THE DAILY CLIPS

December 27, 2010

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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
East Carolina is not a member of the Atlantic Coast Conference, but it seems like it sometimes for the Pirate football team.

When 6-6 ECU takes on Maryland in Wednesday afternoon's Military Bowl, it will mark the fourth game against an ACC opponent for the Pirates this season.

During the six-year tenure of ECU director of athletics Terry Holland, in fact, the Pirates have squared off with the ACC 18 times including the clash with the 8-4 Terrapins. “I talked to (Maryland) coach (Ralph) Friedgen about us being honorary members of the ACC,” ECU head coach Ruffin McNeill joked last week. “As I told Ralph, ‘This is our fourth ACC game, you should adopt us.’”

The game is also a chance for ECU to even its season record to 2-2 in those games this year, and improve the Pirates' 6-11 mark in the previous 17 meetings against the ACC in the Holland era.

Though McNeill is a former Pirate player, his coaching staff's roots are primarily in Texas. But no matter where they are, games of geographic significance mean more everywhere.

“It's always different in a regional game,” ECU offensive coordinator Lincoln Riley said. “It doesn't matter if you're playing North Carolina or Appalachian State last year, when you play somebody that close, you get that feeling.”

Riley also understands that any game between a school from a Bowl Championship Subdivision conference like the ACC and one from outside the BCS like ECU adds excitement for the perceived underdog.

It can also add motivation, and Riley said he expects the Pirates to continue to add more wins to their record against the ACC. “I think Terry and those guys have done a good job of getting some of them on the schedule, and we've done a good job of beating a few of them,” he said. “We'll plan on beating a few more of them in the future.”

What if? It's easy to get comfortable having December practice every year. What's tough is the thought of not having a bowl game at the end of each season.
For ECU, bowls have become the rule, not the exception, and the Pirates' five straight postseason berths have meant having an extra month of practice each of those years. Not having it would be quite an adjustment.

“I thought about that when we tailed off a little bit at the end of the season, how that would be depressing,” said wide receivers coach Donnie Kirkpatrick, the lone carryover from the staff of Skip Holtz which started the team's current bowl streak. “You ruin a lot of things because the bowl game really builds a lot of momentum for the next season. It helps morale, (players) get some nice things, get to experience some nice things.

“It would have been sad for us because I think we're a little better team than we showed the last month (of the regular season), and we'd really like to go out on a winning note.”

Contact Nathan Summers at nsummers@reflector.com or (252)329-9595.
Snow blankets region

By Kathryn Kennedy
The Daily Reflector
Monday, December 27, 2010

N.C. Department of Transportation crews worked hard Sunday to clear the snow dumped statewide by a winter storm system that began early Sunday and continued into the evening.

Their message to the public was clear: Stay off the roads.
“We're doing everything we can do to clear the county, but it just keeps coming,” Transportation Supervisor Joe Ross said late Sunday afternoon.

Conditions prompted East Carolina University, one of Greenville's largest employers, to close today to allow personnel to clear roads and sidewalks. City and county government already were closed for the Christmas holiday.

Fountain experienced the highest amount of snowfall recorded Sunday in Pitt County, with 10.3 inches reported to the National Weather Service before 4 p.m. An estimated 7.5 inches fell in Bell Arthur, at least 6 inches in Greenville, and 5 inches in Farmville and Stokes before the sun set.

Areas to the south and west of Winterville received 3-4 inches, Newport-based forecaster Hal Austin said. That compares to the 10-12 inches recorded in Johnston, Sampson and Nash counties. Wake County reported 9 inches of snow.

The storm was expected to pass by midnight, though residual effects will be felt through today and into Tuesday. Roads where snow has melted under car tires can refreeze at night as temperatures dip into the low 20s.
Ross said crews focused on major highways like U.S. 264 and N.C. 11, as well as main arteries in Greenville and routes to the emergency room at Pitt County Memorial Hospital. But shortly after they moved on to other areas, persistent flakes had the roads covered again.

N.C. DOT employees reapplied salt brine to reduce freezing as they scraped and pushed the snow aside Sunday. Rock salt was applied in areas less traveled. Ten combination snow plows and salt spreaders, two salt brine sprayers and five bladed vehicles were in operation Sunday.

National Guard soldiers also were called to action to assist in winter storm operations. Two Humvees and four Guardsmen were on active duty in Winterville beginning Saturday night to provide transportation or recover stranded motorists at the direction of N.C. Emergency Management and emergency response officials. Others will maintain the armory.

They are prepared to stay on duty for three days, a news release said. Austin said high temperatures today will only reach the mid-30s with a cloudy morning giving way to slightly clearer skies in the afternoon. He said forecasters do not expect more precipitation, but the snow in place is unlikely to melt before later in the week.

