

Carolina CONNECT

Presented by AdvantageWest • Renaissance Asheville Hotel • Asheville, NC • May 13, 2010

Welcome to Carolina Connect 2010!

On behalf of AdvantageWest and the Blue Ridge Entrepreneurial Council, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the 7th Carolina Connect Entrepreneur Conference. We are excited about the continued growth of the conference and look forward to sharing today's program with you.

Carolina Connect continues to be the hallmark networking event for connecting entrepreneurs with their peers and potential investors and for sharing information on trending topics relevant to today's changing global economy.

We are pleased to announce the addition of two new tracks to this year's conference, Green Business Innovation and Intrapreneurship. Both of these tracks bring a wealth of knowledge from industry experts coupled with real-time "boots-on-the-ground" experience to share their collective wisdom with you.

Please take time to thank our sponsors, panelists and speakers who contributed to making today's event possible.

I look forward to working with each of you in the future as we continue to seek new and innovative ways to provide the valuable resources you need to grow your venture. Please contact me at plewis@awnc.org if I can be of assistance.

Pam Lewis
Senior VP Entrepreneurial Development
AdvantageWest





CONFERENCE SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

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| 7:30 – 8:30 a.m. | Registration and Networking Breakfast | |
| 8:30 – 9:45 a.m. | Conference Launch & Panel Discussion “Inside the Minds of CEOs” <i>Michael Shore, FLS Energy</i> <i>Chris McCurry, Highland Craftsmen, Inc.</i> <i>Toby Stansell, OOB, Inc.</i> <i>Greg Lucas, Creative Allies</i> | <i>Renaissance Ballroom</i> |
| 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. | Concurrent Breakouts – Session I Entrepreneurship Track: Entrepreneur Reality Check Capital Track: It Takes a Village To Raise an Entrepreneur Green Business Track: How the Clam Makes... Intrapreneurship Track: What is Intrapreneurship | <i>Windsor (1st Floor)</i> <i>Victoria (2nd Floor)</i> <i>Swannanoa (2nd Floor)</i> <i>Alexandra (2nd Floor)</i> |
| 11:00 – 11:15 a.m. | Break | <i>1st Floor</i> |
| 11:15 – 12:15 p.m. | Concurrent Breakouts – Session II Entrepreneurship Track: Stories of Success Capital Track: Meet the Funders: Basics of Funding Your Business Green Business Track: Untapped Green Markets in WNC Intrapreneurship Track: Models of Intrapreneurship | <i>Windsor (1st Floor)</i> <i>Victoria (2nd Floor)</i> <i>Swannanoa (2nd Floor)</i> <i>Alexandra (2nd Floor)</i> |
| 12:30 p.m. | Lunch & Awards Presentation | <i>Renaissance Ballroom</i> |
| 1:10 – 2:00 p.m. | Lunchtime Keynote “The Mystery of Venture Startups: Risk as a Virtue” <i>Victor Hwang, T2 Venture Capital</i> | <i>Renaissance Ballroom</i> |
| 2:15 – 3:15 p.m. | Concurrent Breakouts – Session III Entrepreneurship Track: Sales Success Strategies Capital Track: Oops! I’m Under Capitalized Intrapreneurship Track: Intrapreneurship Success Factors Green Business Track: Financing Commercialization... | <i>Windsor (1st Floor)</i> <i>Victoria (2nd Floor)</i> <i>Swannanoa (2nd Floor)</i> <i>Alexandra (2nd Floor)</i> |
| 3:15 – 3:30 p.m. | Break | <i>1st Floor</i> |
| 3:30 – 4:15 p.m. | Critical Conversations Cafe | <i>Renaissance Ballroom</i> |
| 4:30 – 5:30 p.m. | Closing Keynote “Bootstrapping Your Brand: Using Social Media To Build Your Brand & Engage Others” <i>Lisa Halpert Mesicek,</i> <i>Social Media Strategy Manager for Monster.com</i> | <i>Renaissance Ballroom</i> |
| 5:30 – 6:30 p.m. | Networking Reception | <i>Patio</i> |



