

syncTM Weekly highlights from the North Carolina Department of Commerce



Commerce Invites Statewide Engagement to Develop State Brand

Help us brand North Carolina. The N.C. Department of Commerce invites North Carolinians to share ideas and creative expressions demonstrating what North Carolina means to them as the department develops a new brand for marketing the state.

The Brand North Carolina Project is being conducted by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's Frank Hawkins Kenan Institute of Private Enterprise (KIPE) and sponsored by the Department of Commerce.

"The state's need for one overarching brand was identified by the North Carolina Economic Development Board" said N.C. Commerce Secretary Sharon Decker, referring to the strategic jobs plan the board recently released. "The best branding programs are grounded in the reality of a product, or a place. Who better to ask what North Carolina stands for than the people who live and work here?"

The project underway at KIPE will compile basic research findings, core concepts, and examples of creative expression for the statewide brand. This bank of creative ideas and knowledge will serve as a source of insights for further brand development work.

"We are pleased that Secretary Decker asked the University to assist with the state branding program," said University of North Carolina President Tom Ross. "With leadership from UNC-Chapel Hill and the active participation of students on our 17 campuses and people all across our state, we can help define our state's future image. In many ways, our students



Dr. Patricia Mitchell

Sixth Annual State of the Northeast Region Meeting Draws Local Officials, Legislators and Business Leaders

Some 250 business, governmental and community leaders gathered in Williamston on February 28th for the sixth annual State of the Northeast Region meeting. North Carolina's Northeast Commission and the Committee of 1000 hosted the event at the Sen. Bob Martin Eastern Agricultural Center.

Dr. Patricia Mitchell, assistant secretary of the Rural Development Division at the North Carolina Department of Commerce, offered attendees an overview of the division and its programs. Among the grant programs the division administers are the Main Street, Building Re-use, Economic Infrastructure, Utility Fund and CBDG programs. "There's been about \$17 million granted through the Rural Development Division in the seven months since its creation," she said. North Carolina's Northeast Commission President Vann Rogerson provided an update on economic development news of the past year. Regional leaders are working closely with

are North Carolina's future, so we are delighted they were able to participate in this important effort."

At the heart of The Brand North Carolina Project are two contests designed to engage people across the state in the effort to define a brand for North Carolina.

First is a [creative expression contest](#) open to all North Carolinians capturing "What N.C. Means to You". The contest seeks submissions that answer this question using any type of creative expression including but not limited to photography, poetry, song, dance, prose, video, art, or sculpture. For example, participants can submit a photograph or create a dance that represents to them the values, culture, and community of North Carolina.

The [second contest is a "case competition"](#) to make the business case for the brand. Using a tool familiar to MBA programs and other business students, student teams will tackle the marketing issues around the brand and compete with teams from across the state to recommend brand positioning, the unique and credible benefits that should be featured, and other factors common in brand development programs.

Another way to participate is an [opinion survey](#) identifying the core values North Carolinians deem most important. In brand development, defining core values is often a step taken to ensure branding messages accurately reflect the characteristics of the entity being branded. The KIPE team will compile the survey data and conduct some market research as well, in an effort to understand current perceptions of North Carolina.

Finally, KIPE is [recruiting volunteer Brand Ambassadors](#) across the state to help spread the word about the project to friends, colleagues, networks, and communities.

The Department of Commerce is currently seeking a professional marketing or advertising firm to develop final creative materials for the new brand, in collaboration with the KIPE team and other stakeholders. Further information about the [Request for Proposals process can be found online](#).

More information about The Brand North Carolina Project can be found online at www.brandnc.org.



Festival to Showcase Greenville and Eastern N.C.'s Entrepreneurial Spirit

Spazz Fest V, a four-day multi-venue festival dedicated to celebrating live music and the creative arts community, will be held in Greenville March 20-22.

This year, the event will also demonstrate Greenville and Eastern North Carolina's entrepreneurial spirit as

McCrary Administration officials in enabling the creation of I-44, an interstate corridor connecting Raleigh and Norfolk through the Northeast. "We want to make sure there's an interstate corridor up to the Port of Virginia." Recent visits to the region include a European company seeking a U.S. outpost and a boat-builder exploring potential manufacturing locations. "Big headcounts come with these projects," he said. A panel of state legislators responded to questions submitted by attendees. Topics ranged from transportation funding and school construction to teacher compensation and the prospects for renewing Article 3J tax credits.

North Carolina's Northeast Commission, established in 1994 by the North Carolina General Assembly, is dedicated to improving the standard of living for residents across its region through tourism promotion, industrial marketing and business development. The economic region's 16 counties are: Beaufort, Bertie, Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Dare, Gates, Halifax, Hertford, Hyde, Martin, Northampton, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Tyrrell, and Washington.

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 - Mar. 18, 2014

New projects assigned:	73
Projects announced:	23
Jobs announced:	1,175
Capital investment announced:	\$105M
Industry visits by existing industry staff:	134
Calls to Business Link N.C.:	4,230

N.C. in the News

This Week's Highlights

- [NC leaders begin process of branding the state](#) (*Time Warner Cable News - March*)

entrepreneurs and eager startups will engage and share their knowledge, passion, and ideas about business, IT, and the arts.

Celebrity chef Vivian Howard from the Chef and the Farmer restaurant headlines a session on March 20 from 5:00pm - 8:00pm at Peasants Pub. She will be joined by Jesse Palmer from Lunasee and Gabe Dough from Shure Foods to share their business experiences. Entrepreneurs can pitch their business ideas for a cash prize on March 21 from 5:00pm-8:00pm at Peanants Pub. A 'Hack-a-Thon' will be held March 22 from 10:00am - 10:00pm at eAudit.

The unique blend of culture and community, along with economic ideas and innovation is aimed to increase entrepreneurship activity and explore future possibilities for Greenville. [Further information about the festival is online.](#)

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- [High-speed fiber Internet could come to Raleigh in 60 days](#) (*Triangle Business Journal- March 11*)
- [Next step for U.S. manufacturing is 'mass customization.' Siemens exec says](#) (*Charlotte Business Journal- March 12*)
- [Raleigh's in one of nation's 12 'regional powerhouses driving the U.S. economy](#) (*Triangle Business Journal- March 13*)

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