The State Highway Patrol agrees with N.C. DOT in urging drivers to stay off the road. “The highways will be slippery, and conditions will be very dangerous for the next two days, even though the roads are treated,” Sgt. W. Crane said.

The trooper recalled similar conditions earlier in December when light snow and ice resulted in more than 100 wrecks in Pitt County.

“It happens mostly because people don't expect the roads to be that bad, and they drive the posted speed limit,” he said.

“Anyone with common sense knows that even in the rain you can't drive at normal speed limits. It's just not safe.”

A dispatcher said Pitt County 911 was busy sending first responders to a high number of wrecks, but she was unaware of any serious injuries or fatalities as of Sunday night. The added factor of holiday time means it is likely there will be more impaired drivers on the road, adding to the danger, Crane said.

“The best way to stay safe is to stay home.”

Relief may come Tuesday, which is expected to be sunny with high temperatures reaching the mid-40s.

Contact Kathryn Kennedy at kkennedy@reflector.com or (252) 329-9566. Bobby Burns contributed to this report. Contact him at baburns@reflector.com or (252) 329-9572.
BRODY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Dr. Carolyn Spencer and Dr. Allen Oseroff, both cardiologists, have joined the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University and its group medical practice, ECU Physicians.

Spencer joined the Department of Pediatrics as an assistant professor and pediatric cardiologist. She comes to ECU from Children’s Hospital in Boston, where she was an assistant professor.

A native of New Bern, she has a medical degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and completed residency training in pediatrics at the University of Florida. She completed a fellowship in pediatric cardiology and echocardiography at Children’s Hospital and a fellowship in pediatric cardiology at Florida.

Spencer is board-certified in pediatrics and pediatric cardiology. Her clinical and research interests are imaging, exercise testing and cardiomyopathy. She sees patients at the East Carolina Heart Institute at ECU and in New Bern at the Craven County Health Department. Appointments are available by calling 744-5601.

Oseroff joined the Department of Cardiovascular Sciences as a clinical associate professor and adult interventional cardiologist. He was in private practice for 21 years at Physicians East and Regional Cardiology Consultants in Greenville.

Oseroff has a medical degree from George Washington University and completed residency training at Walter Reed Army Medical Center and Eisenhower Army Medical Center. He completed a fellowship in cardiology at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

Oseroff is board-certified in internal medicine, cardiology and interventional cardiology. He sees patients at the ECHI at ECU.

Appointments are available by calling 744-3476 or 744-4400.

Dermatologists from East Carolina University are seeing patients two days a week in Washington, N.C.

Dr. Charles Phillips and Dr. Harris Green see patients Mondays and Tuesdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at ECU Physicians Dermatology Washington Office at 1240 Cowell Farm Road. They treat a variety of skin conditions and offer many procedures on site.

Phillips is a professor and chief of dermatology at the Brody School of Medicine at ECU. Green is a clinical assistant professor. Both are board-certified in dermatology.

This practice is a part of ECU Physicians, the group medical practice of the Brody School of Medicine at ECU. Appointments are available by calling 946-6221.

In addition to the new Washington office, ECU Physicians’ dermatology practice in Greenville has moved to 517 Moye Blvd. This location offers improved parking and more space in a modern facility.

More information about ECU’s dermatology services is available online at http://www.ecu.edu/ecuphysicians/patient-care/dermatology.cfm or by calling 744-3109.
WEST CAMPUS Supervisor Shonda Clemmons presents DeLafayette Davis a photo collage of his co-workers during a reception on his last day of work at East Carolina University. Davis retired in October after six years as a mail clerk with University Mail Services. With Davis are Thomas Hardy, Mail Services manager, and fellow mail clerk James Ward.

Davis retires from Mail Services at ECU

DeLafayette Davis recently retired from the Mail Services department at East Carolina University.

"We are all better people for the experience of having known a person like DeLafayette," Thomas Hardy, Mail Services manager, said. "His extensive knowledge, broad experience and remarkable sense of humor will be greatly missed."

Prior to working with Mail Services, where he was responsible for processing and delivering mail to the medical campus, Davis was employed for several years with the ECU Department of Medicine.

The Winterville resident plans to spend more time with his daughters and grandson now that he is retired.
A new Lifelong Learning Program (LLP) designed to meet the learning needs and interests of those who are 50 and older is being planned by East Carolina University.

The program is envisioned to offer a wide array of interesting and enriching courses, workshops, lectures, stimulating speakers, enjoyable trips and more. Town Hall meetings scheduled in early 2011 will gather ideas on topics and activities participants want to see in the program.

The Town Hall meeting sites and times are:
Jan. 20: Tipsy Teapot, Greenville, 5:30-7:00 p.m.
Jan. 21: Pitt County Senior Center, Greenville, 10-11:30 a.m.
Jan. 22: Farmville Community Center, 10-11:30 a.m.
Jan. 22: Grace Martin Harwell Senior Center, Washington, 2-3:30 p.m.

