

COMMERCE LEXINGTON INC.
LEADERSHIP VISIT
CHARLESTON 2016

PRESENTED BY

(MCBRAYER)

CHARLESTON SUMMARY REPORT 2016

ABOUT LEADERSHIP VISIT

Commerce Lexington's annual Leadership Visit has helped expose Central Kentucky leaders to the best ideas of model communities throughout the United States, yielding valuable lessons that have been applied to the improvement of the Bluegrass Region. This three-day trip has become the most valuable opportunity to bring community leaders, decision makers and ideas together in order to make positive changes in our community. It's a very unique program that includes the foremost business,

education, government and community representatives of Central Kentucky.

On June 8-10, 2016, Commerce Lexington Inc. and many of its key community leaders and business professionals embarked on the organization's annual Leadership Visit presented by McBryer, McGinnis, Leslie & Kirkland, PLLC. More than 200 people participated in this year's trip to Charleston, South Carolina.

Wednesday, June 8, 2016



The 2016 Leadership Visit to Charleston, South Carolina, began with a tour of Charleston Harbor aboard the Spirit of Carolina. (Photo by Bill Straus Photography)



Tyler White (left), District Director for Congressman Andy Barr, and Houston Hall, Market President of Forcht Bank, talked during the tour of Charleston Harbor. (Photo by Bill Straus Photography)



Yajaira West (left) of PNC Bank and Malcolm Ratchford, Executive Director of the Community Action Council enjoyed the Charleston Harbor Tour aboard the Spirit of Carolina. (Photo by Bill Straus Photography)



Wednesday, June 8, 2016

BRYAN DERREBERRY, PRESIDENT & CEO CHARLESTON METRO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Bryan Derreberry, President and CEO of the Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce, kicked off the 2016 Charleston Leadership Visit at **The Cedar Room (pictured below)** at The Cigar Factory. He opened by talking about Charleston's rapidly-growing population and noted that the area is adding 48 new people per day, and the metro area is now the 17th fastest growing in the U.S. He said, "Keeping up with that growth is a demanding task for all of us."

Over the last five years, *Condé Nast* has recognized Charleston as the top travel and tourism destination in the U.S., and three of the last five years, it has been number one in the world. Mr. Derreberry talked about the importance of a city's brand, "because we've gotten so small as a globe that your brand precedes you. It's fun to champion that brand and keep it front and center."

As far as job growth, "we are going to be adding 20,000 net new jobs in the next 18 months," said Derreberry. Since 2005, the three-county area has been responsible for 39-percent of the jobs in South Carolina, "so this is *the* job engine," he added.

Charleston has a diverse economy with a global focus. Derreberry said that the Brookings Institution conducted a recent study of 421 metropolitan areas in the nation, and Charleston is in the top ten for future foreign direct investment.

Charleston Harbor is a very important economic driver for the region, and Derreberry mentioned that the harbor's depth will be increased to 52 feet by the end of this decade and will be the deepest harbor on the Eastern Seaboard. Charleston is already setting



records as the busiest port in the country, and the increased depth will allow the big Super-Max transporters from the Panama Canal to make Charleston their destination of choice.

About 25 years ago, Charleston and its region faced an employment crisis when its Naval base closed, causing the loss of 22,000 jobs in 18 months. Derreberry said, "When a lot of communities face that, they have one or two directions they can go. One is you recreate yourself. The other is you wither away." According to Derreberry, the base closing began 25 years of planning that has led to the creation of one of the most dynamic

economies in the country. "And, oddly enough," added Derreberry, "Joint Base Charleston now has 22,000 employees, so I think we did OK recovering on the military front."

Derreberry mentioned that there is a big focus on developing homegrown talent to grow the region's workforce. He said, "We're not a big believer that you can depend on attracting talent." Charleston is home to the only four public school system career academy program in the country, including 62 career academies, 14,500 students, and 160 business partners. Derreberry concluded by saying that they want more young people coming out of the career academies to be going to Trident Technical College and ultimately becoming valuable employees for the employers in the region.

Watch Full Video of Bryan Derreberry's Remarks
On-line at: https://youtu.be/0F_Ms1rllgo



Photos by Bill Straus Photography



Wednesday, June 8, 2016

INSIGHTS & OUTLOOK FROM A NEW MAYOR CHARLESTON MAYOR JOHN TECKLENBURG

Charleston's newest Mayor John Tecklenburg (pictured at right) took office in January of 2016, after Mayor Joe Riley had served in that role for 40 years. Mayor Tecklenburg began by talking about the economy in Charleston's early days. The city was founded in 1670 as a colony of England, making it nearly 350 years old. Back then, agriculture ruled the day, and Mayor Tecklenburg stressed what a big business the slave trade was in terms of how the city was built. Charleston is in the process of raising money to build an African American Museum on the site of Gadsden Wharf, where "80-percent of African Americans in the country can trace their lineage to someone who came across the dock," said Tecklenburg.

It was rice that built the wealth of the Carolina Lowcountry. Once the Civil War came and went, the economy of Charleston over the next 100 years was "lackluster at best." There was not much happening until World War I came along, and the nearby Navy base was built. That economic growth was accelerated by World War II because of military spending in Charleston. In 1995 through base realignment, the Navy decided to close its base in Charleston.

Tecklenburg said, "Mayor Riley was a terrific man and mayor of vision, and he recognized that we had this incredible heritage and history and architecture in the downtown area. We knew it was a good place for visitors and tourism, but it needed to be coordinated and built upon. Through an incredible effort of the chamber, the convention and visitor's bureau, and our city government, we've become the number one destination in the country and two or three in the world in terms of quality experience."

