



MARCH 2021

LABOR N.C.

For all NCDOL Employees

FROM THE COMMISSIONER

The commissioner's column this month features part one of a two-part personal interview with Commissioner Josh Dobson. This month's column will focus on the commissioner's background – personally and professionally – before deciding to run for commissioner of labor. This interview was conducted by Jennifer Haigwood, director of communications and policy development.

Commissioner Dobson, thank you so much for sharing part of your personal and professional story with our employees. Tell us a little about your childhood.

I was born in McDowell County and spent the first 13 years of my life there, with my mom and dad. In 1994, I moved to Avery County with my dad and spent the rest of my childhood there. I played a lot of different sports growing up, especially football and basketball. I had a great childhood with loving parents, and my dad coached me in sports for many years. Though I loved football, and still love watching college football, I was probably most skilled at basketball.

What were your favorite, and least favorite, subjects in school?

History, political science and social studies were always my favorite. Math and science – not so much! But I still love history to this day, and I think that's why I had such a strong interest in public service from an early age. I always knew that I wanted to work in some type of public service, but I wasn't sure how to get there.

Tell us about your educational and professional path after you graduated from high school.

After graduating high school, I went to Gardner Webb University. I played football there, but quickly realized that college football is very different than high school football! That was a bit of a reality check for me, and I decided to come back home after one year. I still wasn't sure what I wanted to do in the long term, so I went to work for Baxter Healthcare in Marion. This was truly an initiation to the real world, as I quickly learned no one cared how many touchdowns or baskets I scored in high school! Also during this time, I married my wife, Valerie, and we now have a 16-year-old daughter, Kennedy. I worked several odd jobs, in addition to Baxter, but I was still struggling with what to do with my life.

Clearly you figured it out somewhere along the way! What happened in your life that allowed you to set the path you're on now?

I can point to three things that caused me to take my life more seriously. First, working at Baxter Healthcare really showed me what it's like to work and live in the real world. Second, the events of Sept. 11, 2001, had a profound influence on how I viewed my life, and how little time we are given to make an impact. And third, I read "Profiles in Courage" by John F. Kennedy. Kennedy's idea of putting aside partisan politics in favor of working together to act in our country's best interest was, and is, truly inspiring to me. This is what really made me think seriously about entering public service. And I knew that furthering my education was key to advancing toward that goal.

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Once you made that decision, what steps did you take to pursue that goal?

I was 22 years old at the time, and I knew that Marion Correctional Institution, a maximum security prison, was hiring correctional officers. I also knew that the hours, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., worked perfectly with my night school schedule at McDowell Tech. So, for two years, I worked the day shift at the prison, then drove to the college for evening classes. I did this until I finished my undergraduate degree. In 2005, with bachelor's degree in-hand, I moved over to the case management side of the prison. I worked as a case manager, helping inmates who are preparing for release, helping inmates work jobs within the prison, etc. I did that job for two years, then became the program supervisor. During that time, I also worked on my master's degree in public administration at Appalachian State...Go ASU! One day, after completing my master's degree, I happened to be walking into the prison with our business manager. He knew that I had recently received my master's degree and mentioned a position in the business office, on the administrative side of the prison. I ended up taking that job and worked as the assistant business manager and budget analyst for the prison.

Wow, you worked really hard to get your education. What would you say to other people who may be in the position you were at age 22?

I wouldn't necessarily advise the same path, as it did make for some really long days! However, doing it the way that I did really made me appreciate my education and the opportunities that came as a result. Ambition and work ethic are obviously important, but I'll also say that sometimes it's a matter of being in the right place at the right time. I can point to several times in my life where the stars aligned in just the right way for me to be able to take advantage of certain opportunities.

This seems to be the point in your life where you began pursuing elected public service positions. Tell us how you got your start in this area.

I'll start by saying that ambition has to meet opportunity. Just because I wanted to serve in an elected office didn't mean that opportunity would magically appear. In 2010, the McDowell County Board of Commissioners had three seats up for election. Two incumbent Republicans were running, as well as one incumbent Democrat. Several other people also filed to run. When I looked at the national landscape, I suspected the 2010 election cycle would be a good year for Republicans, so I decided to throw my name in the hat. My suspicions turned out to be accurate, and I, along with the two incumbent Republicans, won the three seats on the County Commission.

You spent two years as a county commissioner. What was your favorite thing about serving in that role?

I'm not sure that I can point to one favorite memory. However, the most important thing I learned as a county commissioner is the importance of asking questions – specifically, asking the right kinds of questions. This lesson is something that has carried over into my service as a House member, and now labor commissioner. Asking the right questions, and making sure I have all the relevant information, is crucial as I consider how to make the best policy decisions for the department and North Carolina's citizens.

Stay tuned for part two of our interview with Commissioner Dobson, where he discusses his path toward becoming labor commissioner and his goals for the department. Coming soon in the April edition of the "Labor N.C." newsletter.

EMPLOYEE NEWS

- Congratulations to Sara Burnes, OSH West, for passing the Associate Safety Professional certification exam.
- Our condolences to the family and friends of Ric Cruz, former OSH compliance supervisor in Charlotte and Asheville, who died Jan. 30. **Link to obituary.**
- Congratulations to Jordan Hines, OSH West, on her new puppy, Leroy Donk.

