



## North Carolina Candy Factory Reaps the Benefits of the NC State University Rural Works! Internship Program

### A Sweet Deal for Butterfields© Candies

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When you visit the Butterfields© in Nashville, North Carolina, you're immediately greeted with the sweet aroma of sugar. Butterfields© Candies is one of America's oldest artisan hand-made candy makers. Their footprint is small, just two offices and separate areas hosting the copper kettles for cooking, packing equipment and storage.

"Buds" are Butterfields' signature artisan line of hard candies available in over 25 mouth-watering fruit or spice flavors ranging from the original peach to ginger, cinnamon to watermelon, grape, cranberry orange, peppermint and everything in between.

The candy business has changed ownership several times but the brand has stayed true to the artisan recipe - and is still made by hand.

**"Good, old-fashioned taste can only be created the good, old-fashioned way," states their website.**

Butterfields© Buds are still hand-made in large copper kettles, following a recipe and tradition that began in 1924

as the Cane Candy Company in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Candy Buds are 100% dairy-free, gluten-free, pure cane sugar sweet treats.

In the 1940's the company moved to Nashville, North Carolina and its name changed to the Wilson Candy Company with new ownership. Thirty years later, in the 1970s, with a third change of ownership came a new name: Butterfields©. Over the next twenty years, Butterfields© would expand its flavor offerings and transitioned from a regional candy company to a national brand, winning awards at trade shows.

Current President Dena Manning, recalled the first time she'd heard of Butterfields© Candies, "My mother was undergoing chemotherapy for ovarian cancer and we found them in a gourmet store in Raleigh. We bought a lot of lemon buds to help my mother through treatment."

The previous owners of Butterfields Candies ceased production before 2009. That was when Dena and her husband decided to revive the candy company that had comforted her mother during her most challenging healthcare battles. "Taking on a business is huge. I was afraid," she said. Dena, her husband and two sons spent a year refurbishing the facility, re-hired previous employees, then re-started production, reviving "The South's Favorite Candy".

"There is no other candy like Butterfields® Candies," Dena says proudly. "People want Butterfields® candy at their weddings, vacations, birthdays, Christmas and family reunions. It's like a staple of tradition. That's the best part of my job: getting phone calls from people whose family members passed down their love of Butterfields candy to them and they're passing it down to their kids."

Like many family businesses across the state, Dena and her family members have their hands full managing daily operations. When Lori Benn, NC State University Industry Expansion Solutions (IES) regional manager, met the team at Butterfields, she knew that the NC State University Rural Works! Internship Program could help the family business.

"I was so blessed when Lori helped me participate in Rural Works! We've had interns before but it didn't work out either. The Rural Works! Internship program supports NC State University's commitment to social, economic and technological development across North Carolina by offering internship experience for high-caliber students who work with employers in rural counties. Through the Rural Works! program, the NC State College of Engineering provides stipends for rural businesses to be able to pay engineering interns competitive hourly wages that can be found at companies in more urban areas of the state.

"The monetary supplement helps us tremendously; it helps me feel better about making Luke drive out here," Dena joked. "Before, they had to choose between interning for some big company in Raleigh that could pay them more or coming out here to work with us. Now we're on equal footing."

"We decided we were looking for interns that could help identify processes the organization needs assistance with and develop a cohesive marketing presence," Dena stated. Dena met Sam Sanger, who worked in the NC State Career Development office as the outreach coordinator for the Rural Works! program. Sanger matched Dena with two NC State University students - Luke Anderson and Savannah Ross.

Luke Anderson is double majoring in mechanical engineering and communications with a media concentration. Initially, from Fuquay-Varina, NC, he never

imagined that he might work for a candy factory. "I was looking for an internship to help broaden my experiences. I saw a videography internship position at the Rural Works! application web page for a candy factory. It sounded like an amazing opportunity," Luke said matter-of-factly. Luke applied but didn't think he'd get it, given his limited experience with professional videography. But Luke has been making videos since he was a kid. A performer at heart (and a self-proclaimed "theater kid"), he has a knack for putting on and recording a show. Luke reminisced, "When I was a kid, I could never get anyone to be in a video so I would do stop motion videos with LEGOS. Working at Butterfields Candies has allowed me to direct real people."

