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Find out how to reach the growing green-consumer market at the next Blue Ridge Entrepreneurial Council networking forum on Dec 14.

It's no secret that a sustainability revolution is taking place. How is this phenomenon impacting consumer behavior? And what can WNC businesses do to reach the growing green-consumer market?

Find out at the next Blue Ridge Entrepreneurial Council Forum, Dec 14, 5:30-7:30pm, at the YMI Cultural Center in downtown Asheville, which is co-sponsoring the event. Bringing a global perspective to the discussion will be guest speaker Neil Gurney, formerly a CEO with Saatchi & Saatchi and now a partner and head of brand strategy and sustainability for Asheville-based firm Integrative2.

The event continues the AdvantageGreen series of BREC forums, focused on connecting the region's green entrepreneurs and highlighting Western North Carolina's unique opportunities to be a green-economy leader through entrepreneurship.

BREC Forums are open to the public and include plenty of time for networking. Cost is only \$10, which includes heavy hors d'oeuvres and beverages. Space is limited and pre-registration is encouraged.

[REGISTER TO ATTEND HERE.](#)
[Read more about Neil Gurney HERE.](#)

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Last chance to sign up for a share in Blue Ridge Food Ventures' Winter Sun Farms CSA! First pickup starts Dec 8.

A few shares remain in Winter Sun Farms, a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program of Blue Ridge Food Ventures, and this is the last week to join in. Pickups begin Dec 8 at four convenient locations in Buncombe and Henderson counties, just in time for holiday cooking.

Why Winter Sun Farms? It's a great and convenient way to enjoy healthy local fruits and vegetables throughout the winter, while also supporting local farmers. All the hard work is already done: no washing, chopping, slicing, dicing, roasting or pureeing needed!

Gift certificates for shares in this season's Winter Sun Farms CSA also make a healthy and thoughtful green gift. BRFV can even "hold" the recipient's December share until you're ready to present your gift.

For information on Winter Sun Farms, including how to sign up, a list of our farm partners, locations for pickups, and recipes using the produce, [CLICK HERE](#). For information on purchasing a WSF gift certificate, email [Chris Reedy](#) or call him at 828.348.0130.

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Gift-giving simplified: Festive Blue Ridge Food Ventures Red Boxes.

Back by popular demand and ready for gift-giving to clients, co-workers, neighbors and loved ones is the Blue Ridge Food Ventures Red Box, a festive gift box filled with an assortment of local, hand-crafted gourmet food items. From spicy mustard to gourmet jam and pickled bamboo shoots to hot sauce and chocolate treats, all goodies in these pre-packaged gift boxes are made (or got their start) at Blue Ridge Food Ventures. The boxes come in two sizes and can be ordered online. Shipping is available to make gift-giving even easier.

[LEARN MORE and SEE A PHOTO HERE.](#)

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Photos and more: A look back at the Fall 2010 AdvantageWest Economic Summit.

Thanks to some 300 enthusiastic attendees, a panel of insightful expert panelists and program participants, and the generous support of sponsors, the second AdvantageWest Economic Summit, held Nov 15 at Diana Wortham Theatre in downtown Asheville, was a great success.

We are grateful to Lt Gov Walter Dalton, NC Treasurer Janet Cowell, banking veteran Austin Adams, Director of NC's Institute for Emerging Issues Anita Brown-Graham, and UNC-TV host D.G. Martin for their time as participants in program.

We also thank these sponsors whose generosity made this event possible: Piedmont Natural Gas (Gold Level); Forest Commercial Bank, Progress Energy, PSNC Energy (Silver Level); Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College, Carolina First, ECS Carolinas, Frontier Communications, Graham County, KP Communications, McGill and Associates, SBTDC (Supporter Level); and Biltmore Wines, Craggie Brewing Company, MARC Inc., Swain County and Town & Country Furniture Market.

We also appreciate the hard work of the AdvantageWest Board of Directors--in particular, Summit Committee members George Couch, Henry Doss, and Mike Fulenwider--our AdvantageWest staff, and Asheville Event Company for their assistance in making the Economic Summit a success.