DETAILED AGENDA

7:30 – 8:30 a.m. **Registration and Networking Breakfast**

8:30 – 8:40 a.m. **Conference Launch**

Renaissance Ballroom

Scott Hamilton, AdvantageWest President & CEO

Pam Lewis, AdvantageWest Senior VP Entrepreneurial Development

8:45 – 9:45 a.m. **Panel Discussion: Inside the Minds of CEOs**

Moderated by Henry Doss, an AdvantageWest Board Director and a business consultant and principal with Avenue ISR, a consumer research and business strategy practice

The successful leaders of some of the region’s most admired companies share their secrets in an informal “conversation with the CEOs” setting. What energizes them? What is the one thing they must do every day, without fail? What keeps them awake at night? What do they view as the best opportunities in today’s economy? These are just some of the questions we’ll ask of these panelists in this informal and insightful discussion:

- **Michael Shore, FLS Energy** – Michael Shore is CEO of FLS Energy, a solar energy generation company headquartered in Asheville. The company, which started with three employees in 2006 and today has more than 50, has developed, designed, installed and financed some of the most important solar energy projects in the Southeast. Shore has written extensively on sustainability issues, and he served on the U.S. Department of Energy’s Energy Efficiency Leadership Group and North Carolina’s Global Climate Change Commission. He has Master’s degrees in both Civil Engineering and in Environmental Policy.
- **Chris McCurry, Highland Craftsmen, Inc.** – Chris McCurry with her husband Marty is Founder, Owner and Designer of Highland Craftsmen in Spruce Pine, a company started in 1990 with the mission to decrease the impact of construction and harmonize with nature. Highland Craftsmen designs, manufactures and sells natural, Bark House brand architectural elements for the whole home. It is an award-winning company with many achievements including North Carolina Green Innovation Business of the Year and Cultural Contribution Awards. McCurry is the author of *Bark House Style: Sustainable Designs from Nature*, published by Gibbs Smith.
- **Toby Stansell, OOBIE, Inc.** – Toby Stansell is President of OOBIE, Inc., a company based in Greenville SC, that has been designing and creating uniforms that are stylish, functional, comfortable, and durable since the early 1990s. OOBIE works collaboratively with its customers – which include premier national brands such as Chick-fil-A, Wolverine, Food Lion and Stone Mountain Park – to create a custom apparel program that fits the company’s brand image.
- **Greg Lucas, Creative Allies** – Greg Lucas is Director of Business Development for Creative Allies, a new social network that brings bands and fans together around user-generated art. An expansion of Music Allies, an Asheville-based marketing and promotions company that works with major festivals and independent record labels, Creative Allies allows anyone to create content for companies, brands and even rock stars and get paid for it.

10:00 –
11:00 a.m.

Concurrent Breakout Sessions

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| <i>Entrepreneurship Track</i> |
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| <i>Session I</i> |
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“Entrepreneur Reality Check”

Windsor Conference Room – 1st Floor

Wisdom of the crowd: This panel is all about experience from those who have blazed the entrepreneurial trail before and are charting new innovative paths. Engage and interact with this panel of talented entrepreneurial companies from a cross-section of industry disciplines and learn from their successes and – more importantly – their failures. Panelists include:

- **Discussion leader Troy Tolle**, VP and CTO of **DigitalChalk**, developers of an online software platform for training and continuing education
- **Daniel Prevost**, Senior Vice President of **MedOasis**, a medical billing company that serves anesthesiology practices across the southeast
- **John Morris**, Executive Director of the **Center for Entrepreneurial Growth**, an entrepreneurial support organization of Technology 2020 focused on the development of entrepreneurs and startups in the Tennessee Valley Corridor, known as Tennessee’s “Innovation Valley”
- **Jeff Pennypacker**, Founder of **Masterpiece Ice Sculptures Inc.**, the largest and most respected ice sculpture company in Western North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. Clients include HBO, Bayer, Grove Park Inn, Biltmore Estate, and many other private venues.

