

syncTM Weekly highlights from the North Carolina Department of Commerce



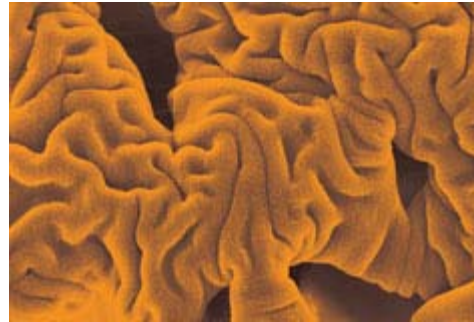
N.C. Dept. of Commerce Sec. Keith Crisco addresses attendees at the Governor's Conference.

Governor's Conference highlights tourism industry

New Bern rolled out the red carpet for nearly 450 tourism, business and government leaders from across the state at the 2010 N.C. Governor's Conference on Hospitality & Tourism March 22 and 23. N.C. Dept. of Commerce Sec. Keith Crisco addressed the conference, announcing that North Carolina gained market share (from 4.3 percent to 4.4 percent) and remains the sixth most visited state despite the economic downturn. He commended travel industry leaders for their work and commitment to marketing North Carolina as a premier travel destination.

Crisco also announced that visitors spent \$15.6 billion in 2009, down 7.7 percent from 2008. Visitor spending generated more than \$1.36 billion in state and local tax revenue, generated a payroll of nearly \$4 billion and created nearly 183,000 jobs for North Carolinians. Each North Carolina household saves approximately \$360 in state and local taxes as a result of taxes generated by visitor spending. [Click here](#) for the complete report.

At the Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development



This photo shows a scanning electron microscope image of a nanostructure. It's an example of the type of research that will be presented at the student poster competition at the Nanotechnology Commercialization Conference. Photo by Mike Forney, UNC Charlotte Nanoscale Science Ph.D. Program

Forum to focus on nanotech

North Carolina is a world leader in nanotechnology, the transformational science of custom-building ultra-precise materials, medicines and devices molecule by molecule to shape the clothes, treatments and machines of our future. To explore emerging practical applications in this rapidly evolving field – and help turn revolutionary concepts into new jobs and businesses – the state will host the second annual Nanotechnology Commercialization Conference, March 31-April 1 at the Koury Convention Center in Greensboro.

North Carolina, with more than 70 companies and 30 university-based research centers involved in nanotechnology, remains a global pioneer in this growing technology sector, N.C. Dept. of Commerce Sec. Keith Crisco said March 24 in announcing the conference. The two-day nanotechnology forum will bring together hundreds of top entrepreneurs, business leaders, researchers, investors and service providers from across the state and around the nation.

"North Carolina was recently recognized as one of the top states in the country for nanotechnology activity, including nanotech research and practical application," Crisco said. "This forum, which focuses on moving nanoscience from the lab to the global market, will expand our state's pioneering

Update, Assistant Sec. for Tourism, Marketing and Global Branding Lynn Minges reported on highlights of the division's accomplishments in 2009, frequently citing ongoing relationships with partners across the state. She reviewed 2009 visitor spending in detail and cited encouraging news from recent lodging reports indicating that occupancy and room demand are up through February 2010.

Dr. Lowell Catlett was the opening keynote speaker. Catlett, a professor and dean at New Mexico State University, commended the state on its beauty and hospitality, telling attendees that they were poised to "own" the future. Geoff Freeman, senior vice president of public affairs for the U.S. Travel Association, discussed national tourism policy issues and how they impact communities across North Carolina. Peter Shankman, founder of HARO (Help a Reporter Out), was the closing keynote. An entrepreneur, author, speaker and worldwide connector, Shankman is recognized internationally for radically new ways of thinking about social media, PR, marketing, advertising, creativity and customer service. Freeman's presentation is available at www.nccommerce.com/governorsconference, along with presentations from the educational breakout sessions.

[Governor's tourism conference brings 400 to New Bern](#) (New Bern Sun Journal, March 22)



(Left to right) Capt. David Scheu; Bill Hensley; N.C. Dept. of Commerce Sec. Keith Crisco; Assistant Sec. for Tourism, Marketing and Global Branding Lynn Minges; Spencer Robbins

Three appointed to Tourism 'Winners Circle'

Three North Carolinians were named to the "Winners Circle" at the Governor's Conference for their significant and continuing contributions to the growth and success of N.C.'s tourism industry. They are:

- Capt. David Scheu of Wilmington, former executive director of Battleship North Carolina memorial
- Bill Hensley of Charlotte, a public relations executive and a nationally known writer, promoter and lecturer
- Spencer Robbins of Banner Elk, who served as president of the Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce and was instrumental in forming the Southern Highland Attractions Association

