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Weekly highlights from the
North Carolina Department of Commerce



Optimism for N.C.'s 2012 economic rebound anchored by top-notch business environment

Confidence and optimism are the buzz words being heard in economic circles this month as business leaders discuss the outlook for North Carolina in 2012. Positive trends in the state's economic indicators are evident, and while gains may be slower than past recoveries, they are steadily on the rise in North Carolina.

Governor Bev Perdue emphasized optimism for the state's economic future during the 10th Annual Economic Forecast Forum held Jan. 3, sponsored by the [N.C. Bankers Association](#) and the [N.C. Chamber](#). Unemployment rates are predicted to decline. Economic growth is expected to climb. North Carolina is expected to nearly double the number of jobs it will add in 2012 over the number added in 2011.

- [North Carolina was ranked by Forbes \[Nov. 2011\] as having the no. 1 best regulatory environment for business.](#)
- [North Carolina is consistently top-ranked for its business climate.](#)
- [North Carolina is one of the most innovative states in the United States.](#)
- [North Carolina is one of the fastest-growing states.](#)

One of the concerns regarding persistent unemployment is that new jobs being created in technology and manufacturing



Spirit fuselage arrives in France

This month Spirit Aero Systems delivered the first Airbus A350 XWB composite center fuselage section (Section 15) to Airbus in St-Nazaire, France. The assembly was made at Spirit's facility in Kinston. [See more photos](#) from Spirit of the delivery.

Carolina Prime Pets to relocate to Lenoir

Carolina Prime Pets, which is currently located in Murphy and makes dog treats, plans to relocate to Lenoir and hire up to 150 workers within the next two years, according to information from Caldwell County. That's the largest number of new jobs announced in the county in years, according to a release from Caldwell County Economic Development Commission.

An official announcement about the company's relocation to the area is scheduled for 10 a.m. Jan. 10 on the upper level of Broyhill Civic Center on U.S. 321. The announcement is expected following the regular meeting of the Caldwell County Economic Development Commission. Company, county and state officials are expected to be at the announcement.

[New firm bringing 150 jobs to Lenoir](#) (*The Hickory Daily Record*, Jan. 9)

require newer and more advanced skills. North Carolina has the infrastructure to accommodate for this caveat. In addition to the 16-campus public university system, North Carolina has a strong, 58-campus community college system that works with business and industry to create training programs specific to current workforce needs. [Read more.](#)



(Left-right) N.C. Job Corps Outreach Specialist/Job Developer Dorothy Sidberry, N.C. Department of Commerce Deputy Secretary and COO Dale Carroll and N.C. Job Corps Executive Project Director for Outreach and Admissions and Career Transition Services Charles Austin

Commerce, N.C. Job Corps collaborate on Workforce Development

On Jan. 6 the N.C. Job Corps visited the N.C. Department of Commerce to provide a briefing on the four [Job Corps Training Centers](#) in the state. Job Corps and Commerce are exploring ways to further collaborate on workforce development in 2012

Tourism efforts promote Civil War sesquicentennial

The N.C. Department of Commerce's Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development is promoting Civil War-related attractions and events across virtually all of its programs throughout the sesquicentennial period.

North Carolina is one of several states participating in Civil War Trails, a groundbreaking history/tourism initiative that has installed more than 1,000 interpretive wayside markers at historic sites in North Carolina, Maryland, Virginia, Tennessee, West Virginia and Gettysburg, Penn. North Carolina has 232 commemorative markers in 78 counties.

Other initiatives include: [journeys](#), [itineraries](#), [brochure downloads](#), events listings and links to additional resources, including the N.C. Department of Cultural Resources' [NCCivilWar150](#) website, on [VisitNC.com](#); a four-page feature in the Official 2012 North Carolina Travel Guide; extensive public relations efforts, including a comprehensive [media kit](#),



Kings Mountain adds its largest solar farm yet

Charlotte continues to grow as an energy hub with the addition of a new renewable energy source in nearby Kings Mountain. *The Gaston Gazette* reported on January 8 the completion of a 28-acre solar farm operated by Charlotte-based [Birdseye Renewable Energy](#). The energy produced by the farm will be sold to Duke Energy. [Read more.](#)

Williamston to begin business recruitment effort

The Williamston Economic Restructuring Committee is working on targeted business recruitment for the downtown. It will contact businesses within the region to consider Williamston for expansion or relocation. Businesses targeted would be to fill gaps in the retail market, such as jewelry stores, clothing, home, and garden. It will also participate in the Strategic Economic Development plan implementation for the county and towns. Williamston is part of the [N.C. Department of Commerce's Small Town Main Street Program](#).

The Design subcommittee has received a generous donation from the George Bagley family towards completion of the Triangle improvement project. The sculpture is almost complete for installation there and completion of the project is expected by early spring. Street and sidewalk improvements are currently underway. Fundraising Brick sales end Dec. 31.



UNC-Chapel Hill ranks No. 1 Best Value for 11th year

[press releases](#), [feature stories](#), [fact sheets](#) and inclusion in media missions in New York and Charlotte; international marketing with an article in the Division's German newsletter and promotion during sales missions in Germany, Canada and the United Kingdom, and the Travel South Receptive Operator Mission in Orlando; group marketing, including promotion during trade shows for the American Bus Association, National Tour Association and Travel South USA; brochure distribution at the Division's nine Welcome Centers and through its 1-800-VISITNC call center.