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| <i>Capital Track</i> |
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| <i>Session I</i> |
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“It Takes a Village to Raise an Entrepreneur”

Victoria Conference Room – 2nd Floor

Quite possibly one of the most important panel discussions in Carolina Connect’s seven-year history. When addressing entrepreneurship, you can’t ignore the topic of capital, and more often than not the term “capital” translates to private investment, loans or grants. This discussion is about the most important type of capital – social or human capital, as it is sometimes called, which is the cornerstone of a healthy environment for entrepreneurial growth. Panelists include:

- **Discussion leader John Locke**, Director of Philanthropic Initiatives at **Mission Healthcare Foundation**
- **John Mark Stroud**, Chairman of **Mountain BizWorks** and former Owner of the award-winning FASTSIGNS franchise in Asheville
- **Marjorie Benbow**, Director of the Charlotte regional office of the **NC Biotechnology Center**
- **Robert K. "Bob" McMahan Jr., PhD**, Founding Dean of the **Kimmel School** (Western Carolina University’s College of Engineering and Technology) and Professor of Engineering at WCU, whose experience also includes serving as Senior Advisory to the Governor of NC for Science and Technology and as Venture Capitalist and Technology Strategist for the CIA at In-Q-Tel
- **Sean McDonald**, Entrepreneur and Co-founder of **Jute Networks**, a consulting company that offers network relationship management services and software

10:00 –
11:00 a.m.

Concurrent Breakout Sessions – *continued*

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| <i>Green Business Track</i> |
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| <i>Session I</i> |
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“How the Clam Makes the World’s Hardest Ceramics at Room Temperature”

Swannanoa Conference Room – 2nd Floor

This panel discussion will address how thinking like nature does can drive radical innovation.

Panelists include:

- **Discussion leader Chris McCurry**, Founder, Owner and Designer of **Highland Craftsmen** in Spruce Pine, a company dedicated to decreasing the impact of construction and harmonizing with nature. She is also the author of *Bark House Style: Sustainable Designs from Nature*.
- **Barry Edwards**, Director of Utilities and Engineering for Catawba County, whose responsibilities include the **Catawba County Eco-Complex**, addressing cradle-to-cradle and industrial ecology
- **Zev Friedman**, a Principal in **Living Systems Design**, which focuses on whole system designs of ecologically beneficial human settlements. He will address systems thinking and permaculture.
- **Clarke Snell**, Founder of **Think Green Building**, Managing Director of The Nauhaus Institute (pronounced “now house”) and author of *Building Green* and *The Good House Book*, addressing carbon neutral design.

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| <i>Intrapreneurship Track</i> |
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| <i>Session I</i> |
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“What is Intrapreneurship and How Can It Help My Company?”

Alexander Conference Room – 2nd Floor

Simply put, intrapreneurship is the ability to act entrepreneurially within a company – that is, innovation from the inside. In this session, we’ll explore the opportunities for those willing to act entrepreneurially. Panelists include:

- **Discussion leader Logan Metcalfe**, Founder of **Arena Consulting**, which provides fractional CFO services to companies experiencing rapid growth and change, and former CFO/COO of Immaculate Baking Company, America’s leading brand of all-natural refrigerated cookie dough
- **Toby Stansell**, President of **OOBE, Inc.**, a company that designs and creates uniforms for some of the country’s best known brands
- **Louis Buck PhD**, Director of the **Center for Entrepreneurship & Innovation** at Western Carolina University and Wesley Elingburg Distinguished Professor of Business Innovation

11:00 –
11:15 a.m.

BREAK

1st Floor

11:15 a.m. – Concurrent Breakout Sessions
12:15p.m.

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| <i>Entrepreneurship Track</i> |
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| <i>Session II</i> |
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“Reaching for the Stars: Stories of Success”

Windsor Conference Room – 1st Floor

Reaching for the stars while pulling yourself up by the bootstraps – that’s what this panel of highly successful entrepreneurs did, and it paid off big time. Discussion will include "growing pains" at various stages, outsourcing, managing remote or virtual staff, product development, advisory boards, and setting priorities. Panelists include:

