

News from the Corner

Volume 3, Issue 1 April 2008

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(* denotes Executive Committee)

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Message from the Chairman



Great things are happening in the NESA region! The NESA organization is working to make this the best year yet. Many exciting events have taken place within the organization during just the first three months of the new year. I'd like to take a moment to highlight some of the great things that are happening at NESA.

I am pleased to announce that NESA was able to accomplish its goal of raising \$450,000 of private support in the past year to be able to participate in the State Match Program for this year. Without the continued support of our private partners, this would not have been possible! With this goal met, NESA has received the State Match Funds and will use them to enhance our efforts in the areas of national media placement, lead generation, rural leadership, product development, national marketing, special events, and a labor profile. In January, the NESA website set a new record for the most hits in a month at nearly 36,000. In the coming months, the organization will be participating in trade missions and hosting consultant and investor events.

With the progress NESA has made so far and the *continued* support of our investors, I am certain we will continue to see unemployment decrease and the regional economy grow like never before.

Senator J. Yancey McGill
Chairman, NESA Executive Committee

NESA Welcomes Sonoco's Support



Sonoco has joined other corporations partnering with NESA to promote economic development. Like NESA's existing sponsors, Sonoco realizes the benefits it will gain from NESA's success. Sonoco, headquartered in Hartsville, SC, serves both industrial and consumer customers in 85 countries. With approximately 18,600 employees from 334 locations in 35 countries, Sonoco is one of the world's most recognized brands for packaging production. Roger Schrum, VP, Investor Relations and Corporate Affairs, will serve on the NESA Board. The NESA staff and executive committee looks forward to working with Sonoco to make our region better for all!

NESA Airport Study Released

NESA Supporters

Private Sector:

ArborOne
AT&T
BB&T
Beach First National Bank
Burroughs & Chapin Company
Carolina First
COMBO
DuBard, Inc.
Horry Electric Cooperative
Horry Telephone Company
Landmark Builders
Myrtle Beach Area Chamber
Pee Dee Electric Cooperative
Pepsi-Cola
Progress Energy
Santee Cooper
Santee Electric Cooperative
Strand Capital
Wachovia

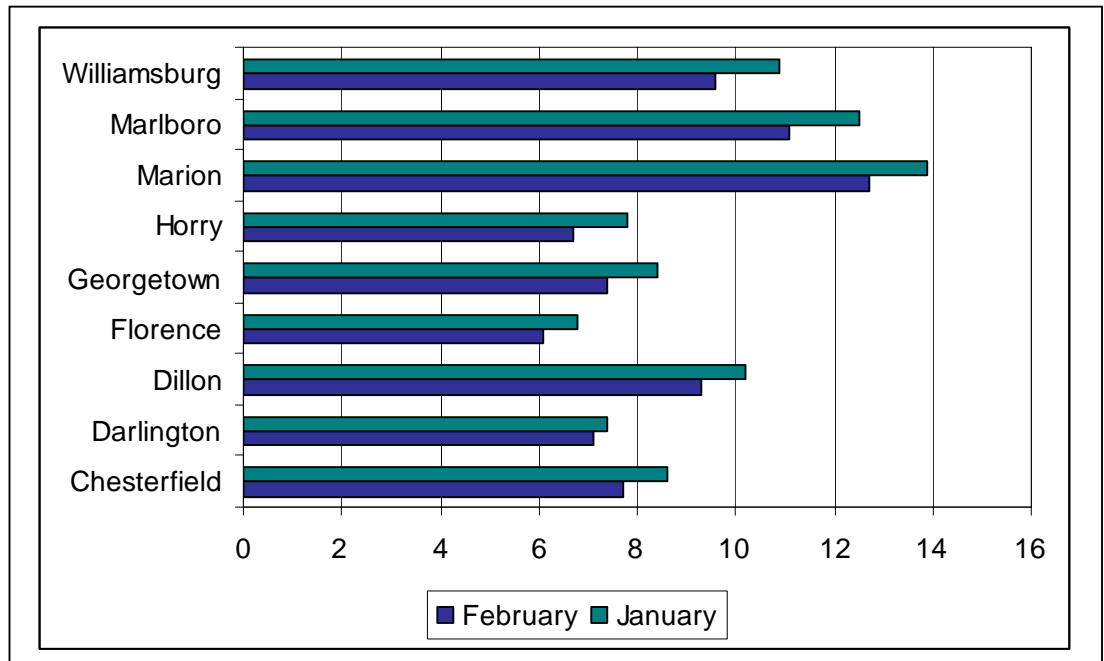
Public Sector:

Chesterfield County
Darlington County
Dillon County
Florence County
Georgetown County
Horry County
Marion County
Marlboro County
Williamsburg County

On Friday, March 30, Phase 1 of the NESA Airport Study was released. The study was commissioned to determine the purpose and need for new or improved airport facilities to meet regional airport capacity needs. The study examined characteristics of the market area, projected future demand, and the ability of existing and planned airport infrastructure to meet this demand. Airport infrastructure needs are driven by the population, employment, and tourism growth, planned development of interstate highways, an international convention center, and interest from international businesses and tourists. The average annual growth in the study area has been higher than national growth rate, particularly in the most recent twelve-month period. Findings of the study indicate that even the lowest passenger demand projection can not be accommodated by current terminals and expanded terminals would have little or no room for additional growth beyond the twenty year period. It was concluded that a strategic approach to providing ample facilities both within and beyond the next twenty year planning period is needed.

