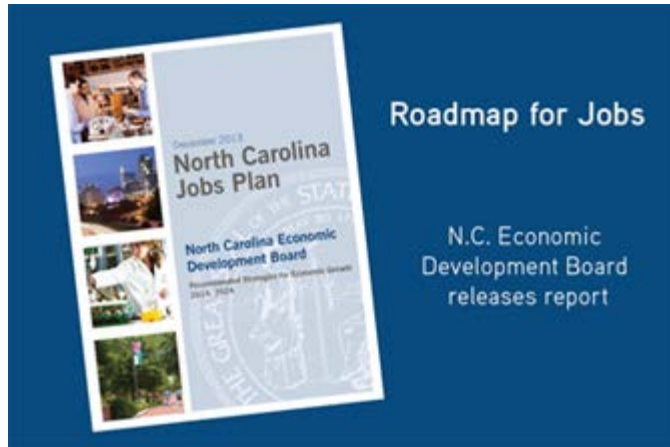


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Weekly highlights from the
North Carolina Department of Commerce



N.C. Economic Development Board Releases Strategic Plan

The N.C. Economic Development Board approved [a 10-year strategic plan](#) on Jan. 24 that is designed to serve as a guide for economic growth and activities across the state.

"I want to thank John Lassiter, Jim Whitehurst and the rest of the Economic Development Board members for their hard work," said Gov. Pat McCrory. "I asked the board to come up with a strategic plan that will direct our efforts at the state level and enable our state and local leaders to coordinate efforts to create jobs and improve the lives of all North Carolinians. We need to make the best use of our economic development resources as we continue our Carolina Comeback."

The Economic Development Board has been meeting since July 2013 in various work groups to develop the strategic plan. In addition, N.C. Commerce Secretary Sharon Decker conducted a Listening Tour across the state and gathered input from more than 2,000 economic development professionals, business leaders and citizens through surveys and town meetings.

"What's presented today is the outcome of six months of hard work by government and business leaders who were all working toward the same goal of improving our economy and creating jobs for North Carolinians," said John Lassiter, Chair of the EDB and President of Carolina Legal Staffing. "I want to thank all of our board members and Commerce staff that worked so diligently on this important effort."

"We appreciate the trust and confidence the governor placed



Last year's N.C. Main Street Conference in Salisbury

N.C. Main Street Conference Cancelled Due to Weather

The Department of Commerce's Office of Urban Development has announced the cancellation of its annual N.C. Main Street Conference, originally scheduled for later this week (Jan. 29-31) in New Bern. With a snow forecast of up to 12 inches expected in the area, conference organizers had no choice in the matter.

"Due to circumstances beyond our control the 2014 NC Main Street Conference & Awards Program is cancelled," said Liz Parham, Director on the Office of Urban Development in a prepared statement. "We were notified at 4:45 p.m. that due to the 11-12 inches of snow expected in New Bern, the Craven County manager has ordered that all county-operated facilities are to be shut down as they are being forced to direct their efforts to essential services. That means that the New Bern Riverfront Convention Center, our conference site, will be closed and they do not know when they will be allowed to reopen. These circumstances unfortunately mean that we are forced to cancel the conference at this time."

Main Street is a downtown revitalization program based on economic development within the context of historic preservation. In 1980, North Carolina was one of six original states selected to launch the work of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's National Main Street Center. N.C. Main Street and Small Town Main Street, which provide technical assistance to smaller participating

in us when we began this process," said Jim Whitehurst, Vice-Chair of EDB and CEO of Red Hat. "We're honored to present this report today and know it will serve as a roadmap for all economic growth, job creation and other related activities moving forward for the next ten years."

The plan includes recommendations in the following areas:

- **Targeted Clusters and Branding:** North Carolina should nurture high-performing industries that have already committed to the state and focus on industry clusters that match the existing workforce with high return rates. The state should also develop an overarching brand for its products.
- **Business Climate:** Efforts are needed to measure and promote the improving tax climate in the state for relocating businesses. Broad scale regulatory reform can strengthen our competitive advantage and the creation of the 'Office of Regulatory Reduction and Review' can review outdated and redundant regulations that serve as a barrier to job creation and capital investments. Incentives play a role in competing across the nation but each tool must have a true return on the investment of public funds. The Business Courts should be expanded to speed up costly litigation and reduce time-consuming appeals.
- **Innovation and Entrepreneurship:** North Carolina's colleges and universities need to become hubs for transferring technology and research to startup enterprises and commercial use. Tax credits are critical to encourage broad venture capital investment and small business services must be streamlined for easy access, providing one-stop services for information and resources.
- **Talent and Retiree Attraction:** North Carolina must establish its reputation as a destination for the creative class. University and community college curriculums need to be realigned to deliver the trained workforce required to support these new businesses. Retirees and second-career entrepreneurs should be recruited as they approach retirement and best practices will be shared between communities that can attract this talent pool. Similarly, North Carolina can lead the nation in attracting and retaining military retirees and returning veterans. This highly skilled and trained workforce has experience in advanced manufacturing and capacity for innovation.
- **Education and Workforce Development:** Our state can create a competitive advantage by enhancing Career and Technical Education with focus on STEM training for industry clusters like manufacturing, IT, Health Sciences and Agribusiness. Workforce development programs must integrate with secondary school curriculums and career development pathways.
- **Rural Prosperity:** Last mile broadband along with market connectivity between port, rail and highways can shrink the gap between rural and urban economic growth. Efforts to complete the supply chain between commodity production and a renewed effort toward energy exploration and generation will be job generators for the long term. Rural tourism and focus on "Micropolitan" regions will drive an inventory of assets and gap analysis.
- **Community Development:** The Block Grant program needs to be realigned to work in unison with the economic development initiatives and the current tier system needs review to maximize return on investment and allow streamlined efforts in areas of poverty within