- **Discussion leader Tracy Sigler**, Founder of **AVL Marketing** and former VP of Web Operations at **The Motley Fool**
- **Derek and Damien Hoffman**, founders of **Wall St Cheat Sheet**, one of the fastest growing financial media sites on the web and ranked by the *Wall Street Journal* as one of the top financial websites. Damien Hoffman is the Editor-in-Chief. His background includes investment banking, two successful start-ups, and he clerked at the Florida Supreme Court. His brother Derek is the CEO of *Wall St. Cheat Sheet*. He has handled media investment and tactical strategy planning for Procter & Gamble and Gillette’s national asset portfolio and has also worked in private wealth management for Morgan Stanley.
- **Keith Pelczarski**, who spent six years at **The Motley Fool** serving in a number of roles: Editor, Producer, Designer, Manager, Recruiter, and Product Developer, among others. **The Fool** grew from 15 employees to 450 then back down to 75 when the dot com bubble burst, so Keith has lots to share on the ups and downs of high-growth startups.
- **Gustavo Kolmel**, now Chairman of LuAnn Capital, founded **InterStar Global Logistics** in 1999 with only a laptop and a small amount of savings. In eight years he grew the company from \$0 to \$25 million, with offices in Europe, Latin America, and the United States, then sold the company in 2008.
- **Jack Carrier** of **DogTagArt.com** – A serial "idea guy," Jack Carrier spent the last glory days of the tech bubble in California partnered with a retired Microsoft executive working on and with startups. In 2009 he raised private capital and won a "Technology Business Plan" competition which helped to fund Dog Tag Art, a community built around unique pet identification, which is growing at about 20% per month.

11:15 a.m. – **Concurrent Breakout Sessions – *continued***
12:15p.m.

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| <i>Capital Track</i> |
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| <i>Session II</i> |
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“Meet the Funders: Basics of Funding Your Business”

Victoria Conference Room – 2nd Floor

Does your business need funding to start up or grow? From angels to venture capital to investment banking, learn the types of funding available, which options are appropriate for your business, how to approach potential funding sources, and what to expect when getting funded. Panelists include:

- **Discussion leader Trevor Lohrbeer**, Founder and CEO of **Lab Escape**, an Asheville-based company that sells advanced data visualization software to large and mid-sized companies across 14 countries
- **Charlie Owen**, Managing Director of the **Inception Micro-Angel Fund**-Western Group (IMAF)
- **Grady Vanderhoofven**, Executive Vice President, **Eclipse Management** and Fund Manager for **Meritus Ventures**, which makes equity investments in rural central and southern Appalachia
- **John Stanier**, Principal, **Carolina Financial Group**, an investment banking firm that specializes in raising private capital and providing financial advisory services

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| <i>Green Business Track</i> |
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| <i>Session II</i> |
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“Untapped Green Markets in WNC”

Swannanoa Conference Room – 2nd Floor

An overview of some ripe and low-hanging market opportunities for entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs, including the following:

- Discussion leader **Larry Shirley**, Director of the Green Economy, **NC Department of Commerce**
- **Peter Marks**, who directs the Local Food and Farm Campaign at the **Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP)**, addressing market opportunities related to sustainable agriculture
- **Susan Parker Weatherford**, Project Manager, **Renaissance Computing Institute (RENCI) at UNC Asheville** and Program Manager for UNC Asheville’s **National Environmental Modeling and Analysis Center**, addressing market opportunities related to environmental information technology
- **Paul Quinlan**, Deputy Director and Strategic Projects for **NC Sustainable Energy Association**. Paul’s projects include the creation of the annual NC Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Industries Census. He will address market opportunities related to energy efficiency.

11:15 a.m. – 12:15p.m. Concurrent Breakout Sessions – *continued*

Intrapreneurship Track

Session II

“What Models of Intrapreneurship Should I Use in My Company?”

Alexander Conference Room – 2nd Floor

This panel discussion builds on Session I by looking at the different models of intrapreneurship that exist within companies. Panelists will address in detail two primary questions: What are the primary decisions I need to make to increase innovation in my company? What are the factors I should consider that influence these decisions? Panelists include:

- **Discussion leader Phil Sanger PhD**, Director of the **Center for Rapid Product Realization** and Associate Professor in the Department of Engineering & Technology at Western Carolina University
- **Dan Parks**, Director of Strategy & Organization Development of the **SBTDC** (Small Business and Technology Development Center)
- **Noel Watts**, Executive Director and CEO of **MARC, Inc.** (Marketing Association for Rehabilitation Centers), a nonprofit association of 14 Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) that provide vocational rehabilitation and developmental services to people with disabilities and disadvantages across 21 WNC counties
- **John Bruce**, Berkeley Mill Manager, for the global corporation **Kimberly-Clark**, whose well-known family care and personal care brands include Kleenex, Scott and Huggies.

