

## TRANSCRIPT

**SCRC Series:** Kannapolis Documentation Project

**Field Notes:** Myra Beatty (compiled April 25, 2008)

**Interviewee:** Myra Beatty

**Interviewer:** Chad Morgan

**Interview Date:** Thursday, April 17, 2008

**Location:** Department of Commerce offices, Chapanoke Road, Raleigh, NC

CM: We're recording um, this is ah, Chad Morgan I'm here with Myra Beatty. It's the 17<sup>th</sup> of April, 2008 um, and we're at the Department of Commerce on ah, Chapanoke Road in Raleigh. Um, first of all I'd like you, I'd like to thank you so much for agreeing to talk with you and I'd like you to start off by talking a little bit about your background um, you know where you're from ah, your professional background and how you came to this ah, post.

MB: Okay, um, again I am Myra Allen Beatty and I am the workforce policy associate um, currently providing oversight to community service um, as well as what in house we call special projects which is really just expanded rapid response services and we'll talk a little about what expand rapid response means a little later. Um, I bring twenty one years of um, service to the State of North Carolina specifically in workforce development. I started my career as a workforce development educator where um, I was charged initially to teach pre-employment skills to high school students um, now they're categorized as in school (CM: Uh, huh) ah, as well as out of school you ah, youth. Um, that means you know to I think the lay person um, outside of giving them some very basic interview um, basic mathematic, reading skills to ready them for the world of work I also operated um, something at that time that we call try out employment and summer youth employment opportunities. And so that's where my career um, started um, somewhere in that process I became president of the state's only Employment in Training Association. Um, went to work at a regional office in New Bern, North Carolina. Our state is set up in twenty four local workforce development boards and at that time um, I worked in what was known as the Neuse River Council of Government. Today it's known as Eastern Carolina Workforce Development Board and I was hired to be um, the assessment center supervisor. Um, the laws had changed from JTPA to Workforce Investment Act and um, as it was changing one of the things that um, the country was looking at was having an objective assessment of all clients ah, whether they were youth, disadvantaged adults or dislocated worker. Um, moved from that position to a program management position with one of the other um, twenty four ah, workforce development boards at that time and to, to this day it's known as Capital Area. Capital Area um, had **??02M 46SEC** over Harnett County, Wake County and Johnston County (CM: Okay) and so what I did was pretty much just set up the contracts um, for those persons who were actually operating programs (CM: Uh, huh) for youth um, adult disadvantage offenders, Native Americans and dislocated workers. Left that position, went to work with the State Department of Public Instruction as their um, coordinator for JTPA Youth Services and ah, worked in that position probably about two or three years. We'll fast forward to coming back to the

Department of Commerce and Workforce Development um, was hired to work as a ah, rapid response field representative and probably about a year of coming to the Department of Commerce I was asked to take the position as the governor's rapid response team coordinator. Um, and that is about where I was and exactly really where I was with the Pillowtex experience. Um, and I say experience because there were so many lessons to be learned um, from Pillowtex and, and ongoing lesson that actually apply back to the work that I do today.

CM: And I wondered if you could talk a little about what some of those lessons ah, were?

MB: During the Pillowtex ex, or prior to the Pillowtex experience I think um, we, I know that we focused more on um, services that the Workforce Investment Act or at that time NAFTA (CM: Uh, huh) um, programs could offer which **??04M 21SEC** tuition assistance, there were some supportive services that could be applied to individuals while they were in pursuit of um, retraining opportunities. Um, and those supportive services were very limited to transportation and maybe some child care um, supplements. The average rapid response um, meeting and the rapid response meeting and we'll talk about the difference between rapid response and employee orientation as, as we go along but the average rapid response meeting um, encompassed myself (CM: Okay), our local um, employment security manager for that particular town or area, the local ah, workforce development board director and sometimes on occasion um, a representative from continuing education (CM: Okay) from the Department of Community Colleges. We did not have at the table but always brought information about um, opportunities to link with um, or possible opportunities to link with community based organizations, faith based organizations but at that time they were not necessarily a part of what we call our rapid response. Um, typically when, when we go into a rapid response meeting we're data gathering much like what you're you know doing today. Prior to going we always send out um, something I would call ah, request for demographic information (CM: Okay). Um, that tells you everything from the average age of employees to the average wage of the hourly employees to the average wage of the salaried employees, the type of work um, that these individuals did and a given work place. Um, how many you know tool and die people if, if we were talking about that type of organization are actually gonna be affected by this lay off or this particular plant ah, closure. How many accountants on the admin or management side are you know going to be effected? And what's you know what particular programs are these individuals familiar with? And it was, it is always good information, it was great information to have about individuals then and I guess where I'm going with this is that at that time we seemed to be you know more focused on just the straight line what you know information we had to have for our specific programs (CM: Right). Not looking at the broader um, picture that an individual that's being displaced needs a lot of (CM: Uh, huh) supportive services to get them to the point where they're (CM: Right), they're comfortable going through this educational retraining process.