Those planning to attend should call the Division of Continuing Studies by Jan. 14 at 328-9198 or e-mail cpe@ecu.edu.

An interest form also can be completed at www.ecu.edu/cpe/llp.cfm online.
Santa Claus talks about his work with Operation Santa Claus in the sheriff's conference room in the Pitt County Courthouse Friday, Dec. 24, 2010. Operation Santa Claus brought together officers from the sheriff's and police and highway patrol departments as well as fire and rescue personnel along with Santa Claus to deliver presents to needy children on Christmas Eve. (Justin Falls/The Daily Reflector)

Operation Santa Claus delivers cheer
By Michael Abramowitz
The Daily Reflector
Friday, December 24, 2010

Santa Claus chose Pitt County this year to begin his annual global gift deliveries to the good boys and girls of the world. He finished the job Friday at homes in Greenville and Grimesland, accompanied by his troop of uniformed helpers.

Jolly St. Nick, played by Ronald Tyson, dropped in on schedule at the Pitt County Sheriff's Office Friday morning to round up the final haul of gifts collected in "Operation: Santa Claus."

The operation was sponsored by first responders from the sheriff's office, Greenville Police Department, Greenville Fire-Rescue and the State Highway Patrol, along with East Carolina University.

The toys all were donated through the generosity of the people of Greenville and Pitt County. The operation began Nov. 27, and the gift collection phase ended Dec. 16, said Christa Radford of the ECU news office.

Collections were made at all county schools, law enforcement and fire stations, at the Greenville Mall and all school sports activities, Radford said.

Sheriff Neil Elks greeted Santa at the office, joined by SHP Sgt. Gary Weaver, GPD Sgt. Carlton Williams and the squad of the familiar purple Engine One.

“I truly get a charge out of giving to kids who would not otherwise receive gifts, but the parents are more excited than the kids,” Santa said.
“It's nice to see mothers and fathers so pleased. Some cry at the sight, and they are all so thankful. It's very touching and makes me feel great.”

The public servants also were pleased to help Santa deliver the gifts, they said. “This is the time of giving, and this is a way for us to give back to the community,” Weaver said. “I expect to see some happy children today, and the response from parents is always overwhelming.”

Elks has participated in many of the annual operations, working behind the scenes after his retirement as a captain from the sheriff's office, but this is his first as sheriff. “I've looked forward to actually going out and making the deliveries. We're so excited to put smiles on the kids' faces,” he said.

Elks gave the credit to county residents for the operation's success. “I'm especially proud of the citizens of Pitt County,” Elks said. “Even though we live in tough economic times, they still step up and give from the bottom of their heart to make this day possible.”

Santa was last seen heading west across Greenville, then turned his sleigh back toward Grimesland for the final delivery of the day. He then dashed across the rooftops and back to the North Pole to load up for his next trip, which began right after the children fell asleep on Christmas Eve.

Contact Michael Abram-owitz at mabramowitz@reflector.com or (252) 329-9570.
Until Steve Mullis walked into ECU's Human Performance Lab, he thought his health was about average for a 60-year-old overweight retiree.

A few minutes on the treadmill indicated otherwise.

Mullis was referred to a cardiologist and within days was scheduled for triple-bypass surgery to remove blockages that had closed one artery and severely affected two others. “Had I not enrolled, or attempted to enroll, in this program, I'd probably be dead,” the Greenville resident said.

Few participants get news as dire as the wake-up call Mullis received. Many participants even get good news about their cardiovascular capabilities. Now that the lab has been approved for use with NCFlex dollars, lab staff are hoping even more faculty and staff will take advantage of its services.

The approval means that state employees can pay for the Cardiovascular Health Assessment Program (CHAP) with pre-tax earnings allocated to their NCFlex accounts. If a major risk factor for heart disease is detected, flex dollars also may be used to join the fitness facility. Such risk factors include high cholesterol values, high percentage of body fat tissue or having a hypertensive blood pressure response to exercise.

The CHAP includes an array of tests: a cardio respiratory exam with a physician; a resting and exercise EKG; a stress test on a treadmill; blood pressure tests; blood lipid and glucose screening; and a body composition assessment. Staff use the data to evaluate participants' risk of disease and prescribe exercise regimens.
“We're all firm believers that exercise is a hidden fountain of youth,” said Mike McCammon, the lab's associate director and director of the exercise physiology program in the College of Health and Human Performance.

Since the lab opened in 1983, about 10,000 faculty and staff members have taken advantage of the cardiovascular assessment to find out how aerobically fit they are, said Julie Cox, a teaching instructor in the lab.