towns and cities throughout the state, are part of the Office of Urban Development in the Department of Commerce's Rural Economic Development Division.

A decision will be made next week as to whether or not this year's conference can be rescheduled. Further information will be posted as it becomes available at www.ncmainstreetcenter.com

6.9% Unemployment Rate Lowest in Five Years

Governor Pat McCrory and Commerce Secretary Sharon Decker released the following statement after North Carolina's unemployment rate dropped by 0.5 of a percentage point to 6.9 percent - the lowest rate in more than five years.

"The trend of more people getting back to work in North Carolina is great news for our state," said Governor McCrory. "We continue to see that our pro-growth and pro-jobs policies enacted over the last year are having a positive impact and getting people into jobs. While this is welcome news, we will remain focused on policies that will encourage job growth — not just for the short-term, but for the long-term to sustain the progress we have made."

Secretary Decker added, "We're encouraged to see these early signs of economic recovery, but we won't rest until every North Carolinian who wants a job has one. The economic development plan approved last week lays the foundation for continuing this important work across the state."

Rural Communities Eligible for Water Infrastructure Grants

In order to provide its rural partners with up-to-date information on funding opportunities, the N.C. Rural Center invites them to learn more about the 2014 water and wastewater infrastructure grants that will be administered by the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources Division of Water Infrastructure.

These are not Rural Center grants. Rather, these grants are made possible by the U.S. Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grant program and administered by the state. The Division of Water Infrastructure expects that about \$26 million will be available in 2014 for this program.

This is the first time that these dollars have been allocated in this manner and administered by DENR. Because of the changes to the CDBG program, DENR has amended its annual action plan and made it

prosperous regions. Seed capital strategies can create partnerships for development of manufacturing and distribution facilities. Main Street efforts to rehabilitate buildings in smaller towns and programmatic sharing can strengthen the tools needed for a return on investment.

- **Delivery of Services and Metrics:** Though final metrics will depend on the elements of plan implantation; benchmarking net job growth, success in retention and recruiting and monitoring the outcomes for state and local investment are examples of the key methodology. Co-location of state resources by prosperity zones will speed up the delivery and access to business developers, planners and agencies like DOT and DENR critical for permit approvals.

The next steps for the plan include the development of an action matrix that will assign responsibility, estimate resource needs, build a timeline and define the metrics of success. The strategic plan will serve as the road map for the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina, the Department of Commerce and the wide array of partners in the state focused on job creation and economic growth.

Canadian Automation Company Announces Expansion into North Carolina

Governor Pat McCrory and N.C. Commerce Secretary Sharon Decker announced Jan. 27 that Eclipse Automation Inc. will be expanding its operations to Mecklenburg County under the name Eclipse Automation Southeast, LLC. The new facility will be located in the Whitehall Technology Park in Charlotte. The company plans to create 50 new jobs over the next three years.

"I'd like to thank Eclipse for creating valuable manufacturing jobs here in North Carolina," said Governor McCrory. "Manufacturing has been a big part of our state's past and will continue to be a large part of our state's future. Our well-equipped talent pool and quality of life continue to be great selling points for businesses new to North Carolina."

Eclipse Automation is a leading supplier of custom automated manufacturing equipment for the energy, health sciences, transportation, mining and consumer industries. Eclipse Automation partners with Fortune 1000 companies worldwide to build efficient and profitable assembly and testing operations.

"We are committed to creating new advanced manufacturing jobs in North Carolina and know that Eclipse will become a strong corporate partner for us," said Secretary Decker. "We applaud the Eclipse executives for their commitment to invest in North Carolina and know our manufacturing community will benefit from this strategic partner."