Charleston has an incredible medical university and other medical facilities that are a big part of Charleston's economy. According to Mayor Tecklenburg, the city of Charleston and the medical university are combining some real estate in a redevelopment effort on the west side of the city that will focus on biotechnology businesses. And, despite the Navy base closing several years ago, Charleston still has a significant government presence in the region, which adds greatly to the economy. It is again a manufacturing center with Boeing, Mercedes-Benz, Volvo, Bosch, and others.

He said that what Mayor Riley did so well was build a sense of place and a brand for Charleston. Whether it was the city's parks, civic buildings, or other features, there was a diligence to be very detailed with regard to what things looked like. There is an architectural review board that defines development inside the city, and Charleston has the oldest preservation ordinance in the country, which was created in the 1920's.

Like any other city, Charleston has its challenges. Tecklenburg said the biggest challenges include housing and infrastructure. Charleston's popularity has made it difficult for people to afford housing inside the city. People are living further outside the city, which means more people driving greater distances, causing greater need for infrastructure improvements. The city has no funding source for building roads and bridges, and is limited by what the



Photo by Bill Straus Photography

state legislature allows. The third challenge Mayor Tecklenburg mentioned is public education.

Tecklenburg concluded his remarks talking about the shooting at Mother Emanuel Church, saying that "it has had a profound impact on this community. For an event like that to happen in 2015... it really shakes your faith a little bit, and where we are as a human race." He went on to say that, "My charge as mayor is to look at every aspect of our government, from community policing and the way we're applying and enforcing the laws of our community to our affordable housing conundrum to our education system. We are not there yet in resolving inequities in our schools and their performance."

"We showed the world an example of how people can come together," added Mayor Tecklenburg. "Now, we want to continue on and try to show the world that we are willing to step up to the plate and work on issues of inequity and racism, and to build trust and relationships among people in our community. We showed the world that love is stronger than hate, but we also want to show it in our actions going forward."

Watch Video of Mayor Tecklenburg's Remarks
On-line at: <https://youtu.be/Zo6RTcJV-zs>



Wednesday, June 8, 2016

WHAT MAKES A GREAT SOUTHERN BRAND: THE STORY OF GARDEN & GUN

Rebecca Darwin (pictured at right) is the founder and CEO of *Garden and Gun* magazine, which launched in 2007 after she moved to Charleston, following a successful career in publishing in New York City. She began her career at *GQ*, later went on to become publisher of *The New Yorker* magazine, and then head of marketing at *Fortune* magazine.

Darwin said she has a great affinity toward Lexington and was introduced to the city during the World Equestrian Games in 2010 at the Kentucky Horse Park. She has been back several times since, including with her daughter who competed in the National Dressage Championships at the Kentucky Horse Park last year.

Garden and Gun magazine launched in 2007 with four issues and was originally funded by the Evening Post Publishing Company, which publishes *The Post and Courier*. Then in 2008, they published seven issues. “Then, the bottom fell out of the economy,” said Darwin. “And, the newspaper company decided that they could not continue to support us.”

Eventually, she and the chairman of the board of the Post and Courier, who is now Darwin’s partner in the business, felt they had found a niche publication and wanted to keep it going. They bought the magazine and kept it going through very difficult times, and today *Garden and Gun* is located in a new headquarters in the redeveloped Cigar Factory in Charleston with 55 employees.

So, how did the magazine get its name? When the Spoleto Festival first began in Charleston some 40 years ago and many artists and musicians came from around the world, there was nothing for them to do after hours. Someone who worked for Spoleto started a club called the Garden and Gun Club, which Darwin likened to the “Studio 54 of Charleston.” When the magazine started up, someone suggested *Garden and Gun* as the name. Darwin said she thought it was “the perfect name.” “It was gutsy, and I knew we were taking a risk, but I thought it was worthwhile,” she said.

Darwin said she wasn’t surprised that *Garden and Gun* has become a strong brand, because there is an amazing sense of Southern pride that people have for their heritage and tradition. The magazine has expanded to other areas over the years, with about 60-percent of its circulation in the South, and about 40-percent outside the South. Texas is currently one of its largest areas of circulation.

Darwin explained what was at the foundation of the *Garden and Gun* brand. She said, “First and foremost, it’s the quality of the product, and mainly the editorial. If you give people something they really want to read and spend time with, they will.”

She said the second key to the brand became evident when dur-



ing the difficult time of the recession, the decision was made to take a break and re-group the magazine and letters of support came flooding in. According to Darwin, there’s mutual respect and trust between the readers and the magazine.

The magazine company has since got into hosting events, first through a special group of folks who invested into different levels of something called the Garden and Gun ‘Club.’ That ‘club’ was later disbanded in favor of offering events to more people.

The magazine also has a very robust on-line store called Mercantile & Co., and has published three books over the last few years with HarperCollins, including *The Southerner’s Handbook*, *The Good Dog*, and *The Southerner’s Cookbook* – all of which appeared on *The New York Times’* Bestseller List.

Most recently, they introduced a new digital marketing on-line marketplace for sellers and buyers, featuring well curated collections of properties, as well as Internet radio – G&G Radio, and a soon-to-be-opened brick-and-mortar retail shop inside a new Charleston hotel.

Darwin stressed that even though they invest heavily in the digital world, she said that *Garden and Gun* remains a “print-centric brand.” The magazine grew by 18-percent on the newsstand last year and received the National Magazine Award for General Excellence, “which in our business is like winning Best Picture at the Oscars,” added Darwin.