Savannah Ross is a student with a concentration in economics with a minor in accounting. Savannah is a Salisbury native who discovered the Rural Works! program through NC State's Career Development Center. "I'm with Luke. I never expected to have an internship with a candy factory but now I wouldn't have it any other way. Working with Dena and learning about the production process has been an honor. There's never been a dull moment," said Savannah.



Homogeneous perspectives often happen in a rural organization and a rural workforce which can hinder an organization's growth even if the employees may be hard-working and dedicated. A student with a different outlook on processes can push a business forward.

**"These interns and this program have exceeded my expectations," said Dena Manning.**

“Luke and Savannah have been hands-on since the word ‘go. I got many ‘Hey, Dena, have you considered trying this?’ This isn’t just an internship; they want to help make a tangible difference here. I had to go out of town one day so I left them here to run the shop and they did a great job. The Rural Works! staff ensures you are matched with student(s) who have a sense of obligation and responsibility.”

“As we expand, the candy must be more consistent in shape and size. Also, a lot of our data, like receiving and production logs, have been done by hand, so we wanted to set up a program and start recording that data digitally where it’s easier to find. Savannah has been helpful with assisting us in that transition,” said Dena.

Savannah’s primary job is transferring paper ship logs into an Excel spreadsheet and using the Julian calendar to determine what candy was produced before putting that information into a production sheet. “Savannah navigated QuickBooks like a pro once she got the hang of it,” beamed Dena. Savannah also came up with the idea of creating templates for the packaging workers to use. The templates are color and flavor-coordinated, a change that has made the packaging process smoother and more productive.



Luke put his very own Gen Z twist on Butterfields Candies’ production processes training videos while cultivating his media experience and video production skills. His videos are described as both funny and informative—comical—yet to the point.

Luke also met with graphic designers, helped design packaging, conducted interviews, participated in run-of-the-mill office work, eagerly made sales calls (and successfully completed a sale). “I try to help with any problem that pops up,” said Luke.

When Butterfields Candies was designing their signature candy cane for the upcoming holiday season, Luke wanted to pitch in. “We had gone through different variations of the candy cane when Luke came up with the mold to quicken the process,” Dena said. “There was something hilarious and magical about seeing grown men huddle around a table, rushing to make the perfect candy cane design before it hardened,” Luke laughed. “I got to try the candy cane, which is about three times thicker and in my opinion, five times more delicious than the generic candy canes you’d use as a stocking stuffer.”

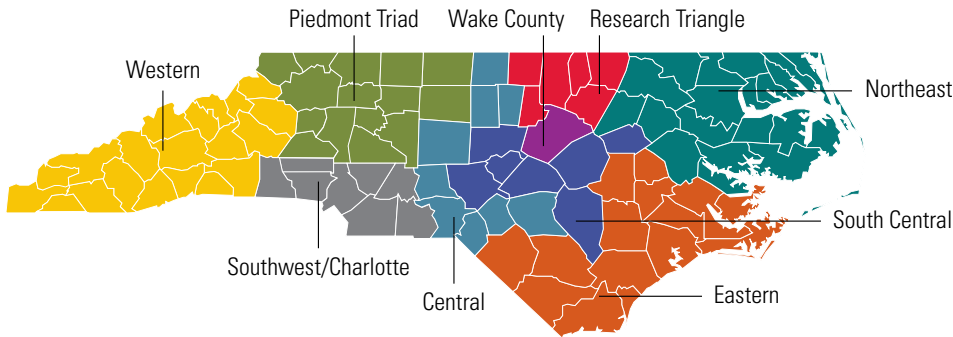
Reflecting on her experience with the Rural Works! interns Dena said, “Working with Luke and Savannah taught me that I need to have more fun and not take everything so seriously. I felt like they were mentoring me. Both of them have been a joy to work with.”

**“I encourage rural organizations to try out the Rural Works! Internship Program. You get connected to engaged young people who are eager to help out.”**

Dena used this metaphor to describe her experience, “You know how in old England when they set off to sail to find the New World? It felt like Luke and Savannah were shipmates and navigating that journey into the unknown with us on a ship called Butterfields Candies.”




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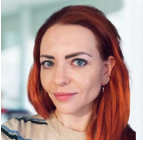


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