Unemployment Rate Down from January

The unemployment rate for the NESA region is down an average of nearly 1 percentage point from January 2008 to February 2008. Marlboro County had the greatest decrease at 1.4% while Georgetown, Horry, Marion, and Williamsburg each had a decrease in unemployment of 1% or more from January. The average unemployment rate of the state decreased by 0.6% from 6.1% in January to 5.5% in February. The average unemployment rate in the nation decreased 0.1% from 4.9% in January to 4.8% in February.



Upcoming Events

- **Ohio Mission** – March 30 – April 4
- **Board Meeting** – Friday, April 4, 12:00pm – Charcoal Grill, Dillon
- **SAE Trade Show** – April 14-17, Detroit
- **Executive Committee Meeting** – Friday, May 2, 10:00am – President's Boardroom, FMU
- **Florida Mission** – May 19-23
- **Investor Event** – TBA
- **Consultant Event** – TBA

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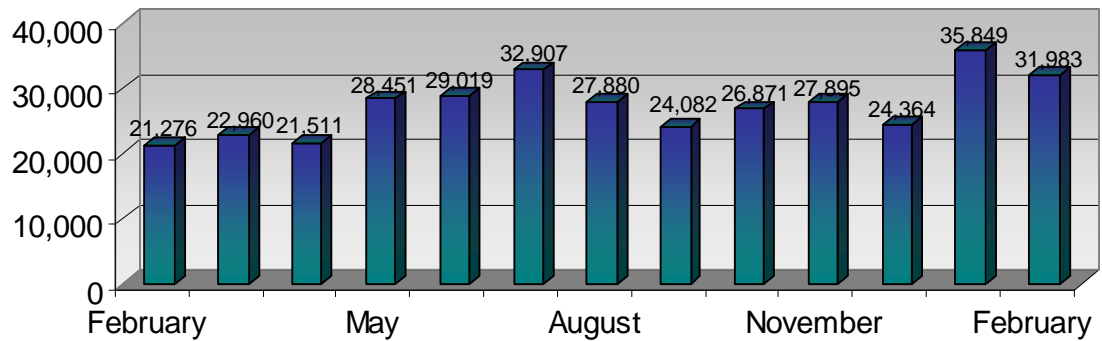
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SCBusinessCorner.com Hits

February 2007 - February 2008



As seen in the graph above, the past year has been one filled with great strides in the web presence of SCBusinessCorner.com. The NESA website reached a record in January for the most hits at 35,849 up almost 3,000 from its past number of hits in July 2007. The website went from 21,276 hits in February 2007 to nearly 32,000 hits in February of this year. Web updates and improvements continue to be made which will enhance the quality of the NESA website.

Regional Announcements

Chesterfield – *Bunting Graphics*, manufacturer of illuminated aluminum, steel structures, and customer architectural metals, has announced plans to locate operations in Pageland.

Florence – *Zenta*, a world-class Business Knowledge Process Outsourcing company, has announced plans to establish a 35,000 square foot facility in Florence and will employ up to 250.

Dunline Rubber Products Co., the world's leading producer of endless rubber preshrinking belts, will make Lake City the home of its manufacturing operations creating 20-25 jobs with an investment over \$1.6 million.

Georgetown – *Lowcountry Paver, LLC*, plans to expand in the Georgetown County Commerce Park adding 20 jobs initially and 20 more later in a \$5 million investment.

Horry – *Awesome Raceware* announced plans to relocate all of its Canadian manufacturing operations to Conway, and will employ up to 50 people in the next 5 years with its \$1.3 million investment

New Investor Relations/Marketing Director Named

NESA is pleased to announce the addition of Anna Poston to its staff as the Investor Relations/Marketing Director. Anna, a native of Pamplico, S.C., is a graduate of Francis Marion University (FMU) with a Bachelor of Business Administration – Marketing. She is also currently enrolled in the Master of Business Administration program at FMU.

News from the Corner is published quarterly by the North Eastern Strategic Alliance. Articles and data contained herein were adapted from information submitted by counties in the region. To submit content for this newsletter, please contact Marianne at MLangley@SCBusinessCorner.com or (843) 661-4669. Contents ©NESA, 2008.