Photos by Bill Straus Photography



Wednesday, June 8, 2016

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT: CULTIVATING AN INTENTIONAL TOURISM ECONOMY

Over 5 million people visited Charleston in 2015, representing nearly \$4 billion in total economic impact. During the final session on day one of the Commerce Lexington Inc. Leadership Visit, participants heard from Charleston leaders about how they work intentionally to maximize the impact of their tourism economy, while valuing their culture and history, and preserving their quality of life. Moderated by Mary Quinn Ramer, president of VisitLEX, the panel included Helen Hill, executive director of the Charleston Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, Harry Lesesne, executive director of the Charleston Parks Conservancy, and Chris Price, president and founding member of The PrimeSouth Group, who spent his youth in Lexington.

Chris Price The PrimeSouth Group

Mr. Price talked about urban core development and began by saying that the “three legs” that you have to have for a livable city are the work aspect, the social aspect, and the living aspect. He then went on to compare and contrast Charleston with Lexington.

- Lexington’s core brand includes horse farms and bourbon.
- Charleston’s core brand includes beaches and historic fabric. He added, “That’s recently been expanded to the culinary scene and to the entertainment and shopping districts. So, we’ve expanded our brand. As developers, what we do is hopefully enhance that brand experience. We give tools to Helen [Hill] to market the city.”
- Lexington is a suburban city, spread out, with a spoke system.
- Charleston is compact, and land is scarce. “50% of our land is water.”
- Lexington’s downtown arteries are thoroughfares.
- Charleston’s streets are activated and are part of the community. “Upper King Street used to be a one-way street and was a thoroughfare. That changed in the early 1990’s.”
- Lexington does not have a main shopping/entertainment district. “There are spots/zones, but there’s an interconnectivity problem.”
- Charleston – “King Street has been the king for 250 years. It’s our gathering place.”

Charleston is one of the toughest zoning cities in America, according to Price. “We’ve limited our buildable square footage. We can only build 55 feet, maybe 80 feet in some sectors, but that’s it. What that’s done for me as a developer is give me some stability, because I know I’m not going to have massive square footage come on-line so I’ve got barriers to entry. The problem though is limited square footage.”

Mr. Price went on to cite leadership [Mayor Joe Riley] and public-private partnerships as key factors to Charleston’s downtown success. “We’ve tackled it block by block, and it hasn’t been easy.”

He also said there is an unprecedented demand factor going on in



Photo by Bill Straus Photography

the Charleston area right now. “Global investor players like Boeing, Mercedes, and Volvo [have created] a demand factor that most cities don’t have. It makes it a heck of a lot easier to fill the vacancies that developers build.”

“As a developer, Charleston is a very difficult environment to build in,” said Price. “But, it also creates a high barrier to entry and gives me some sort of safeguards that I can anticipate in the future.”

“Our job as developers are basically city builders,” said Price. “What we do is enhance the bucket that Helen [Hill] has to market to the marketplace. We further the tools that she has.”

Mr. Price concluded by mentioning a couple of challenges that he felt were more profound than three years ago. One is affordability – both housing and retail/office/residential housing stock. “We have a major problem,” he said. “We can’t build the square footage, so our rent rates are through the roof.” He also mentioned traffic and parking as growing challenges.

According to Price, Charleston officials have done such a great job branding the city and “bringing the tourism industry to its heights,” but the problem now is the hotels and other hospitality infrastructure are pushing out office, retail, and residential housing. “Is our success now taking away from a true livable city?” concluded Price.

Helen Hill Charleston Area Convention & Visitors Bureau

Helen Hill has worked for the Charleston Area Convention and Visitors Bureau for nearly 30 years and having grown up in Charleston, she has a long-term perspective on things the city has done well and not so well. First, she said that she felt that Charleston has been marketed well as a community. The visitor’s bureau has nine funding governments, which is very unusual. She also said that the bureau’s funding is about 50-percent public and 50-percent private.

What has made Charleston special is Charleston, said Hill. And, many of the surrounding communities wanted to be included under the umbrella of Charleston and what makes it unique. She also said





Photo by Mark E. Turner, CLX Staff

that the bureau spends a lot of money on research to find out where people come from, and in 2008, they discovered that a lot of people were driving from places like Charlotte, Raleigh, and Atlanta. Charleston wanted to be more than a 'drive to' city, but had to overcome flight and airport service problems.

The tough decision was made to let low-cost airline carrier, AirTran, go with the hope that Charleston could lure Southwest Airlines. The gamble paid off, and six months later, Southwest began new flights from both Charleston and Greenville, South Carolina. However, Charleston officials still had to market heavily to other cities to get people interested in the new flights, and over time, the majority of people who were flying to Charleston from cities in North Carolina had changed to New York, Washington, and Boston. And, that led to the success of JetBlue for Charleston. "We totally changed the visitor profile just based on the ease of access," said Hill.

Harry Lesesne Charleston Parks Conservancy

Harry Lesesne is the executive director of the Charleston Parks Conservancy, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that works in partnership with the city to improve the public spaces of the city and engage the public in caring for and being involved in and taking pride in public space. He said, "We believe that it creates a stronger community when people are invested not only in their private development or home, but also take pride in the city's shared public spaces."

Mr. Lesesne said that the city's long-serving Mayor Joe Riley led Charleston through its transformation. He said, "Mayor Riley would always speak about the 50-year test. Is what we're doing here today, will people say in 50 years that we made the right decision? That was always the way we were supposed to measure whether we were doing the right thing or not."

"The reason so many people want to live here is because it's a real place," said Lesesne. "It's not contrived. It's not Disneyland. It's the real thing. If I could say anything to those in a city looking to revitalize itself, identify those things that make you genuine or make you real, and then capitalize on those. One of the things that Mayor Riley did was invest in high-quality public spaces."

