THE DAILY CLIPS

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East Carolina University News Bureau
E-mail to durhamj@ecu.edu Web site at http://www.news.ecu.edu
252-328-6481 FAX: 252- 328-6300
Skip Holtz expected to meet with Syracuse AD

But ECU football coach says he is not in an interview process.

BY NATHAN SUMMERS
The Daily Reflector

East Carolina football coach Skip Holtz was expected to meet Monday with Syracuse University Athletic Director Daryl Gross during his visit to New York.

Holtz was in New York City to attend the induction of his father, Lou Holtz, into the College Football Hall of Fame. But it was the son who was in spotlight, and his father helping to confirm Monday’s meeting.

ESPN reported Monday through the elder Holtz that his son, one game shy of capping his fourth season in Greenville, likely would meet with Syracuse officials regarding the school’s coaching vacancy.

Skip Holtz confirmed Sunday to The Associated Press in Charlotte that he wanted to meet with Gross, but said he was not in an interview process and that he was “in the beginning stages of exploring what else is out there.”

According to a report in Syracuse’s Post-Standard, Gross and Skip Holtz were both expected to attend a dinner Monday hosted by Notre Dame for

HOLTZ
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Lou Holtz.

Other names prominently linked with the job have included Buffalo head coach Turner Gill, Temple head man Al Golden and New York Giants assistant Kevin Gilbride.

Last Saturday, Skip Holtz passed an important milestone with ECU when the Pirates won their first-ever Conference USA championship in the team’s initial appearance in the league’s title game.


No news on the Syracuse vacancy came from the university Monday, effectively squashing a Sunday report by the NFL Network which said the ECU coach was expected to be announced on Monday as the next coach of The Oranges.

Holtz has one game left this season with the Pirates (9-4), the Jan. 2 Liberty Bowl in Memphis against Kentucky.

Contact Nathan Summers at nsommers@coxnc.com or (252) 329-9595.

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Perdue leads discussion on economy

She is gathering input from business and community leaders on how to resolve the state's most pressing issues.

BY BROCK LETCHWORTH
The Daily Reflector

North Carolina Gov.-elect Beverly Perdue's series of roundtable discussions on the economy stopped Monday in Greenville to focus on rural development.

The stop was the fourth of an ongoing listening tour in which Perdue is gathering input from business and community leaders on how to resolve the state's most pressing issues.

Topics volleyed most during Monday's one-hour session were infrastructure, education and equitable funding for rural communities.

Which area do you think needs the most attention from state government? Take our poll at reflector.com

"Wherever you go, folks want to talk about the priorities of North Carolina ...," Perdue said. "You hear a lot of the same issues and a lot of the same solutions. (This tour) has been one of the most productive uses of my time, and I'm grateful for the people who come."

Concerns expressed at each stop on the tour are being recorded for Perdue and her staff to prioritize and address when she is sworn into office Jan. 10.

Perdue started Monday's session with an optimistic outlook, saying she is confident after meeting with Pres-
PERDUE
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dent-elect Barack Obama recently that a stimulus package will be put into place to help workers, families and the business community nationwide.

The governor-elect said she also is putting together a stimulus package for the state that she will publicize soon.

With the country mired in an economic recession, Monday's panel had plenty of suggestions for Perdue.

Several members, representing Pitt, Edgecombe, Martin and Beaufort Counties, expressed concerns about infrastructure, including the widening of U.S. 17 and the long-term benefits of providing high-speed Internet in rural communities.

Rick Niswander, dean of the East Carolina University College of Business, said the university is a state leader in online education.

But the opportunity to grow has been slowed by a significant proportion of students living in rural areas with no access to high-speed Internet.

"It is not an affordability issue, it is an availability issue," Niswander said.

"The piece of infrastructure that we have to make sure we pay significant attention to, particularly in eastern North Carolina, is the technological infrastructure to get high-speed access to the citizens of North Carolina.

"If we do that, they can be productive, they can be knowledgeable and they can learn about math and science and be the kind of productive people we want. If they don't, they will be left in the dust."

