

FIGHTING FOR EDUCATION

From preschool through graduate school, Congressman Taylor has been successful at securing funding to improve schools, community colleges and universities across Western North Carolina. From training hundreds of teachers how to use the vast resources of the Library of Congress to wiring schools across the region with the latest in broadband technology, Congressman Taylor has worked to improve the quality of education for our most precious resource: our children. Test scores are improving for both our public and homeschooled students, and enrollment levels at institutions, such as Western Carolina University, are at all time highs.

Continued Success for the ERC

In 1997 Congressman Taylor brought together the presidents and chancellors of colleges and universities from across Western North Carolina to form the Education and Research Consortium (ERC). Over the past nine years, under Taylor's direction, this non-profit group has been the catalyst for the creation of hundreds of new jobs, new technologies, and new opportunities for WNC residents.

The goals of the ERC are to help Western North Carolina acquire the technological and educational resources needed to make this region a leader in the new knowledge-based economy. This has included the design and construction of a state of the art, high-speed, fiber-optic network throughout Western North Carolina; the infusion into our schools of millions of dollars in computer and other technology-related resources and the direct training of thousands of teachers in their use; the establishment of math and science teacher training programs; support of innovative programs in health care, biotech research, environmental studies and modeling; and displaced worker retraining initiatives in our colleges and community colleges.

Among its many accomplishments to date, the ERC has:

- ✓ Recruited a weather services firm to WNC, which is slated to bring hundreds of jobs to the area over the next several years.
- ✓ Employed dozens of full-time faculty, instructors and technical assistants in area colleges and universities, and provided part-time employment for many more.
- ✓ Installed and equipped computer centers and distance learning facilities in area colleges and universities.
- ✓ Established in WNC one of the largest fiber-optic Internet centers in North Carolina and tied it directly to "Tier I" cities such as Washington, DC and Atlanta.
- ✓ Created teacher education programs, which have trained thousands of teachers in WNC and which are now being implemented in many other parts of the country.



Congressman Taylor observes local students while discussing education issues with school leaders.

Adventure of the American Mind

Congressman Taylor secured the necessary funding to bring the Adventure of the American Mind education program to Western North Carolina in the fall of 1999, and it has now expanded to many states. The AAM Online Education Program has developed and implemented a series of online lessons for grades 3-12. These self-paced, project-based, multi-disciplinary lessons are suitable for use by classroom teachers and homeschool educators. Homeschool educators may take these lessons from home or from one of the AAM Home School Labs held at 11 colleges and community colleges in Western North Carolina.

To date, almost 4,000 teachers and librarians have been through AAM training workshops and seminars. The lessons include tutorials in basic technology skills, pretest and posttest, and supplemental resources for educators. These materials are available on two web sites, one for classroom educators (www.aamonline.org) and one for homeschool educators (www.aamhomeschool.org).

The North Carolina Arboretum

Rep. Taylor has also secured funding for improvements at the North Carolina Arboretum. An affiliate of the University of North Carolina, the Arboretum is located on the Blue Ridge Parkway. The funds are being used to help the Arboretum develop on-site educational exhibits and educational technology programs, and to develop the Arboretum's educational programming.

A major emphasis of future funding will be the development of performance venues. These spaces will offer cultural opportunities for vacationing families, tourists and local residents. By encouraging more visitation and extended stays in the region, the Arboretum will benefit local businesses and help build Western North Carolina's tourism and creative arts economy.

The Arboretum attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors from all over the world, and the enhancements to the facility will benefit tourism all over the region. The funds are helping to develop the Arboretum as a major economic and educational resource in the western region as well as throughout the state of North Carolina.