When asked about the process and success in Charleston's destination development efforts, Helen Hill talked about the real tipping point being Hurricane Hugo in 1989. She said Charleston was really battered and bruised, but when journalists around the world started writing stories about how hard hit the city was, Hill and her team went back and invited every member of the media who had written something during that time for a visit to Charleston.

"We realized that we could sell to the press just like you could sell to any meeting planner," said Hill. "We started talking about the things that we were good at. We didn't just talk with the travel press. We started talking to all of them. We talked to the garden press, and we talked to the food press. We've gotten this cool reputation as a foodie destination, but anyone who grew up here will tell that we're kind of eating the same thing we've been eating our whole life. We're just talking about it a lot differently."

Hill said that Charleston had ridden the food craze and destination wedding concept for quite a while, and the next thing on the horizon is arts and culture. "I'm not talking about just walking around a museum. I'm talking about the authentic sense of place as it relates to arts and culture.... I think that's what the next wave of travelers is going to be looking for."

After Hurricane Hugo, the city faced another crisis a few years later with the closing of its Navy base. Charleston lost about 25,000 people. Price said, "We had to re-package ourselves and start opening these doors to say hey, we're open for business." Lesesne added, "In many ways, both of those things launched us into the next phase, because the Navy base closure made us re-evaluate what kind of city is it that we want to be, and what kind of businesses and jobs do we want to attract here."

Watch the Destination Development Panel
On-line at: <https://youtu.be/QBzT7wUvY9g>



Thursday, June 9, 2016

RESULTS ♦ ACCESS ♦ PARTNERSHIP ♦ DIVERSITY: CHARLESTON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

At the beginning of day two in Charleston, Gerrita Postlewait, Ed.D., Superintendent of the Charleston County School District, led a panel discussion of Charleston public school leaders, including CCSD Board Members Dr. Eric L. Mack, Sr. and Kate Darby. Gene Wilhoit, CEO of the Center for Innovation in Education at the University of Kentucky, talked about the latest innovations and approaches in public education, and our very own Fayette County Public Schools Superintendent Manny Caulk facilitated the question and answer portion.

Gene Wilhoit CEO of the Center for Innovation in Education University of Kentucky

Gene Wilhoit began the session by setting a context for the morning conversation. He said, “These are very different times for our country and our communities. The effects of globalization, the movement of technology as a major driver in society, and the increasing diversity of our population in this country and the world have literally changed the context for which we are living. Some folks realize that, but a lot of us don’t. And, that to me seems to be the central issue in this country.”

He added, “We can no longer afford to educate a few of our kids at very high levels, and to have throwaway children in this society. It’s a moral imperative, but it’s also an economic imperative for the future. We are on the verge of making some critical decisions what we’re going to do in public education in this country that will effect what happens to this country in the next several years.”

Mr. Wilhoit said that since he’s been back in Kentucky at the University of Kentucky, they’ve been asking education leaders to be very “reflective” about what’s going on and what they need to do. He said it will probably be very difficult for many of them, simply because they are used to doing things a certain way. “But, we have no choice,” added Wilhoit. “Education has to make some dramatic changes.”

According to Wilhoit, business and community leaders have said that they want children to leave school prepared for success in life, in citizenship, and in a career. “In order to do that, we’ve gone through some soul-searching,” added Wilhoit. He said they asked the business community what would be important for a graduate in America today, and likewise asked the higher education community what it would take for a public school graduate to enter college in a credit-bearing course and get a ‘C’ grade or better. “You told us, and what has happened in the United States is we have had to reset, and that has made a major difference in how we’re thinking about public education,” added Mr. Wilhoit.

So, what does this new approach mean today? Wilhoit said in order to reach the new goals that people say are important, educators cannot continue to practice in the same way. “There is a direct conflict between the system we have inherited and the goals we’ve set for the future,” he added. “We have to either lower our expectations, and suffer the fate, or we’ve got to redesign the system.”



Photo by Bill Straus Photography

Restructuring the system involves the following:

- Ensuring the business community supports the higher goals for students.
- Cannot simply move students through the system. Learning must be credentialed through demonstrated mastery of learning. This involves personalizing learning to a much greater degree.

This new way of thinking about the delivery system is “scary” to some people, said Wilhoit. “My sense is we can ignore this conversation and continue to talk about what we need to do in public education, or we can take on very seriously these issues that we’re talking about right now. It means intestinal fortitude from the business community to stand up and say, ‘we’re going to make these changes at whatever price we have to pay in the next few years,’ or we’re going to suffer in the long-term.”

Gerrita Postlewait, Ed.D. Superintendent Charleston County School District

Dr. Gerrita Postlewait, Superintendent of the Charleston County Public Schools, began by talking about how the current system is not working for some segments of students. According to Dr. Postlewait, many three- and four-year olds are coming into the system at very low levels of development, with a huge gap between those who come from higher and middle income families and those from lower income families, as well as between African American and white children. By the time the children reach the third grade, and gap has actually gotten a little worse.

“That’s a gap we need to acknowledge,” said Postlewait. “We need to stop admiring this problem, and do something about it.”

When looking at the South Carolina state test scores, it appeared that Charleston County students were making good progress and actually closing the gap in math. However, South Carolina began testing all students on the ACT just last year [2015], and the results showed



that less than 5-percent of African American students were prepared to go to college and succeed in math, with only about half of white students ready for college. Kentucky has been testing on the ACT for some time, said Postlewait.

When the school district examined its 2015 graduates who enrolled in Trident Technical College in the fall, they found that only 10-percent were college-ready, and 90-percent required at least one developmental course. "That is alarming," stated Postlewait.

Dr. Postlewait also brought up the disparity between how the school district handled suspensions between black students and white students. They found that black students were six times more likely to be suspended than white students, and while 42-percent of students in the district are black, they represented 81-percent of the suspensions. "We clearly have a huge disconnect between what our system is doing to support learning, and the extent to which our children who most need public schools to get it right are thriving in that system," added Postlewait.

