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## NEWS & OPPORTUNITIES FROM N.C. COMMERCE



(L-R) Dr. Dave Lennon, President, AveXis; Governor Cooper; and U.S. Congressman David Price at the ribbon cutting ceremony at the company's facility in Durham.

## Governor Cooper Celebrates Durham Ribbon-Cutting for AveXis

**Governor Roy Cooper** joined officials from AveXis, a gene therapy manufacturer, for a ribbon cutting and tour of their new facility on February 20. The 400 jobs that will be created with state support at the site were announced in 2018 and 2019. Production of gene therapy medicines will begin in the spring.

The governor and company officials were joined on stage by a family whose toddler daughter benefitted from Zolgensma, the company's gene therapy treatment for children with Spinal Muscular Atrophy. The company anticipates manufacturing other rare disease therapies in addition to Zolgensma in North Carolina in the future. AveXis President Dave Lennon and site leader Rob May led the tour.

"Life changing medicines for children with rare diseases are being made right here in North Carolina by AveXis employees and we're grateful for the lives this company saves and the good jobs it brings," said **Governor Roy Cooper**.

AveXis first announced its facility plans in May 2018, noting that 200 jobs were coming to Durham; 200 additional jobs were announced in February 2019. Both projects received a Job Development Investment Grant (JDIG). Over the 12-year terms of these grants, the project is estimated to grow the state's

## Rural Communities Receive State Infrastructure Grants to Attract 225 New Jobs and More Than \$82 million in Private Investment

The North Carolina Rural Infrastructure Authority (RIA) approved 17 rural grants to local governments on February 25, totaling \$5,535,271 to help communities make necessary infrastructure preparations to attract business to their regions.

The requests include commitments to create a total of 436 jobs, 211 of which were previously announced. The public investment in these projects will attract more than \$82 million in private investment.

"Rural North Carolina needs investments in water and sewer systems and buildings to attract better paying jobs," said **Governor Roy Cooper**. "These grants will help improve the quality of life and put more money in the pockets of rural North Carolinians."

The Authority authorized Building Reuse grants in Cleveland, Cherokee, Lincoln, Randolph, and Wayne counties as well as the cities or towns of Edenton, Rocky Mount, and Tarboro. Grants were also awarded from the state's Utility Account, the Community Development Block Grant Economic Development program, and the state's Rural Demolition program.

Complete details on each of the [RIA awarded projects is available online](#).

## NCWorks Commission Approves Four-Year Workforce Plan for State

The NCWorks Commission, North Carolina's workforce development board, has released a new plan that outlines the state's workforce development strategy over the next four years. Required by the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), this Unified State Plan will be submitted to the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education

The Commission unanimously approved the document during its regular quarterly meeting, held on February 12 at the Bowman Gray

economy by more than \$1.3 billion.

North Carolina has long played a strong role in the life science industry and has staked a leadership role in the industry's emerging gene therapy sector. The North Carolina Biotechnology Center was established in 1984, the first of its kind in the nation. Today, more than 66,000 people in North Carolina work directly in this industry, and overall the sector supports 240,000 jobs in our state.



(L-R) Wilmington Mayor Pro Tem Margaret Haynes; Mayor Bill Saffo; Secretary Copeland; Queensboro owner Fred Meyers; N.C. State Representative Deb Butler; and Wilmington Councilman Kevin O'Grady

## Secretary Copeland Tours Wilmington Businesses

North Carolina Commerce Secretary Anthony M. Copeland visited businesses in Wilmington on February 19.

The Secretary's visit was part of the Wilmington City Council's ongoing series of Innovative Business tours. Mayor Bill Saffo and Council members hosted the Secretary and state legislative delegation members.

During the tour, area leaders had the opportunity to learn more about local manufacturing businesses and what actions local and state government can do to help facilitate their future growth in the community.

Companies on the tour included Quality Chemical Lab, an industry leader in bio manufacturing and testing and Queensboro, a local apparel manufacturer.



(L-R) Tim Mathis, NCWorks Regional Operations Director, Western Prosperity Zone, for the N.C. Department of Commerce; Dan Ellzey, Executive Director, South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce (DEW); Diana Goldwire, SC DEW Regional Area Director; Mark Hendrick, Director of Governmental Affairs, SC DEW; and Gray Parks, SC DEW Assistant Director for Employment Services.

## Workforce Pros Work Across State Lines

Center for Medical Education in Winston-Salem's Innovation Quarter.

The plan supports NC Job Ready, Governor Roy Cooper's workforce initiative, which is built on three core principles: helping North Carolinians get the skills and education they need to be ready for jobs available now and in the future, using employer leadership to keep training relevant to evolving industry needs, and taking promising local innovations and applying them statewide.

"Thanks to the collaboration of numerous partners, this Unified State Plan provides an overview of all the state's workforce initiatives, pointing to how they are currently connected and how they can be integrated further, to promote North Carolina's economic prosperity," said **Tom Rabon, the chair of the NCWorks Commission**. "The plan illustrates how the NCWorks system will continue implementing the NC Job Ready initiative, by connecting workers with career services and training while providing employers a pipeline of skilled workers they need to grow and succeed."

The entire [report is available online](#).

## On Our Radar

- Coronavirus (COVID-19): [Reference Info and Updates for State of N.C.](#) (N.C. Department of Health and Human Services)
- [This chart is the best explanation of middle-class finances you will ever see](#) *Washington Post* - February 24
- [Communities Across NC Awarded \\$166 Million for Water and Sewer System Improvements](#) *Governor's Press Office* - February 19
- [Study: Thousands of biopharma jobs coming to NC by 2024; average wage \\$97,575](#) *WRAL TechWire* - February 18

## N.C. in the News

- [Commerce chief: Employees of tomorrow need more training](#) (*Wilson Times via Johnstonian News* - February 25)

## 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](#).

An Advanced Manufacturing Job Fair was held February 24 that represented a first-of-its-kind partnership between workforce professionals from North Carolina and South Carolina.

Eight advanced manufacturing sector employers participated in this hiring event - four from each side of the border.

Companies engaged in the project included Bulldog Machining, PSU, AZP and Buildz, all from North Carolina. South Carolina facilities for Michelin, Cooper Standard, JIT Manufacturing and Carver by Covercraft also participated in the event.

The job fair was a collaborative effort between the NCWorks team (including Commerce's Division of Workforce Solutions, the Region C Workforce Development Board and the NCWorks Career Center in Rutherford County) and the SC Works team.

"We are so grateful for the partnership and support of our counterparts from South Carolina and the opportunity to serve jobseeker and business customers throughout the region," said **Tim Mathis, NCWorks Regional Operations Director for the Division of Workforce Solutions**. "We realize there are thousands of individuals who drive across state and county lines each day to work and bring that income back to their home communities, and we will continue to work together to promote talent finding jobs and jobs finding talent."

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