CM: Right, so um, obviously you have a lot of sort of experience in these rapid response missions (MB: Uh, huh). Um, I wondered if you could talk about ah, what was sort of

peculiar about the, ah, Kannapolis rapid response report um, how was it similar to what had gone before and how was (MB: Uh, huh) it something new?

MB: Well, actually um, the Pillowtex um, the group at, at Pillowtex there's was a young lady named um, Janet Earnhardt (CM: Okay) who was an individual that was I guess best um, titled if memory serves a regional HR coordinator. She and I had established ah, what I think ah, (CM: And she ah, she worked for the Department of Commerce?) no, she worked for Pillowtex (CM: Oh, okay, okay, okay) okay, I work for the Department of Commerce (CM: Yeah, yeah I ??07M 55SEC) she and I had established um, um, a really good working rapport. Um, Pillowtex prior to this um, whenever they were going to shut down a facility um, do a mass lay off followed the law by um, submitting what is known as warn um, notice and a warn notice um, typically is or really is a notification to the state local government as well as to the employees. It is required by law for companies um, that employ five hundred individuals or more and a third of the workforce is going to be affected by this action. Um, and so they in the past had always you know done that (CM: Uh, huh). Um, as the coordinator um, governor's rapid response team coordinator because I worked so many cases with Pillowtex I think um, Jan felt let me give Myra a call because you know there's, there's something is gonna happen here that her, she and her team all as good as may think they are have never experienced before. Our initial dialog was about a possible displacement of twelve hundred individuals. So many were gonna come from ah, the Kannapolis, Rowan County area, so many were gonna come from the Rowan County area.

CM: And about what, what's the time frame when you're hearing this?

MB: Um, somewhere towards the latter part of April 2, because the event actually occurred in July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2003 rather than 2004 um, by 2004 we were well into our, our retraining efforts. Um, so somewhere towards the latter end of April or around the first of May (CM: Okay). Um, and again um, when she began, when she began this dialog with me we were actually looking at a possibility of this occurring um, no earlier than August (CM: Uh, huh) of that year based on the information that had been you know passed to her as their regional HR coordinator. (CM: Okay) And um, she was exactly right um, we had probably at that point in time the largest lay off ah, plant closure that we'd done might have effected eight hundred individuals and that was over in Harnett County ah, a group called Swift Denim (CM: Okay). I don't know if you are familiar ah, with that company or not (CM: No) but um, I would say if you had on blue jeans the material or if you had some blue jeans that maybe ten years old (CM: Yeah) the material ah, that those (CM: Came from there), those jeans were made from probably came from Swift Denim. They were the suppliers for Levi ah, Strauss, they were the suppliers for Wrangler ah, Lee Jeans ah, all the, you know ready (CM: Yeah) access ah, materials um, that ah, the common man wears (CM: Uh, huh) now I don't know where designer denim came from. It could have been Swift Denim as well but prior to that that was the largest lay off (CM: Okay) um, that we had and we leveraged um, a number of, of resources just as we did ah, with Pillowtex (CM: Okay) um, towards those individuals. So she was right in her assumption that ah, twelve hundred individuals I might need to give her a call (CM: Right) because this is you know this is something big. This is something um, that's

coming. And that afternoon I remember um, calling um, our executive director Roger Shackford and um, prior to that time I had as a ah, I think many employees you know when a new executive director is coming (CM: Uh, huh) on you want to show your wares (CM: Right) and I had um, extended an invitation or two to Roger to accompany me or accompany members of my teams to rapid response meetings and he has ah, preview over (CM: Uh, huh), over all of the workforce investment act initiatives and at that time I think he was also managing some policy and research people um, for the Department of Commerce and you know had, had his hands filled. So this, this is not a, a dig ah, towards him but prior to that time his schedule would not allow him (CM: Right) to accompany me (CM: Sure). And so I called him ah, that afternoon and said um, Roger um, how, how it's going? Oh, it's pretty good, this is a Friday ah, it's, it's going pretty good, how are things with you, Myra? I know that you and your team are working hard because I get the reports you know it seems like I'm getting a report every week and I was like yeah, you, you're getting probably an average at that point of about five (CM: Uh, huh) um, every week and I said well, I've got a bit of information for you. And he said um, what's that? And I told him that I had heard from Jan Earnhardt um, identified who she was and that ah, we were possibly looking at one of the largest single lay offs (CM: Uh, huh) um, at that point the discussion you know went from you know um, exactly how many people? And we were talking then about twelve hundred um, they were at that point I think really thinking that they would close the Rockingham facility but um, be able to salvage what was you know what available in Rowan and, and Cabarrus in Kannapolis (CM: Uh, huh, right) um, North Carolina. And I told him I said on Monday I think I'd like to meet with you um, and talk about you know what our approach will be (CM: Uh, huh) and um, told him to have a good weekend. And he was saying he, he, his ah, reaction to me was have a good weekend? I said yeah, have a good weekend. You know and not to sound cold or anything like that but after, at that point I had been ah, through the beginning of ah, what I knew I mean you know was the beginning of the downsizing of furniture. I have been through tobacco and this was (CM: This was just the latest thing) this was the latest thing. Textiles were you know really the latest thing ah, to come around the, the pike and it's, it's just like any other job um, that you do when you first start doing it ah, it has an you know an effect on you (CM: Uh, huh). Um, one of the effects that working as rapid response team coordinator had on me was ah, I began to grind my teeth. I, I wear a mouth guard to this day and I thought I was doing a pretty good job of you know leaving work at work (CM: Uh, huh) and then when you know when you go home ah, you shut it down. Ah, unlike other jobs or some jobs where you really can do that it really does and I've, I've learned that over the years it really does kind of stay with you. By that Monday I had made a phone call to Helen Parker (CM: Okay) who is the regional administrator of um, the Employment and Training Administration US Department of Labor in Atlanta and um, made her aware that um, this conversation had occurred that I would be meeting with Roger later in that day. Um, and certainly wanted to have a conference call (CM: Uh, huh) because ah, ah, I felt like you know they're giving us this heads up (CM: Uh, huh) I just got a feeling that it's gonna be a little bit more than what either Janice is saying to me or more than what you know (CM: What made you have feeling? Was it just the sort of way things were going or you just had ah) well, prior to that phone call ah, what was interesting was I had gone over to Rocky Mount closed a facility. I had gone ah, I want to say somewhere between

