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State Treasurer Janet Cowell to participate as a panelist at the AdvantageWest Economic Summit on Nov 15.

The first woman to be elected Treasurer for the State of North Carolina, Janet Cowell, has been confirmed as a panelist at the AdvantageWest Economic Summit on Monday evening, Nov 15 at Diana Wortham Theatre in downtown Asheville. The event includes a networking reception and targets business people, entrepreneurs, economic development professionals and others with a vested interest in business and economic conditions, particularly in Western North Carolina.

State Treasurer Cowell joins Lt Gov Walter Dalton, 35-year banking veteran Austin Adams, and Anita Brown-Graham, Director of NC's Institute for Emerging Issues, for a discussion of economic and business issues in Western North Carolina. Newspaper columnist and UNC-TV "Bookwatch" host D.G. Martin will serve as moderator. The discussion will include questions submitted beforehand by attendees.

The networking reception begins at 5:30; the program starts at 7:15. Registration is \$50, which includes heavy hors d'oeuvres, beverages and admittance to the panel discussion. Space is limited and early registration is encouraged. [REGISTER HERE](#)

MORE ABOUT THE ECONOMIC SUMMIT

[CLICK HERE](#) to access the following:

- * Details and registration
- * Sponsorship packages
- * Panelist bios
- * Info on how to submit questions for consideration by the panel
- * Directions to Diana Wortham Theatre

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Reminder: Networking event for entrepreneurs is coming up Tuesday Oct 26. Space is limited - register today!

Sign up now to ensure your spot at the next Blue Ridge Entrepreneurial Council Forum, Oct 26, from 5-7pm. The event launches BREC's focus on successful entrepreneurs in the green-business sector, and takes place at [Posana Cafe](#) in downtown Asheville, the first 2 Star Certified Green Restaurant® in North Carolina. Featured speaker is [Chris Yura](#), CEO of [SustainU](#), a clothing company that uses local labor and 100% recycled materials made from domestically sourced post-consumer plastic bottles (PET), recycled cotton and post-industrial polyester. The company has gotten nationwide attention.

The event is open to the public. Cost is \$20, which includes heavy hors d'oeuvres and beverages. Space is limited and pre-registration is required. [REGISTER TO ATTEND HERE.](#)

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Student entrepreneurs win chance of a lifetime: opportunity to present their computer app to Google engineers and executives.

For the second year, winners of AdvantageWest's [Juicy Ideas](#) collegiate competition for student entrepreneurs got the chance of a lifetime: an all-expense-paid trip to Google headquarters in Mountain View, Calif., home of one of the best-known entrepreneurial ventures in the world.

This was more than an opportunity to tour a place where creativity and innovation is nurtured and valued at all levels; where employees describe the culture as "super collaborative" and the mantra is "Fail fast. Launch and iterate." It was also an opportunity for the winning Stanford University team members to spend meaningful time with engineers and executives at Google, share their winning [computer application](#), and get feedback on its potential.

The students also spent an evening with venture capitalist Victor Hwang, who served as a keynote speaker at AdvantageWest's Carolina Connect last May. "The winning team from Stanford was bright, creative and edgy," said Hwang, managing director of T2 Venture Capital in the Silicon Valley. "AdvantageWest ran a fantastic program that challenged students to think out of the box in new ways. I was impressed."

Juicy Ideas was originally conceived as an outgrowth of the AdvantageWest Certified Entrepreneurial Communities ProgramSM, which encourages activities to engage youth in entrepreneurship. [DigitalChalk](#), a leading Asheville-based eLearning platform provider, partnered with AdvantageWest in developing and executing the initiative. Google agreed to support the contest if it could be scaled nationally.

"I was extremely pleased with the contest again this year. It was great to see the participation grow to hundreds of schools across the country," said Troy Tolle, DigitalChalk co-founder and CTO, who with his company has contributed hundreds of hours to the project since its inception in 2008. "I knew this challenge would be difficult. The team from Stanford impressed me in how fast they were able to deliver an application touching so many technology platforms."

In Western North Carolina, the 2010 winning team was from AB Tech, with its [Asheville-Outdoors.com](#)

website. AB Tech also took second place in the country, just behind the Stanford team. A team from MIT came in third.