"Of the 26,000 jobs that will be created in the area over the next few years, very few of our children coming out of Charleston County Schools are positioned to be able to eventually take advantage of living wage jobs," said Dr. Postlewait. "We believe that education plays an instrumental role in closing that opportunity gap."

Through the local chamber, the school district found that there are "severe job shortages" in specific fields requiring four or more years of college, including a variety of engineering and computer fields, medical lab technician, advertising/sales manager, legal secretary, and more. Likewise, job shortages in fields requiring a two-year degree included environmental technician, nuclear engineer, legal secretary, clerk, and reporter.

Dr. Postlewait was adamant that systemic change needed to happen in the way that students moved through the system. She said, "Rather than giving students the same amount of time to learn and grading them A through F, we've got to be able to identify where every single one of our students is in terms of their skill levels."

Dr. Postlewait said it has been a very "tumultuous and disruptive" year for the school district as it went through the superintendent hiring process. There are a number of initiatives underway to foster change, largely due to the fact that the business community through the local chamber, Trident Technical College, the College of Charleston, and The Citadel are focused on what needs done for the children who depend on public schools to get it right.

INITIATIVES UNDERWAY:

- Intensively examining math curriculum. Boeing has agreed to lead a committee along with other businesses to make sure the math that is being taught contains the right kinds of knowledge and skills.
- Feeder pattern alignment – not all of the schools were organized in a way that was intended to bring kids through a straight K through 12 feeder pattern with a learning progression.
- 2 + 2 + 2 pilot – the school district in the first two years of high school aims to have as many sophomores as possible ready to pass the entrance exam at Trident Technical College in their junior and senior years.
- Early College and Scholars Academy which targets those stu-

dents who have the capability, but come from families who may not know how to navigate the higher education "morass."

- Apprenticeship program is growing exponentially.

CCSD Board Members Kate Darby & Dr. Eric Mack

Kate Darby opened by saying that she felt that Dr. Postlewait has done a great job in her first year of building bridges and strengthening relationships with the colleges and community groups. She said the school district is challenging, because when it was consolidated in 1968, it was set up with a county board and eight constituent boards. The structure includes nine elected county board members, and then the elected constituent boards each with a different number of officials. She said, "Some of them want to do a lot. Some of them want to do nothing, and some of them want to do things that are in our purview."

Darby said that for many years, the school district had a dysfunctional board, with many board members not understanding its role as a governance board. She said they had to face some tough matters over the past year, including a recommendation to close two schools, and the realization that there was a \$26 million budget shortfall.

Board member Eric Mack said he is very excited about where the district is headed in Charleston County. He said, "I am so excited that we have a phenomenal superintendent here in Charleston County who has rolled up her sleeves and dug into what the issues are within our schools, and has literally from day one began to put before us every day about the statistics and challenges that we're facing within our schools."

Dr. Mack mentioned that many of the district's rural schools are predominantly African American students with very low enrollment, mainly because parents are sending their children to other neighboring schools with better opportunities. "No one wants to see their school close, but we're in the business of educating children, and giving them the best opportunity available," added Dr. Mack.

Dr. Mack cited one particular school where students can earn a cosmetology degree with an opportunity to take the state board test, a CNA certificate, and a mechanic certification, and in each case without having to go through additional education.

He added, "Dr. Postlewait understands that we must close this achievement gap in reading and mathematics in order to get our kids ready when they come to Trident Technical College and not have to take one, two or three remedial courses to get them to where they need to be. We have faced many challenges here in Charleston County, but I stand proudly to say that we are moving forward in a positive manner, putting in place initiatives that are going to advance our students and get them career ready when they leave high school."

Watch the Charleston County Public Schools Panel

On-line at: https://youtu.be/_IDhXNQ8M48



Thursday, June 9, 2016



Mary Graham

Kim Wilson

Emily Reynolds

Robin Willis

Photos by Bill Straus Photography

THE POWER'S IN THE PARTNERSHIPS

Entitled “The Power’s in the Partnership,” Thursday’s second session of the morning focused on partnerships fostered by Chamber, business, and school leaders – specifically the Career Academy concept, which provides real-world applications in the classroom to help meet current job demands. Included on the panel were Mary Graham and Robin Willis from the Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce, Emily Reynolds from Heritage Trust Federal Credit Union – a Career Academy partner company, and Kim Wilson, principal of R.B. Stall High School in North Charleston.

Career Academies are career-themed schools within high schools, in which the learning environment reflects the atmosphere and expectations of the 21st Century workplace. Today, Career Academies are available in high schools throughout the region in the following areas: Science, Technology, Engineering and Math; Business and IT; Culinary/Hospitality; and Health sciences. The initiative now includes 60-plus Career Academies in 21 area high schools operating with more than 140 Academy business partners.

Mary Graham Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce

Mary Graham, chief advancement officer for the Charleston Metro Chamber, said that businesses kept telling them that they couldn’t find workers with the skills they needed, so the chamber brought in some outside help to assess the workforce gaps. The study found that there would be 25,000 new jobs to fill over the next five years with the largest growth through 2018 in the fields of industrial production, computer and software development, science and engineering, sales and marketing, medical, and business.

It was also documented that many of the technical and high wage jobs being created were filled by better educated workers who were moving into Charleston from out-of-state, so the chamber decided it needed to do something to better prepare students/residents from the area. Graham mentioned that the consultants looked at the curriculum that was in place in high schools across the three-county region, and came back with suggestions of where gaps could be filled at the high school level and within higher education.

