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Weekly highlights from the
North Carolina Department of Commerce



Governor Perdue addresses the General Assembly in her State of the State address.

Perdue urges corporate tax cut in address

Governor Bev Perdue on Feb. 14 delivered her second State of the State address before the General Assembly, making three major policy announcements. She proposed reducing the corporate income tax; fulfilling her Career and College Promise initiative; and maintaining funding for all state-supported teaching assistant and teacher positions.

In order to continue to attract private sector jobs to North Carolina, Perdue announced that her upcoming budget will cut the corporate tax rate to 4.9 percent - making it the lowest rate in the Southeast. She also called on the General Assembly to support the state's existing incentives program.

"This change will push North Carolina to the forefront in growing jobs for our people," Perdue said. "And that, my friends, must be the No. 1 priority for every one of us in this chamber tonight." [Read the text of the governor's speech and see video of the address.](#)

[Perdue urges cut in business taxes](#) (*The News & Observer* - Raleigh, Feb. 15)

Clearwater CEO recognized in address

During her Feb. 14 State of the State address to the General Assembly, Governor Bev Perdue recognized [Clearwater Paper](#) Chairman and CEO Gordon Jones. In June, 2010, Clearwater announced plans to invest \$260 million and hire 250 workers

Daimler Trucks adding hundreds of jobs in Mt. Holly and Gastonia

Daimler Trucks North America on Feb 15 announced that it plans to add 628 new positions in its Mt. Holly and Gastonia manufacturing plants to accommodate rising customer demand and expanding production schedules.

Company officials also confirmed that hiring will occur at all the company's truck and parts manufacturing facilities during the first half of the year totaling approximately 1,300 positions.

The Mt. Holly Truck Manufacturing Plant is located in Mt. Holly, and plans to fill 447 new manufacturing and 27 plant-based administrative positions beginning in mid-March. The Mt. Holly plant manufactures Freightliner M2 Business Class medium-duty, hybrid, and natural gas trucks.

[Daimler Trucks adding hundreds of jobs in Mt. Holly and Gastonia](#) (Fox Charlotte, Feb. 14)

Lowe's to add 275 jobs in Wilkesboro

Lowe's home improvement stores announced Feb. 15 that it is adding more than 275 jobs during 2011 at its Customer Support Center in Wilkesboro. Plans call for the new employees to work in the Contact Center and interact directly with Lowe's customers who reach out to the company with questions, request assistance with online purchases, or request service for products such as appliances and outdoor power equipment.

Employment in the Contact Center has grown significantly in recent years as the company has expanded its proprietary brands and the services it offers to customers. The center has grown from approximately 350 employees in January 2010 to its current employment of more than 700 people. The 275 jobs announced today will bring the total Contact Center employment to more than 975 by year's end.

[Lowe's to add 275 jobs at Wilkesboro call](#)

over the next five years to build a new manufacturing and distribution facility in Shelby. The plant will make private-label tissue products for retail grocery chains throughout the Southeast and along the East Coast. The investment was made possible by a Job Development Investment Grant from the N.C. Department of Commerce.

Perdue quotes Jones on why Clearwater picked North Carolina: "It was a critical combination of four things - reasonable taxes, good highways, available workforce and a very good working relationship with city, county and state agencies - that made North Carolina the excellent choice for us."



(Left-right) N.C. Department of Commerce Deputy Secretary Dale Carroll, Ted Abernathy of the Southern Growth Policies Board, N.C. Representative Danny McComas and Rick Kaglic of the Federal Reserve Bank at the freight conference

'Freight in the Southeast' conference held in Charlotte

The Institute for Trade & Transportation Studies held its national meeting in Charlotte on Feb. 9-11. The N.C. Department of Transportation and UNC-Charlotte co-hosted the conference. The conference included discussion of initiatives such as the N.C. Logistics Task Force and the N.C. Mobility Fund. Panelists included N.C. Department of Commerce Secretary Dale Carroll and N.C. Department of Transportation Secretary Gene Conti. [Learn more.](#)



(Left-right) N.C. Department of Commerce Deputy Secretary Dale Carroll and N.C.'s Southeast Director Steve Yost

N.C.'s Southeast holds annual

[center](#) (WGHP - Greensboro, Feb. 15)

Merck to add 150 jobs at Durham plant

Merck is moving ahead with plans to hire 150 employees at its massive vaccine plant in Durham. The new jobs are in addition to the 230 employees Merck hired at the plant last year. The facility will package and eventually grow vaccines to protect against chicken pox and other diseases.