The Winners Circle Award originated in 2004. Previous recipients include H.A. "Humpy" Wheeler, former president and general manager of Lowe's Motor Speedway; Jerry Richardson, owner of the Carolina Panthers; and Hugh Morton, owner of Grandfather Mountain.

role and help turn these concepts into solid economic development opportunities and skilled, high-wage jobs." [Read more.](#)

NASCAR Hall of Fame counts down to finish

The checkered flag is in sight for the NASCAR Hall of Fame grand opening in Charlotte. To mark the final days before the 150,000-square-foot interactive entertainment attraction opens May 11, fans are invited to participate in a 50-day countdown on Twitter and watch www.NASCARHall.com for 50 days of news about the NASCAR Hall of Fame.

Through May 11, a trivia question will be posted each morning on the NASCAR Hall of Fame Twitter page ([@NASCARHall](https://twitter.com/NASCARHall)). The lucky fan who posts the first correct response to [@NASCARHall](https://twitter.com/NASCARHall) will win a NASCAR Hall of Fame prize pack. In conjunction with the contest, the NASCAR Hall of Fame team will reveal one feature of the facility daily at www.NASCARHall.com/50days.

"This has been one of the most anticipated openings of an entertainment attraction not just for Charlotte and the Carolinas, but nationwide," said Winston Kelley, executive director for the facility. "We are in the final stretch, and we want to get as many people involved as possible. We are looking forward to revealing features of the venue each day on our Web site and through social media. This allows everyone nationwide to share in our excitement as we prepare for the grand opening." [Read more.](#)

[NASCAR Hall Of Fame Kicks Off 50-Day Countdown](#) (WSOC-Charlotte, March 19)



N.C. Dept. of Commerce Deputy Sec. Dale Carroll leads a grants panel with officials from U.S. Economic Development Association, U.S. Dept. of Labor and the Self-Help Credit Union

Hagan holds grants workshop in Eastern N.C.

On March 22, Sen. Kay Hagan held a grants workshop in Eastern North Carolina at the Global TransPark Training Center in Kinston. N.C. Dept. of Commerce Deputy Sec. Dale Carroll led two sessions for the approximate 200 participants from local governments and



(Left-right) N.C. Dept. of Commerce Deputy Sec. Dale Carroll presents a gift to Harvest Time CEO Rich Paolino and CFO Ben Weller (photo by Surry County Partnership)

Harvest Time Bread selects Mount Airy

On March 26, Gov. Bev Perdue announced that Harvest Time Bread Company would add 38 jobs and retain 86 jobs at a manufacturing facility they agreed to purchase in Mount Airy. Melissa Smith was the N.C. Dept. of Commerce developer who successfully managed the project.

The announcement was made possible in part by a \$100,000 performance-based grant from the One North Carolina Fund.

"North Carolina continues to attract companies looking for the perfect location to invest and create jobs," Perdue said. "Our skilled workforce and top-rated business climate provide an ideal foundation for companies looking to expand. Creating jobs continues to be my top priority."

Harvest Time Bread of North Carolina is a wholly owned subsidiary of Harvest Time Bread Co., headquartered in New Jersey. The company, which produces a wide variety of breads, rolls, whole grain and organic products, operates a bakery in New Jersey and one in Mount Airy. [Read more.](#)

[Perdue awards incentives for Harvest Time bakery expansion](#) (Triangle Business Journal, March 26)

[PRC announces 300 additional jobs](#) (Jacksonville Daily News, March 26)

Commerce awards CDBG funds

N.C. Dept. of Commerce Sec. Keith Crisco announced March 23 that two North Carolina counties have been awarded Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) to provide down-payment assistance and financial literacy training for first-time homebuyers.

Catawba County will receive \$70,000 and Columbus County will receive \$50,000 from the CDBG Individual Development Account program, which assists community organizations in funding financial literacy education and matching low-income participants' contributions to savings accounts dedicated to the purchase of first homes.

"These grants not only will help improve the quality of life for hard-working families in these two areas, but will benefit the

small businesses. A similar session is being planned for Western North Carolina.

[Nearly 200 from around region attend grant workshop at GTP Monday](#) (enctoday.com, March 23)

PRC to add 300 jobs in Jacksonville

PRC, a Jacksonville communications center that handles customer service and sales for two major global brands, on March 25 announced plans to add 300 more jobs. The company made the announcement during a celebration marking its fourth anniversary in the Jacksonville community. The company also took the opportunity to make donations to several local nonprofit organizations.