That number represents a wide range of ages, body shapes and health levels. After participants undergo the $350 assessment, which McCammon estimated could cost more than $2,000 elsewhere, they can become members of the lab for $30 a month. That gives them access to the facilities as well as the expertise of the staff and graduate students who offer personal training at no extra cost.

“What we're able to do is bring it down to the level of where you are exercising for your health,” McCammon said. “You don't have to worry about what the other person looks like, because everybody looks different in our lab.”

The lab, Cox said, is “smaller, more personalized,” than many gyms.

The cardiovascular assessment can be a safe entryway for people who haven't exercised regularly. Some people, McCammon said, are a bit wary of exercise and may not know where to begin.

“What our program does for a lot of folks is it takes away the concerns they have,” he said. “They'd like to exercise but think, 'Gosh, I don't know if it's safe for me. I haven't done anything for so many years.' That fear factor limits people. We can teach people how to exercise smartly.”

After undergoing surgery in February, Mullis is back to all of his regular activities. He walks regularly. He recently finished painting the outside of a two-story house. None of it would have been possible, he said, if he hadn't been warned at the Human Performance Lab.

“I was lucky,” he said.

For information on the Human Performance Lab's services, visit http://www.ecu.edu/hpl/ or contact Julie Cox at coxju@ecu.edu or 737-1295.

**Pirate Battalion honors fallen grad**
The East Carolina University's Army ROTC “Pirate Battalion” raised $13,000 for the Fort Bragg Survivor Outreach Service's “Families of the Fallen” program with its third annual Golden Corral Patriot Run on Nov. 20. The battalion also honored a fallen ECU graduate and soldier, Capt. David “Jp” Thompson, who was killed in January.
Hosted by Brook Valley Country Club and featuring Golden Corral as the title sponsor, this year's edition of the Patriot Run exceeded the previous year's run with 303 registered runners, according to ECU professor of military science Lt. Col. Steven Delvaux.

Race director Cadet Steven Barnes, a senior at ECU who will be commissioning into the U.S. Army Reserve in the spring, presented the proceeds from the Patriot Run to the Fort Bragg Survivor Outreach Service's (SOS) “Families of the Fallen” during halftime of ECU's football game against Southern Methodist on Nov. 26.

“We are extremely grateful for the tremendous outpouring of support we received from all the local sponsors and runners,” Delvaux said. “Greenville is without a doubt one of the most supportive and military friendly communities I've ever lived in, and the area's commitment to our servicemen and women was on full display.”

The opportunity to honor and remember servicemen who have been killed or wounded while serving in combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan was an equally compelling reason for many runners who participated in the race, Delvaux said.

Emily Thompson ran in honor of her husband. Capt. Thompson was a 2002 ECU graduate who was killed in Afghanistan on Jan. 29. Dawn Cash-Salau, widow of Capt. Christopher Cash, who was killed June 24, 2004, in Iraq, said she was “personally touched” by the race.

Capt. Thompson was honored Nov. 26 before the ECU football game with the unveiling of a memorial in the foyer of Christenbury Gym. His widow and their two daughters, Isabelle and Abby, along with his parents and sister were on hand for the dedication and later during a halftime ceremony.

Thompson was commanding a Special Forces A Team, 3rd Special Forces Group, at Fort Bragg.

During halftime, Emily Thompson, also an ECU graduate, presented Cadet Angelo Iovino with the first “Jp” Thompson Memorial Scholarship.

Delvaux considers the Patriot Run to be one of the premier events conducted by ECU's Army ROTC battalion.

“This is an absolutely integral component of our cadets' leadership development,” Delvaux said. “The servicemen we're honoring today provide all of us with great examples of the type of selfless service we're all expected to emulate as commissioned officers in the United States Army.”

Equally important in Delvaux's estimation is the opportunity to honor and remember the widows and surviving children of the servicemen honored after the race.
“One of our ‘Warrior Ethos’ is that we will never leave a fallen comrade,” Delvaux said. “I believe that commitment extends to the great patriots of our country who have lost a loved one.

“Military wives and children serve too and this race gives us an opportunity to honor and thank them for their incredible sacrifices and make sure they know that their sacrifices are appreciated and that their loved one's sacrifices on our behalf in defense of our great republic will never be forgotten.”

The Fort Bragg Survivor Outreach Service's mission is to advocate on behalf of the families of fallen service members and to provide an avenue to resources to include support groups, bi-monthly newsletters, information briefs, and social events for surviving spouses, parents, and children. Patriot Run director Barnes reported this year's donation to Fort Bragg “SOS” of $13,000 almost doubled the amount ECU's Army ROTC battalion donated last year to Fort Bragg's Wounded Warrior Battalion.