"The Juicy Ideas competition offers students the opportunity to build on leadership, innovation and teamwork in a contest that has potential real-world application," said Pam Lewis, Sr VP Entrepreneurial Development for AdvantageWest and co-author of the Certified Entrepreneurial Community Program. "The opportunity to meet and learn more about the student leadership teams from both AB Tech and Stanford provides further evidence that the emphasis on youth engagement and entrepreneurship in our long-term economic development strategy is right on track. That is where these students are headed!"

View a video featuring Google manager Zach Geller and Stanford's winning team [HERE](#) and see a photo gallery of the trip to Google [HERE](#).

CEC REMINDER: The deadline for communities to submit their formal letter of intent to participate in the Certified Entrepreneurial Community Program is Wednesday Oct 27. For more information about the program and the upcoming CEC Leadership Training on Nov 3-5, [CLICK HERE](#).

To read an interview with the leaders of the Haywood County CEC, the first Certified Entrepreneurial Community in the United States, [CLICK HERE](#).

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NC STEM Community Collaborative launches in Western North Carolina in Ashe, Caldwell, and Watauga counties.

The future of our economy in North Carolina - and our country - is dependent on three critical elements: innovation, education and infrastructure. In turn, all of these are dependent on our ability to leverage skills in science, technology, engineering and math - collectively known as STEM.

The [NC STEM Community Collaborative](#) is leading the charge in bringing together business, education and community leaders in a joint effort to design innovation into education practices - and to develop business and technology skills in our young people. State organizers with the initiative have selected Ashe, Caldwell and Watauga counties as the first NC STEM Community Collaborative in the Western North Carolina region, which was announced officially at a statewide STEM education summit last month in Raleigh.

Leaders with the tri-county WNC collaborative, along with Henry Doss, Board Champion for the AdvantageWest STEM Initiative, have already begun the innovation design process and, in coming months, will be sharing their findings and ideas for new practices across the state. Says AdvantageWest Director Doss: "STEM can have an impact on the AdvantageWest region and the entire state for years to come: by nurturing technology innovation in schools and businesses; by leveraging non-traditional expertise and experience in our educational system; and by focusing communities on the critical needs for STEM curriculum emphasis in our schools."

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German manufacturer to bring first U.S. production facility to WNC, creating at least 79 new jobs.

If you missed our announcement earlier this week about a German company's plans to locate its first U.S. manufacturing facility in AdvantageWest region, here it is again: [CLICK HERE](#).

AdvantageWest was the first point of contact with the company and worked for almost a year to help bring this project to the region. Other partners included the NC Dept of Commerce, NC Community Colleges and the Economic Development Coalition for Asheville-Buncombe County.

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First shared-use Natural Products Manufacturing Facility in the U.S. now open at Blue Ridge Food Ventures.

Entrepreneurs wishing to produce, bottle, seal and label natural products, including medicinal herbs and dietary supplements, now have a new place to do so that is compliant with new federal FDA standards. The Natural Products Manufacturing Facility, located at Blue Ridge Food Ventures on the AB Tech Enka campus, is the first shared-use facility of its type in the US and will tap WNC's rich biodiversity and agricultural traditions of harvesting and growing herbs and medicinal plants.

Blue Ridge Food Ventures officially launched the new facility on Oct 18 at a reception attended by funding organizations the NC Biotechnology Center and the Golden LEAF Foundation; elected and appointed officials and representatives; educators; the president and board members of the NC Natural Products Association; project partners BioNetwork BioBusiness Center, SBTDC and Gaia Herbs; and potential users of the facility - about 75 individuals in total.

[CLICK HERE](#) for an *Asheville Citizen-Times* news story about the opening and [HERE](#) to view a photo gallery by Clear Channel Asheville reporter Dan Hesse. [MORE ABOUT THE FACILITY HERE](#).

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Winter Sun Farms CSA subscriptions going fast - sign up now!

Time is growing short to sign up for Winter Sun Farms, a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program of Blue Ridge Food Ventures. Members will start picking up their boxes of healthy local produce, processed and frozen at the peak of freshness in just over a month.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT WINTER SUN FARMS HERE](#) and [HERE](#). Read an article about the program that ran in the *Asheville Citizen-Times* earlier this week [HERE](#) and another one a few weeks ago in *Mountain Xpress* [HERE](#). Memberships are limited and going fast, so sign up today!

