



Midlands Education and Business Alliance eConnections

September 2006

Connects students, parents and educators to career opportunities through business partnerships, training and resources.

MEBA Holds Annual Orientation Meeting

The **Midlands Education and Business Alliance (MEBA)** held its annual Orientation on Friday, August 25, 2006, at the **BellSouth Auditorium** in Columbia, South Carolina. The meeting emphasized MEBA's mission and accomplishments and also introduced attendees to an exciting new project underway in the Midlands, the **Greater Columbia Fuel Cell Challenge**.

A partnership between **EngenuitySC**, the **University of South Carolina**, the **City of Columbia** and the **SC Research Authority**, the **Greater Columbia Fuel Cell Challenge** works to collaborate with private sector leaders from all areas of the fuel cell market for the unprecedented deployment of fuel cell and other alternative energy technologies into multiple city, university and commercial applications throughout the region. Panelists **Neil McLean**, Executive Director of EngenuitySC, and **Dr. Harris Pastides**, Vice President for Research and Health Sciences at USC, spoke of the exciting venture to build a hydrogen fuel cell cluster and the significant impact this will have on the Midlands economy, workforce and way of life. **Midlands Technical College** is also a key player in the project. **Dr. Sonny White**, President of Midlands Technical College, also served as a panelist and explained the College's efforts to build the pipeline of hydrogen fuel cell technicians by training the next generation workforce.

According to the panelists, Columbia is well positioned to become a leader in fuel cell innovation because it has existing research strengths in fuel cells at USC and the focus and collaboration of the region's political, business and academic leaders. Columbia is in the early stages of a renaissance. USC is building Innovista, a forward looking research campus that will spread out over 200 acres and combine 5 million square feet of research labs, office space, mixed-use retail and affordable residential housing. Innovista will connect downtown Columbia to the banks of the Congaree River, where residential and public development already is underway.

MEBA's Orientation began with welcoming remarks from **Martha Scott Smith**, Director of Corporate and External Affairs for **BellSouth** and a member of MEBA's Board of Directors Executive Committee. **Ron Anderson**, Vice President for Research and Technology for **NAI**



Jim Reynolds of Total Comfort/Comfort Services, Robert Dozier, MEBA's new vice chair, and Dr. Sonny White of Midlands Technical College attend MEBA's Orientation.

Save the Date!

Midlands high school students are invited to participate in MEBA Career Days:

Industrial Technology Day

October 9, 2006
8:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Midlands Technical College
Airport Campus

Healthcare Career Day

October 10, 2006
8:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Midlands Technical College
Airport Campus

For more information, please call
Lisa Call at 822-3776



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Steven Benjamin Named Chair of MEBA Board of Directors



Stephen K. Benjamin, principal of **The Benjamin Law Firm, LLC**, became chair of MEBA's Board of Directors at the August 25 Orientation. In only his second year as a member of the Board, Benjamin is honored and eager to accept the position of chair. A well-known and respected figure in the Midlands community, Benjamin brings significant leadership experience and a passion for improvement to the position. "I am excited about helping MEBA continue to meet its goals with great success," says Benjamin. "We have a strong history of bringing people together, and I am committed to strengthening this connection and to preserving our long term stability and achievement."

Benjamin became involved with MEBA through his work with the **Greater Columbia Chamber of Commerce**. His interest in education and in workforce development made working with MEBA an ideal fit. "MEBA's mission is extremely important to the vitality of the Midlands community," explains Benjamin. "We work to bring education and business together to focus on what is important to us all -- the success of our schools, the success of our workforce and the undeniable link between the two."

In addition to ensuring MEBA continues to bring people together and to provide programs and resources for students, parents, educators and business leaders, Benjamin also wants to focus on the challenge faced by all nonprofits -- long term stability. As chair, Benjamin is committed to helping MEBA bring in more partners and to secure its financial base. "MEBA is one of the Midlands' best kept secrets, and it shouldn't be that way," asserts Benjamin. "We have to do a better job of getting the word out about what we are doing and how it is making a positive difference in improving the quality of life in our community."

Benjamin received his bachelor's degree in political science from the University of South Carolina in 1991 and graduated from the University of South Carolina School of Law in 1994. Benjamin has received numerous awards and recognitions for his professional accomplishments. In 1999 the National Bar Association named him the National Young Lawyer of the Year, and the University of South Carolina recognized him as Young Alumni of the Year. He is the recipient of the Lincoln C. Jenkins, Jr. Award given by the Columbia Urban League and was featured as one of *Ebony Magazine's* "30 Leaders of the Future."