Perdue acknowledged the importance of technological infrastructure and noted after the meeting that she wants her administration to be known as the one which positioned the state to compete globally in the 21st century.

Other panel members stressed the importance of lowering a dropout rate that continues to rise statewide.

D. Jordan Whichard III, chairman of the N.C. Economic Development Board, said he believes student education and workforce development in public schools, community colleges and universities have always been the state's most important investments for economic development.

Whichard, publisher of The Daily Reflector, also acknowledged the importance of making water and sewer infrastructure in smaller communities affordable and said the board is working on strategies for developing widespread economic prosperity.

Local farmer Lawrence Davenport asked that agriculture not be overlooked when it comes to funding, noting that it remains the state's most profitable industry.

"We are decreasing in numbers, but our dollars are not decreasing," Davenport told Perdue. "The money that goes into agriculture remains very, very important."

Perdue is expected to address agricultural concerns Friday during the next stop of her listening tour.

Other suggestions offered during Monday's session included strengthening nonprofit organizations, utilizing green technologies, investing in state-manufactured products and providing equitable access to grant funding.

Perdue asked those attending the session to follow up with her by proposing solutions to various economic challenges.

She also asked for patience from the panel and others across the state, noting that she is projected to enter the governorship with a more than $2 billion deficit.

"I have been public saying that some of the decisions I am going to have to make for the state aren't going to be ones you all necessarily agree with," Perdue said. "But I hope that rather than being cynical and harsh and saying 'She let us down,' you will remember the reality and let us get through.

"I know North Carolina, and we can get through this."

Contact Brock Letchworth at bletchworth@coxnc.com or (252) 329-9574.
Pirate revisits old school, inspires kids

On behalf of J.W. Smith Elementary School in Cove City, I would like to thank senior linebacker Pierre Bell and East Carolina University. Bell recently made a visit to his elementary school and spoke to many students about the importance of listening to teachers and doing your very best to succeed. He answered many students' questions and signed a lot of autographs.

Before he left, he wandered around the school visiting with former teachers and played football with students attending recess. Bell is a graduate from Craven County schools. He attended J.W. Smith Elementary School, West Craven Middle School and West Craven High School. He is a fine example of what kids can accomplish if they stay focused and out of trouble. He was a great inspiration to the kids at J.W. Smith.

I know he really enjoyed his day at J.W. Smith Elementary School. I think he also converted some Wolfpack, Tar Heel and Blue Devil fans to Pirates.

The Pirate Nation should be proud of the student athletes we have at East Carolina University. Thanks again Pierre and go Pirates!

PAM BROCK
Winterville
Intruder enters UNCC dorm rooms

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHARLOTTE — Authorities say at least four female students at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte reported that they awoke to find an intruder in their dormitory rooms last week.

The Charlotte Observer reported Monday that one student was touched inappropriately and two other were touched on their ankle or foot. University spokesman John Bland said one student saw the man before he left her room.

University police are investigating the incidents that occurred between 3 and 5 a.m. Thursday in Sanford Hall. Officials said most of the dorm rooms were unlocked.
Summer toil wins science prize

Months in a lab mean top honors for Wake high-schoolers

BY ERIC FERRERI
STAFF WRITER

DURHAM — While many teenagers slept in, played all day with their Facebook profiles or headed to the beach, Sajith Wickramasekara and Andrew Guo spent the summer dutifully reporting to a Duke University research lab, working hour after hour to make tumors more sensitive to cancer drugs.

The payoff came Monday when the 17-year-old seniors at the N.C. School of Science and Mathematics took a grand prize in the prestigious national Siemens Competition in Math, Science and Technology.

"There is no doubt that these scholars will change the world, starting right now, with their passion for science and math," Thomas McCausland, chairman of the Siemens Foundation, said after Monday's announcement.

Wickramasekara and Guo won one of two grand prizes awarded from a pool of 1,205 entrants. With it comes $100,000 in college scholarship money. Winners often go on to careers in medicine or science research.

The duo is the third team from the Durham-based public, residential high school to win the award. Teams from the school also won in 2004 and 2000. The school has had more finalists for the award than any other school in the nation.