The Charleston Chamber, along with the Berkeley County and Dorchester District 2 School Districts, piloted seven career academies in five high schools with 21 business partners during the 2013-14 academic

school year. A debriefing session was held in May 2014 with the academies, school districts and business partners to evaluate the pilot-year results. Feedback was unanimous that the pilot year was a success and all agreed to move forward with full implementation. In August 2015, the programs expanded to include Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester School Districts.

What is a Career Academy? It involves a smaller learning community, integrates CTE and core courses, fosters relevance through business engagement, and includes project-based learning. Career Academy partners are Chamber member businesses that partner with one or more Career Academies for one year. They are part of an advisory board, which meets monthly, and there are three Chamber-hosted All Academy events. The partners also provide teachers with continued industry interaction and quality experiences for students.

About four years ago, the chamber raised around \$1 million dollars to establish a scholarship fund that provides scholarships to graduates of the career academies who attend Trident Technical College to pursue a two-year Associate’s degree in the high-demand fields. This scholarship program targets students with a 2.0 to 2.9 GPA. Seventy-five scholarships were awarded to graduates in 2016.

Kim Wilson Principal of R.B. Stall High School

After 25 years at one school, Kim Wilson moved to R.B. Stall High School, which had declining enrollment and a bad reputation, with most of the students on free or reduced lunch. In the first year at Stall, he noticed that most of the students would not interact with him or other school administrators. He devised a way to be able to sit down and talk with students by inviting 12 students each week to eat pizza and chat with the principal. He found that most of the students were not living with their maternal parents. He said, “It was such an eye opener. But, the next day when they would see me in the hallway, they came up to talk to me and brought three or four of their friends, because they wanted pizza the next week. After they saw that I was going to come back the second year, they realized that I wasn’t going to give up on them. I wasn’t going to be like everybody else in their life.”

First, staff wanted to change the culture at Stall High School, so they signed on to a national program called “Capturing Kids Hearts,” because as Mr. Wilson said, “You have to capture a kid’s heart before you can



ELECTIVE SESSIONS

capture their mind.” The idea was to build positive relationships with the kids, which he stressed was important to get their buy-in for everything else. Every teacher and administrator in the school goes through three days of intensive training in this program.

Secondly, the school obtained a grant to purchase iPads for every kid in the school. Some observations he made when the kids received their iPads – they were quieter, because they were interacting with the technology, and they walked differently in the hallways... “like scholars,” said Wilson. The school also instituted personalized or digitized learning, meaning that when a student has something he or she doesn’t understand, the teacher doesn’t have to stop the lesson for everyone else to instruct a single child. Teachers act more as facilitators, and students are taught to interact and help one another.

Mr. Wilson said his staff started working with the Charleston Chamber, because he wants as many business and community leaders in the school as he can get. He said that the kids act better when there are other people from the community inside the building. Stall High School also had 11 graduates awarded scholarships to Trident Technical College through the AGC scholarship program. Those are students who did not have the grades, means, or parental support to go to college, according to Wilson.

Emily Reynolds Heritage Trust Federal Credit Union

Heritage Trust Federal Credit Union is a business partner of the Career Academy program in Charleston. Heritage Trust had been looking to put a credit union within a school for some time. They approached some of the area colleges first, but the timing was not great, and it was not a priority for them. Berkeley County School District reached out to Heritage Trust, because they had actually seen a credit union in a high school during a visit to Nashville. Representatives of the credit union went with school officials to the Jacksonville area, which has credit union branches in many different schools.

Not only did Heritage Trust open a credit union at a high school in Berkeley County, but they were also approached about doing the same thing in Dorchester County, and now have a second branch at a high school there. The students had to interview for positions in the student branch and those selected received paid training over the summer. By the start of the school, the branches were up and running, and students were helping teachers and other students open accounts and manage money. Teachers were also trained and work alongside the students, who receive class credit for their career academy tract.

Robin Willis Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce

Robin Willis, who serves as Career Academies Director for the Charleston Chamber, said that when they are trying to match up business partners with the school, they first look at what the school needs. They try to find a place for “just about every member business that wants to be involved,” said Willis. “We like for the businesses to know what they are getting into and to be excited about it.”

Career Academies are available in high schools throughout the region in the following areas: Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM); Health Sciences; Computer Science & IT; Business, Finance & Marketing; and Culinary, Hospitality & Tourism.

Watch the Power’s In The Partnerships Panel
On-line at: https://youtu.be/hqME97Zau_Y



Historic Carriage Tour (CLX Staff Photo)



Boeing Tour (CLX Staff Photo)



Lowcountry Local First @ GrowFood Carolina Tour (CLX Staff Photo)



CYP - Emerging Leader Lunch (CLX Staff Photo)

Downtown Charleston Challenge:

Teams of Leadership Visit participants took the Downtown Charleston Challenge, locating key things around the city to get ideas of how to improve Lexington. Congratulations to the team from VisitLEX for winning the Challenge.



Thursday, June 9, 2016



Mary Thornley

Yvonne Brown

Melissa Stowasser

Mitch Harp

Photos by Bill Straus Photography

EDUCATION FUELS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The final session of day two during the Leadership Visit to Charleston included a panel of representatives from Trident Technical College, which discussed how the college works toward its vision to be the leading force for educational opportunity and economic competitiveness in the communities it serves. The panelists included Mary Thornley, Ed.D. President, Trident Technical College, Melissa Stowasser, Director of High School Programs, Mitch Harp, Director of Apprenticeships, and Yvonne Brown, Assistant Director of Continuing Education.