E. L. Wright Students Air on New 92

Jeff Roper, the morning on-air personality of the show that bears his name, "Jeff Roper in the Morning," on **New 92**, along with his morning show sidekick, **Rhonda Rawl Matthews**, visited **E. L. Wright Middle School's Leadership Academy** on August 22, 2006, to talk about careers in radio. Matthews is also a member and past chair of MEBA's **Business, Management & Information Systems Alliance**.

Roper discussed how with radio, a person must "paint a picture" in someone's mind using words and various tones of voice. He and Matthews emphasized the many careers in radio in addition to being on-air including sales, production, promotions, management and human resources.

The class was excited when Roper recorded them and replayed the class the following morning on his radio show. In addition, **Stephanie Ackerson** was selected to role-play being on the radio. She performed a cheer that was also played back the following morning.



Jeff Roper interviews E. L. Wright student Stephanie Ackerson.

Check out the MEBA website
www.mebasc.com

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Avant, LLC, and chair of MEBA's Board of Directors for 2005-2006, recognized MEBA investors, former MEBA alliance and committee chairs and introduced **Stephen Benjamin of Benjamin Law Firm** as MEBA's new board chair for 2006-2007.

Dr. Kaye Shaw, MEBA's Executive Director, provided remarks on MEBA's past accomplishments and the growth and success the organization and its supporters can look forward to in the future.

Kama Staton, Workforce Development Coordinator for **Lexington Medical Center**, was called on to share her experience as a participant in MEBA's Career Development Facilitator (CDF) graduate course. Staton described the course as "the best thing I have done in my career, both for myself and for Lexington Medical Center," and credited the course with helping her to understand what the Education and Economic Development Act (EEDA) means for educators and business persons.

Other highlights of MEBA's recent achievements include an inaugural Annual Fund Campaign that garnered \$26,000 in new contributions, field study and graduate course opportunities for students and educators, and more than 5,600 parents and caregivers reached by the *Your Child Is Job #1* program at more than 30 places of business.

*Special thanks to **Rachel Card**, Project Manager for EngenuitySC, for her assistance with this article. For more information about the Greater Columbia Fuel Cell Challenge, please visit www.fuel-cellchallenge.com.*



Dr. Harris Pastides of USC delivers a presentation on the Greater Columbia Fuel Cell Challenge to MEBA Orientation attendees.



MEBA Executive Director, Dr. Kaye Shaw, presents outgoing board chairman, Ron Anderson, with a token of appreciation for his service.

New Publications Available from MEBA

MEBA continues to be a great source for career information for students, educators, parents and business persons. During the summer, updates of the Healthcare, Manufacturing and Automotive editions of the "Be A Part Of" career brochures were printed. Updated versions of the *Volunteers Opportunities* booklet and the *Job Skills 101* booklet are now available on CD.

In addition, we have published the 2004-2006 MEBA Progress Report as well as a MEBA Informational Brochure. A complete list of MEBA resources can be found on the MEBA website at www.mebasc.com.

Free Seminar

Dealing with Hypertension

Wednesday, September 20, 2006
8:30 - 10:30 a.m.

Midlands Technical College
Northeast Campus, CT 105

Learn why hypertension is called "The Silent Killer," and more importantly, what you can do to prevent or mitigate its effect on you, your family or your clients. Seminar participants also will learn small but significant lifestyle changes that can deliver big results. To register, please call 732-0432 or visit www.mtctraining.com. Course ID is CECE500-01.

Your Child Is Job #1 Continues to Connect

Even during summer months, MEBA's Education and Community Director, **Kay Barlow**, stays busy sharing the *Your Child Is Job #1* program with hundreds of parents, educators and business persons throughout the Midlands. Below are some highlights from August:

- On August 3, 2006, Barlow and **Stacey Westberry**, MEBA's Professional Development Director, distributed career guidance resources to **Richland School District Two** educators at their annual pre-school gathering, "Magical Matinee."
- On August 8, 2006, Barlow presented to 11 firemen from the **City of Columbia** on the topic of "Instilling the Desire to Succeed in Your Child." Each participant received a brochure of the same title.
- On August 14, 2006, Barlow spoke to 107 **Spirax Sarco** employees on "Success in Five Easy Steps." Barlow helped participants learn how to help their children and students tackle any challenge by using the following five steps: 1) Determine **WHAT** needs to be done; 2) Determine **HOW** it needs to be done; 3) Determine **WHEN** it needs to be done; 4) Enlist someone to hold you **ACCOUNTABLE**; and, 5) **REPORT** back your success. Barlow also shared "Success in Five Easy Steps" with members of the **City of Columbia Water Division** on August 22, 2006.
- On August 21, 2006, Barlow greeted more than 200 parents at **Ridge View High School** in **Richland School District Two** to discuss careers and distribute helpful information and resources.