here and Pender County or Wilson and Pender County and closed a facility (CM: Uh, huh). Um, I had closed you know Plant One (CM: Uh, huh, right, so it, everything just seemed to be going that way) yeah, the indicators just weren't good for this is just gonna exist forever. (CM: Right) Um, so I, I did have a gut feeling that it's gonna be more than what they said (CM: Right) um, you know what was being said. Plus the fact I mean everything else, the smaller companies Pillowtex was the, the largest textile company that the state had (CM: Uh, huh) and the smaller companies, the mom and pop, the hosiery companies (CM: Yeah) you know were, were cutting back and, and closing facilities and you know you're I mean I think somewhere, I know somewhere in that process um, I did a rapid response for a group called US Labels (CM: Okay). And the US Label people um, just so you'll know probably were the people that prior to this year made that little Columbia tag (CM: Oh, okay) on your shirt. (CM: Alright) They would make the tags that say small, medium, large or (CM: Right) you know actual clothing um, sizes. Those folks went out of business (CM: Uh, huh). They have been in business in this state for over sixty, seventy years (CM: Right). So what does that tell you? You know um, they weren't just making labels for clothes (CM: Right) they made labels um, you know the label that on your mattress that says do not remove? (CM: Right) Ah, they make those you know the labels on ah, the back of the towels that you buy at, at JC Penny's (CM: Uh, huh) that these folks (CM: Right) you know were actually producing um, at Pillowtex and so I'd seen so many trends (CM: Uh, huh) that just said to me it's gonna be bigger than this (CM: Right). That May we were about to embark on um, something that actually occurs every year. We have something that we call the region um, in the region um, and the region is defined by North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Tennessee, Kentucky um, am I leaving anybody out? I don't think so (CM: Okay) um, at any rate the in this region Alabama, they wouldn't like that ah, um, at any rate in this regional forum we would have a, a once a year what we call dislocated worker trade round table (CM: Okay) and as a region we would come together and talk about the types of lay offs that were occurring. The types of rapid response um, services um, that we were deploying and you know tried to as a region reshape the delivery system. And so that particular year in May um, we had scheduled ah, a meeting down in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. I contacted Jan and um, a guy named Don Mallow (CM: Uh, huh) who was the corporate vice president of HR for Pillowtex (CM: Uh, huh) and offered them an opportunity to come and meet with me as well as my state level you know counterparts, partners (CM: Uh, huh) my regional administrator and my executive director and I offered them that opportunity because I think um, well for, for a number of reasons. Um, they had not filed a warn notice, you are talking about ah, organization that was represented by **??19M 34SEC** and so technically I couldn't come on that campus and have a meeting with him (CM: Right) or you know without labor being present and it bringing ah, you know the idea of a warn notice. But I had to find a way for my system (CM: Uh, huh) to begin to ready itself (CM: Right). And so they agreed and you know tell me Myra hey, we appreciate you know the opportunity to do this. You've always done really good work for us um, you make sure the dollars are there. Um a part of rapid response is one of our responsibilities is to assist companies um, in filing for um, the trade and at that time NAFTA (CM: Uh, huh) benefits and we actually you know sit down with them and tell them what needs to go in that application. And we're pretty good at it because North Carolina is second um, in the country ah, with the number of

