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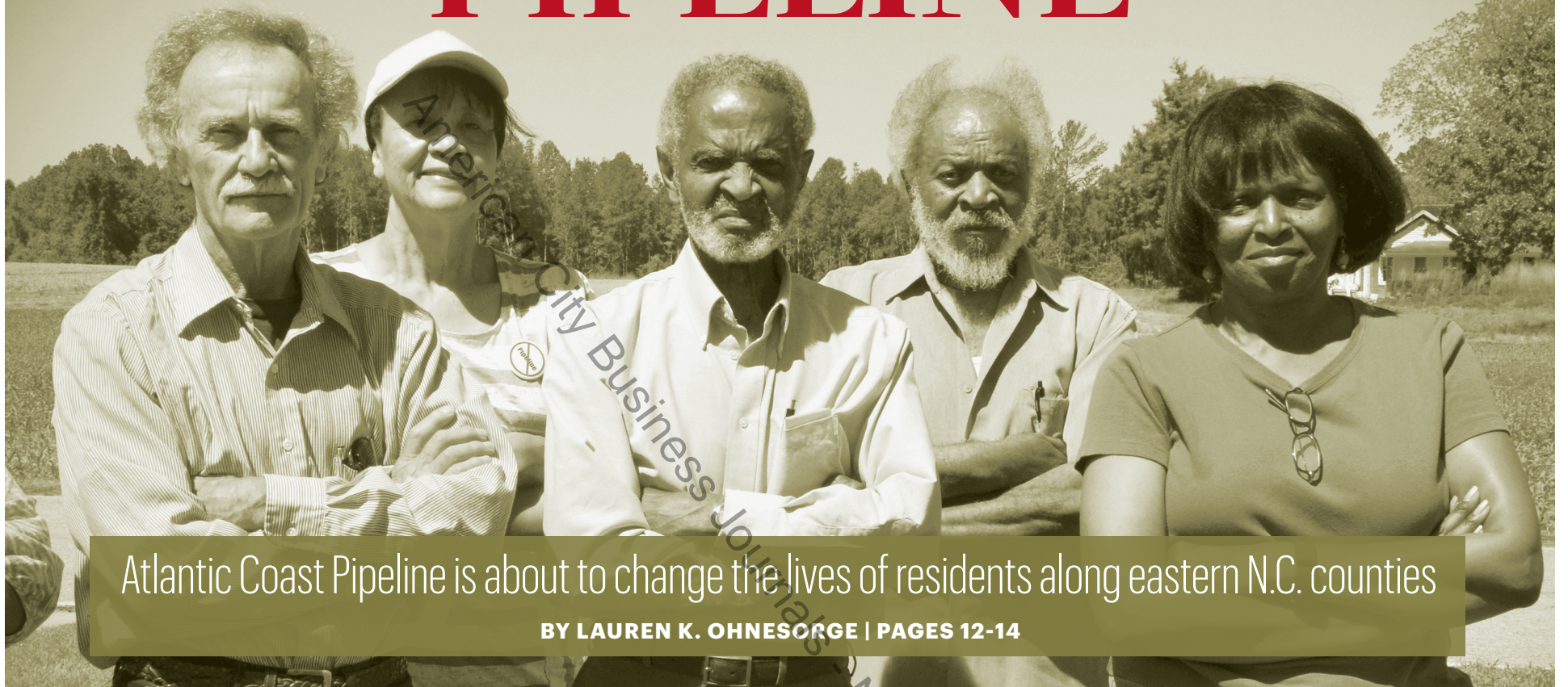
Jay Blandford moves from his revenue post to become president

CAMERON SNIPES, 34



COVER STORY

THE FACES BEHIND THE PIPELINE



Atlantic Coast Pipeline is about to change the lives of residents along eastern N.C. counties

BY LAUREN K. OHNESORGE | PAGES 12-14

LAUREN OHNESORGE

NEW IN TOWN

SHE CAME FOR THE LOVE OF THE THEATRE



Instilled with a love for music at an early age, Elizabeth Doran has built a career

in the arts. Now, she heads up the North Carolina Theatre. Doran brings with her years of experience in heading San Diego Theatres in California.