12:30 p.m. Lunch & Awards Presentation

Renaissance Ballroom

Mike Fulenwider, President & CEO, Fulenwider Enterprises; AdvantageWest Board Champion for Entrepreneurship

Pam Lewis, AdvantageWest Sr. VP Entrepreneurial Development

- ❖ **2010 Lone Eagle Entrepreneur of Excellence Award**, presented to an outstanding entrepreneur in the AdvantageWest 23-county region.
- ❖ **2010 Innovation Advantage Award**, presented to an existing industry or business with a presence in the AdvantageWest region that has demonstrated a culture of innovation within their corporate infrastructure.

1:10 p.m. Introduction of Lunch Keynote

Renaissance Ballroom

Henry Doss is an AdvantageWest Board Director and a business consultant and principal with Avenue ISR, a consumer research and business strategy practice based in Traverse City, Michigan. He works in affiliation with Decision Support Sciences on larger-scale projects related to technology, data mining, research and database modeling.

**1:15 –
2:00 p.m. Lunchtime Keynote
“The Mystery of Venture Startups: Risk as a Virtue”
Victor Hwang, T2 Venture Capital**

Victor Hwang is a Kaufmann Fellow and the Co-Founder and Managing Director of T2 Venture Capital, experts at the intersection of venture capital, startup innovation and public policy. Located in the Silicon Valley, T2 Venture Capital grows startup companies spinning out of academia and government-funded technologies, and advises government on the formation of venture capital and the building of venture ecosystems.

Victor is Immediate Past President of Larta Institute, one of the nation's leading organizations helping to commercialize technology from key government agencies, such as the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health. He is also the Co-founder and Executive Chairman of Liquidity Corporation, a water filtration company, and was Chief Strategy Officer of Veatros, a video search company, where he led the company's acquisition by DivX. He has mentored more than 200 companies and has structured venture capital and technology transactions as a corporate attorney in world-class law firms.

Before joining Larta Institute, Victor was an attorney in the Corporate Securities and High Technology groups of Irell & Manella in Los Angeles. He practiced in a variety of legal areas, including negotiating venture capital investments, public and private equity and debt structurings, and mergers and acquisitions. Victor has also counseled on a range of new technology matters, including software development, telecommunications, multimedia, and the Internet. Prior to joining Irell & Manella, he practiced corporate and finance law with the international firm of Mayer, Brown & Platt.

Victor has reviewed grant investments in startup technology businesses for the National Science Foundation and the State of California. He has testified on technology policy for both the California Senate and Assembly. Victor was appointed to the California Blue Ribbon Task Force on Nanotechnology and was awarded a Marshall Memorial Fellowship, a program for emerging trans-Atlantic leaders. His opinions have been cited in *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and the *Los Angeles Times*, among others.

2:15 –
3:15 p.m.

Concurrent Breakout Sessions

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| <i>Entrepreneurship Track</i> |
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| <i>Session II</i> |
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“Sales Success Strategies: Winning in Any Economy”

Windsor Conference Room – 1st Floor

Are you eager to totally transform your ability to attract new business and close more sales? In a fun, engaging, and interactive session, learn the essential elements and mindset which comprise sales success. All session attendees will leave with practical information and guidance (specifically targeted to your business), which will enable you to translate what you have learned into robust business development opportunities and increased revenue. Presenters are:

