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FROM N.C. COMMERCE



N.C. Main Street Conference to Convene in New Bern in March

Community and economic development leaders from across the state will gather at the New Bern Riverfront Convention Center for the 2020 North Carolina Main Street Conference, March 10-12.

Organized by the North Carolina Department of Commerce and its N.C. Main Street and Rural Planning Center, the Main Street conference will explore downtown revitalization and economic development strategies. This year's conference celebrates the 40th anniversary of the Main Street program. The North Carolina conference is the largest statewide gathering of its kind in the nation.

The 2020 conference is expected to attract more than 700 people and will explore the impact of the program over the past 40 years while looking to the future.

Keynote speakers include **Donavan Rypkema, Principal of PlaceEconomics and President of Heritage Strategies International**, and **Ilana Preuss, Founder of Recast City, LLC**. Rypkema will offer a behind-the-scenes look at the impact of the N.C. Main Street Program. Preuss will deliver a presentation on how to incorporate small scale manufacturing into the business mix on Main Street.

In addition to the keynotes, two plenary sessions are scheduled. **Rodney Swink, a former N.C. Main Street Director** and current **N.C. Main Street Director Liz Parham** will explore the projects that generated more than \$3 billion in investment. **Irvin Henderson, Principal with Henderson & Company** and Board Member for the National Main Street Center will speak on spurring downtown investment. The conference will include 20 breakout sessions that cover a wide range of downtown revitalization topics, and six tours of downtown New Bern that will look at everything from housing to



Pactiv Manufacturer to Invest \$8 Million in Greensboro Expansion

Pactiv Corporation, a food packaging manufacturer and distributor, will create 25 new jobs in Guilford County, **Governor Roy Cooper** announced January 24. The company will invest a minimum of \$8 million to expand their current facility in Greensboro.

"Companies like Pactiv choose to expand in North Carolina because our state has the right ingredients for success: the infrastructure and workforce to help grow their business," said **Governor Cooper**.

Pactiv is a global leader in the food packaging industry. Founded in 1965, Pactiv strives to innovate and focuses on producing and distributing the highest quality foodservice packaging products. The company supplies every major foodservice retailer and distributor in North America and continues to be an industry leader in technology and innovative new product development.

"It is important for us to grow in areas where there is both a good business climate and an available and skilled and workforce," said **Fred Mooney, Pactiv's Vice President of Operations**. "We have found Greensboro, North Carolina to be such a place. Thank you to the City of Greensboro and the State of North Carolina for their continued support of our growth."

"North Carolina is the second largest state for food and beverage processing," said **North Carolina Commerce Secretary Anthony M. Copeland**. "When North Carolina companies grow their operations in our state, it confirms the strength of our strong business climate, convenient location and capable workforce."

Although salaries will vary depending on the position, the average wage for all new positions will be \$48,200. The current average annual wage in Guilford County is \$47,955.

A performance-based grant of \$50,000 from

cultural facilities.

New Bern is one of the original Main Street programs in both the country and the state. This riverfront city has experienced tremendous success with their downtown initiatives over the past 40 years. Since launching their program in 1980, New Bern has received more than \$338 million in investment, which created 174 businesses and renovated more than 250 buildings. The beautifully renovated convention center, which recently reopened after Hurricane Florence renovations, will serve as the conference headquarters. While in town, attendees are encouraged to visit Tryon Palace, explore the birthplace of Pepsi-Cola, walk through the N.C. History Center, enjoy the local cuisine, do a little shopping with local merchants, and watch the sunrise and sunset over the convergence of the Neuse and Trent rivers in downtown New Bern.

[More information and online registration](#) is available at the conference website, ncmainstreetconference.com.



Governor Cooper talks with Design Foundry employees during his January 28 visit.

Governor Cooper Visits JDIG Recipient in Hickory

Governor Cooper visited Design Foundry last week (January 28), a furniture manufacturing plant in Hickory and winner of a Job Development Investment Grant (JDIG) announced last year.