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Congratulations to these WNC community and business leaders.

*Mark Burrows, Director of Transylvania County Planning & Economic Development, recently received the prestigious Robert G. Parrish Sr Intergovernmental Relations Award from Land-of-Sky Regional Council. A member of the AdvantageWest Board of Directors, Burrows won the award based on his service in Transylvania County as well as to regional and state organizations.

*J. Hardy LeGuinn, founding partner of [FLS Energy](#), a solar energy generation company based in WNC, was recently honored with the NC Sustainable Energy Association's 2010 NC Individual Leadership Award. In other FLS news, the company has completed installation of a second solar farm at the headquarters of business analytics and software and services provider SAS, located in Cary. The new solar farm, which was installed in partnership with groSolar, has a 1.2 megawatt capacity and will produce an estimated 1.9 million kilowatt-hours (kWh) each year. [Related news: NC ranks 14th in Solar Jobs](#).

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Mark your calendar for these other upcoming events, opportunities and deadlines.

Oct 21, 7pm and Oct 23, 1pm: Screening of "On Coal River" - *Fine Arts Theatre, Asheville*. Documentary by Asheville filmmakers Francine Cavanaugh and Adams Wood. On Oct 21, screening will be followed by an energy panel moderated by David Hurand, news director of WCQS public radio. Visit the Film page on the AdvantageWest website for information on this and [more upcoming local film events](#).

Oct 26: 11:30am: CEC Core Leadership Luncheon - *Morganton Community House, Morganton*. For leadership teams of existing CEC communities. Contact [Pam Lewis](#) for more information.

Oct 26, 5-7pm: Blue Ridge Entrepreneurial Council networking forum, featuring Chris Yura, CEO of

SustainU - *Posana Cafe, Asheville* (see article in this newsletter). Open to the public. [REGISTER HERE](#).

Oct 26, 6-9pm: "From Recipe to Market" special presentation - *AB Tech Enka campus*. Blue Ridge Food Ventures hosts a session with the founder of Mrs. Picky Fanicky's foods to talk about food business development. Open to the public. [REGISTER HERE](#).

Oct 27: Deadline to submit Letter of Intent to participate in Certified Entrepreneurial Communities Program. CEC Leadership Training is Nov 3-5. [LEARN MORE HERE](#).

Nov 12: Deadline for nominations for 2011 SBA North Carolina Small Business Person of the Year and Small Business Champion Awards. [LEARN MORE HERE](#).

Nov 15, 5:30-9pm: AdvantageWest Economic Summit, *Diana Wortham Theatre, Asheville* (see article in this newsletter). Open to the public. [REGISTER HERE](#).

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Check out the AdvantageWest website for announcements, press releases and more news of interest.

[Bookmark the AdvantageWest Online Newsroom](#) for a roundup of other news and items of interest from around the region, including the following:

- Forbes: NC ranked 3rd for Best States for Business
- Press release: WCU signs partnership agreement with Brazil-based renewable energy company
- Press release: Land-of-Sky Regional Council wins \$1.6 million Sustainable Communities Initiative grant
- Weather Channel: National broadcast from Blue Ridge Parkway
- Charlotte Observer: Wheels of Time Museum in Maggie Valley
- Fact Sheet: The North Carolina Ports, ranked the No. 25 overall North American port

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Got news?

We welcome your announcements about economic development activities within the 23-county region of Western North Carolina. Submit news for consideration to the [newsletter editor](#). AdvantageWest reserves the right to modify submissions to conform to editorial guidelines, space constraints, timeliness and other circumstances.

Editor's note: AdvantageWest is transitioning to a new newsletter system. Thank you for your patience as we work out bugs in the new process. If you have problems with newsletter delivery or other concerns, please [contact us](#).



AdvantageWest is the regional economic development partnership serving the 23 westernmost counties of North Carolina. Chartered by the state General Assembly in 1994, AdvantageWest is a nonprofit, public-private partnership governed by a 21-member board of directors. Our program of work focuses on advanced manufacturing, entrepreneurial development, agribusiness, and the green economy. AdvantageWest also maintains the WNC Film Commission.

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