trade petitions that are actually filed and approved and that all starts in the rapid response process. But ah, fast forwarding back to um, that meeting Don came and it, it had grown from ah, twelve hundred (CM: Uh, huh) to maybe now it's gonna be a couple of thousand (CM: Uh, huh). Um, here's what we, what we learned that was significant. We learned that Pillowtex ah, was a self insured organization that while they felt that they would be able to offer COBRA um, once employees had been released of, of service that it would be time limited and they weren't really certain at that time if they were going to be able to do as they had done in the past in terms of their lay off pattern. Typically what they had done was lay off in, in waves (CM: Uh, huh). It might have been two hundred people displaced um, this week. Three weeks later another four hundred, three weeks later until you hit you know the, the targeted goal. Um, Don did say to us at that time that their, he felt that there were some structural organizational um, efforts ah, restructuring and organizational efforts going on with the company meaning that they were in pursuit of trying to find um, a buyer (CM: Uh, huh) ah, for those facilities and that's why he was tabling it with ah, probably it would be about two thousand um, individuals affected. So we thanked him (CM: Uh, huh) ah, for coming and then we sat around um, this table and began to think about um, the services that we historically had offered, the **??22M 26SEC** the services we needed to offer and ah, the caveat of new services being introduced. November ah, 2002 the trade program had significantly changed. Um, it changed by um, adding ATAA which is a component that serves individuals that are fifty years old or older (CM: Okay) by providing them um, wage supplement if they choose to go back to work. It had also changed because something because called the health coverage tax credit was being introduced which is an opportunity for those people who are trade affected to secure insurance either through their own effort or through ah, COBRA offered you know by the (CM: Uh, huh) an employer um, or private insurance that they, they see. Well this health coverage tax credit um, sounded you know pretty good. They were talking about paying up to sixty five percent of an individuals premium cost and so we were you know kind of welcoming that. That was something that historically ah, as we did this work of serving dislocated workers and the rapid response process um, was always our number one you know concern. It was the number one thing outside of income support that's what everybody wants to hear about first you know how much (CM: Right) **??23M 53SEC** benefit am I gonna receive? The next question is what about my health benefits (CM: Uh, huh) then you know the third question um, particularly you know when you're dealing with um, a population that may be between age range twenty and thirty five what about you know child care supplements (CM: Uh, huh) um, and then you know they begin to look at transportation assistance and then probably sixth on the line is I need to retrain. And there was ah, a period when I started doing this in '99 um, that individuals weren't necessarily interested in the retraining piece (CM: Uh, huh) and it was largely because um, lay offs were occurring but companies weren't closing (CM: Right). So you could literally go down the street (CM: Uh, huh) and take that same skill set (CM: Uh, huh) and be employed somewhere else (CM: There were other textile mills, okay). Right, by the time this Pillowtex thing occurs (CM: Uh, huh) there are no more (CM: Right) you know options and individuals are, are you know clearly um, very aware that there are no more options. Um, going back to the health coverage tax credit, we knew it was a good idea but the way that the law was written anybody that would benefit from it had to wait until they filed taxes to get that sixty five percent credit. So they'd

have to come out their pocket (CM: Uh, huh) with the entire premium um, payment. We approached ??25M 28SEC and said there has to be something that we can do about this that's different (CM: Uh, huh). If an individual you know if, if the law says that the federal government can cover sixty five percent can't we cover that immediately? (CM: Uh, huh) And the answer that came back was yeah, you can. Um, we wrote what we now call the health coverage tax credit bridge plan (CM: Okay) and it's where individuals in that rapid response employee orientation process can actually access um, sixty five percent they pay thirty five percent and then we pay the other sixty five percent for up to three months while their application is being processed um, through ??26M 20-22SEC is a company that the IRS has contracted with to run that (CM: Uh, huh) the health coverage tax credit advance payment piece (CM: Okay). Um, all those things were happening. Now the thing that was interesting about Pillowtex was that you had some people who were gonna be covered by a petition that was filed under NAFTA (CM: Uh, huh) that says you have a year to get your education and training done. Then you had another group of people who were still at work that were gonna be covered by this new petition under trade (CM: UH, huh) that said you have two years (CM: Okay) to get this education piece done. Now whether it was a year or two years you had income support extended um, benefits the TRA piece you know attached (CM: Okay). The people that had a year the health coverage tax credit benefit did not apply to so it was, it was like walking a tight rope so to speak um (CM: You, you had to work with a couple of different circumstances that these people) you worked with, you worked with a lot of different circumstances (CM: Okay). Um, we, we met with them, the state insurance ah, commissioner and, and his staff you know and trying to set up how this health coverage tax credit bridge map was gonna, gonna roll. Um, I have to say I bought into the commercial and ah, I just had this thing that was stuck in my mind that Blue Cross Blue Shield had out ah, on the market um, and they talked, they had this guy that was in the commercial that said I'm thirty five years old, I get insurance for three hundred you know dollars a month (CM: Uh, huh) whatever I don't, you know maybe he's paying thirty six dollars a month. Maybe the (CM: Right) the annual premium was three hundred I'm not really sure. But I had this in my mind that you know how difficult (CM: Right) can this be? By the time we finished that series of meetings which you know spread over probably every other day for about three weeks to get this thing set up I felt like I was able to go out and sell insurance. I had a, a whole different you know sense of appreciation for insurance and how premiums are assessed. Um, I had to think about things you know from the perspective of the people that this program was actually designed to serve (CM: Uh, huh). I had to think about that information you know earlier we talked about the request for demographic information (CM: Uh, huh). Average age of individuals that was affected by the Pillowtex lay off was forty seven (CM: Uh, huh). Right now being forty seven it is a very surreal conversation that we're having. I think you know it's moot point to say that the older an individual becomes that is that population that is the biggest user of um, the medical system and the insurance system (CM: Uh, huh). The younger you are, the healthier you are, the more invincible you know you believe you are the less likely you really are gonna you know to do more than maybe an annual (CM: Right) you know check up and probably somebody's gonna have to encourage you um, to do that. But as you age and as you encounter different health issues that premium cost and charge increases (CM: Uh, huh) and God forbid you had