"It's pretty big for us and could open up some doors," said Wickramasekara, speaking via telephone hours after accepting the award in New York City. "It's the biggest thing to happen to us in our education."

Neither Wickramasekara, of Raleigh, nor Guo, of Cary, have made their college decisions yet.

Wickramasekara, an Eagle Scout and captain of his school's science bowl team, has narrowed his choices to Stanford and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Guo, a state champion tennis player who speaks Mandarin Chinese, will attend either Stanford or the University of Pennsylvania. Each attended Enloe High School in Raleigh before enrolling at the School of Science and Math.

Since last December, the two budding scientists knocked ideas around in a Duke University laboratory under the tutelage of Craig Bennett, a Duke oncologist.

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They read volume after volume and asked piles of questions, their intellectual curiosity driving their work, Bennett said.

Intellectually, they're at the level of a first-year graduate student, he said.

"They're very mature for their age," Bennett said. "They didn't fritter their summer away at the mall. They spent it here."

Wickramasekara's mother, Kushlan, said Monday that she's delighted if not surprised by her son's success. She has seen signs of his curiosity since he was young.

"He's had a passion for a lot of things from an early age," she said. "He stated making Web pages when he was 6 years old. He learned HTML himself."

In tinkering with current cancer drugs, Wickramasekara and Guo hope to better match drugs with individuals using their genetic data, essentially making the treatment as specific as the disease. It is a field known as "personalized medicine."

Wickramasekara said he sees a day not long from now when a person can get a DNA sample taken at a health clinic. From that DNA sample, a doctor could quickly decide which of several medicines are best used to combat the person's ailment.

Guo said the award legitimizes the duo's work.

While they may head to different colleges next year, they could still continue to collaborate.

"We're going to try to keep working on the same project," Guo said. "At least we know we're going in the right direction."

eric.ferreri@newsobserver.com
or 919-932-2008
Holding the line on tuition

WASHINGTON

Of all the promises Barack Obama made during his campaign, none received more cheers and applause than his vow to make college more affordable and accessible for America’s young people.

This was obviously appealing to youths themselves, many of whom now find themselves, such as Barack and Michelle Obama did, burdened with debt when they finish their educations. But equally, it was attractive to parents and grandparents who worry about how the next generations in their families can afford the education that is essential to their future well-being.

A report last week from a commission headed by Jim Hunt, the former governor of North Carolina, underlines how important Obama’s pledge is — and how difficult it may be to attain his goals.

Its bottom line: College has become increasingly unaffordable to millions of middle-class and working-class Americans, and the rising barriers to campuses are costing the United States in the international competition for a trained work force.

Here are a couple of the key findings from “Measuring Up 2008: The National Report Card on Higher Education,” published by The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education:

• Between 1982 and 2007, college tuition and fees rose three times as fast as median family income, after adjusting for inflation. In the past decade, there has been a 50 percent increase in the number of undergraduate borrowers and a doubling in the inflation-adjusted total of students’ debts.

• The affordability barrier to college is eroding America’s standing in the world. Among Americans over 35 and under 64, the United States is second only to Canada in the percentage holding at least two-year degrees. But among those between 25 and 34, we lag not only behind Canada, but Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, Ireland, Belgium, Norway, France and Denmark. When it comes to college completion rates, we are 15th of 29 rated nations, barely above Mexico and Turkey.

In an interview, Hunt warned that the trend threatens the U.S. economic future. It results in part from the stagnation of wages and family incomes in the past decade, and also from the severe inflation of college costs — worse even than the run-up in medical care.

With Obama and a Democratic Congress, it is likely that help for students and their families will be on the way — to the extent that budget limitations and the need for big economic stimulus packages allow.

But Hunt’s message to those now sitting in the governors’ chairs, as he did for so long, is that higher ed must become their priority as well.

“We’ve gone through three stages,” he told me. “First, states focused on K-12 and developed a standards-based approach to improving the performance of elementary and secondary schools. Then we turned to early childhood education and worked on universal kindergarten and pre-K programs. The next focus has to be on the colleges.”

