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N.C. Careers Helps Those Considering Changes

BY MOSES CAREY JR.

During my high school days, most of us didn't stress over what "we wanted to be when we grew up." In fact, it was pretty cut and dry. There were kids who knew exactly what they wanted to be — as well as those who didn't have a clue. This latter group of kids was probably in the majority.

But, eventually, we figured it out, either through active pursuit or simply through the twist and turns of our lives.

Many realized they could actually get paid for doing something they enjoyed; others found a position which met their needs and that of their families.

With job security seemingly becoming a thing of the past, anxiety about job loss has risen among workers as a whole. Many of those who have lost jobs are finding their careers have taken a different direction — one of less demand. They realize they need to look to other careers, but are at a loss of where to begin.

One of the biggest challenges to changing careers is identifying your transferable skills and then learning how to package them to appeal to an employer in a different industry. N.C. Careers, a career planning software program, can do just that. It can be accessed through the N.C. Employment Security Commission's website, www.ncesc.com and offers career exploration through self-assessment tools that allow individuals to find the specific skills they have which can be used in other occupations.

It also guides individuals to those occupations, giving complete job descriptions and detailing the necessary education and training for those careers. Once they find specific occupations of interest, they can match their current skills to those needed in these occupations. The program allows people to work through it at their own speed, while broadening their perspectives on possible job opportunities.

Although the prospect of changing one's career can be frightening, it's one that more people are going to be faced with as the demand for jobs continues to change. By setting realistic goals, being honest in your assessment of your skills, and keeping a positive attitude, you will find that making a career switch is not nearly the overwhelming prospect you once thought it to be.

(Moses Carey is chairman of the N.C. Employment Security Commission.)