



**PUPPIES DIE:
TWO PERISH
IN NEWTON FIRE. A3**



ON HDR ONLINE: VIEW VIDEO OF THIS STORY AT WWW.HICKORYRECORD.COM.

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COLD-WEATHER CONCERNS



As clouds roll into the area, Dennis Hall and Corey Jones, with the city of Hickory Street Department, mix brine solution for possible icy road conditions this morning. TOP LEFT: Jones breaks up the ice on the brine solution mixer as he prepares to get to work. City crews will spray the brine mixture on bridge surfaces and roadways in the area.



Crews prepare for wintry mix; others fix busted water main

HICKORY
 It's been cold and below freezing the last several days in the Greater Hickory area, and the weather is going to get worse. A winter weather advisory, predicting a mix of wintry weather, has been issued by the National Weather Service for today. In preparation for that, local cities were preparing Wednesday to spray salt, sand and a brine

City crews work on a water main leak early Wednesday on Eighth Street, NE, which created an icy situation on the road.



Drivers slow down as they approach an icy patch of road on Eighth Street, NE, due to a water main leak. City crews were working on the leak Wednesday.



ON THE NET

View video of city of Hickory crews preparing for the winter blast online at hickoryrecord.com

MANUFACTURING SOLUTIONS CENTER



Scott Regenbogen and Dan St. Louis, with the Manufacturing Solutions Center, discuss how they can shorten the time it takes to produce a prototype product for clients. The Manufacturing Solutions Center will move to Conover in the near future.

Nonprofit works to save, create jobs

■ Facility prepares for move to Conover.

By John Dayberry
 jdayberry@hickoryrecord.com

CONOVER

In a region that has lost 40,000 jobs during the last 10 years, nothing could be more important than employment, Dan St. Louis said.

"For us, it's all about jobs," said St. Louis, director of the nonprofit Manufacturing Solutions Center.

"This move will enhance our ability to save and create jobs."

St. Louis was referring to plans to move the Manufacturing Solutions Center from cramped quarters at Catawba Valley Community College's East Campus in Hickory to a new, 30,000-square-foot building at the Conover Station development in Conover.

So far, the Manufacturing Solutions Center project has received \$2.7 mil-

SEE CENTER, A8

Success story

■ Center helps entrepreneurs grow businesses.

FROM STAFF REPORTS

HICKORY

Got a great idea for a new product or a better mousetrap? If so, the Manufacturing Solutions Center might be able to help you build a prototype and a business.

That's exactly what Marianne Wakerlin in

Vermont did. She had been hand-knitting brightly colored socks for friends and relatives. It took her a week to make one pair. Her handiwork was so popular that she decided to see if she could get it mass produced. So she attended the International Hosiery Exhibition in Charlotte in hopes of finding a company.

As she walked around

SEE SUCCESS, A8

Retiree says time working for Newton has been a blessing

■ 'Bootsie' Roberts to leave city of Newton after 30 years of service.

By Sharon McBrayer
 smcbrayer@hickoryrecord.com

NEWTON

City officials are saying good-

bye to one of their own. Beunice "Bootsie" Roberts is retiring from the city of Newton after 30 years of service. Her last day is Wednesday.

A reception for Roberts is set for Dec. 29 and the city council proclaimed the day "Bootsie Roberts Day."

City council members this

week praised and thanked the woman who worked her way up through the ranks to become city clerk. Mayor Bob Mullinax paid tribute to Roberts, saying her service and dedication to the city was second to none.

Roberts called Newton,

SEE ROBERTS, A7



Beunice 'Bootsie' Roberts listens Tuesday night as Newton Mayor Bob Mullinax reads a proclamation honoring her service to the city. Roberts will retire Wednesday after 30 years of service to the city.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CITY OF NEWTON

INSIDE	WEATHER	DEATHS	Cynthia Harris, 58 Robert Hensel, 94 C. Thomas Hildebran, 87 Beulah Killian, 91 Henrietta Kutz, 84	Everette Lael, 89 Charles Monroe Sr. 89 William Nelson, 87 Roy Rhoney, 82 Amy Sharp, 51 Claude Sigmon, 84	Betty Travis, 80 Daisy Walker, 86 Vernon Williams, 88 Martha Wright, 62 Obituaries, A2, 3	POWERBALL	©2010 Media General Operations, Inc. All rights reserved.
360-World A6 Buzz A9 Classifieds B8	Comics B13 Editorial A4 Sports B1	ICY HI: 38 LO: 33	B14 Allen Benfield, 74 Anita Campbell, 45 Rick Cline, 54 Katherine Felts, 100			DEC. 15: 10, 11, 18, 32, 45 POWERBALL IS 18 POWER PLAY IS 5	7 56002 40005 7

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RENDERING COURTESY OF CONOVER PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Rendering shows future Manufacturing Solutions Center in Conover Station development.