Student loan debt in the United States has reached nearly $874 billion, according to the Student Loan Debt Clock at FinAid.org. That is almost $50 billion more than is owed on credit cards as of June, according to the Federal Reserve. Those numbers are astounding when you consider credit cards are available to nearly all American adults while student loans are limited primarily to those who attend college.

Thousands of students graduated this month. Student loan payments will begin immediately for some, or within six months for others. Those who graduated last May have begun feeling the effects of their repayment. With an average debt load of $24,000, according to a report from the Project on Student Debt, the average borrower can expect monthly payments of $276 for the next 10 years. No wonder 85 percent of college graduates polled by the marketing firm Twentysomething Inc. indicated they would be moving back home.

Now hear the good news. Federal student loans are the most borrower-friendly loans on the market. There are programs to match nearly every borrower's situation so there is no reason to be late or fall behind on payments. Whether the borrower cannot find a job, finds one with a low starting salary or gets called to active military duty, there are federal student loan repayment options available. Failing to make payments or paying less than the minimum could mean serious consequences, such as wage garnishment and confiscation of any federal tax rebates. Credit scores also will be negatively affected.

Plus, student loans cannot be dismissed through bankruptcy.

So how do borrowers eliminate their loans or find out their options? It is important they speak with their student loan servicer and their financial aid office. The first step is to understand how much is owed and to whom. The next step is to decide how to pay it off.

For federal student loans there are many options. The borrower must be sure to choose the one that best fits his or her situation.

Standard repayment is the best and least expensive option in the long run. The loans will be paid off in 10 years and will result in the lowest amount of interest expense. Paying extra each month will eliminate the loans even quicker.

If low salary is the issue, there are several other options. The graduated repayment option results in smaller initial payments with increases every two years. The loans still will be paid off in 10 years but with more interest and higher monthly payments toward the end.
If there is no way to make those payments then the extended repayment option may work. If the borrower owes more than $30,000 the payments can be stretched out for 25 years. The payments are a bit smaller but result in a ton of extra interest expense.

There also are payments based on income. Borrowers must check with their student loan servicer to see if they qualify.

Just plain broke? Then seek a deferment. A deferment means no payments are required for a period of time. To qualify, the borrower must meet one of the following criteria: unemployment, economic hardship, military service, or reenrollment in college (at least half-time).

If a deferment is not an option then seek forbearance. Forbearance is similar to deferment, but it is up to the loan servicer to decide eligibility. These are both short-term solutions.

Regardless of the situation, if the borrower does not have enough money left over at the end of the month to make his or her student loan payments there are options available. It is the responsibility of the borrower to put forth the effort and contact the loan servicer.

When all is said and done, keep in mind the money was borrowed with the promise to repay it. The borrower will be expected to do so.

Bill Pratt is a teaching instructor for the College of Business at East Carolina University and ECU's Financial Wellness Institute. He also had authored several personal finance books including “The Graduate's Guide to Life and Money.”
EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — After a relatively quiet rookie season, Matt Dodge is on the hot seat.

The New York Giants' punter was front and center on every sports highlight show on Sunday night with coach Tom Coughlin in his face, ripping him for failing to kick the ball out of bounds on DeSean Jackson's game-ending 65-yard punt return in the NFC East showdown with the Philadelphia Eagles.

Dodge was criticized by some and vilified by others for a play that almost certainly cost the Giants (9-5) the division title. The good news was there was no hate mail. Through it all, Dodge has stood tall.

The seventh-round draft pick from East Carolina who was given the job after veteran Jeff Feagles retired this spring, has been in front of his locker every day answering questions about the punt, his future, his mental state and life in general.

Everyone wants to know can Dodge rebound this week when the Giants try to clinch a playoff berth with a win against the Packers (8-6) in Green Bay today. “It's been a pretty normal week, except for the interviews,” Dodge said Friday after practice. “I'm fine though.”
Dodge, who has averaged 45.3 yards punting with a mediocre 34.6 yards net, has acted as if nothing has happened. He's typically been one of the first players on the field at the start of practice and one of the last to walk back into the locker room. He even managed a laugh when there was a report that Coughlin was so angry after the game that he kicked him out of the locker room and threw him off the team in one grand gesture.

“I couldn't believe people would think he would do that,” Dodge said of Coughlin. “He's such a well-respected, such a great guy that I've grown to respect so much that that would be completely out of character if he would do something like that.”

However, being a kicker leaves players exposed. When a running play breaks down, sometimes it's impossible to figure out who missed the block.

As a punter, everyone knows who is at fault on any shank and flub. It's also obvious who is at fault when the coach stands on the field and screams at you after a punt is returned for a touchdown on the final play in regulation for the first time in NFL history.

“I'm a pretty resilient guy,” Dodge said. “It's the kind of the thing, you put the human element in sports, stuff happens sometimes. And as much as I wanted to hit that out of bounds and give us a chance in overtime, it just didn't work out.”