[Merck to add 150 workers this year](#) (*The News & Observer* - Raleigh, Feb. 12)

Textiles maker to create 42 jobs in Davie County

Governor Bev Perdue on Feb. 14 announced that Avgol, a leading manufacturer of ultra lightweight nonwoven fabrics, will expand its facility in Davie County. The announcement comes on the heels of a meeting between N.C. Department of Commerce Secretary Keith Crisco and company executives in Israel. The company plans to create 42 jobs and invest \$35 million during the next three years in Mocksville. The project was made possible in part by an \$84,000 grant from the One North Carolina Fund. The N.C. Department of Commerce's Jan Critz was the developer on this project. [Read more.](#)



(Left-right) N.C. Department of Commerce Assistant Secretary for Tourism, Marketing and Global Branding Lynn Minges, National Trust for Historic Preservation Southern Office Director John Hildreth and Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau Executive Director Laurie Paolicelli

Chapel Hill named a Distinctive Destination

Chapel Hill has been formally designated one of the National Trust for [Historic Preservation's Dozen Distinctive Destinations of 2011](#). Town of Chapel Hill representatives, accompanied by the Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau, N.C. Department of Commerce Assistant Secretary for Tourism, Marketing and Global Branding Lynn Minges, along with

planning workshop

On Feb. 10, N.C.'s Southeast held its annual planning workshop. The regional Technical Advisory Group, composed of local EDC directors and private sector allies, worked with Director Steve Yost and his staff to update the marketing plan for southeastern North Carolina. N.C. Department of Commerce Deputy Secretary Dale Carroll served as one of the guest speakers for the planning session.

Registration open for NCEDA Midwinter Conference

Registration is now open for the [N.C. Economic Developers Association Midwinter Conference](#), March 3-4 in Pinehurst. Confirmed speakers include N.C. Department of Commerce Assistant Secretary for Tourism, Marketing and Global Branding Lynn Minges, N.C. Community College System President Scott Ralls, N.C. Biotechnology Center VP for Bioscience Industrial Development Bill Bullock and N.C. Employment Security Commission Director of Employment Service Manfred Emmrich. Titled "Taking on the Competition," this year's conference will offer insight into North Carolina's competitive positioning and examine ever increasing challenges state economic developers face in the global economy.



(Left-right) Cape Fear Green Building Alliance Intern Jessica Gray, Wilmington Mayor Bill Saffo, Wilmington City Councilwoman Laura Padgett, N.C. Representative Mike McIntyre, Office of Science and Technology Assistant Director Sharlini Sankaran, and Cape Fear Green Building Alliance Executive Director Joy Allen.

Green Business Fund winner holds ribbon-cutting

Sharlini Sankaran, assistant director of the N.C. Department of Commerce's Board of Science and Technology, represented Commerce at a Feb. 1 ribbon-cutting for Cape Fear Green Building Alliance's new Performance Training Center. The event was also attended by N.C. Representative Mike McIntyre, Wilmington Mayor Bill Saffo and City Councilwoman Laura Padgett, among others.

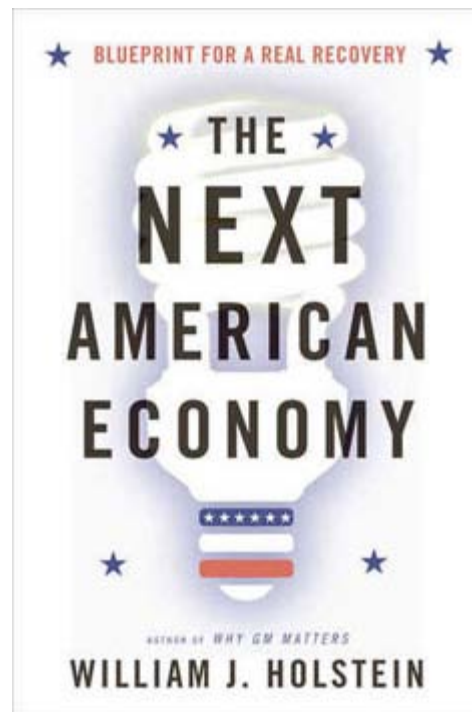
The facility, which will offer Building Performance Institute (BPI) certification training, was made possible by a \$99,806 grant from the N.C. Green Business Fund, which is funded by federal dollars through the U.S. Department of Energy. This funding is part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and was made available under a competitive grant program.

representatives of the University of North Carolina and the Preservation Society, received a plaque at a Feb. 15 ceremony.

The designation recognizes Chapel Hill for offering cultural and recreational experiences different from the typical vacation destination. Chapel Hill features a historic campus, dynamic neighborhoods, including downtown Chapel Hill, a rich architectural heritage, cultural diversity and a strong commitment to historic preservation, sustainability and revitalization - all of which yield an abundance of character and exude an authentic sense of place.

[Chapel Hill named top 12 tourist destination](#) (The News & Observer - Raleigh, Feb. 15)

[Meet the USA's newest top distinctive destinations. Which should be No. 1?](#) (USA Today, Feb. 15)



New book spotlights N.C.'s export program

A new book on the U.S. economy scheduled for release this spring devotes an entire chapter to North Carolina's export program for small businesses.

"The Next American Economy: Blueprint for a Real Recovery" by business journalist William J. Holstein is a collection of case studies highlighting examples of innovation throughout the U.S.

Holstein says that North Carolina features a support system in which local, state and federal agencies work together to help small exporting companies. The book also takes a look at two North Carolina entrepreneurs,

The purpose of this facility, the only one of its kind in the entire coastal North Carolina region, is to provide training in the knowledge and skills needed to perform home energy efficiency retrofits. The retrofit industry is a high priority of the current administration in Washington and will soon be in North Carolina, when the state launches its own retrofit program.