CENTER: Nonprofit is 'catalyst for new manufacturing economy'

FROM PAGE 1

lion in state and federal grants, and more funding is being sought, said Conover City Manager Donald Duncan, who calls the project "a real opportunity for Conover, for Catawba County and for the region. This represents the future of manufacturing."

The Manufacturing Solutions Center began 20 years ago as the Hosiery Technology Center, serving as an advocate for the U.S. hosiery industry and developing hosiery testing resources and procedures. It has since expanded into other industries — including furniture, medical devices, logistics and green manufacturing — and two years ago adopted the name Manufacturing Solutions Center. The center's move is a joint effort of Catawba Valley Community College, the city of Conover and the N.C. Department of Commerce.

The center fulfills its mission through numerous services for new and existing companies, including product testing, research and development support and assistance, marketing support, website design, and assistance with export sales. It also develops partnerships with trade groups, colleges and universities.

The center's staff works with Underwriters Laboratories to test materials for lead, strength, color fastness, durability and more.

"The laboratories are like something you would see in a '007' movie," Duncan said.

"Engineers build prototypes or dissect products to figure out how to improve them. In turn, entrepreneurs then start manufacturing their items and hire people. That's how jobs grow."

The Manufacturing Solutions Center's move to Conover Station is expected to be complete by late 2011 or early 2012.

Thus far, the project has received a \$1 million economic development grant from the N.C. Department of Commerce, \$200,000 from the Golden Leaf Foundation and a \$1.5 million economic development grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Duncan said.

He said the Manufacturing Solutions Center will be a perfect fit for Conover Station, an \$8 million downtown development project being created on a 27-acre site formerly occupied by Broyhill Furniture.

Conover Station will be the setting for train and bus depots, the city library, a city park and several small businesses, among other things.

Duncan and Conover Mayor Lee E. Moritz Jr. said the Manufacturing Solutions Center and Conover Station are important to the region for many reasons.

Moritz said the goal of Conover Station is to redevelop an unusable piece



Scott Regenbogen, with Manufacturing Solutions Center, removes a prototype product from a Z-Corp Spectrum Z 510 rapid prototyping machine. AT LEFT: Regenbogen uses a brush to remove fine dust from the product.

Robert C. Reed | Record photos



of property into a mixed-use sustainable development.

"This would include cultivating a new form of manufacturing, manufacturing that is based in smaller and smarter fac-

ories that nourish innovation," he said.

"The catalyst for the new manufacturing economy is the Manufacturing Solutions Center."

Moritz said two-thirds of the net jobs in the private

sector originate among small firms or small business births. The smallest segment (one to 19 employees) produces the most new jobs relative to its share of total employment, he said.

"The Manufacturing Solutions Center will become the business accelerator for new product innovation both in and outside textiles," Moritz said. "When companies launch their businesses from this facility, our hope is they will plug into our local communities, use our available industrial properties and employ our skilled and able work force."

"We have been very fortunate both North Carolina and federal agencies agree with this vision and have stepped forward to partner through grant funding and to make this a reality for western North Carolina."

ON THE NET:

www.manufacturingsolutionscenter.org

SUCCESS: Idea becomes reality

FROM PAGE 1

the trade show floor with a pair of her socks in hand, she received a lot of shaking heads and "no's." Because of her intricate layering of colors, she couldn't find any machinery with the capability of weaving the colors together in the manner she could with a simple pair of knitting needles.

Then Wakerlin saw the booth for the Manufacturing Solutions Center.

She was greeted with a very enthusiastic "Yes!"

Dan St. Louis, director of the Manufacturing Solutions Center, said he knew Hickory-based L & R Knitting Inc. had the machinery to make Wakerlin's socks.

Rodney Sigmon, the Manufacturing Solutions Center's knitting specialist, helped her with patterning and yarns to use to create the hand-knit look she had on her socks.