NEW HIRES

- Meredith Watson, Commissioner's Office, safety awards coordinator, Raleigh
- Kevin Barnes, OSH West, OSHA safety officer, Charlotte

PROMOTIONS

- Mark Luniewski, Consultative Services, OSHA supervisor, Winston-Salem

SEPARATIONS

- David Bailey, REDB, employment retaliation investigator, Raleigh



Leroy Donk Hines, above, is a very good boy.



Left: Commissioner Dobson attends a virtual call to present a Commissioner's Award for Excellence in Service to Norma Derqui-Lopez, Wage and Hour, on Feb. 16. Right: Commissioner Dobson attends a virtual meeting to present a Commissioner's Award for Excellence in Service to Buddy Amerson, Consultative Services, on Feb. 26.

March Birthdays!

1 Griselle Negron

4 Deidre Duncan

7 Lisa Culbreth

7 Margaret Harris

9 Pam Short

10 Julie Daniels

10 Chris Jasion

11 Lee Peacock

16 Doris Kester

17 Horace Dozier

19 Madelyn Edwards

20 Andy Sterlen

21 Felicia Gore Hoover

23 Richard Parker

24 Ken Darnley

25 Jesika Freeman

27 Shirley Curtis

28 Sam Atassi

28 Abigail Torres

29 Mike Saye

30 Art Britt

30 Nancy Hall

31 Steve Hardin

31 Sabrina Martin

From Legal Affairs: Certificate of Insurance

By Jill Cramer, General Counsel

If you ever receive a request for a Certificate of Insurance, please forward the request to Legal Affairs.

What is a Certificate of Insurance, you may ask? It is a document issued by an insurance company or insurance broker verifying the existence of an insurance policy. In relation to the State of North Carolina, all properties in which N.C. Department of Labor employees are housed are covered by the insurance. The State of North Carolina is self-insured, which means the State assumes the risk for any losses covered by insurance. All insurance coverage is handled through the N.C. Department of Insurance.

INSIDE NC LABOR

Be sure to check out NCDOL's *Inside NC Labor*, a podcast designed to inform and educate North Carolina citizens on the role that the Department of Labor plays in state government.

Episode 40 features Labor Commissioner Josh Dobson as he discusses his background, the importance of public service and his goals for the N.C. Department of Labor.

Inside NC Labor is now available on YouTube, Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Anchor and Google Podcasts.



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Is 2021 Any Better Yet?

2020 was an incredibly challenging year, and you may have simply hoped a New Year would make everything better. Unfortunately, we continue to face the stress, anxiety, and sadness associated with COVID-19, social justice, and political differences.

Make a New Year's resolution to seek the support you need.

Call your NC EAP at 1.888.298.3907 to schedule an appointment.
Phones are answered 24/7/365, and free, confidential appointments are available in person, virtually, or telephonically.

Access your Work-Life Services at mygroup.com or download the app. *Resources include discounted legal and financial services, the savings center, and child and elder care locators.*



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What's New @ Your Library

Online Resources

- **COVID-19 Vaccine Communication Toolkit for Essential Workers: Getting Started.** CDC toolkit.
- **Quick Tips to Increase Ventilation at Indoor Construction Sites Without Operating HVAC Systems.** CPWR document.
- **Construction COVID-19 Checklists for Employers and Employees.** CDC webpage.
- **Dry Ice and Liquid Nitrogen Can Cause Injuries or Death.** Washington State Department of Labor and Industries hazard alert.
- **Essential Workers & Employees: When and How to Get Vaccinated.** CDC webpage.
- **FACE IT—Worker Safety Matters During Block Wall Construction.** NIOSH FACE infographic.
- **Guidance for Businesses and Employers Responding to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).** CDC webpage.
- **Hot Filling Hazards with SCBA Air Cylinders.** NIOSH publication.
- **Importance of COVID-19 Vaccination for Essential Workers.** CDC webpage.
- **Interim List of Categories of Essential Workers Mapped to Standardized Industry Codes and Titles.** CDC webpage.
- **Keeping Workers Safe at COVID-19 Vaccination Sites.** OSHA poster.
- **NIH News in Health.**
- **Protecting Workers: Guidance on Mitigating and Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 in the Workplace.** OSHA webpage.
- **Public Service Announcements.** OSHA webpage.

- **Safety + Health.** February 2021. NSC publication.
- **Silica, Crystalline.** NIOSH webpage.
- **Workplace Vaccination Program.** CDC webpage.

New Books/Periodicals

- *CSP Exam Equations Simply Explained and with Examples.* T 55.2 .F37 2020. Apub, 2019.
- *Chlorine Manual.* CI PAM 1. Chlorine Institute, 2014.
- *Control of Energy Sources (Lockout/Tagout) for Construction and Demolition Operations.* ANSI/ASSP A10.44-2020. ASSP, 2020.
- *IEEE Guide for Protective Grounding of Power Lines.* IEEE Std 1048-2016. IEEE, 2016.
- *Portal and Pedestal Cranes.* ASME B30.4-2020. ASME, 2020.
- *Recommended Practice: Lighting Industrial Facilities.* ANSI/IES RP-7-20. IES, 2020.
- *Safety + Health.* February 2021. National Safety Council, 2020. *Donated by Phil Hooper, Standards and Inspections, and Wanda Lagoe, ETTA.*
- *Standard Specification for In-Service Care of Insulating Gloves and Sleeves.* ASTM F496-20. ASTM, 2020.
- *Utility LP-Gas Plant Code.* NFPA 59-2021. NFPA, 2020.
- *Ventilation for Acceptable Indoor Air Quality.* ANSI/ASHRAE STD 62.1-2019. ASHRAE, 2019.