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Media Contact: Stephanie Duffey
Office: 252-539-3039
sduffey@roanokeelectric.com

ACES HIGH: HOW TO PLAY A WINNING HAND IN TODAY'S JOB MARKET
*REDI helps area citizens increase skills, employability and opportunity in light of
projected economic boom*



Staff Photo/STEPHANIE DUFFEY
Jennifer Mayle of the Roanoke Valley Chamber of
Commerce discusses potential strategies for ACE initiative
with Roanoke Electric Cooperative CEO Curtis Wynne.

**RICH SQUARE, N.C. – Self
sufficiency.**

It is more than a buzz word in the non-profit realm. It's the main component of what we call the American Dream and REDI (Roanoke Economic Development, Inc.) and its partners are diligently working to bring that dream closer to reality for area residents. How? Through the ACE program – Achieving Career Excellence.

Born out of a statewide drive (known as the Women's Economic Equity Initiative), ACE helps provide training

for both women and men that make them marketable to employers in our region.

One big-name future employer that has created a huge media buzz is Carolina Crossroads, the multi-million dollar entertainment complex currently being built in Roanoke Rapids. "As the entertainment industry begins to influence our communities, more service sector opportunities will be available to our citizens," said Jennifer Mayle, Work First Manager with Roanoke Valley Chamber of Commerce. "We expect expansion in all our hospitality and service fields, including retail sales and service, foodservice, guest services, and tourism to name a few."

Developers of the ACE project plan to take advantage of this growth by preparing potential employees through short-term training and support.

The project kicked off with a focus group to help coordinators identify and address some of the obstacles hindering the progress of women in the workforce.

"Over the next three years, our plan is to put 200 participants through specialized training to help each individual achieve their optimum potential," said Diana Mitchell, TRC (The Roanoke Center) Director.

Based on projected employment opportunities and ongoing discussions with developers and existing businesses, REDI and its partners have been tailoring the ACE program to accommodate for skills that employers will be looking for in the coming years.

ACE will go beyond existing workforce development programs and offer three major components:

- Job training and program support
- People and personal skills and development training
- Job placement assistance upon successful completion of the program

“The ACE project is designed to bring diverse resources, gifts and talents to citizens in our five-county region. Our common interests bind us together for the good of all while challenging us to think about the best interest of our communities.”

The ACE program is supported by grants from Z. Smith Reynolds and the N.C. Department of Commerce Division of Workforce Development.

For more information, visit: www.roanokecenter.org or contact Stephanie Duffey at 252-539-3039.