



\*\*\*\*\* MEDIA ADVISORY \*\*\*\*\*

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 04.15.26 at 6:30 p.m.**

**CONTACT**

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## NC Community College System to Honor Top Educators, Business Partners at Annual Awards Celebration April 15

**WHAT:** The North Carolina Community College System, State Board, and Foundation will host the 2026 NC Community Colleges Dinner and Awards Celebration, honoring nine outstanding students, faculty, staff, and workforce partners from across the state. The awards, presented by Duke Energy, highlight exceptional achievements in education, high-tech workforce development, and community impact across North Carolina's 58 community colleges.

**WHEN:** Wednesday, April 15, 2026; 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

**WHERE:** The Angus Barn Pavilion, 9401 Glenwood Ave, Raleigh, NC 27617

**WHO:** The following 2026 award recipients will be honored:

- **Dallas Herring Achievement Award:** Ms. Cheri Landreth, Student, Surry Community College
- **I.E. Ready Lifetime Achievement Award:** Mr. Rick Hendrick, Hendrick Motorsports
- **Excellence in Teaching Award:** Ms. Tonya Stephens, Blue Ridge Community College
- **Staff Person of the Year Award:** Ms. Heather Pack, Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College
- **President of the Year Award:** Dr. Janet Spriggs, Forsyth Technical Community College
- **Apprenticeship Champion:** Caterpillar Inc. with Central Carolina Community College

- **Innovative Leadership Award:** Okuma America Corporation with Rowan-Cabarrus Community College
- **Business of the Year Award (<500 Employees):** Aegis Power Systems, Inc. with Tri-County Community College
- **Business of the Year Award (>500 Employees):** Pratt & Whitney with Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College

**WHY:** These award recipients exemplify the mission of North Carolina's community colleges to meet students where they are and provide life-changing opportunities. From pioneering AI pathways in the classroom to building global training hubs in rural counties, these winners represent the engine of North Carolina's economic development and workforce innovation.

**MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES:**

- Interview opportunities with Dr. Jeff Cox, President, NC Community College System
- Interview opportunities with 2026 Award Winners
- Photo and video opportunities of the Awards Ceremony
- Coverage of the Workforce Development Pinnacle Awards, honoring outstanding business and college partnerships across the state, presented by Duke Energy

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