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► GROWING BUSINESS

WOMBLE CARLYLE EYES MORE N.C. WORK ON SWINE WASTE DEALS

After helping Wilmington-based client Optima ink an agreement with Duke Energy for a swine-waste natural gas conversion project in eastern North Carolina, Womble Carlyle Sandridge & Rice sees the potential for more work on similar deals in the pork production-heavy state going forward.

“Optima is clearing the way for this to happen with other farmers. ... We will have a lot of pieces in place that weren’t in place a year ago,” says Belton Zeigler, a partner in Womble Carlyle’s Columbia, South Carolina, office who led the work on behalf of Optima, along with a largely Raleigh-based team from the firm.

The deal will see Optima harvest methane from swine waste at three farms around Kenansville and produce “more than 80,000 dekatherms of natural-gas quality methane per year for use at Duke’s natural gas-fired power plants,” according to Womble Carlyle. The project is expected to be operational this summer.

To get the agreement in place, the team from Womble Carlyle handled matters ranging from engineering, financing and agreements with swine waste producers, to real property issues related to placing facilities for natural gas methane production on farms, creating interconnection agreements with utilities to transport the gas and determining standards with utilities with which the gas would need to comply, says Zeigler.

“This really is a groundbreaking project,” he says, that involves taking a greenhouse gas and “turning it into usable energy” for things like lighting homes, heating baths and running dishwashers.

Law firms look to improve processes, make billing predictable for clients

BY JENNIFER HENDERSON
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Lawyers from Ward and Smith just got their yellow belts, but they’re not for karate. Rather, the firm is embarking on a new quest for efficiency.

The firm is currently working with Catherine Alman MacDonagh, found-



Angela Doughty

er and CEO of the Legal Lean Sigma Institute, to apply project management principals of reducing waste and limiting variation – characteristic of Lean Six Sigma – to drive value for both the firm and its clients.

Lean Six Sigma – native to manufacturing – has gained steam in the legal industry with international firm Seyfarth Shaw at the forefront of implementing such measures.

Angela Doughty, who leads Ward and Smith’s intellectual property practice, says the firm began thinking about Lean Six Sigma as part of its strategic

planning process.

“[The firm] first identified legal lean and project management as one of the ways we could continue to put our clients first and be more proactive in terms of changes we’re seeing in the legal industry,” she says.

Ward and Smith sent a team to one of MacDonagh’s Legal Lean Sigma workshops for that purpose this year. The representatives came from marketing (what clients are finding of value), finance (what clients are looking for in terms of pricing and invoicing) and IT (how technology can be a resource for improving efficiency), says Doughty. They also included an attorney on the transactional side, herself, and a litigation attorney, she says. A table at Legal Lean Sigma workshops runs about \$10,000, according to its website.

At the workshop, Ward and Smith, along with other participants, identified a particular problem or challenge facing the firm and then applied Legal Lean Sigma to address it. Doughty said that the firm is applying Legal Lean Sigma to other processes as well.

“We want to provide clients predictability on costs,” she says, but also adds that the firm “wants to make sure cli-

ents are getting consistent, high-quality product.”

Also implementing the concepts is Parker Poe Adams & Bernstein. Chief Marketing and Business Development Officer Kristen Leis says, “We started really thinking about Lean Six Sigma last year when we heard from clients that they want and value law firms and lawyers that think not only as lawyers but also as business people.”

The firm launched what it calls its Mini-MBA program for its lawyers – MacDonagh taught one of the courses – and will be hosting a Legal Lean Sigma workshop in Charlotte in July.

Parker Poe will bring several clients along to collaborate on improving processes, according to Leis. One participating client is a bank in Raleigh, while lawyers from the firm’s Raleigh, Charlotte and Atlanta offices will attend.

While Leis says law firms have been a bit behind the curve in terms of applying Lean Six Sigma, it’s garnering more and more attention in the field as client pressures mount for firms in terms of demands for efficiency and predictability. However, she says there is trepidation among many firms “because law firms make money by billing time.”

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