Blue Ridge Parkway Update

Construction is now underway on the new Blue Ridge Parkway Destination Center in Asheville. The center, which will be the first of its kind within a national park, will welcome visitors who travel into Western North Carolina along the Blue Ridge Parkway. A variety of interactive exhibits and interpretive technology will help to educate visitors about the natural and cultural heritage of communities along the 469-mile scenic highway. Rep. Taylor secured the federal funding for the nearly 12,000-square foot facility. It will house a 70-seat auditorium, sales area, community and private attraction information, a classroom for visiting school groups, and the headquarters and offices of the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area. The center will be partially staffed by students from colleges and universities in WNC who are studying for tourism-related careers. It is expected to open in late 2007.

The exhibits in the new center will help visitors better understand the unique heritage of the region. The Southern Appalachian mountain communities located along the Blue Ridge Parkway are among the most special places on earth. Visitors who drive the parkway will be able to use the center as a launching point to any number of destinations, from Cherokee, to the Biltmore Estate, to the Great Smoky Mountains Railroad.

Studies show that increasing the amount of time visitors to the Blue Ridge Parkway spend in WNC by just half a day will add nearly one billion dollars a year in tourism-related spending to WNC's economy.

Rep. Taylor participates in the groundbreaking event for the new Blue Ridge Parkway Destination Center. The center is projected to increase tourism spending in WNC by a billion dollars a year.



UNCA Science and Technology

Rep. Taylor is working to secure \$6 million to help equip the new Science and Multimedia Building at UNC Asheville. The new classroom and laboratory building will provide a state-of-the-art facility for teaching, learning and undergraduate research in the fields of chemistry, biology, and multimedia arts and sciences. The new laboratories will complement other science-based teacher training programs such as the Pisgah Forest Institute and new engineering programs, in the Western Carolinas. The improvements at UNCA enhance a bio-informatics network that also includes Western Carolina University, Furman University, Clemson University and UNC Charlotte. The new, high-tech science labs will complement, rather than duplicate, education opportunities that are available at other institutions within the ERC network.



Rep. Taylor and WCU Chancellor John Bardo observe students demonstrating high-tech equipment for which Rep. Taylor obtained funding.

In addition, Rep. Taylor also secured funding to establish NEMAC at UNCA. NEMAC is a national center for the modeling and analysis of environmental data.

Programs such as NEMAC are helping to shape Western North Carolina into one of the premier regions in the nation for economic development in environmental technology. It is also building the weather industry into a core business for the region's economy, as more businesses relocate to WNC to take advantage of the wealth of weather information stored here.

WCU School of Engineering

The first class of students to enroll in the new School of Engineering at Western Carolina University is now midway through the program, and should graduate in two years. Rep. Taylor was instrumental in securing funding for the engineering program because of the impact it will have on Western North Carolina's economic development. Most modern companies must have access to engineering expertise, such as that provided by the professors at Western, as well as an ample pool of student interns and future employees. Existing companies are also benefiting from Western's new programs in electrical and computer engineering. In today's technology-driven economy, engineering is vitally important. It is a key to continuous improvement in the quality of life locally, regionally and statewide; and it is vital to the nation's economic development and to sustaining the nation's security. Maintaining U.S. innovative capacity is heavily dependent upon the recruitment and further educational development of our creative talent in engineering.



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A Special Report from CONGRESSMAN CHARLES TAYLOR

JOB'S ■ HEALTH CARE ■ EDUCATION ■ TECHNOLOGY

Proudly Serving Western North Carolina

"I AM HONORED to be your voice in the United States House of Representatives. My reason for serving you in Congress has always been single-minded—to improve the lives of the people of Western North Carolina. For a region to prosper, education must be the central focus. Many of the federal appropriations I have fought to obtain address the critical workforce issues that face WNC—for those who drive our economy today, as well as tomorrow's new generation of workers. Our region's manufacturing jobs were steadily disappearing due to unfair trade policies, such as NAFTA and CAFTA, which I strongly opposed. Our young people must have good jobs so they can stay here and help this region prosper.

