

# PRESS RELEASE

## North Carolina Community College System

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### **Community College Small Business Centers utilize latest communication tools to save travel time, dollars and gasoline** ***Training to be given for an innovative small business information CD***

RALEIGH -- What do you do when you need to teach individuals all across the state to use a new tool that will benefit small businesses, but the persons who have to be taught can't travel to Raleigh? Technology comes to the rescue!

Following Governor Easley's mandate to reduce travel, the North Carolina Community College System's Small Business Centers are using the latest communication services offered by the North Carolina Information Technology Service (ITS) to conduct an important meeting without burning valuable gasoline.

Early in October Small Business Center Directors at each of North Carolina's 58 community colleges will participate in a two-hour meeting originating from an ITS videoconferencing room in Raleigh. Four similar rooms at community colleges strategically located across the state will provide full interactive video and audio connection to the ITS originating site.

Small Business Center Directors who serve the many communities not selected for videoconferencing sites will participate online through ITS streaming video services. These Directors can either communicate live via conference call (telephone), or they can listen directly from the streaming video and email questions to the host of the meeting, Willa Dickens, the Director of Small Business Centers at the North Carolina Community College System needed to organize a meeting with Center Directors across the state to demonstrate the capabilities of new small business startup software made available in the form of a CD. This CD facilitates the initial stages of new small businesses startup - a critical time for new business owners. The CD can also be modified or localized to provide information specific to the area served. North Carolina is the second state in the nation to utilize this innovative delivery method for small business owners

The challenge for Ms Dickens was to quickly organize a large-scale meeting to replace a cancelled conference and still comply with Governor Easley's travel restrictions.

"This technology provides a wonderful way to follow the lead of small businesses and utilize every possible resource to make things happen," said Ms. Dickens. "Small businesses are the backbone of our economy so we need to disseminate information about our new software so budding entrepreneurs can put it to use as quickly as possible."

Streaming video technology enables community college personnel to access meetings from their office or home computer. This is no passive experience. It is fully interactive. Personnel can participate in discussions, make comments, and ask questions. Additionally, these online sessions can be archived - stored as files that can be accessed anytime they are needed by participants or others.

The training session will take place next month. Afterwards, the Small Business Center Directors will have a new tool to help them help their clients be more successful, and thereby help North Carolina's economy.

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