Mary Thornley, Ed.D. Trident Technical College

Mary Thornley began the presentation by talking about the close relationships between the entities involved in growing the regional workforce. Trident Technical College's biggest customer is Boeing. When someone is hired there, they have to annually go through re-certification and prove that they still have the skills to do the job. Since Boeing opened its doors in 2011 in Charleston, Trident has performed over 94,000 certifications. "Boeing has relationships with colleges all over the world," said Thornley. "They do not have this relationship with any other college. We are actually co-located on the Boeing campus, and run their re-certification lab."

There are three ways that Trident meets the needs of their customers. One way is through ReadySC, which helps develop a workforce for companies locating or expanding in South Carolina. Another way is through continuing education programs, and then all of the credit programs that Trident Technical College offers.

Yvonne Brown Assistant Director of Continuing Education Trident Technical College

In the division of Continuing Education, Trident offers non-credit programs, and "we do that in two ways," said Brown. "We do that by offering public offerings, the open enrollment programs, but we also work with companies in the area through customized training. We get the opportunity to go in and do assessments with companies and identify where their training gaps are, and put together a business solution."

Within the Continuing Education division, Trident offers training in health care, manufacturing, industrial, and construction trades, corporate and IT, personal enrichment and special projects, and aeronautical. Most of the programs lead to a national certification or some kind of credential, said Brown. "A lot of the programs are for entry level positions, but many times people who are in the workforce have decided that they want to do something different [in their career]."

The Continuing Education division has worked closely with Boeing to develop a composite program focused on Boeing employees, who receive a certain amount of money for continuing education. Very soon, Trident is looking at adding electrical, CNC, and an assembly mechanic certification for Boeing. "The goal is to take these programs and in the future make them public offerings," added Brown. "This would be a great program for young people who are not going to a two-year school, but want to get into the workforce."

During the summer, Trident's Continuing Education division conducts camps called Kids' College and Teen U for ages 7 to 17 in math, science, reading and others. Last year, Trident had an enrollment of 2,000 in the camps, and this year is hoping to reach 2,500 enrollments.

In addition to Trident's four main sites, it also has two other centers for training in rural areas, where students can utilize computer centers to do their homework. People who many not have access to computers in their home also come to those sites to fill out job applications or search for jobs.

Mary Thornley

Thornley noted that higher education in the United States, South Carolina, and at Trident Technical College has seen declining enrollment in recent years. She said, "That's a national trend that all of us need to be alert to, as employment changes, then enrollment in higher education has changed, and we need to be mindful of that."

Trident Technical College has about 15,000 students and is the third-largest college in the state behind the University of South Carolina and Clemson University. Trident is the largest provider of transfer students of any college in the state. Of the 15,000 students at Trident, Thornley said that about 9,000 enroll for the purpose of



getting a job, while about 5,000 to 6,000 intend to transfer to a four-year college.

Trident Technical College serves three counties, with enrollment at the college very closely mirroring the demographics of its service area. “We have spent 15 years becoming the college that was the land of opportunity for everybody and was a mirror image of Charleston, Berkeley and Dorchester counties. That is no small thing. That is absolutely essential,” said Thornley.

TRIDENT ENROLLMENT STATISTICS (Fall 2015):

- Median age is 24 years of age
- 60% are female, 40% are male
- 55% are part-time students, 45% are full time students
- 1,123 students enrolled are veterans or received VA benefits
- 1,450 students earned dual credit for high school and college courses

Melissa Stowasser Director of High School Programs Trident Technical College

Melissa Stowasser handles the dual credit program for Trident Technical College. She said that when the program started in 1996, there were eight students all at one high school who took college English 101. Today, there are over 1,600 students annually in dual enrollment classes. “That means we’ve built strategic relationships with folks like Kim Wilson [principal at R.B. Stall High School].”

There’s a belief at Trident that every student should have the opportunity to participate in dual credit classes, and therefore has been offering need-based scholarships for everyone who is eligible for free and reduced lunches at their schools. Their tuition is covered, and their materials and books are also provided. “That is no small cost at all,” said Stowasser. “But, that’s our commitment to the children of the Lowcountry, because if we don’t make that kind of commitment, we know we cannot make the kind of changes in our region that are so essential to making our community the most vibrant it can be.”

Mitch Harp Director of Apprenticeships Trident Technical College

Trident Technical College’s Apprenticeship Office was started in 2007, and its role is to work with local companies and assist them in starting U.S. Department of Labor registered apprenticeship programs. An apprenticeship consists of three things: a job-related education, gainful employment while going through the education, and paid work. Since 2007, Trident has helped 102 companies start U.S. DOL registered apprenticeship programs.

Trident also recently began a youth apprenticeship program, where high school students are being paid to work at a variety of companies around the region. The program began with 6 companies and 13 kids participating in youth apprenticeships mostly in manufacturing, but now has expanded to other industries. The very next year, the program had grown to 30 employers, and by the fall of 2016, there will be 64 companies that have agreed to hire kids as young as

16 years of age.

“Youth apprenticeships is a mechanism to bring the community together,” said Harp. “It’s a mechanism to bring employers, schools, and higher education together for one purpose. It gives employers the opportunity to get involved and hire people and mentor them. Most importantly, it’s about opportunity for that young person... Youth apprenticeships are changing the Charleston community.”

Mary Thornley

Dr. Thornley closed out the presentation telling the group that Trident has proposed a \$79 million aeronautical training center that would be located about five miles from Boeing. The facility would feature 215,000 square feet of training space, which includes 165,000 square feet of classrooms, shops and labs, and 50,000 square feet of open bays, along with a 100,000 square foot aircraft ramp.

Thornley stressed that none of the colleges throughout the state compete with the others. They all have their specific niche market. She said that despite the data highlighted by Charleston County School Superintendent Dr. Postlewait, each person is “1,000-percent optimistic.” “The reason we don’t compete is because we have agreed on the problem, and once we identified the problem, then we began agreeing on the solution,” added Thornley.

