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Weekly highlights from the
North Carolina Department of Commerce



N.C. Department of Commerce Secretary Keith Crisco, Assistant Secretary for Tourism, Marketing and Global Branding Lynn Minges, and U.S. Travel Association President and CEO Roger Dow at the N.C. Governor's Conference in Concord

N.C. tourism industry leaders meet at the 2012 Governor's Conference

The [2012 N.C. Governor's Conference on Tourism](#) is being held March 11-13 at the Embassy Suites in Concord. Nearly 500 North Carolina businesses, tourism professionals and people from related industries are attending.

"Each year more than 500 leaders of our tourism industry come together to learn the latest in marketing strategies. This year it's even more important in this emerging economic recovery," said Lynn Minges, assistant secretary for Tourism, Marketing and Global Branding for the North Carolina Department of Commerce. "Expert speakers and panelists will inspire our participants and spark new ideas."

"Setting the Pace" is the theme of this year's conference. Keynote speakers include Roger Dow, president and CEO of US Travel Association, presenting "Why Travel Matters"; Sally Hogshead, author of "Fascinate: Your 7 Triggers to Persuasion and Captivation," presenting "How to Persuade and Influence"; and Danny Morrison, president, Carolina Panthers, presenting how the Panthers are ensuring a unique customer experience.

The annual N.C. Governor's Conference on Tourism is the state's premier travel industry event, bringing together travel



N.C. Department of Commerce Secretary Keith Crisco and N.C. Northeast Commission President Vann Rogerson at the N.C.'s. Northeast Commission State of the Region event last month

Northeast commission hosts state of the region

N.C. Department of Commerce Secretary Keith Crisco was among the speakers appearing at [North Carolina's Northeast Commission's](#) fourth annual State of the Region meeting in Williamston on Feb. 24. The event, co-sponsored by North Carolina's Northeast Committee of 1000, drew some 300 attendees. Crisco spoke of the importance of job creation to the region's overall economic and social fabric.

"A job is a lot more than a paycheck," he said. "It's about self-worth and putting order into the day." Crisco commended the Northeast's first-of-a-kind Regional School of Biotechnology and Agriscience, as well as other workforce readiness programs. "Education is the common denominator of economic development," he said.

N.C. Northeast Commission President Vann Rogerson reviewed results of the region's business recruitment, infrastructure development, tourism marketing and workforce readiness initiatives. The Northeast, he said, had made measurable progress in embracing economic opportunities associated with alternative energy -- including wind, solar and biomass.

Ameridial to add 195 jobs in Rutherford County

Governor Bev Perdue on March 9 announced that Ameridial Inc., a provider of contact center services, will expand operations at its facility in

leaders from all over the state to catch up on the latest trends and issues facing the industry.

['Hunger Games,' other movie business booming in North Carolina](#) (*The Charlotte Observer*, March 13)



The 2012 Winner's Circle honorees from left: Jim Hobbs, Charlie Shelton, Ed Shelton, Mary Jaeger-Gale and Richard Childress

North Carolina tourism industry welcomes award recipients into winner's circle

Four distinguished North Carolinians were honored on March 12 during the [North Carolina Governor's Conference on Tourism](#) in Concord for their significant and continuing contributions to the growth and success of North Carolina's tourism industry. The 2012 Winner's Circle Awards were presented to Richard Childress, president and CEO Richard Childress Racing and Childress Vineyards; Charles and Ed Shelton of Shelton Vineyards and The Shelton Companies; Mary Jaeger-Gale, general manager, Chimney Rock at Chimney Rock State Park; and Jim Hobbs, executive director, the Hospitality Alliance of North Carolina.

"We thank these visionary leaders for their hard work and dedication to our state's tourism industry," said N.C. Department of Commerce Secretary Keith Crisco. "Their efforts have significantly improved the state's tourism offerings, enhancing economic development throughout the state."



Commerce Secretary Keith Crisco reading to a class at College Park Elementary School in Wilmington to celebrate Dr. Seuss' birthday on March 2

Crisco helps celebrate "Read across America Day"

Rutherford County. The company plans to create 195 jobs and invest \$2.1 million during the next three years in Spindale. The project was made possible in part by a \$100,000 grant from the One North Carolina Fund. The N.C. Department of Commerce's [Bill Payne](#) was the developer on this project.