you know cancer (CM: Right) three or four years ago. Yours was astronomical. (CM: Yeah) So as we sat around that table the ad that Blue Cross Blue Shield who by the way was the, the entity that supported the state's health coverage tax credit bridge plan and will be the entity that will support um, the state's at risk insurance from this point forward. They began to tell us that there were gonna be very few people that um, a monthly premium of three hundred dollars were gonna cover (CM: Uh, huh). That and we began to hear about um, individuals that would, could yes benefit from this who's premium costs were gonna be eight thousand dollars a month (CM: Wow).

CM: So um, how do you deal with that?

MB: You pay the sixty five percent (CM: Okay). When the, when the individual pays can come up with the thirty five percent and some of them couldn't (CM: Uh, huh) um, but some families, some of those faith based organizations which I hope we'll have an opportunity to talk about before you leave um, stepped up to the plate (CM: Sure) and made those, those premium payments for those individuals.

CM: So we're talking, when you talk about faith based organizations like Cooperative Christian Ministry is an example of this?

MB: That's an example of that, foundations ah, for the community based foundations of the Carolinas um, lots of you know private um, who I'm sure would like to remain anonymous (CM: Okay) ah, philanthropist (CM: Okay) type individuals fed money ah, into you know into pools um, to assess these you know assist these individuals (CM: Uh, huh). Um, and I mean I don't obviously I work for the state I don't know what it's like to be a millionaire. I thought maybe this morning I'd have that opportunity but I saw I didn't win the Powerball um, I hope that if (CM: That, that wouldn't have affected whether you did this interview right?) ah, it might have slightly (CM: If you won, if you were a millionaire this morning I might not have ah) it might have slightly. Um, you know maybe I would have phoned it in (CM: Okay) but, but I, you know I say that to say I hope that I, if I you know something if I were ever that you know financially blessed that I would think about something outside of me, my individual family ah, or the things that you know I, that I have great passion for and try to find situations like this um, to assist (CM: Uh, huh) the individual. Because a lot you know and, I, I think that's the story that um, might be untold um, how many entities, foundations, companies ah, you know how many organizations came together ah, under one roof (CM: Uh, huh) to say what can I do you know and how do we get this done? (CM: Uh, huh) Um, and it, it was, it was a change that was occurring as we approached rapid response. After Pillowtex we could no longer just have those three **??33M 19SEC** entities (CM: Uh, huh) um, ESC, um, Department of Community Colleges (CM: Uh, huh), the rapid response coordinator and the local workforce development board you know coordinator attacking and approaching this thing. We could never, no longer sit back in our individual offices and just think about what our dollars could do. We had to begin to think about how we leverage resources (CM: Uh, huh) you know to attack um, the situation. How we include faith based and community based um, entities. United Way absolute hero um, of the day. You know there were things that I can't say you know that none of that group ever