While his words were calm, Dodge was upset by the incident. He exchanged text messages with special teams coach Tom Quinn after the game, stating that he felt that he let the team down, the fans down and even the city of New York down.

Place-kicker Lawrence Tynes wasn't surprised. “You think of the magnitude of that game and what it meant for the team and this city, and for it to be the last play is kind of why it sticks out,” Tynes said. “If it would've happened in the second quarter, it probably would've been talked about but not as much.

He definitely took it hard, which he should and we all should as team. It was definitely tough for him to deal with that with a game of that magnitude. But he's done a great job.” Dodge was encouraged by the number of teammates who offered words of encouragement this week, especially the guys on defense. They told him it was their fault for giving up 21 fourth-quarter points, and his punt was just the finish to a disastrous quarter.

It eventually got to the point, where Dodge got tired of getting words of encouragement. As much as he appreciated it, he had to tell them he wasn't going to hurt himself because of one punt.

“I've got a pretty good demeanor,” Dodge said. “I don't get too high or too low. I knew when I was punting really well that it was never as good as it seems, and it's never as bad as it seems. We have a chance to win this game and get in the playoffs and that's what we are going to do.”
Long snapper Zak DeOssie says Dodge's maturity is beyond his years.

“He has right mentality,” DeOssie said. “He is not going to let one kick define his whole career. He is a great punter and he is always getting better. There are going to be mishaps here and there, and he is just going to keep working.”
Under the Dome

A better way: Cut state pay
Sunday December 26, 2010

BY ROB CHRISTENSEN - Staff Writer

The last time North Carolina state government faced a budget crisis like the one it will confront next year, the state had one of its best governors in charge.

That was O. Max Gardner, a Shelby textile mill owner, lawyer, undersecretary of the U.S. Treasury and confidante of presidents and business tycoons. He was on his way to take his post as U.S. ambassador to Great Britain when he died of a heart attack. (He was also the only man to captain both the Carolina and State football teams.)

To cope with the Great Depression, Gardner oversaw the reorganization of state government. Gardner and his protégé, J.C.B. Ehringhaus, cut state salaries by one-third in the early 1930s to avoid widespread layoffs.

Gov. Bev Perdue faces the worst crisis since the Great Depression, with a projected $3.7 billion shortfall in a $21 billion budget next year. Because the legislature seems unlikely to raise taxes, we are talking about a roughly 18 percent budget cut.

To put that in perspective, you could close the shortfall if you shut down both the University of North Carolina and the state community college systems.

The state could be looking at laying off 21,000 public employees next year, the N.C. Budget & Tax Center, a private liberal group, concluded after analyzing the budget cuts that Perdue has asked her departments to prepare.

That is about 7.4 percent of the state's work force.

One idea being floated by one of the state's wise men, John Sanders, former director of the Institute of Government in Chapel Hill, is that Perdue and the legislature follow Gardner and cut salaries rather than institute massive layoffs.

Though temporarily cutting salaries would be very painful, it would spread the pain equitably.

Many people, of course, live very close, and a pay cut of, say, 15 percent could cause some people to lose their cars or their houses.
But there are good reasons to think about this. At a time when the state is supposed to be focused on creating jobs, such a massive layoff could drive the state's unemployment level to 10.2 percent.

Large-scale layoffs would save money, but there would also be plenty of expenses - separation costs, unemployment benefits, training and other costs. Putting 21,000 people out of work is bound to affect car dealers, real estate agents, merchants and the economy in general.

I've worked in the private sector all my life, and I've seen a lot of friends and colleagues lose their jobs in this recession. I've taken pay cuts and furloughs. Throwing thousands more people out on the street in this difficult job environment should be a last resort.

It was something that Gardner and other Depression-era governors managed largely to avoid in North Carolina. Gardner and North Carolina received national recognition for the way it handled the budget crisis during the Depression. Gardner's speech to the Kentucky General Assembly was entitled "New Conditions Demand New Remedies."

rob.christensen@newsobserver.com or 919-829-4532
Outlook for recovery in 2011
Sunday December 26, 2010

BY DAVID BRACKEN - Staff Writer
This economic downturn has been truly national in scope, with almost no region or industry immune to the downturn.

Massive job losses in such industries as construction have been felt in every community. They have left many people with skills that no longer match the jobs available in industries that are growing.

But the pace of recovery across this state is likely to vary depending on the makeup of the local economy. Recovery is likely to be slowest in parts of North Carolina that are still restructuring, and shifting away from a reliance on legacy industries, such as textiles, that have been shrinking for years. Regions like the Triangle are expected to be among the fastest to recover nationwide.

Here are snapshots of the economic outlooks for four areas of the state.

