



7 Little Words
Find the 7 words to match the 7 clues. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of letters in each solution. Each letter combination can be used only once, but all letter combinations will be necessary to complete the puzzle.

CLUES

- 1 not immediately cashable (9)
- 2 simple song (5)
- 3 chances to win prizes (9)
- 4 be unalike (6)
- 5 venue for authentic Asian food (9)
- 6 actor Matthew of "Sahara" (11)
- 7 sudden forward movement (5)

SOLUTIONS

PO AT DI GIV
FER LUN NAT AUG
CHU MEY QNW

IN SECTION > C
STARNEWS MEDIA LAUNCHES NEW GAMES IN PRINT AND ONLINE.

Concepts **Kakuro**

15	12	10	7	18	19
17					21
33					21
6					
			13	11	16

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PORT OF WILMINGTON | Public salaries

'IT DEFIES HUMAN REALITY'

Ports Authority official says static salary an inadequate incentive

BY ADAM WAGNER
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Jeff Miles, the interim executive director of the N.C. Ports Authority, might be one of the only people in the state who's underpaid at \$146,000 a year.

At the similar-sized Port of Miami, Executive Director Bill Johnson earns \$262,350. Directors at Jacksonville and Palm Beach, Fla., and South Carolina also earn more than Miles.

In Georgia, the port operation is much larger than North Carolina's, but 19 of its employees earn more than Miles does.

N.C. Ports leaders think pay is a problem and would like to see improvements, beginning with a wage study and possibly leading to performance-based bonuses throughout the organization, starting at the top.

"We need to have an executive director motivated who believes that his bosses, the board, want him to succeed," said George Rountree, chairman of the N.C. Ports Authority's governance and finance committee. "You can't tell



The J.P. McAllister helps guide and dock the YM Elixir, an 882-foot-long container ship with approximately 2,000 cargo containers, at the N.C. State Port at Wilmington. Photo by Mike Spencer

me that paying a man a straight salary of \$146,000 is going to motivate him to outperform Charleston, Savannah, Norfolk or whatever. It defies human reality."

Miles was unavailable for comment. "The world we live in is a performance-

ON THE WEB

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based world," Rountree said, and the port should be prepared to compensate for successes, particularly because the N.C. ports turned a small profit last year and is on track to be about \$3 million in the black this year.

In a tentative scenario Rountree laid out, every employee would receive a 5 percent increase right now - a raise he estimated would cost \$600,000. Then, senior management would be allocated a pot of \$100,000 to \$200,000 that they could spend as they saw fit.

To determine just how much the ports should be paying its staff, Rountree has been pushing the board to authorize a compensation study. Conducting a wage review is beginning to receive support from other members of the board, as well, who believe that it is necessary to keep employees throughout the organization

PORTS

Continued from 1A

satisfied.

"I have heard from the employees all the way down that they haven't had a wage review in five, six years, and we're turning around," said Danny McComas, chairman of the ports board. "The morale is way, way down, and they don't feel that they're getting the support. All the while, when somebody leaves by way of attrition, more often than not that position isn't replaced."

The Ports Authority conducts wage reviews on a piecemeal, as-needed basis, and Laura Blair, a ports spokeswoman, said it completes a full review about every three years.

In the past year, the Ports Authority is down 21 employees, a phenomenon that has several causes. Blair

said using a contractor for gate security, not filling non-critical positions and cutting unnecessary positions were among the reasons for the drop.

"Reductions are also possible because of productivity improvements within our workforce and the use of additional temporary personnel as cargo volumes fluctuate," she added.

In Rountree's tentative scenario, the executive director would be eligible for a set of performance-based bonuses for accomplishing tasks such as increasing business in bulk and break-bulk, increasing the ports' profit margin and keeping the workplace injury-free.

Rountree would also like to see the executive director take part in creating a five-year strategic plan and then stay on the job long enough to see it through to completion. In the past 18 months,

the Ports Authority has had four executive directors. Tom Eagar was fired in January 2012 and is now suing for wrongful termination.

Jeff Strader, the interim executive director from January to August 2012, took a position as chief financial officer at Port Freeport, Texas. There, he joined another North Carolina transplant, Glenn Carlson, who had been N.C. Ports' chief commercial officer/senior vice president of liner services, business and economic development. Neither the chief financial officer position Strader left behind when he was promoted nor Carlson's chief commercial officer position has been filled.

In August 2012, Tom Bradshaw, who as the statewide logistic coordinator already oversaw N.C. Global TransPark in Kinston, became the interim executive director

of the ports. When Bradshaw's tenure as executive director came to an end in January, Miles, who had been the organization's deputy director, stepped up.

Rountree hopes that the ports can increase the compensation to help North Carolina catch up to some of its geographic competitors and bring some stability to the position.

"Then you can command quality, attention, devotion, loyalty, not looking around for another job.... Here's a strategic plan; you helped create it. It'd be folly to have a CEO who had to embrace a strategic plan with which he has no input," he said.

"This is the real world," Rountree said. "We are not in the real world in North Carolina. We're some sort of Alice in Wonderland."

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