"Our investments in education and job training programs have built a skilled workforce that companies know they can depend on," Perdue said. "We also have kept a low cost of doing business, all of which has created a top-notch business climate for companies like Americal."

Americal, founded in 1987, is a privately held company headquartered in North Canton, Ohio. The company employs more than 800 service and sales professionals at eight centers located in Ohio and North Carolina. Americal offers a variety of contact center solutions for both large and mid-size clients, with a focus on the health insurance industry. [Read more.](#)



N.C. Department of Commerce Deputy Secretary Dale Carroll speaks at the NCEDA's midwinter conference in Pinehurst

NCEDA focuses on job creation

Creating jobs throughout North Carolina's 100 counties is a top priority for the members of the [N.C. Economic Developers Association](#). The association and its allies gathered on March 2 in Pinehurst to discuss ways to generate job growth and build a foundation for future economic development success. Presentations during the association's midwinter conference covered a diverse range of topics including military defense expansions and clean technology innovation.

N.C. Department of Commerce Deputy Secretary Dale Carroll presented an overview of the department's activities over the past year, including an update on the economic development grant report due to the N.C. General Assembly and two departmental reorganizations that took place this winter. Lieutenant Governor Walter Dalton also spoke at the conference.

Governor Bev Perdue proclaimed March 2 as "Read across America Day" in North Carolina, part of a national effort to encourage children to read on that day and throughout the year.

"Read across America Day," observed on the birthday of Dr. Seuss, promotes reading as the catalyst for students' future academic success and their ability to compete in a 21st century global economy. The event also serves to encourage adults to get involved in children's education as an investment in the well-being of their community and long-term quality of life.

Members of Perdue's cabinet read at schools around the state, including N.C. Department of Commerce Secretary Keith Crisco, who read to students at College Park Elementary School in Wilmington that day.



Defense spending increases 13 percent in N.C. during fiscal year 2011

Governor Bev Perdue and [The N.C. Military Business Center](#) announced on March 5 that U.S. Department of Defense spending for prime contracts in North Carolina exceeded \$4 billion in federal fiscal year 2011 - an increase of 13 percent and \$471 million over procurement in the state in 2010.

"North Carolina is securing a bigger and bigger share of the global military and defense market," Perdue said. "Our investments and efforts have built a growing cluster of defense industries that is capturing federal revenues and growing jobs right here in North Carolina - the most military friendly state in America."

Perdue helped establish the NCMBC within the North Carolina Community College System and launched [The N.C. Military Foundation](#), a business development organization focused exclusively on building the state's defense and homeland security economy. [Read more.](#)



N.C. representatives meet with visitors to the state's exhibit at Nano Tech 2012 last month in Tokyo

Trade division and N.C. nanotech exporters exhibit in Tokyo

The N.C. Department of Commerce's International Trade Division and three of its nanotechnology clients exhibited at [Nano Tech 2012](#), the 11th annual international nanotechnology exhibition and conference, held Feb. 15-17 in Tokyo. Interest was high in the products of [Xanofi](#) and [Protochips](#), both of Raleigh, and [NanoForge](#) of Research Triangle Park. "The N.C. Department of Commerce organized the trade show booth, arranged meetings, and even scouted the floor to help North Carolina companies like ours make connections. We have engaged numerous companies, and one large Japanese group is sending a delegation to North Carolina next month," said Xanofi CEO Miles Wright.

The North Carolina exhibit had significant traffic, with Japanese visitors appreciating that staff members from the [State of North Carolina Japan Office](#) were available for translating discussions. In addition, the North Carolina companies' brochures and materials were translated into Japanese for the show. This is a service offered as part of the ["N.C. Passport to Export" grant program](#). Over 45,000 visitors attended this trade-only show.

Government contracting conference coming to Asheville

[Opportunities 2012: Making Dollars and Sense Selling to the Government](#) will be held at the Grove Park Inn in Asheville on March 19. This biannual conference and trade show allows small business participants to learn how to do business with federal, state and local government agencies, and prime contractors. The event is a "reverse" trade show where government agencies and prime contractors are the exhibitors.

Opportunities 2012 will also feature seminars on identifying federal, state and local government procurement opportunities, SBA programs for women, minorities and veterans, contract accounting, and winning proposal strategies. In addition, N.C. Department of Commerce Deputy Secretary Dale Carroll is scheduled to speak at



North Carolina's Eastern Region to host State of the Region

On March 14, business, community and government leaders will gather in New Bern for [North Carolina's Eastern Region's](#) annual meeting. The Fifth Annual State of the Region will take place at the [Riverfront Convention Center](#).