With state budgets already under duress because of slumping revenues and rising Medicaid costs, Hunt said he realizes that it will be difficult this year to protect higher education’s funding, let alone increase spending.

But he said the report makes a powerful argument that the worst thing to do is to continue to raise tuition and fees, putting college beyond the reach of more and more families.

“We have to look at productivity measures for college faculties,” he said. “The course load may have to increase for some professors.”

That will not be popular with some of my friends at the University of Maryland and the University of Virginia. But when autoworkers are giving up — at least temporarily — some of their unemployment and health care benefits, academics may have to sacrifice as well.

As Obama clearly recognizes, the education of the next generation is not something that can be squandered, if this nation is to have a decent future.
Futrell recognized by ECU Brody School of Medicine

He was one of 41 leaders who helped establish school

By CLAUD HODGES
Newsroom Manager

The late Ashley Brown Futrell was among 41 individuals who were recognized on Oct. 23 by East Carolina University for working to bring a medical school to eastern North Carolina.

ECU officials unveiled a painting Oct. 23 honoring those people.

Futrell's image is located near the right side of the painting, which was rendered by ECU-graduate Cameron Jackson.

Dr. Paul Cunningham, dean of the Brody School of Medicine at ECU, and Dr. Phyllis Horns', interim vice chancellor for health sciences, pulled the cover from the painting during the school's fall convocation.

"The work by these people was made during the late (19)60s and early (19)70s," said John Durham of the Brody School of Medicine.

Futrell and the other individuals helped convince legislators and the University of North Carolina Board of Governors to build the medical school in Greenville, according to Cunningham and Horns.

"The painting is on display now and in the foreseeable future in the lobby of the Brody School of Medicine building," Durham said.

The unveiling and convocation were held in the auditorium of the new East Carolina Heart Institute at ECU, the first official event to be held in the new $60 million building. The four-story, 206,000-square-foot building at 115 Heart Blvd. on the ECU health sciences campus houses offices and research labs for cardiologists, cardiothoracic surgeons, vascular surgeons and scientists. It also houses outpatient treatment and educational facilities.

Futrell began working at the Washington Daily News on Nov. 15, 1949, just 10 days before his marriage to Rachel Fox. He bought the paper shortly thereafter. The Futrell's only child, Ashley "Brownie" Futrell Jr., joined the Washington Daily News in 1978 as its general manager before becoming president and publisher in 1982.

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Founding the East Carolina University School of Medicine

This painting celebrates the contributions of forty-one individuals without whom the School of Medicine would not have come to be.

1. Leo W. Jenkins, Ed.D.
2. Edwin W. Monroe, M.D.
3. Wallace R. Woolee, Ph.D.
4. Hon. H. Horont Rueantre
5. Mr. David J. Whichard, II
6. Hon. Henry E. Frye
10. Hon. Robert B. Morgan
11. Hon. Robert W. Scott
12. Lenox D. Baker, M.D.
13. Jack W. Wilkinson, M.D.
14. Andrew A. Bent, M.D.
15. Frank H. Longino, M.D.
16. Mr. Reginald F. McCoy
18. Hon. J. P. Hukins
19. Dr. John L. Womun, M.D.
20. G. Ead Trevathan, M.D.
21. J. Allen Taylor, M.D.
22. R. William Mccornell, M.D.
23. Irwin Hardy, Jr., M.D.
24. Hon. John R. Gamble, Jr., M.D.
25. William J. Senter, M.D.
26. Mr. Leo Brody
27. Mr. J. Samuel Brody
28. Mr. J. Marse Gratz
29. Hon. Walter B. Jones, Sr.
30. Mr. William W. Speight
31. Mr. Kenneth K. Dew
32. Mr. Ashley B. Futrell
33. Hon. William D. Mills
34. Hon. Ralph H. Scott
35. Hon. Harold W. Hardison
36. Hon. S. Gerald Arnold
37. Hon. Coy C. Priven
39. Mr. Robert L. Jones
40. Hon. Nancy W. Chase
41. Mr. Vernon White