That was in 2000. Today, Solmate Socks sells mis-matched pairs in stores across the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan and China. Wakerlin employs eight people and hires more during peak buying seasons.

In the Hickory area, contracts with Solmate Socks have saved and

spurred jobs.

"Marianne saved our business," said Ron Brittain, owner of L & R Knitting. But it wasn't just my company that she helped. You have to consider the companies that make the yarn, like Hickory Throwing Company, Catawba Creations in Hildebran that makes toboggans for her and Tarason Labels in Conover."

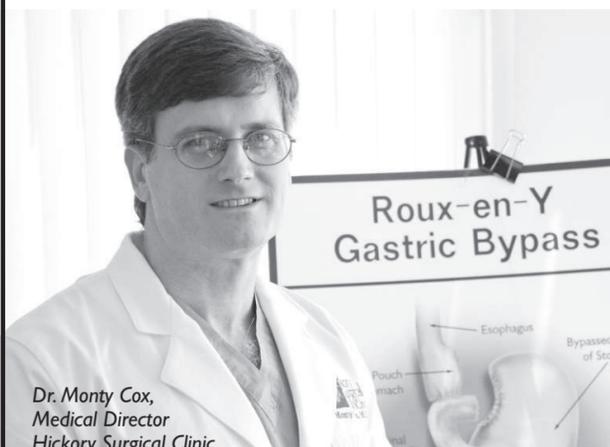
St. Louis said Solmate Socks is just one of many companies the Manufacturing Solutions Center has been able to jump-start.

"We not only help match manufacturers with budding entrepreneurs, but we also guide them in getting their wares to wholesalers and retailers," St. Louis said. He said many think their ideas are worthy of distribution on QVC or through Walmart.

"Well, that's not always feasible," St. Louis said.

"Inventors and budding entrepreneurs sometimes don't realize how that system works or understand how a business operates. We guide them through the process and some opt out. We help those with bona fide concepts convert them into reality, spurring job creation. That's what we're all about."

Your Loss is Your Gain



Dr. Monty Cox,
Medical Director
Hickory Surgical Clinic

Join us in Hickory on December 27th at 6:00pm for a free seminar on Bariatric surgery at the Health First Center in Valley Hills Mall. Call 828-326-2082 for reservations.

Are you over 18 and more than 100 pounds over recommended weight? Have you exhausted all efforts to lose weight through diet and exercise? Then bariatric surgery may be an option for you. Our Surgical Weight Management Program offers specialized surgical interventions, aimed at improving health and prolonging life. Our program offers you several minimally invasive surgical options, including Laparoscopic Gastric Bypass, Adjustable Gastric Banding, and Sleeve Gastrectomy. We can help you decide which option is right for you.

Our program includes:

- Dedicated Bariatric Surgeons
- Care coordination by RN
- Education tailored just for you before and after surgery by a nurse and dietician
- Monthly support group meetings
- Lifetime follow-up care

If you have considered or even wondered if surgical weight management may work for you, join us at the Health First Center in Valley Hills Mall on December 27th for our educational seminar.

To register, call Libby Shaver, Surgical Weight Management Coordinator, at 828-326-2082.



"Today we are a totally different couple! Together, we have lost a total of 288 pounds! The "light-bulb" moment for us came when we do what many parents take for granted and took our children to Carowinds. Unable to fit in the safety harnesses, we were embarrassed to find we simply couldn't ride most of the fun rides with our kids! We also had to take frequent rest breaks just trying to keep up with our 2 active kids. As a couple, we realized then that something had to be done and started researching options. We chose gastric bypass performed by Dr. Johnathan Hata, of Hickory Surgical Clinic. This summer, to celebrate, we took our kids to SeaWorld and rode every ride we wanted! It hasn't been easy. We both participate in the Weightloss Support Group hosted at Catawba Valley Medical Center to stay engaged in this journey and share with others who are committed to the dramatic changes in

lifestyle such as focus on nutrition, portion control and exercise. Now it has been one year since my procedure and 9 months since Mark's and we both have more confidence and enjoy energy levels that allow us to keep up with our kids."

— Mark and Adrienne Chafin, Hickory, NC



L. James Cook, MD
Hickory Surgical Clinic

Jonathan Hata, MD
Hickory Surgical Clinic

Libby Shaver, RN
Certified Bariatric Nurse
Catawba Valley Medical Center



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