thought of but you know if you go from a household that individuals whenever they worked overtime um, to get it or not that generates sixty, sixty five thousand dollars a year (CM: Uh, huh) to a household who's UI benefit in total for a month is gonna be a thousand dollars, you're in trouble (CM: Uh, huh). Not only are you gonna be struggling to make your mortgage (CM: Uh, huh), you're gonna be struggling to put food on the table. Now the Department of Social Services which you know is a, was a secondary partner, full partner now but they have this program called food stamps (CM: Uh, huh). Well, they look at what your income was this quarter. Let's say this quarter you were working ah, you know that overtime (CM: Right) that last forty you were working that overtime and you were bringing home that pay. When they look at that period of time it appears that you, you know have money or you should have reserves or resources (CM: Uh, huh). Um, I, I think one of the things that makes all, you know makes all of us Americans is that we're a couple of paychecks away from not having those resources (CM: Uh, huh) but I say that say that's their guidelines. It's not an individual here in North Carolina this is a national you know this is a national thing (CM: Right, sure). Okay, still does not answer the question for the individual who needs to put food on the table for his kids (CM: Uh, huh) how that happens. And it was our community and our faith based partners that stepped up to the table and said these people need you know assistance with food (CM: Uh, huh). As we approached August these same individuals had children that were about to go back to school just off the top of your head (CM: Uh, huh) you know kids need pencils, they need papers, they need book bags, lunch boxes um, a whole **??36M 15SEC** of things, new clothes you know it doesn't have to be designer but they need you know they need those things to back to school. Again faith based community, community based community stepped up, excuse me, to make sure the individuals had those type of things (CM: Uh, huh). So um, I say that to say that our approach had to change. We had to change (CM: Okay). We began having um, I will never forget once the company and it was overnight, once the company you know we got the call um, that I was on my way home it's always I'm in my car on my way home. I was on my way home and I got a call from this office um, and they said Myra it's happened. (CM: Okay) And that was the 30<sup>th</sup> (CM: Uh, huh) and tomorrow you know we're gonna have to you know put our plan of action in place etc. Well, we had ah, over at ah, at 301 North Wilmington Street which is where our main North Carolina Department of Commerce offices are um, we put together what we call a town hall meeting (CM: Uh, huh) and um, anybody that wanted to come from those two communities and believe me it was wall to wall. We had it in ah, Secretary **??37M 34SEC** conference room were able to come and ah, my boss you know presented um, you know the programs **??37M 43SEC** and services that our what's known as now workforce development network could offer. And um, while people had an appreciation for that (CM: Uh, huh) they were talking about things like the town infrastructure (CM: Uh, huh) this is the largest ah, electricity user, water user you know what's gonna happen you know to our tax base? And so they were in, you know individuals (CM: Right) from economic development um, who spoke to you know some, some of their concerns. Couldn't answer all of them (CM: Right). There were people from business and industry ah, local chamber people, a whole sundry of individuals which I think for me as the person that was the governor's rapid response team coordinator said, it said to me you know what this goes beyond the individual now (CM: Uh, huh). This goes you know

directly to the community when companies decide you know when they close these doors and they back down you know a pack up and leave town. It, this is the example that shows how it affects communities (CM: Uh, huh). So from that day to this day when we have um, large lay offs um, one of the first things that we do is, is have set up an opportunity for what we call um, service delivery forms and we talk to um, the community leaders, the mayor's, the city councilmen um, the city you know city planners and, and managers, etc, we talk to the company and invite the company in (CM: Uh, huh) so that they can be a part of that process. We bring in United Way you know the faith based ah, organizations to say guys this is what you know is happening. This is what you know the initial employment and training approach or workforce development approach is gonna be. We need to know you know what you have available to leverage (CM: Uh, huh) towards supporting this community. So that was one of the good things I think and one of the lessons um, learned that is that we had to um, get a bigger table (CM: Uh, huh) and get more people you know to the table (CM: Right) to help resolve those issues because it really is about more than um, a voucher that says this individual can go to a community college (CM: Right) um, and, and follow a certain training pattern (CM: Uh, huh). That was the other um, I think significant piece about Pillowtex um, in particular the you know Rowan Cabarrus ah, County area um, the community college (CM: Right) was not, there was just no way that they could meet the demand of (CM: Uh, huh) a potential forty eight hundred individuals (CM: Right) coming there (CM: Right) to seek services. So for the first time in history ah, we here at the Department of Commerce contacted ETA and asked them for a capacity building that (CM: Uh, huh) ah, for Rowan Cabarrus Community College so that they could rent the space, hire the additional teachers (CM: Uh, huh) um, and make this, this educational process happen. The timing of the announcement or you know the and there wasn't never and I don't want you know to convey that there was ever a warn notice filed (CM: Okay) just wasn't, happened overnight (CM: Right) and we've seen that happen before. It happened with Midway Airlines (CM: Uh, huh) um, and it's happened with you know a number of other companies historically through the years and it probably will happen again (CM: Uh, huh). Um, and you know there are no reasons why um, human beings (CM: Uh, huh) are human beings and unless you know there's something else that's gonna be at the helm of these companies other than a human being I'm, I'm pretty (CM: Right) sure that, that's what's going to occur. But um, that, that capacity building grant, the health coverage tax credit bridge grant um, the bringing in of community and faith based partners um, the idea of these service delivery forms or town hall meetings all of those things made the face of rapid response different.

CM: Right um, and you, you've covered an awful lot of the questions I had ah, prepared for you (MB: Oh, okay, sorry) which is terrific, no that's, that's terrific, that's ideal in fact. Um, but I wondered if you could talk a little about ah, you know what your continuing involvement with this situation?