- **Susie deVille Schiffli**, President of **Innovation Compass**, an executive and entrepreneur consulting and coaching firm based in Highlands, NC. Her areas of expertise include fostering creativity and innovation, niche marketing, sales training, leadership development and strategic planning. With a master’s degree in entrepreneurship and an undergraduate in anthropology, Susie applies her acumen in human behavior toward helping executives and entrepreneurs achieve break-through results and growth. She is a certified coach with “the best-known life coach in America,” *New York Times* bestseller and *O Magazine* columnist, Martha Beck. Susie is a graduate of the William C. Friday Fellowship for Human Relations, the Duke Certificate Program in Nonprofit Management, and the Western North Carolina Rural Economic Development Institute.
- **Meridith Elliott Powell**, Founder of **MRP Profit Strategies**, designed her company on the culmination of her experience, insight and talents. With a career path that began in sales and marketing and grew into commercial banking, Meridith specializes in helping companies bring the numbers side and the people side together – aligning goals and associates to drive to profitability. A certified strategist, coach, and human behavior specialist, Meridith is a member of the National Speakers Association and the American Society for Training and Development. She is a principal member of the Haines Centre (world leaders in strategic management working in 68 countries) and is affiliated with both Personality Insights Inc. (specialists in communications), as well as EQ at Work (specialists in emotional intelligence). She is gold master-certified by the University of San Diego in strategic planning and holds certifications for coaching, training, and communications. Her new book, *42 Rules for Turning Prospects into Customers*, will be released in June.

2:15 –
3:15 p.m.

Concurrent Breakout Sessions - *continued*

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| <i>Capital Track</i> |
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| <i>Session III</i> |
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“Oops! I’m Under Capitalized”

Victoria Conference Room – 2nd Floor

What's worse than getting zero funding for your new venture or business expansion? Getting not quite enough. Look around and you can see endless examples of good business ideas, great startups, and growth strategies, which would have worked out just fine – “but we ran out of money.” This panel will share thoughts and answer questions about that most fundamental question of all: “How much money do I need?” This panel will also discuss other options to overcome the lack of funding to help your company strive through tough times. Panelists include:

- **Discussion leader Jim Roberts**, of the International Trade Division for the **NC Department of Commerce**
- **Shaw Canale**, CEO of **Mountain Bizworks**, an agency that provides in-depth business planning courses, coaching and advanced training, and small business loans up to \$50,000
- **Mike Fulenwider**, President and CEO of **Fulenwider Enterprises Inc.**, the company formed to oversee the many businesses that have grown from the one franchise his family bought in 1965
- **Nell Leatherwood**, Executive Director of the **Sequoia Fund**, which provides training, technical assistance, and resources to support entrepreneurship, business startup and expansion, and community development.
- **Steve Poland**, Director of the **Technology Commercialization Center** at A-B Tech

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| <i>Green Business Track</i> |
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| <i>Session III</i> |
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“Financing Commercialization of Green Innovations”

Swannanoa Conference Room – 2nd Floor

A discussion of green-specific funding resources and unique challenges to funding green businesses. Panelists include:

- **Discussion leader Sam McLamb** of **FLS Energy**, whose experience includes working with fast growth companies in business development, strategy, and raising capital. Sam’s experience includes work in energy efficiency, renewable energy and renewable fuels
- **Anna Tefft** of **Natural Capital Investment Fund**, which provides capital to small and emerging natural resource-based businesses, speaking on higher risk loans/capital
- **Jane Hatley**, Commercial Loan Officer with **Self-Help Credit Union**, a mission lender that emphasizes building wealth among traditionally underserved areas of the population, including minority and women borrowers. Self-Help has a long history of giving loans to green businesses, including, locally, Greenlife Grocery, Earthfare, and Endless Supply (a green construction company specializing in soy-based insulation).
- **John Stanier**, Principal, **Carolina Financial Group**, an investment banking firm that specializes in raising private capital and providing financial advisory services, speaking on angel investment

2:15 –
3:15 p.m.

Concurrent Breakout Sessions - *continued*

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| <i>Intrapreneurship Track</i> |
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| <i>Session III</i> |
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“Intrapreneurship Success Factors”

Alexander Conference Room – 2nd Floor

Intrapreneurship is assisted by certain factors. This panel of successful entrepreneurial company representatives will discuss the most important factors affecting success including clear strategy, specific goals, the right people, and an organizational structure that does not inhibit innovation and execution. Panelists include:

- **Greg Warmuth** of **American Emergency Vehicles**, a manufacturing facility in Ashe County
- **Bill Payne**, Existing Industry Specialist with the **NC Department of Commerce**
- **Gary Ball**, CEO of **Ball’s Machine & Manufacturing Co./ Solarnomics** in Candler, a company serving WNC since 1976

3:15 –
3:30 p.m.