Thornley said they are well aware that the public schools have been bad for some time... “and we are waking up to the fact that no longer is it OK to only take that upper 20- or 30-percent of our public school attendees or our private school attendees, and send them off to any school in the country where they do well. That’s great, but that’s not enough,” said Thornley. “We, with a laser focus, are zeroing in on the 40- to 50-percent right there in the middle that are as bright as you and I, and just don’t know it.”

Watch This Panel Discussion On-line at:

<https://youtu.be/Oz6YqhkCGL8>



Photo by Bill Straus Photography



Friday, June 10, 2016

A COURAGEOUS CONVERSATION

The final session of the 2016 Leadership Visit was held at Mother Emanuel Church, site of a mass shooting nearly one year earlier. The Bluegrass delegation wanted to hear how Charleston dealt with and overcame the tragedy without falling into the same unrest and volatility that had plagued other communities across the country.

The session began with a pre-recorded interview between Commerce Lexington Inc. Board Chair Alan Stein (SteinGroup, LLC) and former long-time Charleston Mayor Joe Riley, who discussed some of the key events throughout his tenure that helped bring his community together.

Watch The Interview With Former Mayor Riley:
<https://vimeo.com/170663151>

Charleston Police Chief Greg Mullen (pictured above) then shared the story that illustrated how the community had built relationships over the years that helped them come together to respond to the shooting that occurred at the church.

Chief Mullen said, "Everyone came together, because of the relationships built over time." He said that the most important thing that has occurred during his 10 years as Chief has involved "communication, commitment, and consistency." Additionally, the marketing imagery of the police department has been changed to include more photos of officers working within the community and less photos of weapons and assault gear.



Chief Mullen said that in the time following the shooting, there were no egos between agencies during the investigation. He said they always informed the families of the victims before making any announcement to the media, and from the start, the department with the backing of the faith-based community and others said, 'This was a hate crime. There's no other explanation.'

He also said that the business community was very helpful throughout the ordeal, especially the local hotels and nonprofits. He added, "This was a community response. When the outsiders [protesters] came in, and they did, it was the community leaders that told them to leave."

Following Chief Mullen's presentation, the group listened to Charleston leaders talk about how leadership, trust, forgiveness, and strong relationships shaped Charleston's reaction and provided lessons for the world. Charleston panelists included **Chief Mullen**, **Rev. Dr. Betty Deas Clark**, then-Pastor of Mother Emanuel, and **Charleston City Councilmember Perry Waring**.

Lexington leaders included on the panel included **Lexington Mayor Jim Gray**, **Rev. Dr. C.B. Akins Sr.**, pastor of First Baptist Church Bracktown, **Lexington Police Chief Mark Barnard**, and **Martina Ockerman** of the United Way of the Bluegrass and Ordained Minister for the United Methodist Church in Lexington. The Bluegrass delegation then engaged in a Courageous Conversation not only about Charleston, but also looked inward at Lexington to examine the connection between education, crime and the economy.



Photos by Bill Straus Photography





Photo by Bill Straus Photography

NEXT STEPS

EDUCATION & PUBLIC SAFETY

Watch for topical events in the near future that are being planned around **education** and **public safety**. We'll be exploring the concept of career academies in Lexington through the Ford Next Generation Learning initiative and programs available through BCTC that are similar to what we saw at Trident Technical College.

Commerce Lexington Inc., the Business & Education Network, and FCPS have partnered together on a new initiative called Ford Next Generation Learning (NGL). Ford NGL mobilizes educators, employers, and community leaders to create a new generation of young people who will graduate from high school both college and career-ready. This will create an emerging workforce prepared to compete successfully in the 21st Century economy. There are currently more than 25 Ford

NGL communities across the country and each community uses career-themed academies to lay a solid foundation for success in the classroom and the workplace. This academy model gives students an opportunity to choose a career path that best fits their personal interests, such as engineering, health care or technology.

As **Lexington Police Chief Mark Barnard** pointed out, public safety is the number one budget item for the city. There is a strong connection between education, public safety, crime, and the workforce. Barnard said, "Every crime that occurs in our city affects us economically and socially." Similar to Charleston, the Lexington police department has been conducting community policing for some time.

A COURAGEOUS CONVERSATION

There was a strong desire among Leadership Visit participants to continue the Courageous Conversation among our community. In light of recent national and international tragedies, this 'conversation' is more important than ever. Charleston and its leaders illustrated that the right relationships can bring the community together and can help overcome difficult situations.

Some of these conversations have been occurring and continue to be led by senior officials with the City of Lexington and key community and ethnic organizations. How do we - the people - broaden this

conversation and involve the wider community, so that we have an actionable template that we can build on from Charleston?

As **Rev. Dr. C.B. Akins** said during Friday's session, "The worst thing we can do is act like it [the Charleston shooting] couldn't happen in our city."

Commerce Lexington remains committed to this process with city and community leaders and is an advocate for inclusion of all people at the table, so that we can create systematic change that affects all of us in a positive way.

Commerce Lexington Inc. would like to publicly thank the staff and congregation of Mother Emanuel Church in Charleston for welcoming our group and allowing us to host a very important session there even in the midst of a difficult time of reflection for the community.

As **Lexington Police Chief Mark Barnard** said during the **Courageous Conversation**, "The fact that this community allowed us in this church is all part of the plan here in Charleston."

Following the session, many of you told us that you wanted to help Mother Emanuel Church financially, and we're pleased to report that Commerce Lexington collected and sent funds from Leadership Visit participants totalling more than \$1,800 to Mother Emanuel.



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