

# Rapid Responders' e-Bulletin

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE  
DIVISION OF WORKFORCE  
SOLUTIONS RAPID  
RESPONSE TEAM

JUNE 2015

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- ◆ Greensboro/High Point/Guilford County responds to Kmart
- ◆ 2nd Quarterly Rapid Response Best Practices Webinar



**JUNE 14  
COMMEMORATES  
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ANNIVERSARY  
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FLAG IN 1777.**

## Davidson Works Leads Community Response for Councill Furniture

Councill Company LLC based in Denton manufactures and sells handmade wood and upholstered furnishings for residential, hospitality and commercial interiors. Earlier this year, Councill announced the closure of its complete operation which would adversely impact 113 workers, due to its acquisition by Century Furniture in Hickory. Layoffs began on May 15 and will continue through August of this year. An initial rapid response meeting was held with the state and Davidson Works rapid response teams and Councill Company officials on March 24.

Although the small Davidson county town of Denton only has a population of 1,650 at last census, the community support for the Councill layoff was enormous, primarily due to the efforts of the local Wesleyan Church which partnered with the Davidson Works team to provide assistance to the company and its workers. The Davidson Works team hosted three employee orientation sessions at Councill plants on Friday, April 17. The church held job search assistance sessions facilitated by its "Geek Squad" on April 15 and 18. The tech savvy group provided guidance on computer usage, resume development and interview skills. The Wesleyan Church also offered local meeting space for Davidson Works rapid response sponsored workshops and services so that they could be held in the community, as a supplement to the classes and resources available at the local NCWorks Career Centers in near-by Lexington and Thomasville.



*Photo:  
A group of proud Councill  
Company workers at Plant 1*

In addition to a community job fair held at the Wesleyan Church on April 19, Councill human resources staff and the Davidson Works team partnered to host a job fair at the Councill site on April 24. Beverages and snacks were available and many useful promotional items were provided by participating employers. Local area hiring employers represented included: Atrium Windows and Doors, Klaussner Furniture, Ashley Furniture, IE Furniture, CID Attachments, Whitewood Furniture, GCA Services, (Contractor for PPG) Zepsa Architectural Woodwork, Endura Products, Marsh Furniture, Fastenal, Mega Force Staffing, Carolina Drawers, Leggett and Platt and Tadlewood Manufacturing. Local businesses, Montgomery Insurance and First Bank assisted workers with insurance needs and addressed financial planning questions. Cris Waugh, NCWorks Thomasville Career Center Manager and Wanda Montgomery, Career Development Coordinator, met with workers at the job fair to promote the services available at the local career centers.

The job fair was well attended and workers left with great enthusiasm and optimism, having received many promising job leads from the employers they had met. The employers attested to the quality of the Councill workers in attendance and said that their time was well spent.

"We never like to have layoffs in Davidson County, but the outpouring of support from Councill Furniture's management team, NCWorks partners, and the community at large has been incredible. The amount of caring and willingness to help has turned what could have

**N.C. STATS:****WARN NOTICES  
RECEIVED**

For Program Year 2014, the State Dislocated Worker Unit received a total of 78 WARN notifications covering 9,467 NC workers thus far.



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been a hardship into new opportunities for many affected Council employees.” said Pam Walton, Workforce Board Director, Davidson Works.

The local rapid response team in partnership with the Council Company Human Resources department and the Denton Wesleyan Church are commended for their strong commitment to the Council workers and an excellent service strategy which prepared them for the transition to new employment.

### **Greensboro/High Point/Guilford County Responds to Kmart**

On January 6 the Sears Holdings Corporation announced the permanent closure of its Kmart distribution center in Greensboro which would adversely impact 130 workers. The decision to close the Guilford county operation on April 10 was made due to a company consolidation of its distribution functions into facilities in Florida, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Illinois. The Greensboro/High Point/Guilford County Workforce Development Board rapid response team quickly sprang into action by hosting a meeting with company officials and union representatives to orient them to the services available through the Workforce Investment Act Dislocated Worker program and NCWorks Career Centers.

An employee service strategy soon followed beginning with two on site employee orientation sessions on March 5. Resume writing and interview skills workshops were held on March 11 and 18 at the Guilford Technical Community College Greensboro campus. A job fair was held at the distribution center on March 25 from 1:00 to 4:00 PM and featured a number of companies with current job vacancies including: FedEx Ground, Caffey Distribution, O’Reilly Distribution, Liberty Hardware Manufacturing, RHA Health Services, AT&T Staffing, TRC Staffing, Graham Staffing, Mega Staffing, Workforce Unlimited and Manpower Inc. Workforce and community partners were also represented including the Greensboro local Division of Workforce Solutions office, Guilford Technical Community College and the NC Foreclosure Prevention Fund. The hiring event drew a crowd of over 70 workers. The company offered severance packages to departing workers as well as COBRA continuation for medical benefits.

According to the Kmart Distribution Center Human Resources Manager, the feedback from the employees was very favorable and they were pleased and thankful for the services and assistance provided. “The rapid response team helped them out tremendously by developing and executing services to employees.” said Keith Lipscomb, Business Services Manager for the Greensboro/High Point/Guilford County Workforce Development Board, “In addition to assisting employers with ongoing economic development strategies, we are here to respond to the needs of employers who are downsizing/closing and their employees experiencing job loss. In doing so, we strongly encourage workers to engage in the services available at local NCWorks Career Centers. We see our rapid response initiatives and service strategies as an introduction to the full realm of services available at our centers.” The Board would like to thank the Kmart Distribution Center human resources managers and local union representative for their time and full support in working with us to provide and accomplish these services.”

The local rapid response team is commended for their service to this employer and their support of the statewide NCWorks Career Center system.

### **Upcoming Best Practices Webinar Focuses on Automotive Industry**

The second quarterly webinar in the 2015 Rapid Response Best Practices series: *Best Practices for Serving Dislocated Workers: A Hiring Manager Perspective*, will feature Vail Carter, Business Services Coordinator, Centralina Workforce Development Board, and a panel of employers from the automotive industry who will share the critical technical and soft skill needs of this industry, provide interview tips and answer questions from the audience. The live webinar will be held on Wednesday, June 17, from 1:30 to 2:30 PM. To register, click here: <http://www.ncworkforcetraining.com/>.



*Photo: Kmart workers meet with hiring employers at job fair in Greensboro on March 25.*