During his tour of the factory, the Governor noted that 200 jobs are being added to the company over the next five years and how important it is to invest in education and work-based learning to prepare workers for those jobs.

The company is investing more than \$3.1 million in the project.

Design Foundry manufactures upholstered furniture in partnership with a major furniture and home goods retailer. The company emphasizes the strong tradition of handmade furniture combined with technology in manufacturing to create new methods of manufacturing through supplier partnerships and internal research and development.

At the time of the announcement, company CEO Eric Fulcher said, "We are excited to make Catawba County our home. The community has a strong tradition of being makers of great things, with furniture being an important part of that history. Investments in STEM programs within Catawba County helped affirm our decision to select Hickory as the location for this company. We believe Catawba County can be at the forefront

the One North Carolina Fund will help facilitate Pactiv's expansion in Guilford County. The One NC Fund provides financial assistance to local governments to help attract economic investment and to create jobs. Companies receive no money upfront and must meet job creation and capital investment targets to qualify for payment. All One NC grants require a matching grant from local governments and any award is contingent upon that condition being met.

In addition to [N.C. Commerce](#) and the [Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina](#), other key partners in the project include the [North Carolina Community College System](#), [Guilford Technical Community College](#), [Guilford County Economic Development Alliance](#), [Greensboro Chamber of Commerce](#), [High Point Economic Development Corporation](#), [Guilford County Workforce Development Board](#), and the [City of Greensboro](#).



Jamie Lee Curtis stars in "Hollywood Kills." Photo courtesy Universal Pictures.

2019 Film Production Season Finished Strong in North Carolina

North Carolina wrapped up 2019 with production companies spending more than \$167 million in direct in-state expenses, the most money spent on television and film projects in the last five years. Combined, the projects created 11,820 job opportunities for North Carolina's highly-skilled film professionals.

The year concluded with three more North Carolina Film and Entertainment Grant recipients completing production: "Halloween Kills", "The Georgetown Project", and "The Eyes of Tammy Faye." Together, these three productions had a direct in-state spend of more than \$56 million while creating more than 3,200 job opportunities, including nearly 500 well-paying crew positions.

"North Carolina continues to be a desirable production location for the film industry," said **N.C. Commerce Secretary Anthony M. Copeland**. "With our infrastructure and experienced film talent, North Carolina can confidently support television and film projects anywhere in the state, which is an economic

of combining innovative technology with the artisan craft."

More about the company's JDIG project [is available online](#).

Federal Bonding, Work Opportunity Tax Credit helped N.C. employers hire more workers in 2019

Two workforce incentive programs managed by the North Carolina Department of Commerce reached higher benchmarks last year, indicating more people found jobs thanks to the financial support these programs provide to North Carolina employers.

The Department's Workforce Solutions division increased the number of Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) certifications issued to nearly 80,000, while its Federal Bonding program more than doubled the number of bonds it handled in 2019 versus the previous year. Both programs serve as incentives for companies to hire people with significant barriers to employment.

"During a period of low unemployment, it's particularly important that we bring more North Carolinians into the workforce who have faced challenges," said **N.C. Commerce Secretary Anthony Copeland**. "This year, we will be encouraging even more employers to use Federal Bonding and the Work Opportunity Tax Credit to support hiring these jobseekers, contributing to the success of their businesses and that of their communities."

The [Federal Bonding program](#) provides free individual fidelity bonds to employers when they hire people who traditionally have had difficulty finding meaningful employment. Employers receive \$5,000 in coverage for the first six months of employment, and the bond must be established prior to the first day of work. The coverage protects the employer from acts of dishonesty such as theft, larceny or embezzlement.

Among those workers who may be eligible for Federal Bonding are individuals with a history of arrest or conviction, individuals with a history of substance abuse, or individuals lacking sufficient work history. The Division of Workforce Solutions (DWS) processes these bonds for North Carolina employers. In 2019, the agency processed 102 bonds, compared to 50 in 2018.

