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Michelin North America adopts eight S.C. schools

Education drives economic and workforce development

BY JENNY MUNRO • BUSINESS WRITER • AUGUST 4, 2009

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Michelin North America has adopted eight South Carolina elementary schools this fall, with thousands of Michelin employees helping thousands of youngsters statewide through the Michelin Challenge Education program.

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“Michelin has long supported programs to improve the quality of education in the state of South Carolina and throughout the communities in North America where we maintain a presence,” said Dick Wilkerson, chairman and president of Michelin’s North American operations. “Michelin Challenge Education takes that commitment to the next level.”

The leading driver of the economy, per capita income growth and a workforce ready for jobs is education, said Ben Haskew, president of the Greenville Chamber.

Michelin’s program “is a great corporate example,” he said. “Any size company can join in to this and partner in our schools,” he said.

The company’s support of education recognizes that elementary schools are “where fires are ignited,” said Jennifer Brown, magnet science teacher at E. North Street Academy – one of Michelin’s selected schools to be adopted. “Children don’t know what to be interested in until they are exposed” to potential jobs that require education, especially math and science.

As each school works with its adopting facility and Michelin employee volunteers, “this will be another model for people to look at when they try to figure out to best use volunteers in schools,” said Dick Riley, former governor of South Carolina and former U.S. secretary of education.



Former SC governor and US Secretary of Education Dick Riley (left), SC Superintendent of Education Jim Rex (center) and Michelin North America chairman Dick Wilkerson talk before a press conference at Michelin headquarters Tuesday, Aug. 4, 2009. Michelin is creating a program to provide employee tutors and mentors to elementary schools and adopt schools in an effort to improve public education in the state. (GEORGE GARDNER/Staff)

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