MEBA's Kay Barlow (right) distributes materials to teachers at Richland School District Two's "Magical Matinee" at the Koger Center.

Upcoming Events

Manufacturing & Industrial Maintenance Alliance Meeting

September 21, 2006
11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Midlands Technical College
Northeast Campus, Room 328

Guidance Committee Meeting

September 26, 2006
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon
National Guard Armory
Bluff Road

Health Careers Field Study

September 28, 2006
8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Midlands Technical College
Harbison Campus

**Includes visits to Lexington Medical Center and Providence Hospital*



Angela and Greg Hinson receive a MEBA certificate on behalf of Spirax Sarco's *Your Child Is Job #1* participants.

Carolina Careers Guidance Workshops Offered

The **Carolina Careers Guidance Workshops**, presented by **South Carolina Educational Television**, provides monthly training, professional development and state and national updates to educators who work with, or have an interest in, K-12 career development. The Fall Semester began on August 22, 2006, and will run through November 14, 2006. The programs are aired on Channel 304 from 10:00 to 11:15 a.m. on the dates outlined below. Programs are streamed for viewing via personal computers approximately one week following the live broadcast. Should you miss one of the live broadcasts or wish to see one that has already aired, please check with your media specialist or visit www.knowitall.org/carolinacareers.

August 22

- The Education and Economic Development Act: "The Role of the Middle School Career Specialist in Guidance" (Janice Jolly, Dorchester Two, and Betty Kendrick, Lexington One)
- Career Development Topic: "The EEDA Law and Resources" (Dr. Ray Davis, State Department of Education)

September 12

- The Education and Economic Development Act: "Integrating Career Awareness in K-5" (Nancy Allen, State Department of Education and Dr. Mary Thomas, Carolina Elementary School)
- Career Development Topic: "41st Annual Career Development Month Poster and Poetry Contest" (Ann White, State Department of Education and The Education and Business Alliance of South Carolina)

October 10

- The Education and Economic Development Act: "Preparing for the Individual Graduation Plan (IGP)" (Nancy Verburg, Lexington One, and Dr. Donna Elmore, Orangeburg-Calhoun Education and Business Alliance)
- Career Development Topic: "The Impact of Career Counseling in K-12" (Dr. Moody Crews, Special Consultant to the State Department of Education)

November 14

- The Education and Economic Development Act: "A Place at the Table: School Counselor Accountability" (Ann White, State Department of Education)
- Career Development Topic: "The ABC Awards for K-8 Career Guidance Excellence" (Dr. Ray Davis, State Department of Education)

Midlands Middle College Opens Its Doors

The **Midlands Middle College** opened its doors to 43 students on August 8, 2006, and is already receiving positive reviews from parents and students. "We refer to the Midlands Middle College as 'the gift,'" says one parent. "It has improved my son's self-esteem and has given him confidence. It has also improved our home life. We actually talk to each other now. We have conversations at the dinner table about history and world events -- something we've never done before."

One student credits the Middle College with giving him a second chance at an education and a career. "I dropped out of school two years ago," he explains. "This school is helping me to catch up. I am going to take college courses and earn real college credits. I didn't know how important that was two years ago, but I do now."

The Middle College High School is a unique, three-county initiative housed at **Midlands Technical College's Airport Campus**. The multidistrict Middle College helps students who are identified by school officials as probable dropouts but who have academic promise. Its goal is to reduce the high school dropout rate, create a seamless transition to college programs, afford students real-world work experiences and encourage collaboration between K-12 and higher education. Attending students were drawn from nine Midlands school districts including Fairfield, Lexington One, Lexington Two, Lexington Three, Lexington Four, Lexington/Richland Five, Richland One, Richland Two and the Department of Juvenile Justice.