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# THE EXTRA



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**CONNECTED** — Featured speaker Tommy Preston Jr., right, of Boeing South Carolina gets a tour of Piedmont Tech's Center for Advanced Manufacturing from Piedmont Tech President Ray Brooks, left, following Thursday morning's "In the Know" Breakfast, which was jointly sponsored by Laurens County's Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Corp.

Photo by Judith Brown

## County partners, educational programs top priorities for Boeing South Carolina

By Judith Brown  
Staff Writer

The 180 miles which separates Laurens County from the Boeing South Carolina campus is connected not just by I-26 but also by partner companies within the county itself.

"We spent close to \$700,000 just last year in Laurens County, and that's just the two companies, CCL Label and Eastern Crane," said Tommy Preston Jr., Esq., the Director of National Strategy and Engagement for Boeing South Carolina.

Preston, one of many South Carolina natives who make up the ranks of Boeing employees in Charleston, was the featured speaker at Thursday morning's "In the Know" Breakfast, sponsored jointly by the Laurens County Chamber of Commerce and the Laurens County Development Corporation. Hosted by Piedmont

Tech's Center for Advanced Manufacturing, Preston praised the state's technical school system which is preparing much of the company's workforce for their jobs in Charleston.

He and a team from Boeing are joined by representatives from the S.C. Department of Commerce, the S.C. Manufacturing Alliance and others completing a multi-day tour of several counties and schools, discussing the benefits that South Carolina has provided to Boeing in its 10 years here, and the benefits the company has brought to the state.

"To see in 10 years what we've been able to do is remarkable and it's a testament to the entire state of South Carolina really wrapping their arms around us and helping us to be successful, and helping us show the world that a small, southern, conservative state could build one of the most revolutionary products in the entire world," Preston said, referring to the 787 Dreamliners,

which are currently on a seven-year wait list because of its popularity.

"You will have an international customer come pick up their airplane and when they come, they travel the state and spending money. So when you think of the economic development, it's also the people coming here," Preston said, recounting a visit to Boeing by the vice president of a country who saw all the BMWs ready for export at the port and "He said, 'I want some of those,' and then and there made arrangements to buy 50 BMWs."

Laurens County is among the many counties benefitting directly through 294 in-state partnerships with the company and they include CCL Label in Clinton, and Eastern Crane and Hoist in Fountain Inn.

"We spent close to \$700,000 in Laurens

(Continued on page 2)

## Appeal dropped in Clinton city election

By John Clayton  
Editor

An appeal filed in 8th Circuit Court challenging the outcome of a Clinton City Council election has been dropped.

Laurens County Clerk of Court Lynn Lancaster confirmed Thursday morning that the challenge was withdrawn.

Rosa Booker, who was among four candidates running against incumbent Shirley Jenkins for the District 2 seat on city council, appealed first to the Laurens County Board of Registration and Elections, claiming Jenkins' two adult children voted illegally.

After that appeal was denied, Booker filed the legal appeal, the necessary next step in the election appeals process.

Calls seeking comment from Jenkins, who said she was pleased after the board's ruling, were not immediately returned.

If upheld by the court, that appeal, which was based on Booker's claims of voter fraud, would have determined whether a criminal investigation by the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) was warranted.

Following the March 5 municipal election, the local elections board voted unanimously in Jenkins' favor, saying the ballots cast were done so properly by legally registered voters. The purview of the board does not include determining legalities surrounding the election.

Jenkins won the five-way race with 57 percent of the vote. Eighty-five votes were cast for Jenkins. Booker totaled 29 votes (19 percent).

Booker claimed Jenkins' two children, who voted absentee, live outside the district.

After the appeal to the board was denied, Booker levied accusations against Jenkins and Laurens County Councilwoman Diane Anderson. Booker claimed Jenkins and Anderson worked together to commit voter fraud by filling out the ballots of older citizens in the district.

"I want to see (Jenkins) in jail," Booker told reporters after the March 8 hearing.

South Carolina's laws concerning absentee ballots are somewhat vague and allow absentee voters to vote in their home districts if they reside in other areas with the intent of returning to their home districts in the future.



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