BREAK

1st Floor

3:30 – **Critical Conversations Café**
4:15 p.m. *Renaissance Ballroom*

Back for the second year, the Critical Conversations Café offers informal discussions with industry experts on critical topics facing today's entrepreneurs and business owners. These no-PowerPoints-allowed discussions are intended to be casual and flexible to allow for maximum exposure to a variety of topics in a conversational format. Pick and choose among these roundtable discussions – stay for as long as you like at each table. Moving around heartily encouraged! Topics include:

- **Startup Legal Ease**

Conversation leader: Thomas Beckett, Attorney, MBA and Entrepreneur with Mountain South Business Law

What are critical legal issues and developments in the law affecting North Carolina businesses? What's the best legal entity? What about investment agreements, contracts and intellectual property? Through his law firm, Tom offers guidance to small and startup businesses ranging from software and technology ventures to agricultural enterprises. He is intensely interested in creative, sustainable business, grassroots economic development, and authentic experience. *NOTE: The Critical Conversations format is intended to address general issues of concern among attorneys and entrepreneurs. It is not an appropriate setting to seek professional advice regarding specific legal questions for a person or business. The attorneys engaged cannot responsibly provide professional advice at this event.*

- **It's An App World**

Conversation leader: Tony McCune, VP of Sales & Marketing at DigitalChalk, developers of an online software platform for training and continuing education

There's an app for just about everything. This roundtable will start with a discussion of the history of applications and how it's swung between centralized systems and distributed applications/computing. Where do things stand today? How will this help us anticipate where things are moving in the future? Will mobile and the next big jump in broadband affect the direction of apps? How was data used by apps over the past two decades and how is that different from how data is being used by apps today? Come prepared to discuss the benefits and pain points you've experienced from across the spectrum.

- **Every Business Is A Media Business**

Conversation leaders: Bryan Freeborn and Tracy Sigler of AVL Marketing

The web makes it possible for every company to have its own "channel." By creating valuable original content you can attract your audience (i.e., customers and prospects), build relationships, demonstrate expertise, show the product ownership experience in advance, and much more. This roundtable will include a discussion on strategy, formats (for example, blogs, videos), tools, topic research, leverage with social media, and anything else you want. We'll have Mind Maps for everyone!

- **Wake Me From This PR Nightmare!**

Conversation leader: Kathi M. Petersen, Owner & PR/Communication Strategist with KP Communications

Tiger Woods wasn't the first guy to find himself in the middle of a public relations nightmare. From oil spills to natural disasters, employee lawsuits to disgruntled customers, every company is vulnerable to an unexpected communications crisis. Don't lie awake at 2 a.m. worrying and wondering what to do when it happens to you – be prepared! Find out some simple but critical steps to take now so you'll be ready. Bring your own war stories and how you survived.

Critical Conversations Café - *continued*

- **Going Global**

Conversation leader: Jim R. Roberts, NC Department of Commerce International Trade Division

As the US recession continues to have an impact on the revenues and hiring at American based companies, some North Carolina companies are finding success by selling to emerging markets overseas. If you are not aware of BRIC, PIIGS and the book, *The Post American World*, this conversation may change your outlook on international trade opportunities. There are loads of resources to help you start selling your products and services internationally. If your domestic US annual sales are down 20-50%, begin to sell to the other 95% of the world's population outside of the United States.

- **The 4 Ms of Startup Management**

Conversation leader: Carlton W. Murrey, Principal, Bailey Southwell & Co.

Startup management is about the 4 Ms: Market, Model, Management and Money. Where does an entrepreneur start? What takes priority? Discuss the importance of each of these areas to building a successful company with conversation leader Carlton Murrey, who returned to investment banking in 2008 after spending five years as a co-owner of Curtis Wright Outfitters, a retail store and guide service with three WNC locations. While at CWO, Carlton was responsible for marketing, guide services, and business development, including the design and facilitation of leadership training programs.

- **Life in the Cloud**

Conversation leader: Troy Tolle VP and CTO of DigitalChalk, developers of an online software platform for training and continuing education

Cloud computing is a hot topic. "It's the next step, it's the next phase, it's the next transition," says Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer. Google CEO Eric Schmidt says, "It's a powerful model and it's where the industry is going." And from Werner Vogels, CTO of Amazon (a company that DigitalChalk does private beta-testing for, and was one of the pioneers on Amazon's platform) – comes this: "With the cloud comes unconstrained thinking and willingness to tinker and experiment without worrying too much about cost," adding "The cloud allows lot of businesses to scale aggressively." What do you think? This conversation will help define what cloud computing is and how it can impact your business. Learn the evolution of the computing platform and how services continue to shift to your web browser, whether that is your desktop, laptop or phone.