The [WOTC](#) is a federal tax credit available to employers who hire qualified individuals from eligible target groups. In North Carolina, DWS administers WOTC and determines eligibility for the target groups.

According to the newly released data, DWS awarded certifications to 2,731 North Carolina employers for 79,443 new employees in the 2019 calendar year. That represented an almost 5 percent increase in the number of certifications compared to the 2018 calendar year. Those certifications allowed employers to potentially claim up to \$197,942,800 in tax credits – which was likewise an increase of 5 percent, or about \$9.5 million, over 2018.

After receiving a certification from DWS, employers may then apply for the tax credit with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). A business can claim from \$1,200 to \$9,600 for each eligible employee, depending upon the target group of the person hired, the wages paid to that worker in the first year of employment, and the number of hours worked.

development success for everyone."

Debuting this fall, "Halloween Kills" is the latest installment of the famous Halloween movie series. Jamie Lee Curtis returns to the role of Laurie Strode. Filmed in the greater Wilmington area, the project is eligible for a rebate up to \$7 million through the North Carolina Film and Entertainment Grant.

"The Eyes of Tammy Faye" tells the story of the rise and fall of Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker. The production filmed in the greater Charlotte area and is approved for a rebate of up to \$3.7 million from the film and entertainment grant.

The final grant recipient of 2019 is "The Georgetown Project," a thriller about a troubled actor who begins to unravel while shooting a horror film. Qualifying for a rebate up to \$3.3 million, the Miramax project filmed in the greater Wilmington area, with extensive production at EUE/Screen Gems Studios.

"Television and film production saw great activity in North Carolina last year," added **NC Film Office director Guy Gaster**. "These high-profile projects filmed at the end of the year have brought added exposure to our state's film industry and will serve as a great springboard as we move ahead in 2020."

Governor Roy Cooper recently revived the Advisory Council on Film, Television and Digital Streaming. The council plays a critical role in advising Governor Cooper on economic development strategies to increase film and television production in North Carolina.

The North Carolina Film and Entertainment Grant provides financial assistance to attract feature film and television productions that will stimulate economic activity and create jobs in the state. The program is administered by the North Carolina Department of Commerce and promoted by the North Carolina Film Office, part of the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina.

Funding Opportunity: Golden LEAF Foundation Addresses Workforce Issues

The Golden LEAF Foundation recently launched *GLOW*, the Golden LEAF Opportunities for Work initiative. The program can provide funding to address urgent workforce issues facing North Carolina, with an aim to develop creative strategies to expand the pool of workers available for employment in today's environment of near full employment.

Governmental entities or established 501(c)(3) nonprofits with experience delivering workforce development services are eligible to apply.

Among those who may qualify for the WOTC are certain veterans, recipients of public assistance, people with felony convictions, people with disabilities, and the long-term unemployed. Only new hires are eligible.

Deadline for applying is noon on Friday, March 6.

More information is available at the [Golden LEAF website](#).

On Our Radar

- [Gov. Cooper Names New Secretaries for Departments of Transportation and Information Technology](#) - February 4
- [With building trades in demand, Wake Tech apprenticeships put students on road to job security](#) (WRAL.com - January 24)

N.C. in the News

- [Pella invests in Reidsville Recreation](#) (Rockingham Now - February 3)
- [Policygenius raises \\$100M from investors as it grows its Durham headcount](#) (News & Observer - January 30)
- [Ohio governor chosen to be head of ARC](#) (The Post - Athens, Ohio - January 27)

About Us

SYNC is North Carolina Commerce's electronic newsletter for local government officials, private-sector allies, state policy makers, and other economic development leaders. We offer unfiltered details about new economic development projects and events, useful news about your peers, and opportunities to synchronize with statewide programs and tools in order to advance economic development in your community. [Send your story ideas to the editor.](#)

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