[Read more.](#)

British American Business Council, GSK to Host Wellness Event on Feb. 5

The Triangle/Eastern N.C. Chapter of the [British American Business Council](#) and [GlaxoSmithKline](#) will host a [Business Exchange](#) event, "Do More, Feel Better, Live Longer," on Feb. 5 from 5:45 to 8:30 p.m. at GSK's global headquarters located at 5 Moore Drive in Research Triangle Park. Speakers will include GSK executive Jamey Millar, vice president,

available for public comment. The document includes information about proposed eligibility and project requirements.

For additional information, a copy of the draft action plan, or comments, please contact:

[Julie Cubeta](#), Supervisor, State and CDBG-Infrastructure Grants Program, Division of Water Infrastructure, NCDENR.

N.C. in the News

This Week's Highlights

- [Take a tour of the 1,800-acre Chatham County megasite](#) (*The Business Journal of the Greater Triad*, Jan. 24)
- [Lenovo-IBM deal to double Lenovo's N.C. presence](#) (*Triangle Business Journal*, Jan. 23)
- [North Carolina companies in on Team USA preparations](#) (*Time Warner Cable News*, Jan. 23)
- [Food business conference slated for Feb. 26 in Raleigh](#) (*N.C. Political News*, Jan. 23)
- [Pactiv to boost employment in Mooresville by 50 jobs](#) (*Charlotte Business Journal*, Jan. 23)
- [Manufacturing in N.C. could see resurgence](#) (WSOC TV, Jan. 23)
- [Purdue Pharma finalizes land purchase for new Durham plant](#) (*Triangle Business Journal*, Jan. 22)
- [CT Nassau doubling size of its Burlington facility](#) (*The Business Journal of the Greater Triad*, Jan. 22)
- [Obama's manufacturing innovation hub to open by spring](#) (*Triangle Business Journal*, Jan. 22)
- [Evalueserve starts recruiting for 400 jobs in Raleigh](#) (*Triangle Business Journal*, Jan. 21)
- [This week's PGA merchandise show to feature 30 N.C. companies](#) (*Triangle Business Journal*, Jan. 21)
- [Pintful: Craft beer in North Carolina is \\$791 million market](#) (*The News & Observer - Raleigh*, Jan. 21)
- [Organization of Women in International Trade creates Triangle chapter](#) (*Triangle Business Journal*, Jan. 21)
- [Launch Chapel Hill 'graduates' 3 companies, welcomes 7 more](#) (*Triangle Business Journal*, Jan. 21)
- [ABB expanding at Centennial Campus](#) (*Triangle Business Journal*, Jan. 21)
- [Group tries to buy land for megasite](#) (*News & Record - Greensboro*, Jan. 20)
- [Harrisburg names economic development director](#) (*The Independent Tribune -- Concord*, Jan. 20)
- [Applications available for skilled-trades training](#) (*The Daily News - Jacksonville*,

oncology business unit head, and Spencer Mahony, HM Consul and regional director, East Coast U.S.A., U.K. Trade and Investment, British Embassy, Washington D.C.

"The topic of this program hosted by GSK is an excellent choice for our first major event of 2014," said Steve Cain, president of the Triangle/Eastern N.C. Chapter of the BABC. "The success of GSK globally and in the U.S.A. is a fascinating story of innovation through putting patients first. GSK is a highly important company in the Triangle/Eastern North Carolina Region with a large R&D investment in RTP and manufacturing in Zebulon. They are also well known for their support of innovative health and education programs designed to bring sustainable, positive change in this region and across America."

"At GSK, we serve U.S. communities by discovering, developing, and delivering new medicines, vaccines and other healthcare products to help people do more, feel better, and live longer," said Millar. "We are committed to discovering new ways to treat disease, making sure patients get their medicines, and making a difference in the community. Based on initiatives started in RTP, GSK recently announced changes to its global sales and marketing practices to further ensure patient interests come first."

The Triangle/Eastern N.C. Chapter of BABC was founded in 2012 to build on the close professional, business and cultural relationships between North Carolina and the U.K. and to act as a catalyst to help maintain and further strengthen the strong and lasting trade partnerships between the two. The region has grown exponentially as a high-tech hub, hosting industries in medicine, electronics, education, agribusiness, aerospace, biotech, energy, defense and entertainment. The BABC is a transatlantic business network that helps bridge markets between the U.S. and U.K., stimulating collaboration and fostering partnership.

The cost [to register for the Business Exchange event](#) is \$20 for BABC members and \$40 for nonmembers.

Jan. 20)

- [ARCA expanding manufacturing operation in Mebane](#) (*The News & Observer* - Raleigh, Jan. 20)
- ['Sleepy Hollow' stars, producer tout food, history and crew](#) (*StarNews* - Wilmington, Jan. 19)
- [AdvantageWest Moves Forward](#) (*CitizenTimes*- Asheville, Jan. 17)

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