



A weekly newsletter on North Carolina General Assembly news relevant to the North Carolina tourism industry

NCTIA 'Kicks It' with Legislative Duo

As part of Global Meetings Industry Day in Charlotte, NCTIA hosted a luncheon on Thursday that featured [Rep. Jason Saine](#), [Sen. Paul Newton](#), and NCTIA lobbyists Skye David and Brian Lewis for a panel discussion about the politics of tourism and importance of the meetings industry to the state.

The discussion kicked off with an issue pervading the hospitality industry: The employee shortage.

"Senator Newton and Representative Saine gave us a behind the scenes look at how the General Assembly is addressing this issue, including their decision to champion our pilot project that is recruiting high school students to our industry," said NCTIA Executive Director Vince Chelena. (See main article.)

David and Lewis moderated the panel discussion and other topics discussed by the legislators included occupancy tax policy, e-sports, and job recruitment.

"We were honored to have two of the most powerful political leaders in the state spend the afternoon with us and to see our successful student job fair," Chelena added.

Student Job Fair a Success in Charlotte

The following article, which includes video, was published by [WCNC Charlotte](#) and can be read and seen in its entirety [here](#).

For many high school students getting closer to graduation, their next step is unclear. Some young adults want to get into a career right away.

Over 400 high school juniors and seniors, enrolled in the Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways program, had the opportunity to learn about job opportunities in the hotel industry.

An inaugural job fair was held Thursday, at the Charlotte Convention Center for CMS' CTE students. Karen Brand, a spokesperson for the event, described the CTE pathways program as a "blend of early career discovery and skill development opportunities through hands-on courses."

Brand said \$200,000 in funding was included in the 2021-2022 State Budget for a hospitality employment pilot program in Charlotte. Organizers said that funding will help with an apprenticeship program for high school students interested in a career in the hotel industry.



NCTIA sponsored a luncheon on Thursday that included Sen. Paul Newton (and Rep. Jason Saine, who worked to include a \$200,000 appropriation for a hospitality employment pilot program, which made the job fair possible. (See sidebar article.)

"We need to rebuild the pipeline and that pipeline starts with our high schoolers," Mary Jo Marasco with the Westin Hotel in Charlotte said.

Students who attended the job fair told WCNC they learned valuable information. "The pay is great, and they have a lot of benefits. And they have a lot of positions, and it's very diverse," Stephanie Garcia, a senior at Northwest School of the Arts, learned.

"One of the things we see, probably not indicative to Charlotte, but we have a lot of students that graduate and they are not exactly sure what it is they want to do. So being able to have a trade, come through CTE," job fair organizer Dr. Nakesha Dawson said. "That means you're actually getting a skill that you can actually start a career with, and I use 'career' not just 'job' intentionally. Because the kids right here, they can start something that can take them to the next level that they can actually build on."