MORE ABOUT THE ECONOMIC SUMMIT

- Photo galleries from the event [HERE](#) and [HERE](#).
- *Asheville Citizen-Times* coverage [HERE](#) and [HERE](#).
- *Mountain Xpress* coverage [HERE](#) and audio of interviews following the Summit [HERE](#).
- Coverage from *Biltmore Beacon* [HERE](#).
- Newspaper column by moderator D.G. Martin [HERE](#).

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AdvantageWest convenes region-wide leadership training for the Certified Entrepreneurial Community Program®

AdvantageWest recently convened its second ever region-wide Certified Entrepreneurial Community® (CEC) training program at Western Piedmont Community College, hosted by Burke County CEC. The session included representatives from Caldwell, Clay, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Wilkes, and Yancey counties, in addition to Burke.

Deb Markley of the RUPRI Center for Rural Entrepreneurship provided tools and information to help entrepreneurs be successful with their community. Juleigh Sitton, Director of the NC Governor's Western Office spoke to the group on the importance of the CEC program. A new feature, the Power Coaching session, was introduced for the first time by Mountain BizWorks, a nonprofit WNC organization that provides small-business loans, training and coaching.

Developed by AdvantageWest, the rigorous, five-step CEC program was the first in the country to certify communities as "entrepreneur-ready." According to Chuck Moseley, team leader and representative for Burke's CEC, "The more communities make the effort to promote small-business growth in Western North Carolina the better opportunity we all have for economic recovery. The Certified Entrepreneurial Community program of AdvantageWest is good thing for all of us."

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Good news about Western North Carolina businesses.

[DigitalChalk](#), an Asheville-based online training and technology company, was featured in a recent *Wall Street Journal* article about entrepreneurship and the challenges of the current economy. According to co-founder and CTO Troy Tolle, the company has received interest from numerous venture capitalists, angel investors and banks since publication of the story. [Read the article HERE](#).

[World's Best Carrot Cake](#), a graduate of Blue Ridge Food Ventures, is on a *Huffington Post's* list of gift Ideas. The writer for the popular website claims that World's Best Carrot Cake "is probably the best dessert I have ever eaten" and advocates "choosing gifts that serve a purpose, keep up with our ideals and respect environmental concerns." [Read the article HERE](#).

[FLS Energy](#), a solar energy generation company in Asheville, was one of 10 businesses across the country to receive an inaugural Green Jobs Award. Presented on Nov 16 at a reception in New York City, the award honors innovative private businesses that contribute to the economy and the environment. The award is supported by the Citi Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation. [See more HERE](#).

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Mark your calendar for these upcoming events & opportunities.

Dec 9, 2pm: AdvantageWest Board of Directors Meeting - *AdvantageWest Offices*. Regular bimonthly meeting of the 21-member Board of Directors. Open to the public. Call 828.687-7234 for more information.

Dec 14, 5:30-7:30pm: BREC Forum - *YMI Cultural Center*. Registration now underway. (See details elsewhere in this newsletter.)

Dec 28: 10am-3pm: 5th Annual Homecoming Job Fair - *Biltmore Square Mall, Asheville*. Showcasing

employment opportunities in advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and other growth industries in Western North Carolina. [LEARN MORE 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:

- NC County Tier Designations Announced for 2011: Change in status for Cherokee and Swain.
- Facebook Data Center in WNC: A sample of media coverage and an AdvantageWest photo gallery of the event announcing that Facebook will locate a data center in Rutherford County.
- Radio Podcasts: Hear recent interviews with AdvantageWest staff on area radio stations.
- NC Rural Center Grants: WNC gets nearly \$1.5 million to create jobs and support innovative projects.
- CBS Sunday Morning: Link to a recent segment on the Blue Ridge Mountains of WNC
- USA Today: Travel feature mentions holiday festivities at the Carl Sandburg Home in Henderson County

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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.

AdvantageWest Economic Development Group - 134 Wright Brothers Way - Fletcher, NC 28732 - 828.687.7234

www.advantagewest.com