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Regional Convenings Week 3 Recap: Forsyth Tech and Asheville-Buncombe

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NC COMMUNITY COLLEGES
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What do race cars and pastries have in common? North Carolina community colleges prepare students to create both. This week, the convenings headed west from Raleigh to explore race car technology at Forsyth Technical Community College in Winston-Salem and culinary arts at Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College in Asheville. Both stops paired hands-on learning with conversations about regional workforce strategies.

Week Three Highlights

- **Forsyth Technical Community College:** Leaders from Forsyth, Rowan-Cabarrus, Stanly, Isothermal, and Davidson-Davie community colleges joined Monday's convening and toured the Transportation Technology Center. Students there prepare for automotive, motorsports, and transportation careers. The race car technology program teaches students to build and maintain race cars and trucks through engine assembly, chassis fabrication, welding, and vehicle setup.

- **Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College:** Leaders from A-B Tech, McDowell Technical Community College, and Mayland, Haywood, Southwestern, and Tri-County community colleges gathered Thursday in Asheville. The convening coincided with the Culinary Open House, where local students and leaders alike tour the college's unique teaching kitchens, meet current culinary and pastry students, and sample dishes prepared through the programs. CEO David Bowne then led leaders on a tour of AvL Technologies, an Asheville-based manufacturer of mobile satellite communications antennas used in defense, news broadcasting, and disaster relief.



Dr. Sullivan and system leaders toured Forsyth Tech's Transportation Technology Center, where students can earn a degree or certificate in race car technology.



Community college leaders gather in Asheville for a regional convening focused on workforce development, educational opportunities, and the future of North Carolina's

community colleges.

Key Takeaways

- **Career exploration is starting before college — and even before high school.** Campus visits, career assessments, and mentoring help middle school students connect their interests to education and career opportunities.

- **Workforce development includes employees already on the job.** Employers use apprenticeships and customized training to strengthen current employees' skills and prepare new hires.

- **Predictable funding helps employers plan ahead.** Discussions highlighted the opportunity to build on recent apprenticeship investments with longer-term funding, along with the value of customized training in economic development incentive packages.

- **Partnerships drive innovation.** From recovery efforts to future economic opportunities, colleges band together to meet student and workforce needs.



Leaders get a taste of student talent at Asheville-Buncombe's culinary department, led by Cathy Horton, director of the Brumit Center for Culinary Arts.

Coming Up Next

The regional convenings continue next week at Cape Fear Community College and Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute.

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