TRIANGLE
With its highly educated population and diverse economy, the Triangle was among the least affected by the recession, losing about 4 percent of its jobs at the peak of the downturn.

"The only metro area in the state that did better was Fayetteville, due to what's happening at Fort Bragg" and the military expansion, said Michael Walden, an economist at N.C. State University.

The Triangle's attractiveness is driven by Research Triangle Park and the region's three major universities - Duke, UNC-Chapel Hill and N.C. State - which produce a steady supply of labor and high-level research.

A number of local companies have continued to add workers over the past year, including Red Hat, SAS, Cree and Talecris. Others, such as Research in Motion, Garmin and HTC have recently been drawn to the region by its abundance of engineers. Still, the Triangle's unemployment rate has been stuck around 8 percent since May. That's below the state rate of 9.7 percent but well above the 5.5 percent rate recorded in the Triangle two years ago.

One of the Triangle's largest employers, state government, has already announced hiring and pay freezes and reductions in purchases and travel. And there's the strong likelihood
of significant layoffs within state government next year as legislators seek to close a projected $3.7 billion budget deficit.

Severe cuts to state and local budgets will hit this region's economy harder than others, said John Quinterno of South by North Strategies, a Chapel Hill firm specializing in economic and social policy.

Those cuts will come as many private employers continue to look for ways to control costs until the economy revives. Some of the region's larger businesses, GlaxoSmithKline and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina to name two, have announced major cost-cutting initiatives that could result in smaller work forces. The housing market, a key component in the region's grown in recent decades, continues to limp along without the help of government tax credits.

**CHARLOTTE**

The Charlotte region, which has historically weathered recessions well, was hurt badly this time around by declines in financial services and manufacturing. That helps explain why the region's unemployment rate, 11 percent in October, was a full 3 percentage points higher than the Triangle's.

Financial services and manufacturing each account for about 10 percent of the region's employment base.
"We're losing jobs in manufacturing and construction, and for the most part they're not coming back," said John Connaughton, an economist at UNC Charlotte.

**Financial sector losses**

In financial services, the total number of jobs lost hasn't been nearly as severe as many people feared when Wells Fargo announced it was acquiring Charlotte-based Wachovia. Total jobs in the financial sector declined from 77,000 before the recession to about 69,000 today.

"The real kicker is the quality of the jobs we've lost," Connaughton said. Losing a corporate headquarters has meant fewer high-paying executive and trading jobs. Those high salaries helped drive consumer spending, which in turn boosted employment in the service sector.

The Charlotte region is getting a large percentage of the few jobs that are being created. Of the 15,000 new jobs the state has created over the last year, 6,000 have been in the Charlotte area.

Charlotte is making a concerted effort to turn itself into a hub for energy-related companies. It's also recently been awarded several corporate expansions. BAE Systems, a British defense and aerospace company, said this month that it would open a center to handle back-office services in Charlotte and create 176 jobs. Industrial manufacturer SPX Corp. is expanding its Ballantyne headquarters and adding 180 high-paying jobs. The company says its new jobs will pay an average wage of almost $83,000 a year.
As in most other areas of the country, Connaughton said, the problem in Charlotte is that the pace of job creation isn't fast enough to make a dent in the losses that have already occurred. "It's not raining anymore," he said. "But it's not bright and sunny."

TRIAD
As an area that once relied heavily on tobacco, textiles and furniture manufacturing, the Triad was struggling with job losses even before the country dipped into recession.

The severity of that restructuring is reflected in the region's jobs data. The number of jobs in the Triad is now about the same as it was in March 2001. "Come next spring we could actually have fewer payroll employment jobs and fewer private sector jobs than you had 10 years ago, which is extraordinary," Quinterno notes.

Dell plant fizzes:
One of the area's biggest economic development projects, a Dell computer assembly plant in Winston-Salem, quickly turned into a bust. The plant closed last month, just five years after it opened.

Quinterno said Winston-Salem has made more strides at repositioning its economy than Greensboro and High Point. The unemployment rate in October was 10.2 percent in Greensboro and 9.2 percent in Winston-Salem.

Among the recent bright spots for the Triad was Caterpillar's announcement in July that it would build a factory in Winston-Salem next to the shuttered Dell plant that will add nearly 400 jobs.

The company joins several other major corporations, including FedEx and Honda, that have established a presence in the Triad in recent years.

The region has its advantages, Walden said, including a good education system and transportation network. But he expects the Triad to lag behind the Triangle and Charlotte as it continues to rebuild its economy.

EASTERN N.C.
Parts of Eastern North Carolina, stung by the decline in U.S. manufacturing, were also hurting before the recent economic downturn took hold.