"To remain economically competitive in this changing world, I have fought to provide programs to support emerging high-tech, 'new economy' issues. I support a regional approach to maximize the resources WNC already has and to develop new industries, primarily in the technology sector. Please take a moment to read over the following pages and learn about some of the programs that are making a difference in our mountain economy and creating jobs to ensure a better future. If you have suggestions on any of these programs, or know of any way our office might better serve you, please feel free to contact us with your thoughts and comments."

—CONGRESSMAN CHARLES TAYLOR

Charles H. Taylor
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WORKING FOR WNC JOBS

Securing Jobs & Strengthening Our Nation's Defense

Earlier this year, Congressman Charles Taylor announced funding for an innovative defense project in Western North Carolina. The \$2.6 million earmark was awarded to 3TEX—a Rutherford County company—for research and development of defense-related products. 3TEX is currently developing and manufacturing lightweight structural composite armor for blast and ballistic protection. Not only will the new funding help to develop life-saving equipment to aid the U.S. military in the war on terror, it will also create hundreds of new jobs in our hard-hit textiles region.

The appropriations earmark will allow 3TEX to develop a lightweight armor to protect soldiers and vehicles from the threat of explosions. Many of the add-on armor solutions currently available add significant weight to the vehicles, which slows down performance. The armor developed by 3TEX can also be used to protect buildings. This work will also mean other companies will relocate to our region, in turn creating even more new jobs.



Congressman Taylor tours a local factory in an effort to better understand the needs of WNC businesses. Because of knowledge gained from meetings such as this, Taylor is able to secure much-needed federal funds and contracts for local businesses and projects.

Taylor Helps Build Global Trade

In an effort to build global trade, Rep. Taylor obtained funding in 2005 to create the International Trade and Small Business Institute, bringing together the schools of business at seven colleges and universities in Western North Carolina. The Institute's mission is to encourage a trade relationship that benefits both local businesses and developing capitalist economies in Russia, Eastern Europe, the Middle East and Africa. The first group of Russian students to be accepted to the Institute just finished a year of business training at the member colleges. Upon their return to Russia, they will use the training to develop small businesses, and then build trade programs with WNC companies. The participating schools in the International Trade and Small Business Institute are Brevard College, Montreat, Gardner-Webb, Appalachian State University, UNC Asheville, Mars Hill College and Western Carolina University.

PARI

Rep. Taylor also secured \$3 million for UNCA's Pisgah Astronomical Research and Science Education Center to improve radio and optical astronomy equipment at the Pisgah Astronomical Research Institute (PARI) near Rosman. Students and faculty members from the 16 University of North Carolina campuses have opportunities for hands-on radio astronomy research at PARI that are not available anywhere else in the nation.

The funds are being used to make significant improvements to the instrumentation for PARI's 26-meter radio telescopes. Pre-college through post-graduate students have opportunities to work and learn with full-time and visiting astronomers at PARI. Additional access is provided on a remote basis, through the Internet, to grades K-12 and the public.

