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**Apply for Touchstone Energy Hoops
Camp Scholarship by March 31**

Pee Dee Electric to award all-expense paid scholarships to two middle-school students

The deadline is quickly approaching for middle-school students to apply for an all-expense paid scholarship from Pee Dee Electric to attend summer basketball camps at two of the state's largest universities.

Pee Dee is awarding two Touchstone Energy Sports Camp Scholarships to local students this year. A young man will be selected to attend the Roy Williams Basketball Camp June 17-21 at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, and one young lady will win a scholarship to attend the Wolfpack Women's Basketball Camp June 11-14 at N.C. State University in Raleigh. Applications must be received or postmarked by March 31.

"These scholarships are a fantastic way for young athletes to experience life on a college campus and learn from mentors at their favorite NCAA athletic programs," said Ashley Haynes, Communications Specialist at Pee Dee Electric. "We're proud to reward local students for their hard work by providing this opportunity to have fun, make new friends and develop skills that will help them excel on and off the court."

At camp, students will work directly with the players and coaches to learn basketball skills and about leadership and teamwork.

To be eligible to apply, students must be in the fifth, sixth, or seventh grade during the current 2016-2017 school year and they must reside in a home that is served by Pee Dee Electric. Applicants must have permission from a parent or guardian to attend the overnight camp and must provide their own transportation to and from the camp if selected to attend.

Applications and more information on the scholarships can be found at www.pdemc.com or by contacting Ashley Haynes at 704-694-7604. Applicants will be judged on academics, extra-curricular activities and an essay. Winners are expected to be announced by May 1.

The Touchstone Energy Sports Camp Scholarships provide a one-of-a-kind educational and athletic opportunity to our state's youth and reflect Touchstone Energy's core values of accountability, integrity, innovation and commitment to community. North Carolina's Touchstone Energy cooperatives will award more than 50 sports camp scholarships to students statewide this year.



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S8 MANAGER / HOUSING AUTHORITY STANDARD (HQS) INSPECTOR

Wadesboro Housing Authority is seeking applications for S8 Manager/HQS Inspector for the S8 Housing Choice Voucher Program. The position is effective March 1, 2017; Close date is March 20, 2017.

Reports to: Executive Director

Position Summary This is a full-time position with benefits.

Duties and Responsibilities: An S8 Manager performs a variety of office activities to implement Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program.

Required Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

- 1) Strong interpersonal skills.
- 2) Moderate to excellent computer skills.
- 3) Schedule interviews with S8 landlords and tenants, prepare and process correspondence to landlords and tenants. Assures that all assisted housing management records are accurate and correct.
- 4) Possession of a valid State of North Carolina vehicle operator's license, reliable automotive transportation, and a driving record.
- 5) Reviews housing applications to determine family eligibility for housing, performs annual S8 Housing Quality Standards and Housing Inspections, Tenant Recertifications.
- 6) Knowledge of the general operations and procedures of a Public Housing Agency and of local state and federal regulations governing subsidized housing programs is a big plus.

Education and Experience

High School Diploma required. Graduation from a two-four year college or university with a degree in Public or Business Administration or closely related subjects is desirable. Experience in housing management or combination of education and experience.

Housing Quality Standard Certification/Inspection and experience and/or training in the Housing Choice Voucher Program or other HUD housing program are a big plus.

Resumes may be mailed to:

**Wadesboro Housing Authority
P.O. Box 211
Wadesboro, NC 28170
Attention: Betty Huntley**

Or submitted via email to: wadesborohousing@windstream.net

Telephone Number 704-694-4852

EOE

You Decide: Do Economists Ever Agree?

By Dr. Mike Walden, North Carolina Cooperative Extension: Economists have a reputation for being disagreeable. By this, I don't mean they have unlikeable personalities. Instead, I mean the public perception is that economists rarely agree among themselves about the economy. Some have argued an individual economist even has trouble agreeing with her or himself! President Truman once reportedly asked his staff to find a one-handed economist. This was because President Truman was frustrated with his economic advisers telling him, "on the one hand, this may happen; but on the other hand, that may happen."

Recently I had a chance to test the level of agreement among economists. I was part of a panel of four economic colleagues – including persons from universities as well as the private sector – who addressed 900 attendees at this year's North Carolina Chamber Economic Forecast Conference. We were peppered with questions from the panel moderator about economic trends, economic forecasts and economic public policy.

And guess what – there was an amazing degree of agreement. In fact, one of the most repeated phrases was "I agree with John's (or Mark's or Harry's, or Mike's) statement. Also there was no yelling, screaming and name-calling as often occurs in debates about key public issues.

So what did we agree about? First, each of us thought 2017 would be a year of economic growth. We saw no imminent recession looming. Of course, we differed on the precise number for the rate of growth. Some thought the expected Trump Administration policies would accelerate growth in 2017, while others believed the policies would have either no effects or the effects would be delayed. Still, our differences in the precise number for economic growth were relatively minor.

Second, we all see higher interest rates in 2017. With the economy expanding, the Federal Reserve will raise their key short-term interest rate two or three times during the year, but with each jump being a modest 0.25 percentage points. Long-term interest rates, which have already risen significantly since the election, will continue to be between one-half to one percentage point higher in 2017 than in 2016.

We also had consensus on the big economic problems facing the country, including slow improvements in labor productivity, relatively weak business investment, economic growth that does not include all income levels and all geographic areas and the challenges presented by technology's increased capabilities displacing human workers.

There was one key disagreement among some of the panelists, and that was about the economic impact of the stronger international value of the U.S. dollar. Traditionally a stronger U.S. dollar makes U.S. exports more expensive while making imports to our country cheaper. One panelist in particular worried this could widen the U.S. trade deficit and chip away at economic growth.

But other panelists countered this worry in two ways. They stated a stronger U.S. dollar would attract foreign investment to our nation which, in turn, would increase domestic spending and jobs and ultimately spur productivity. Also, many U.S. manufacturers obtain supplies from foreign countries, so the lower costs of these inputs would help them remain competitive when they sell in foreign countries.

What did the panel say about North Carolina? We agreed our state has had two good years in a row in economic growth surpassing national growth, and we expect the same in 2017. But the large majority of this growth and improvement has occurred in the state's metro regions – especially around Charlotte and the Triangle. However, with labor markets tightening in the metropolitan counties, it's expected there will be a better spread of job growth to rural areas this year.

I and my economic colleagues also agreed education and skill acquisition are the keys to future economic prosperity for more people in North Carolina. We argued for continued efforts to strengthen K-12 education as well as an expansion of opportunities for students at the high school level to be exposed to vocational and technical occupations. More apprenticeships and collaborative programs with businesses in designing curriculum would also be helpful.

Last, the panel was asked about the economic impact of HB2. Without addressing the relative pluses and minuses of the legislation, we did agree the law has hindered economic recruitment. The private sector panelist who travels the country said the legislation is a constant topic of discussion in other states and has often put North Carolina at a disadvantage in competing with those states for new businesses.

Does this broad level of consensus among a handful of economists mean everything we forecasted for 2017 will come true? Of course not – agreement is one thing; accuracy is another! We could be agreeing and still be wrong. So, like President Truman, you may like to have economists give consistent advice, but you could still decide to seek other opinions!

Walden is a William Neal Reynolds Distinguished Professor and Extension Economist in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics at North Carolina State University who teaches and writes on personal finance, economic outlook, and public policy.

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