The Division also worked with the [Appalachian Regional Commission](#) and twelve other ARC states to develop and produce a Civil War map-guide for distribution in the Spring 2011 issue of "American Heritage," which is also available at the state's Welcome Centers and by download from [VisitNC.com](#).

[New perspectives mark Civil War anniversary](#) (*The News & Observer* - Raleigh, Jan. 3)

Waddell named to Transition Team

N.C. Department of Transportation Secretary Gene Conti announced recently that Darlene Waddell, long-time executive director for the Global TransPark Authority, will join a transition team supporting the integration of the N.C. Ports Authority and the Global TransPark with NCDOT. She began her appointment Jan. 1.

"NCDOT is fortunate to have Darlene in this new role," said NCDOT Director of Strategic Initiatives Roberto Canales. "As a CPA, she is an asset to the team as we merge financial systems and internal processes." [Read more.](#)

UNC School of Govt. to hold Community Development Academy

The UNC-Chapel Hill School of Government will hold a six-day course covering the concepts, methods and strategies of community economic development, March 13-15 and April 24-26 in Chapel Hill. The course provides community development practitioners with significant perspective and practical skills surrounding community development in North Carolina. [Learn more.](#)

Belk, workforce boards honored for economic impact

Jobs are the number one priority of most Americans, and the 2012 recipients of the Charlotte Regional Partnership's annual economic development awards are creating jobs and helping people develop the skills to fill them.

Belk Inc. is being honored with the private-sector Jerry Award. Charlotte Works, Pee Dee Workforce Investment Board and the Centralina, Gaston County and Region C workforce development boards are being recognized with the public-sector award. The Jerrys will be presented during the Partnership's May 10 luncheon at the Charlotte Convention Center. The Region C Workforce Development Board includes Cleveland County; Pee Dee Workforce Investment Board includes Chesterfield County in South Carolina; and the Centralina Workforce Development Board includes Anson, Cabarrus, Iredell, Lincoln, Rowan, Stanly and Union counties.

You can't beat North Carolina for great education at a great value. For the 11th year running, UNC-Chapel Hill, the nation's first public university, was named by [Kiplinger's Personal Finance](#) magazine as the number one top value for public universities. The magazine attributes generous financial aid, a highly-competitive admission rate, low student-faculty ratios and strong graduation rates to the school's first-place ranking. [Read more.](#)

Grove Park Inn President and CEO Craig Madison resigns

Saying "it's been a great 34 years," Craig Madison, president and CEO of the Grove Park Inn Resort & Spa in Asheville, resigned Jan. 3, according to a statement issued by the historic resort.

Madison co-founded the Asheville advertising firm The Alpha Group in 1978 and served as its president. The following year, the Grove Park Inn hired The Alpha Group to handle its food and beverage advertising. After five years of that work, Madison was retained as director of marketing for the resort. He was named the Grove Park Inn's general manager in 1999, then named president and CEO in 2003.

Madison has also been active in the community, serving on boards including the N. C. Travel and Tourism Board, the N.C. Travel and Tourism Coalition, AdvantageWest Regional Economic Partnership and UNC Asheville's and Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College's foundation boards.

[Asheville's Grove Park Inn announces resignation of CEO J. Craig Madison](#) (*The Citizen-Times* - Asheville, Jan. 3)

Tengion completes move to Winston-Salem

Tengion Inc. confirmed Jan. 5 that it has finished moving its headquarters to its Winston-Salem operations.

The move by the biotechnology company had been expected since it said Nov. 14 that it was concentrating its research and development operations in Winston-Salem as part of a major restructuring.

The company eliminated 15 jobs each in Winston-Salem and East Norriton, Penn., where the company was based, as part of the restructuring. The cuts included several executive positions.

[Tengion completes move to Winston-Salem](#) (*Winston-Salem Journal*, Jan. 5)

"Both Belk and these workforce development boards understand the fundamental key to success: Know your customers and meet their needs," said Ronnie Bryant, president & CEO of the Charlotte Regional Partnership. "Because these organizations put their customers first, they are successful. And because they are successful, the 16-county Charlotte region is more economically resilient and competitive."

The Jerry Awards are named in honor of the first recipients, Carolina Panthers owner and founder Jerry Richardson and Jerry Orr, aviation director at Charlotte Douglas International Airport, who recognize that regionalism benefits the economies of all 16 counties and the businesses within Charlotte. [Learn more.](#)

[Belk, work-force development groups earn Jerry Awards](#) (*Charlotte Business Journal*, Jan. 9)

N.C. in the News

This Week's Highlights

- [Western NC Nature Center sets attendance record](#) (*The News & Observer* - Raleigh, Jan. 8)
- [Governor Bev Perdue to open Jan. 12 Chamber Executive Women's Luncheon](#) (PR.com, Jan. 8)
- [Electric vehicle charging station opening in Alamance](#) (*Business Journal of the Greater Triad*, Jan. 6)

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