Help for WNC Farmers

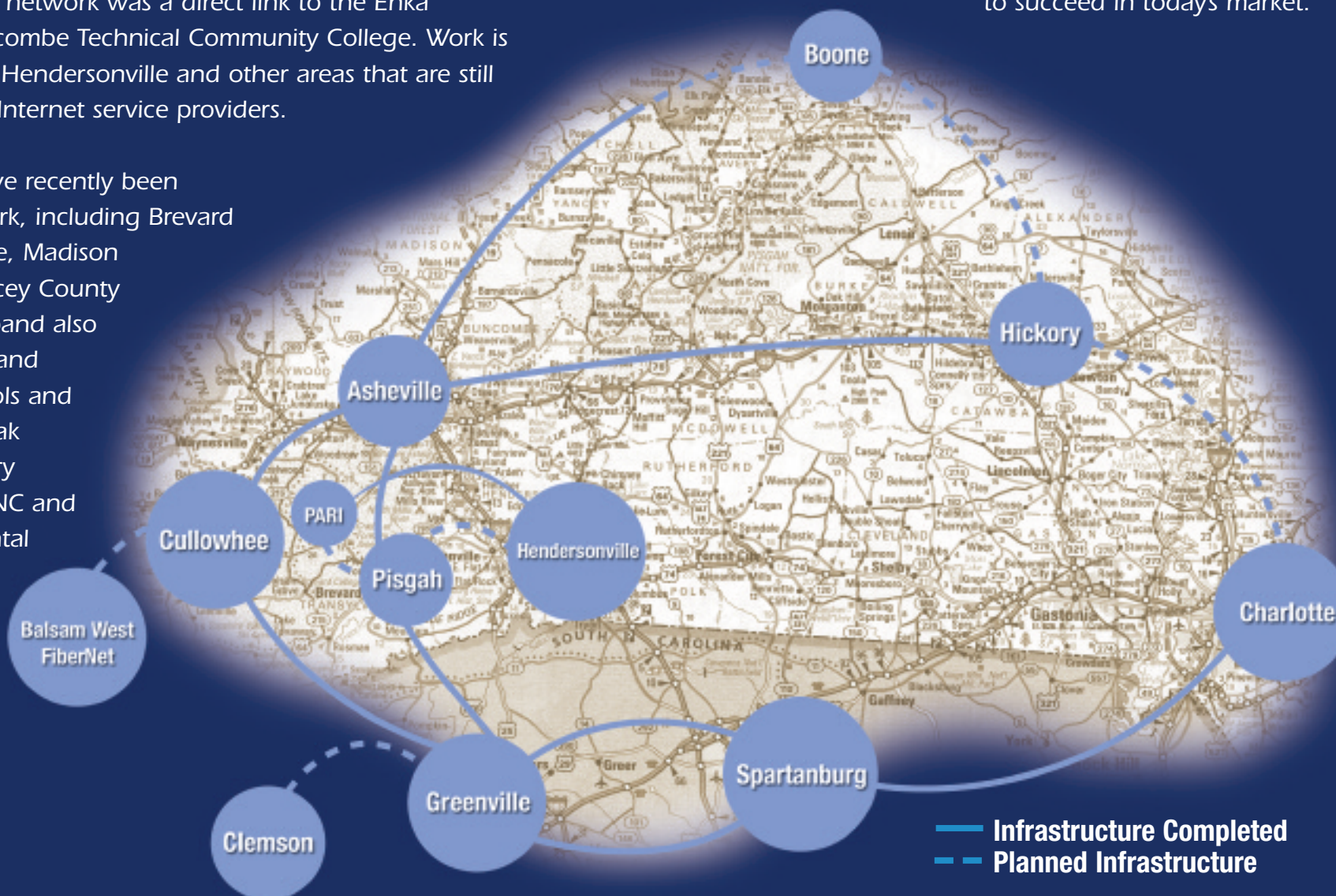
Earlier this year, Rep. Taylor secured \$1,000,000 to help create agriculture and other support jobs in Western North Carolina. These funds are a tremendous incentive to some of our mountain tobacco farmers who are looking for alternative crops. The funds will be the catalyst to create new jobs both here in WNC and statewide.

Congressman Taylor: Helping Connect Western North Carolina

The Education and Research Consortium now has nine broadband operational Points of Presence (PoPs) in Western North Carolina and Upstate South Carolina. The seven PoPs in WNC are located in Asheville, Burnsville, Charlotte, Cullowhee, Marshall, Pisgah Forest and Waynesville. The ERC network includes two rings in Asheville, with a third ring currently under construction. The most recent addition to the ERC fiber network was a direct link to the Enka campus of Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College. Work is now underway to reach Hendersonville and other areas that are still underserved by existing Internet service providers.