"This center will provide opportunities for job training and will help create well-paying green jobs that help grow a robust, innovative 21st century economy in North Carolina," Sankaran said. "And in the long run, it will result in North Carolinians drastically cutting their energy bills, and putting money back in our citizens' pockets."

Hilton opening first new brand in 20 years in Fayetteville

Hilton is launching its first new hotel brand in 20 years and the chosen location is in Fayetteville. With the first Home2 Suites, Hilton Worldwide is venturing into a mid-tier extended stay market that remains relatively competitive amid a slowly recovering economy. Hilton already has a presence in the extended-stay segment with the upscale Homewood Suites, but Home2 Suites is providing something new: Increased amenities and a larger, more modern lobby design.

[Hilton opening first new brand in 20 years](#) (The Associated Press, Feb. 2)

Tech startups find new financial incentive in N.C.

North Carolina-based tech startups have a new financial incentive thanks to a Durham non-profit. NC IDEA is looking for startup technology companies in the information technology, medical devices and material sciences sectors to apply for grants of up to \$50,000.

"We help companies overcome small business obstacles that can make the difference between growing the business and going out of business," says a statement on the organization's website. "NC IDEA is committed to supporting North Carolina's economic development by helping young, innovative companies grow, create jobs and become major contributors to the state's business community." [Read more.](#)

WSJ, NYT cover India mission

The Wall Street Journal and *The New York Times* both recently devoted coverage to U.S. Department of Commerce Secretary Gary's Locke's recent trade mission to India. N.C. Department of Commerce Secretary Keith Crisco led the North Carolina delegation on the trip. With the second-fastest growing major economy in the world that is expected to soon expand 8.6 percent, India is one of the most desirable overseas markets for U.S. companies.

[U.S. delegation is seeking deals in India](#) (*The New York Times*, Feb. 8)

[North Carolina Courts India Business](#) (*The Wall Street Journal*, Feb. 7)

Valdese awarded CDBG

Michael Zapata III, a Raleigh-based exporter of nanotechnology tools; and Craig Hamilton, whose Greenville company exports software used to test the expiration date of pharmaceutical products.

[Book shines spotlight on N.C. business innovation](#) (*The Charlotte Observer*, Feb. 11)



(Front row from the left) Jeanette Faria, N.C. Tourism Canada; Division of Tourism, Film & Sports Development International Marketing Manager Heidi Walters; Kathy Motton, N.C. Tourism Canada (back row from left) Division of Tourism, Film & Sports Development PR Manager Margo Metzger; Tracy Aldridge, Cabarrus County CVB; Lorrie Love, Outer Banks VB; Tammy O'Kelley, Heart of North Carolina VB; Dianna Pierce, Asheville CVB; Charmaine Singh, N.C. Tourism Canada; Brandy Richard, Visit Charlotte

Tourism promotes N.C. travel to Canadians

From Feb. 8-10, the N.C. Department of Commerce Division of Tourism, Film & Sport Development's International Marketing Manager Heidi Walters, PR Manager Margo Metzger and five industry partners were in Toronto and Montreal, pitching travel to North Carolina to more than 100 tour operators, media and airlines. The group also conducted North Carolina training webinars to Canadian Automobile Association agents throughout the regions. Participating North Carolina partners were the Asheville Convention and Visitors Bureau, Cabarrus County CVB, Heart of North Carolina Visitors Bureau, Outer Banks VB and Visit Charlotte.

Metrics from B&I Division

Below are year-to-date metrics tracked by the N.C. Department of Commerce's Division of Business and Industry that illustrate some of the recent activities of the Division. The metrics include the number of new economic development projects assigned to B&I development staff; the number of economic development project announcements; the number of announced jobs created and capital invested; the number of interactions existing industry staff had with businesses throughout the state; and the number of contacts received by the Business Link North Carolina/Business ServiCenter.

Jan. 1 - Feb. 15, 2011

The Town of Valdese has been approved for a Community Development Block Grant in the amount of \$450,000 to assist in providing a public pretreatment facility for a new 15,000 square-foot plant to be constructed by Kleen Tech Inc. The company has pledged to create 30 new full-time jobs and invest more than \$1.17 million as a result of this grant.

New projects assigned:	40
Projects announced:	14
Jobs created:	1,797
Capital invested:	\$308M
Industry visits by existing industry staff:	171
Calls to Business Link N.C.:	2,581

N.C. in the News

This Week's Highlights

- [*A Cinderella Story finds its glass slipper in Wilmington's film community*](#) (WHQR - Wilmington, Feb. 11)
- [*Deluxe to close Ariz. call center. move some jobs here*](#) (*The News & Record* - Greensboro, Feb. 11)
- [*HPU plans to add 108 jobs by August*](#) (*The News & Record* - Greensboro, Feb. 11)
- [*State ranking will help Lee County lure jobs*](#) (*The Fayetteville Observer*, Feb. 10)

(919) 733-4151

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Building Location:
301 North Wilmington Street
Raleigh, NC 27601-1058

Mailing Address:
4301 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-4301

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