Ted Abernathy, executive director of the [Southern Growth Policies Board](#), will give the keynote address. In addition, a panel discussion by state and regional leaders will weigh in on a growing effort, STEM education. A second panel will focus on the thriving life sciences cluster in the region. Despite the sluggish economy, this sector has continued to flourish in recent years.

Additionally, NCER Vice President & Executive Director of the Military Growth Task Force Mark Sutherland will update guests on the region's Defense Logistics Initiative and the upcoming transition from the MGTF to PlanIt East. Sutherland will be followed by NCER President & CEO John Chaffee, who will deliver the State of the Region report.

For a detailed agenda, please visit www.nceast.org/sor2011. To RSVP, please visit www.nceast.org/eventregistration.

Study: Solar becoming more affordable

It is getting cheaper to go solar, according to [The N.C. Sustainable Energy Association](#). The organization's new study, "[Levelized Cost of Solar Photovoltaics in North Carolina](#)," reports that the average energy cost for the state's installed solar photovoltaic systems of 10 kW or less fell 24 percent between 2006 and 2011. The installed cost of the systems from 10 kW through 500 kW went down 33 percent during that time. And those costs will continue to fall as component and installation costs decrease, installers become more efficient, capacity increases and N.C. policies remain favorable. However, if state and federal tax incentives expire in 2015 as planned and subsidies for other U.S. energy sources continue, solar power costs could be almost double that of power from the state's investor-owned utilities. However, the study indicates that if the incentives are phased out, large solar projects would be competitive with utility residential prices by 2020. The study analyzes the cost solar photovoltaic systems in relation to the retail price of electricity provided from electric utilities in North Carolina.

[N.C. solar prices dropping](#) (*The Charlotte Observer*, March 2)

the event.

Registration is \$70 and includes lunch. For more information or to register for the event, visit www.sbtcd.org/events/opportunities or call (828) 251-6025 ext. 22.



Interactive video helps users 'discover' High Point Market

The [High Point Market](#) has produced a unique interactive video to showcase a buyer's discovery of the world's largest home furnishings show and all that it has to offer.

The [Discovery Video](#) puts a spotlight on the depth and breadth of the High Point Market and its reach around the world. As the buyer in the video learns more about the High Point Market, the viewer can interact with the video itself, discovering embedded clues that lead to more information about the market and opportunities to register for prizes. [Watch the video](#).

Year-to-date Metrics

Below are year-to-date metrics tracked by the N.C. Department of Commerce's Division of Business and Industry Development 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 - March 13, 2012

New projects assigned:	87
Projects announced:	25



North Carolina leads east coast ports for container trade volume increases

Growth in [North Carolina state ports](#) activity benefits businesses operating in the state, indicating healthier economic outlooks. In a [February 8 press release](#), the N.C. State Ports Authority announced increases in cargo movement for 2011 as compared to 2010. Container movements increased more than 11 percent and general breakbulk cargo increased eight percent during 2011.

According to [a Feb. 20 report in The Journal of Commerce](#), North Carolina's port growth contributed to an overall East Coast container trade volume increase of over five percent in the first 10 months of 2011 as compared to the same period in 2010. North Carolina's 14.4 percent trade growth was the highest rate among the top-ten East Coast ports reported. The state was also one of six top ten East Coast ports that showed 10-month growth in 2011 compared to 2008 in total trade, recording an impressive 52.6 percent increase. [Read more on.](#)

Jobs announced:	4,154
Capital investment announced:	\$1.16B
Industry visits by existing industry staff:	233
Calls to Business Link N.C.:	4,315

N.C. in the News

This Week's Highlights

- [Auto parts maker AW North Carolina adding 250 jobs in Durham](#) (*The News & Observer*, March 13)
- [President plans visit to N.C. truck plant](#) (*The News & Observer* - Raleigh, March 6)
- [Wind power conference expected to draw 300 to Charlotte](#) (*Charlotte Business Journal*, March 6)
- [Local company excited to see their work in 'Hunger Games'](#) (*WCNC* -- Charlotte, March 6)
- [Lightning-smart lab shows grid of the future](#) (*The News & Observer* - Raleigh, March 6)

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