



August 11, 2015

RONNIE BRYANT **Charlotte Regional Partnership**



Judy Wishnek introduced Ronnie Bryant, President and CEO of the Charlotte Regional Partnership (CRP). Ronnie graduated from Louisiana State University, *Shreveport* with a BA in Management Administration in 1979, and received a degree from the Economic Development Institute at the University of Oklahoma in 1992. He has worked in economic development for over 30 years, and is past chairman of the International Economic Development Council.

Ronnie began his talk by explaining that he has been a bit gun-shy when it comes to introductions ever since he was introduced as a “model economic developer” at an industry luncheon. Being quite proud of being held in such high esteem, he told his staff about it when he got back to the office. His secretary subsequently gave him a dictionary opened to the definition of “model,” which was, “a small replica of the real thing!”

He then went on to describe the CRP, which is a non-profit regional development agency serving 16 contiguous counties in the Charlotte area, 12 in North Carolina and 4 in South Carolina. Their purpose is to recruit new jobs and investment opportunities in the region, working only with primary employers. As they represent 16 counties, the CRP is a neutral broker that does not favor any particular one, and acts as a neutral information provider serving the needs of the prospective employer. The region is marketed nationally and internationally as “Charlotte USA.”

He went on to discuss the site selection process, stressing that it is highly competitive. His customers are primarily consultants retained by companies looking to locate or relocate to the southeast, seeking to find the site that will be best for the needs of their clients. He describes the consultant’s job as ‘site elimination’ more than site selection. Typically, the consultant will start with multiple sites in each of several states, and then narrow that number to the few he thinks are the best fit for the client. These are researched in greater depth to provide the company with the information to make the final decision.

He presented a list of the top factors considered by companies in making their location decisions, and graded the Region, the state of North Carolina, and the state of South Carolina on their desirability as a destination for employers. The factors, with their grades, were as follows:

Factor	Region	NC	SC
Quality and Quantity of Workforce	B+	A-	B-
Global Accessibility	A	B	B
Real Estate Availability	C-	C+	C+
Cost of Doing Business	B	B	B
Quality of Life	A	A	B
Academic Strength	B	A	A-
Corporate Presence	A	B	B

Notable strengths of the Region include our strong educational system, including both CMS and the community college system; the airport and intermodal facility, providing excellent access to the world for both people and cargo; cultural amenities (necessities) and low cost of living; and our corporate presence, with nine Fortune 500 companies located here. Weaknesses are the lack of available industrial buildings in the area and our relatively small financial incentive program.

In response to questions about economic development, he indicated that the importance of infrastructure, incentives, and the tax and regulatory environments have to do with the impact on various companies in terms of their total cost of doing business here; and with reducing the cost of entry to the market for companies relocating here.

He concluded by saying that he feels that the role of the Charlotte Regional Partnership is not to win the site selection competition, but rather to bring companies here by getting on their list of possibilities and provide them with the information to make the best decision, which is, of course, *Charlotte USA*.

Speaker Write Up: Rick Handford

Head Table: Claire Fallon, Mike Crum, Tom Bartholomy, Judy Wishnek, Ronnie Bryant, Edwin Peacock, Vernon Menard; Invocation: Catherine Browning; Guests & Visitors: Steve Eanes, Song: Ty Hands; Health, Happiness & History: Edwin Peacock and Phoebe Brannan; AV: Jessica Dupree and Nikki Keith; Photos: Herb Harriss and Harriman Jett

Club News

Nikki Keith introduced new member **Cheryl Banks**, a court specialist for the U. S. Probation/Pretrial Services. Nikki referenced Cheryl's father, David Banks, who received the Four Way Test Award from the Shelby Rotary Club. Cheryl can be reached at Cheryl_banks@ncwp.uscourts.gov; **Jill Santuccio** introduced her good friend, **John Shaver**, who is a major accounts sales rep with the Charlotte Observer. John can be reached at jsshaver@charlotteobserver.com.

Correction....the medal **Ralston Pound** received for the American Fighter Aces Association is the Congressional Gold Medal, not the Congressional Medal of Honor. Check out the link **Jim Barnhardt** provided: <http://acesofww2.com/USA/>; **Ron Kimble** talked about the boost soccer is giving the economy in last week's Business Journal.