MB: With Pillowtex (CM: Um, yeah). Ah, I think the department I would be fair to say that the Department of Commerce is continuing um, involvement at some point obviously after you've provided ah, the training and, and let me say this another thing that and I'm not gonna say that it did not occur but that has occurred with us as a um, department is

that division and economic development actually sit down and talk about when they are recruiting (CM: Uh, huh) um, an individual what the skill sets need to be. And I can't say it didn't you know that it did or it didn't because you know they're, in this twenty one year process has taken me a minute to kind of get to the level of the food chain that I'm currently on (CM: Right) but um, we do get together and we do talk about um, the types of companies that they are trying to recruit and so therefore we can talk to our local workforce development boards (CM: Uh, huh) as their case managers are and, and counselors are talking with um, the affected workers and say you know this is what's gonna be a growth industry um, in this area. These are some of the jobs that you know I'd like for you to take a career assessment, a inventory, let me assess you know if this might be something that's a good match for you. So those things are current (CM: Uh, huh) and I think we're building a more qualified workforce. I think we because of, of that dialog (CM: Uh, huh) um, that you know occurs um, North Carolina has positioned itself to immediately on day one meet the needs of companies that you know consider um, our area um, or a given area in our state. That has occurred um, and, and I say all that to say you asked me the question you know where are we now? We have passed that point of um, providing the training, doing the workforce um, forecasting and probably now two or three years, I'm trying to remember when did the Murdock um, announcement occur because there was, there were obviously months if not a years (CM: Right) worth of work to get that (CM: Right) ah, to come fruition. But we, we're definitely at that point of have you know pasted that point where ah, workforce development you know kind of ah, steps to the, the background and economic development steps to the foreground and begins to do the work of trying to recruit entities (CM: Uh, huh) um, for that you know particular area. And it's not just you know the interesting thing is that it's not just ah, about the Murdock ah, facility it is about also continuously ah, recruiting supportive service business and industry um, that will either feed off of that or you know that to getting those businesses to take a look at that area.

CM: Right, well you talked about sort of the workforce development part proceeding the economic part in this case (MB: Uh, huh) and my guess is that's not ideal (MB: No, it is not) oh, okay because you'd like the jobs there to be there in order to train them right?

MB: Right, right, um, and in some cases um, Governor Easley as I recall during that time coined a phrase about ah, Pillowtex that I really did think sums up what was going on at that time. He called it an economic disaster (CM: Uh, huh). And when things like that occur you're not gonna be dealing with you know the ideal um, world (CM: Okay) or the ideal scenario. Ah, should the economic development come first? You know there's some that would say absolutely, yes and there's some that would say I don't know (CM: Yeah). Um, I think our approach as a state as the Department of Commerce you know goes um, this, this workforce development network ah, which is embodies us the Department of Community Colleges and ESE (CM: Uh, huh) we go along there you know with the economic um, development team (CM: Uh, huh) and talk to the companies about the available skill sets um, in a given area and number of plants or, or you know companies may have closed. This is a skill set that these folks have ah, we're willing to invest the retraining dollars in the individuals to bring them up to the level that um, your company needs them (CM: Uh, huh) to be at to perform. Um, we use labor market

information and commuting patterns (CM: Okay) um, to show them that maybe in fifty or a hundred mile radius this is not ??47M 45SEC but (CM: Right) there are so many skill sets or so many individuals with certain degrees um, that would be ready day one to come to work you know for your company or could possibly be recruited for you company. Um, workforce development has always been very good at pipeline services and um, that is you know continues to be what we do. I think we have um, made the significance of what we do known to um, that, that and you know the collected entity of people that sit around the economic development table (CM: Uh, huh) and they realize how important it really is to ah, have the experts at the table to articulate what those, those skill sets are what the assessment tools are, what it, what are when you say pipeline services what that really means.

CM: Okay, um, wow, um, is there, was there anything else you wanted to add about either Kannapolis Pillowtex thing or your work here?

MB: Um, not really ah, it is um, the job that I do now if there is ah, um, a mass lay off or a closure that affects communities I am the one that goes out and do this aforementioned ah, community service delivery forms. I do have a wonderful opportunity ah, to coordinate large job drives, community, job and community fairs and its ah, I think the one that I if I had to pick one that I really like the most um, I like the job and community fairs. We did a couple last year um, down in southeastern North Carolina um, in Robeson County, a little town called Roland (CM: Huh) um, that was largely a manufacturing textile town and everybody moved away (CM: Uh, huh) but these folks still wanted ah, to come you know have opportunities to go to work. And then we did one in Scotland County (CM: Uh, huh) and the job and community fairs ah, is kind of built on the Pillow, is built on the Pillowtex model. Ah, you have employers there because they need to hire workers. Ah, they have so many you know jobs that they need to fill that day and you also have um, community resource people who want to say to the general public we have these services um, and they are available and you know here's a brochure on that. And so it's a very effective way of ah, you know continuing this process of ah, working on a more you know in a more holistic approach (CM: Uh, huh) um, to serving um, these folks. So I still do that, I still have the opportunity to do that, I still have the opportunity to do that. A couple of days ago I had the opportunity to go over to the legislatures and ah, talk about some of the things that we do you know provide um, to displaced workers in the state and hopefully um, there's a better understanding of that and if not I will keep going until um, there is. I, I have to say from beginning to end when I started in this and I probably should have said this ah, in my opening statement about my personal history (CM: Uh, huh). Um, I graduated from Fayetteville State University in 1982 with a degree in English and Literature. I am the child um, two educators. My father was a school principal and my mom was an English teacher. So my aspiration when I graduated um, was if I can get a job ah, writing, if I can get a job ah, teaching English my life is fulfilled. I got married in '82 and no his last name is not Beatty. I ??51M 42SEC I was one of those women that when it didn't work you know went back to (CM: Okay) exactly who I am ah, but when I got married I moved to Goldsboro (CM: Uh, huh) and Wayne County and ah, went and applied you know with the school system and you know let the folks know I want to teach English. There were