Several WNC schools have recently been added to the ERC network, including Brevard College, Mars Hill College, Madison County Schools and Yancey County Schools. The ERC Broadband also serves the Asheville City and Buncombe County schools and plays a key role in the Oak Ridge National Laboratory projects underway in WNC and the National Environmental Modeling and Analysis Center at UNC-Asheville.

In addition to the fiber network, ERC Broadband has developed a range of offerings, including disaster recovery, co-location, and high performance computing. ERC Broadband is one of only four authorized providers of the National Weather Service's NEXRAD Level II weather data. All of these services allow ERC Broadband to provide WNC with the technological infrastructure to succeed in today's market.



"In late 1997, when we announced the formation of the Education and Research Consortium, I compared the importance of bringing broadband Internet access to Western North Carolina to the construction of the railroads and interstate highways during the last century. Today we are seeing the tremendous results that our broadband network is having on every facet of life in our region, from education, to health care, to the economy. Many people have contributed to these accomplishments, but we still have a lot of work to do."

—Congressman Charles Taylor

IMPROVING HEALTH CARE

By investing our resources wisely, Western North Carolina's health care industry is shaping up to be one of the finest of any rural area in the country. Congressman Taylor has successfully secured tens of millions of dollars for new construction, life-saving equipment, and programs such as Hospice. This investment has brought a higher level and better quality of health care to our region, along with many high-paying jobs.

Taylor Secures \$2.5 Million in Federal Funds for WNC Data Link

When patients need immediate health care, determining their medical history can take critically needed time. Western North Carolina is at the forefront of creating an integrated approach to health care, thanks to \$2.5 million in federal grants Congressman Taylor helped secure to start the WNC Data Link. This innovative solution is the first regional health information organization in North Carolina and one of the largest in North America. Four hospitals, Angel Medical Center, Haywood Regional Medical Center, Rutherford Hospital and Transylvania Community Hospital, are currently connected. A total of 16 hospitals are scheduled to be linked to the system in the coming months.

This high-tech system allows participating doctors to quickly, easily and securely access patient information over the Internet in seconds. Access to this information will allow participating hospitals to view patient records so they can more accurately and efficiently provide treatment and avoid duplication of costly tests.

With a total of 85,000 hospital inpatient stays and 1.5 million outpatient visits in this region last year, this innovative new network will result in reduced wait times, improve the accuracy and effectiveness of treatment, and help make patient care more affordable. In the coming months, additional hospitals, physicians' offices and clinics will be integrated into the system so more and more residents can reap the benefits of this innovative solution.



Congressman Taylor discusses health care issues facing Western North Carolina with local officials.

Opportunities 2006, Making Dollars and Sense Selling to Government Agencies

In March, Congressman Taylor hosted the seventh bi-annual Opportunities trade show. This regional "reverse trade show" allows small businesses the opportunity to meet contracting officers from more than 60 federal, state and local government agencies and prime contractors. Nearly 600 small business owners, mostly from North and South Carolina, attended this year—the largest crowd ever to attend an Opportunities trade show. Two businesses were awarded on the spot government contracts. Many more small businesses will be awarded contracts as a result of this trade fair.



Congressman Taylor presents an award to a Haywood County company for creating new jobs through government contracts.

Asheville VA Medical Center Plan

Since 1991, Rep. Taylor has secured \$75 million in funding to renovate the Asheville VA Medical Center. The improvements have turned an aging hospital that was in danger of being closed into one of the finest medical centers for veterans in the entire country.

New VA Medical Clinic in Franklin

In June, Rep. Taylor announced the approval of a new Community Based Outpatient Clinic to provide much-needed medical care to veterans west of Asheville. The new clinic will be located in Franklin and is part of a comprehensive plan to modernize health care facilities in Western North Carolina. The clinic will provide both primary care and mental health services to an estimated 3,200 veterans each year, allowing them to receive care much closer to where they live without having to make the long trip to Asheville every time they need to see a doctor. The new clinic will serve as an extension of the existing VA Medical Center in Asheville that already provides highly specialized care to WNC veterans.