Many areas are dealing with structural unemployment issues, meaning the jobs they've lost aren't coming back and need to be replaced by some new industry. Nash, Wilson, Edgecombe and Halifax counties all have unemployment rates well above 10 percent. "When we don't see real strong job growth it's really not going to help those areas much at all," said James W. Kleckley, director of the Bureau of Business Research at East Carolina University. "But there are bright spots."
Major TransPark tenant:

One is Spirit AeroSystems, the first large tenant to come to the Global TransPark in Kinston. The company opened a new plant this summer where it will make fuselage components for Airbus airplanes.

Spirit, lured to the TransPark by tens of millions of dollars in state and local incentives, has promised to create 1,000 jobs over the next six years and at least 200 by the end of the year.

Also opening in Kinston in January is a massive new Sanderson Farms chicken processing plant, which is expected to eventually create 1,600 jobs. Other bright spots include the ongoing expansion of the military in Jacksonville and the recent jobs announcements by Fountain Powerboat Industries in Washington and Hatteras Yachts in New Bern.

The coastal economy depends heavily on tourism and construction, two areas that were hurt badly by the recession. Kleckley said this summer appeared to have been better for tourism. As for new construction, it remains at record low levels.

"It's going to be a while until you see really active building," he said. "It's still a struggle, and those people that depended on construction jobs are going to have a hard time coming back to the things they like to do."

david.bracken@newsobserver.com or 919-829-4548
Defense is a concern as Pirates prep for bowl
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BY EDWARD G. ROBINSON III - Staff Writer
His defense has been dogged by criticism and plagued by injuries, but East Carolina defensive coordinator Brian Mitchell considers the efforts of his patchwork squad commendable given its limitations.

But as the Pirates (6-6) prepare to face Maryland (8-4) in Wednesday's Military Bowl (2:30 p.m., ESPN), it's Mitchell's defense that worries Pirates fans.

The Pirates, who have dropped four of their past five games, finished the regular season ranked at the bottom of Conference USA in total defense (allowing 478.8 yards a game) and scoring defense (43.4 points per game). Before the season started, the odds were stacked against ECU fielding an experienced, strong defense.

The unit started practically from scratch after the loss of nine defensive starters last season.
Three of those departed players - defensive linemen Linval Joseph, Scotty Robinson and C.J. Wilson - now play in the NFL. In his 16th season as a coach and first as a defensive coordinator, Mitchell filled the starting roster with a group of players with limited experience - 13 first-time starters this season - and asked them to flourish in a new system based on timing and feel.

Progressing at a slow pace, the Pirates then lost three key starters to injuries - defensive tackle Michael Brooks (right knee), defensive end Justin Dixon (right knee) and defensive end Marke Powell (right wrist).

Their loss crippled Mitchell's blitzing system and placed pressure elsewhere on the defense, as reserves filled new roles and veterans stayed on the field for more plays. "Those kids were key components to our playmaking ability," Mitchell said. "Just when you saw the progression, you saw the chemistry, you saw the playmaking ability with that core ... all of a sudden we're without that core. We're having to do something different schematically."

Mitchell said his defense "fell short" of executing its blitz-heavy, all-out attacking philosophy, yet he has used a needle-and-thread approach to stitch together the best possible options each week.

"You piece together the best scheme you can possibly put together for your kids," Mitchell said. "You piece together 11 men trying to accomplish one goal. And that's what
we probably did the latter half of the season. We were deficient in some areas. When you're deficient ... you try to compensate in other areas, and therefore things are not jibing the way you want them to jibe."

With 15 additional practices before the bowl game, coaches say the repetition for inexperienced players will pay off in the long term, and rest for veterans should help against Maryland's spread offense.

For first-year head coach Ruffin McNeill, it's not a question of effort. "I've been on defense my whole life," McNeill said. "There is a lot of pride in that defense. Having been in coaching for a while, I also know there has to be some wisdom and patience in there."

Young players such as freshman defensive end Derrell Johnson, a Baltimore native, started in 10 games this season. His inexperience often showed in his reaction to the speed of the game.
"It's one thing to watch it, but when it actually happens to you, it's a totally different reaction," Johnson said. "Everything happens just a tad bit faster, which causes you to react faster."

As the Pirates have struggled to react, teams have dominated them on third down. To have a chance against the Terrapins, ECU will have to do better than the 51.7 percent third-down conversion rate - worst in Conference USA- it allowed opponents this season.

Coaches have emphasized third down and concentrated film study on Maryland's tendencies, particularly the Terps' usage of the draw.
"Every third-down route, we need to drill them in our brain out there on the practice field. Just know what to expect. ... And just get off the field," ECU senior linebacker Dustin Lineback said.

That's been easier said than done this season. "You have some guys who got nicked and bruised and were lost for the year," McNeill said. "You lost three of our most talented guys. No excuses, though. I know the coaching staff knows that."

robinson@newsobserver.com or 919-829-4781