no English jobs or English teaching jobs available. Ah, the job that was available was ah, teaching the pre-employment skills class. Needing a job I took it (CM: Yeah) and you know I had no idea that six months later I would be coordinating a program. I had no idea that two years later (CM: Right) I would be the director ah, for the JTPA in school and at risk you know youth program. And so I say all of this that to say that um, my initial thoughts about you know the type of career that I would have um, certainly did not look anything like this (CM: Right) but the outcome of um, as you know said earlier almost twenty two years of doing this ah, leaves me in a place that says I really enjoy everyday (CM: Uh, huh) coming to work. Um, I believe that there is an outcome ah, everyday um, whether it is answering an, an, a letter that's been sent to the governor from a displaced worker or that may come to the attention of Secretary ??53M 14SEC um, picking up the phone and calling individuals and saying I need you to connect with this customer ah, or and in some cases I actually pull out you know my teaching skills and case management skills and try to hunt down and find a job for them myself. Um, there's you know a big return on the investment of work versus joy of doing this job.

CM: So it's satisfying work obviously and you're doing something ah, ah, that probably couldn't be more important ah, but you also mentioned earlier in the interview about ah, you sort of grind your teeth (MB: Yeah) I mean this is, this is I mean (MB: It's stress) ah, this, this is a difficult because so many people do depend on you and ah, I, I don't know I wondered if you could talk about you know how, how stressful it is and if you feel this sort of weight of those peoples needs um?

MB: As we were going through that you know ??54M 16SEC don't have one, don't have any I would liken this to what it must be like for a parent at midnight that's stuck in a snow storm without a working car that need to get their kid to the doctor and there's no internet. There are many days that I feel and many days that I felt that way (CM: Uh, huh). Um, that although my, my efforts were certainly the very best that I could do that there were ah, still things to be done. Um, somewhere in this conversation we talked about and what it was like in 1999 to what it looks like right now (CM: Uh, huh). In 1999 when I first started doing this you know I was aware that um, individuals you know by and large a lot of companies weren't offering COBRA. If they did people couldn't afford it (CM: Uh, huh). In 1999 I recognized there were a lot of ah, you know single head of household individuals I'm not gonna say they were all females ??55M 26SEC (CM: Uh, huh) but who needed child care um, assistance and the money was not always there to assist them as they desired. If, they may have had the desire to go back to school but they may have been able to access the resources through these programs to go back to school but the you know total package support was not there (CM: Uh, huh). Is it perfect now? No, it's not and those are the things that um, sometimes do make me feel like the parent with the sick child in the snow storm (CM: Uh, huh) stuck on the mountain without a vehicle or internet to get information um, about how you know to make this child feel better. And, and it's probably that (CM: Uh, huh) that ah, made me ah, grind my teeth ah, and it you know I can't say that prior to doing this work I mean I certainly didn't lay awake at night grinding my teeth when I was teaching ah, pre-employment skills, when I was a regional ah, manager though one of the programs that I managed interestingly or had under my purview was a dislocated worker program (CM: Uh, huh).

Um, but I think I was so far removed from the individuals that were affected by those programs and you know it's something when you ah, go on ah, campus, a workplace you have a job (CM: Uh, huh) these individuals have already been informed that they don't have one and you're sort of the individual that it's, it's like being a funeral director for a workplace. I don't know how they do it. You know that you know (CM: Right) as, as life occurs as people are born people will die (CM: Uh, huh) and in any kind of economy good, bad or indifferent there are gonna be shifts in (CM: Right) employment (CM: Right). Ah, this group will lay off or this will go down and, and we talked about the change from the industrial to the informational (CM: Uh, huh) ah, type of economy. Well, there, lay offs are gonna occur (CM: Uh, huh) and people, there will be these you know these Eb's and Flo's of ah, times where individuals are gonna have to upgrade skills so that they can move onto um, ah, the next stay. But um, if you are a person that cares at all about ah, people (CM: Uh, huh) and, and people are not identified as just a number off of that demo, you know demographic request for information it's got to have some kind of effect on you and for me um, I guess that's better than you know sitting here telling you well, um, I do a fifty of Gin every other day. Um, it didn't manifest that way and so I guess that was the only way that, that it you know that it would um, come out so.

CM: Alright, well thank you so much for your time.

MB: You're welcome.