- **Please Take a Minute to Locate the Exits**

Conversation leaders: Jenny Manner, Chair of Meet the Geeks; Hunter Goosmann, General Manager of ERC Broadband; Tom Barr, entrepreneur and CEO of New South Business Ventures; James McMahon, COO of YuDeal, Founder of Wisdomology, IT Consultant and Author

This discussion will focus on the difference between starting a successful business and building a business that can be successful (with or) without you. How do you plan exit strategies and then use those strategies to build value and measure performance. What is the role of formalized processes in enabling entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs to more effectively delegate as a means of building value and preparing for "what's next"? Join this roundtable on managing with the end-goal in mind.

Critical Conversations Café - *continued*

- **New Media Communications: Making the Most of Twitter and Facebook**

Conversation leaders: Social Media Marketer Jennifer Saylor and Social Media Consultant Wendy Lou

Participation in so-called social media is fast becoming a business requirement. The overwhelming tangle of social media choices can be less overwhelming with just a little professional help and advice. Get guidance on Twitter and Facebook and learn how to brand your company's voice and identity. Find new customers and reach out to existing customers in new ways. All levels of knowledge are welcome, as are all your questions: Facebook group or page? How often do I tweet? How do I get followers? Ask our consultants. They have answers.

- **Green My Business**

Conversation leader: Steve Linton, LEED AP, BPI Certified Professional and Director of Sustainable Technologies for Deltec Homes, an Asheville-based panelized home builder

Now that green and sustainable business practices are expected rather than rewarded, what's next? Join this roundtable to hear and share ideas on how to successfully integrate common-sense sustainability into your business while staying on the cutting edge. The conversation will explore multiple levels of the green genre including the built environment, waste stream, business operations and procurement, and social responsibility.

- **Bring Your Own Contrarian Point of View**

Conversation leader: Henry Doss, business consultant and principal with Avenue ISR, a consumer research and business strategy practice

Have your own business model? Your own crazy perspective? Your own version of "what if..."? Do you wake up at night thinking that everyone else must be wrong on "this" and you are definitely "right"? Join this table for an active dialogue with other like-minded contrarians. Bring your own spiel, have it ready, share it with others see if you can sell a radical departure. Remember, status quo and "the norm" are not welcome!!

**4:30 – Closing Keynote: “Bootstrapping Your Brand: Using Social Media
5:30 p.m. To Build Your Brand and Engage Others”**

Lisa Halpert Mesicek, Social Media Strategy Manager for Monster.com
Renaissance Ballroom

We are living in a world swirling with trendy buzz words – Social Media, Social Networking, Twitter, Facebook, blogs, etc... Many of us realize there is an evolution happening around us, but we don't know where to begin. Whether you're The Biltmore Company, Wachovia or the smallest independently owned business, people are talking about your business and you have two choices: pretend it doesn't matter, or engage. Lisa Halpert Mesicek is on the leading edge of marketing as Social Media Strategy Manager for Monster.com, the premier global online employment solution for people seeking jobs and the employers who need great people. She joined Monster in 2007 after completing her MBA with a focus in entrepreneurship. Lisa leads Monster's social media strategy, measurement, and analysis, as well as the numerous strategic projects that involve social media and communications. She'll share what Monster is learning about how businesses and individuals are using social media to do what they've always done – share advice and opinions, engage in conversation, and make referrals – and how you can put this new reality to work for your business.

5:30 – Networking Reception
6:30 p.m. *Patio of Renaissance Asheville Hotel*

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We value your input and thank you for your time.

AdvantageWest thanks the Small Business and Technology Development Center for their continued guidance and support of Carolina Connect. The SBTDC at WCU is a program of Western Carolina University and operated in partnership with the US Small Business Administration. North Carolina's SBTDC program is administered statewide by NC State University on behalf of The University of North Carolina System.

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