Thanks to **Karen Steffens** and **Marie Jaffe** for their help to sell tickets for the Duck Race. Proceeds will be used to fund the District's Youth Conference on September 13 and 50% of ticket sales from this club will be returned to the club. \$320 was collected on Tuesday; contact the Rotary office if you could help out at next week's meeting: <http://goo.gl/NoK5BA>.

Travis Vance, Clyde Robinson, Mary Ellen Player, Ben Pendry, Courtney Ramey and others are working on ways to keep the "younger" Rotarians engaged in the club. The target age is 45 and under; the plan is to meet once a month or so outside the usual club meeting for lunch or happy hour to network, socialize and learn more about Rotary. This rowdy group made a statement at Tuesday's meeting as they raised a toast with their "Capri Sun" and did you notice they were strategically sitting just two tables away from the "wine" group. Ha Ha

Approve for Membership (comments to Rotary office by 8/18/15)

Jennifer Ann Marshall

Brookdale Senior Living Inc. (Retirement Community)

Sponsor: Jerry Coughter

Endorsed: Matt Joyner, Travis Vance

The first of the 100 Service Projects for the Centennial is in the books! Thanks to **Amy Burkett, John Tabor, Wes Sturges, Lynn Wheeler, Jesse Hite, David Tobin, Mike McLaurin, Claire Fallon, Lee Tabor, Angela Mauldin,** and **Terri DeBoo,** for their participation.



Charlotte Fire Department Recognition

The Insurance Services Office rates fire departments across the country. Last month Charlotte Fire Department was elevated to the highest ranking, ISO Class-1. There are only **132** ISO Class-1 departments nationwide out of over 48,000 fire protection districts

The fire chief (**Jon Hannan**) says it's an accomplishment earned by many moving parts. "Our chief fire investigator delivers three times national average on clearing arson. Our three educators get in every third-grade classroom-- we don't miss one." 99.5 percent of emergency calls were answered within 10 seconds; 256 firefighters were on duty 98.1-percent of the time; and the average response time was four minutes and 34 seconds.

This rating now allows Charlotte property owners to get the lowest premium possible for fire insurance.

Other Opportunities

- North Mecklenburg Rotary Club is having a Trivia Charity Challenge, August 16 at 2PM at Spare Time Bowling Center, Huntersville. Contact Ben Thalheimer, 704-376-3030, Ext 6 if you have questions.
- Lake Norman Rotary Club's signature event, The Wine Spectacular, will be held October 10 at NorthStone Country Club. [Buy Your Tickets Now!](#) The Rotary Clubs in North Mecklenburg are also fundraising for Huntersville Veterans Memorial Park; learn more at <http://www.lakenormanrotary.org/VeteransMemorial/index.htm>
- The Charlotte Walk to End Alzheimer's will be held Saturday, September 26 at Symphony Park, Charlotte. Volunteers may visit [CHARLOTTE WALK](#).

VISITORS ON 08/11/15

Shelly Fasciana, Ben Thalheimer, Chris Hailey, John Larranaga, Kevin Zogg, Larry Broome, Greg Reagan, Betty Witmore, Vivek Vemunooril, Nick and Phoebe Brannan, Vanessa Goeschl, Libby Simonini, Jonathan Donahue, Gina Carroll Howard

UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS (08/18/15 – 08/24/15)

08/20 Carol Hardison, Dale Halton
08/23 Diane Restaino, Bill Stegelmeyer
08/24 Quincy Foil

UPCOMING ANNIVERSARIES (08/18/15 – 08/24/15)

08/18 Norva and Ed Pickett

08/24 Joan and Mark Erwin, Jenn Jackson and Andy Boswell

Visitors & Guests	15
Club Members	159
Total	174
Percentage	57.6%

MEMBERSHIP

06/30/2015	319
08/11/2014	321
Net Increase:	+2

New Members: Cheryl Banks, John Shaver

Resignations:

UPCOMING LUNCHEONS (www.charlotterotary.org and click on the events tab)

08/18 – How I Got Where I'm At (Glenn Paton, Mike Restaino, Mike McLaurin)

08/25 – Laura Wellman, President and CEO, E4E Relief

09/01 – Dr. Harris Pastides, President, University of South Carolina

09/08 – Daniel Levine, Levine Properties, First Ward Redevelopment Update

Photos from our luncheons and other events can be found on Flickr [Click here](#)





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