In the long run, they will know how to access these resources."

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COX
NEWSPAPERS
Jobless rate shifts course

Unemployment numbers deflate a little as companies peek out of their shells.

BY JONATHAN B. COX, Staff Writer

Let's get this out of the way: Unemployment is still painfully high for the Triangle.

But it's becoming more clear that the worst of the recession might have passed.

In June, joblessness in the eight-county region that includes Durham, Johnston, Orange and Wake fell to 8.5 percent from 8.8 percent in May. That's according to figures reported Friday by the N.C. Employment Security Commission and adjusted for seasonal effects by Wells Fargo in Charlotte.

The rate drop is just one sign. Another can be found over at Manpower, a staffing firm. It is seeing a slow uptick in job orders from companies.

Now, most of those are for contract employees. But that's where the recovery will likely show up first.

Employers are more likely to add temporary workers before adding permanent ones as business improves. They want to ensure that the economy has really hit bottom and that a recovery is under way before adding to expenses that they've worked so hard to cut for many months.

"We're seeing things beginning to turn," said Jeff Stocks, president of Manpower in Raleigh. "They're better than they were," he said, but "we don't see the rocket taking off yet."

That's an important point. Thousands of people have been put out of work during this recession at companies ranging from retailer Circuit City, which went bankrupt, to drugmaker GlaxoSmithKline, which is revamping its operations. Many are struggling to make ends meet.

And they're likely to continue hurting, even if the darkest days of the recession are over.

"Layoffs appear to have peaked in the private sector," said Mark Vitner, senior economist with Wells Fargo Securities in Charlotte. "But we still expect hiring to remain sluggish as businesses continue to focus on cost cutting."

Each industry is likely to recover at a different pace. Stocks said he's seeing the most hiring activity among technology and biotechnology companies. Construction and manufacturing are still contracting, according to ESC data.

Even so, this region is doing better than most of the state, which had unemployment of 11 percent in June. Among 10 counties with the lowest unemployment rates, four -- Orange, Durham, Wake and Chatham -- are in the Triangle, according to figures seasonally adjusted by the Bureau of Business Research at East Carolina University.
Caldwell County northwest of Charlotte had the highest seasonally-adjusted rate, according to the ECU data. It was 16.2 percent.

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**Reporting the rate**

Some media on Friday reported that Triangle unemployment actually rose in June. What gives?

The News & Observer uses seasonally adjusted numbers that take into account regular fluctuations in the labor market to get a more accurate view of underlying trends and to provide a more fair comparison to the state rate.

The N.C. Employment Security Commission seasonally adjusts the statewide data and that number -- 11 percent in June -- is the one reported by just about every media outlet in North Carolina. The agency, though, does not seasonally adjust county or regional numbers. On an unadjusted basis, the ESC said Friday that unemployment in the Raleigh-Cary metropolitan area was 9.1 percent in June and 8.4 percent in Durham-Chapel Hill.

Wells Fargo in Charlotte and the Bureau of Business Research at East Carolina University take the raw data from the ESC and seasonally adjust them. The N&O consults with both sources on the Triangle rate and both showed, on an adjusted basis, the rate declined by 3 basis points in June.

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10 Most Common Myths About College

For many students thinking about college, the "big U" is one big mystery: Will college be just like high school? How do I go about picking a college? How will I do in the new environment? What will professors expect of me, and will they be nice? These questions are compounded when you suffer from all kinds of myths about college: misconceptions and half-truths that you’ve gathered from friends, teachers, parents, and who even knows where. In an attempt to allay the confusion, we offer the 10 most common myths about college—and what the realities are:

**Myth 1.** The average college student is 19, male, and in a fraternity. *Reality:* Old stereotypes die hard, but almost 60 percent of college students today are female. The average age of college undergraduates now is 26. And fewer than half of college students participate in the Greek system. So, college no longer is all about the keg in the closet.

**Myth 2.** The better the football team, the better the college. *Reality:* While success on the gridiron gets lots of publicity and looks great in the college videos and tours, there are plenty of great schools with bad football teams. And, of course, plenty of bad schools with great football teams. Look beyond the sports teams when judging the quality of a college.

**Myth 3.** Research universities are bad at teaching. *Reality:* Although you might think that colleges where faculty devote themselves full time to teaching would have better teachers than universities that emphasize research, it can be unbelievably exciting to study with a professor who’s at the cutting edge of his or her field. And contrary to what you might think, many top researchers love teaching as much as they love their own research. They get to communicate what they’ve just discovered. Some bonuses of studying with research faculty: They know the field the way only someone who practices it does, and they can involve students in their research projects—one of the best ways to learn.
Myth 4. The sticker price is the price you pay. Reality: While prestigious colleges list huge tuition costs (some as high as $50,000 a year, the price of a new Lexus, each year), usually financial aid packages are available to reduce these costs significantly. Don't declare a school out of your price range before you check out all the aid possibilities.

Myth 5. If you did well in high school, you'll do well in college. Reality: Just because you (a) took massive numbers of AP courses, or (b) got on the honor roll every semester of high school, or (c) won almost every high school prize, or (d) did all of the above does not mean that you're going to find your route through college paved with gold. The amount of work required and the level of skills needed to do well go up significantly when you transition from high school to college—especially if you didn't go to a high-powered high school (something you might not figure out until you actually get to college and see all the people from those high-powered high schools).

Myth 6. If you work hard, you'll do well at college. Reality: Yes, you need to work hard to do well in college, but working hard isn't enough in itself. You also have to produce good-quality papers and do well on the tests to get good grades in college. In college, it's the product that counts. So, no matter how hard you worked on that paper, if it doesn't have a clear point, contains mistakes, or doesn't answer the question, it's not going to get a good grade. If you want to be paid by the hour, try Wal-Mart or McDonald's.

Myth 7. You can cut classes, and it won't make a difference. Reality: Just because there are no truancy officers at college, or because professors sometimes don't take attendance or dock your grade for missing classes, doesn't mean you can cut class without a second thought. Professors typically don't spend a lot of time reviewing or repeating class material: One shot and you're done. And the real killer comes when you miss the class in which the prof explains the material that'll show up on the paper or test two weeks later. You think, "What difference is one class going to make?" The professor thinks, "I taught just that material in excruciating detail on September 6; why aren't you spitting it back on September 26?"

Myth 8. Professors live in ivory towers. Reality: Professors aren't paid enough for that. They tend to live in run-down ranch houses, sometimes even in trailer parks. But really, the idea that professors are closeted away and inaccessible to students is totally out of date.
Teaching is a service profession. Most professors enjoy talking with students—especially about the class material—in office hours, via E-mail, on course Web pages, or in some cases, by Skype, Twitter, or on Facebook pages.

**Myth 9.** Professors are the enemy. *Reality:* Professors are teachers, and, as with all decent teachers, their goal is for students to learn. This means that when they construct a test, they're trying to determine if students learned the important points in the class, not to trick students by asking about some unimportant, picky matter. So, too, the papers are meant to see if students have mastered key analytical or research skills, not to play "gotcha" with obscure questions that no one could possibly answer.

**Myth 10.** A college education is worth $1 million lifetime. *Reality:* While it used to be thought that getting a college degree would result in $1 million extra earned lifetime income, compared to a high school diploma, there's now some thought that it nets you only about $279,893. (For more on this debate, see Inside Higher Ed's "College Isn't Worth a Million Dollars.") But even if the $1 million is a myth, going to college is a really great experience. Think about the opportunity to study such a wide variety of subjects, with, in many cases, world-renowned experts, at a level of depth and sophistication that can't be matched at any high school (and indeed in many jobs after college). Priceless.

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