Morrison helps welcome Biden to Cree

N.C. Dept. of Commerce Assistant Sec. for Energy John Morrison joined state and local officials during Vice President Joe Biden's visit to Cree in Durham on March 18. Biden said the administration's recovery efforts have helped create or save 62,000 jobs in North Carolina. Cree, a manufacturer of energy-efficient LED lighting products, has received \$39 million in tax credits through the federal stimulus act. The company has hired 375 workers in the past year.

Appliance retailers can participate in program

North Carolina appliance retailers can sign up to participate in the state's Energy Star Appliance Replacement and Rebate Program through a special Web site launched March 29. The program will offer North Carolina residents a 15 percent rebate when they buy certain Energy Star-rated appliances over a four-day period beginning on April 22, which is Earth Day.

A link to the special retailer Web site is available on the [N.C. Energy Office's Web site](#). Retailers should look for the blue Energy Star logo beside the words "Retailer Information Here." Retailers will be able to find the necessary forms and procedures to participate.

The program, offered by the N.C. Energy Office and funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, allows consumers to replace older refrigerators, freezers, washing machines and dishwashers with similar new Energy Star-rated items that are purchased from April 22 through April 25.

Tourism Strategic

entire state," said Crisco. "Home ownership instills a sense of pride and accomplishment that in turn build stronger neighborhoods and communities, which benefits everyone."

The N.C. Dept. of Commerce Finance Center also recently awarded CDBG funds to two communities.

The Town of Stoneville was awarded a CDBG in the amount of \$375,000 to assist in providing public water and sewer to the SANS Technical Fibers manufacturing plant. The company has pledged to create 25 full-time jobs and invest \$2.8 million as the result of this project.

Also, the Town of Long View has been awarded a CDBG in the amount of \$600,000 to assist in providing infrastructure support for a vacant industrial building to be renovated by Maple Springs Laundry. The company has pledged to create 68 full-time jobs and invest \$3.75 as the result of this project.

N.C. seeks new 21st Century Communities

The N.C. Dept. of Commerce's 21st Century Communities Program (21CC) 2010 solicitation period will open March 31. Any Tier One or Tier Two county that has not previously been selected is invited to apply.

The 21CC Program's objective is to assist selected counties with responding to economic shifts that have counties rethinking strategies and approaches to economic/community planning and revitalization.

The program helps counties develop or revise a strategic plan with clear and achievable broad-based priorities engaging the involvement of stakeholders from across the community spectrum. The program will commit dedicated staff involvement to selected communities for two years. These planners will facilitate the planning and priorities development process, seek adoption of the strategic plan by the county commissioners, then proceed with the implementation of actionable broad-based priorities.

21CC is a collaborative program. It is successful because of the partnership networks and intra-agency networks that align to assist with technical assistance and funding development of the achievable priorities. Past and current 21CC communities have worked on water and sewer infrastructure, building reuse and restoration, rural health care, leadership capacity building, tourism development, and the arts.

The application is available on the Web at www.nccommerce.com/21cc and www.ncacc.org. The closing date for submissions is May 19. Any questions can be directed to Director Mark A. Roberts, Director, Office of Rural Development Programs at (919) 733-4979 or mroberts@nccommerce.com.

Marketing Plan now available online

The Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development's 2010-2011 Strategic Marketing Plan is now available online, Assistant Sec. Lynn Minges announced at the Governor's Conference. The comprehensive plan outlines the division's initiatives for the coming year, based on consumer research, that suggests travelers continue to seek the kind of affordability and diversity that is at the core of the North Carolina brand.

The division's messaging expands on the "Simple Pleasures" campaign introduced last year, reaching consumers through a broadened print, online, broadcast, radio and visitnc.com media mix. Marketing initiatives across the entire division will continue to focus on increasing interest through visitnc.com and 1-800-VISITNC to influence consumers, group and international travel and sports event recruitment.

[Click here](#) to request your link to the Division's 2010-2011 Strategic Marketing Plan.

Metrics from B&I Division

Below are year-to-date metrics tracked by the N.C. Dept. of Commerce's Division of Business and Industry (B&I) 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 29, 2010

New projects assigned:	115
Projects announced:	20
Jobs created:	3,374
Capital invested:	\$409.4M
Industry visits by existing industry staff:	259
Calls to the Business ServiCenter:	6,006

N.C. in the News

This Week's Highlights

- [Obama moves on to jobs, and to Charlotte](#) (Charlotte Observer, March 29)
- [Gov. Perdue talks jobs with business leaders](#) (WWAY-TV -Wilmington, March 26)



The display at the I-26 East N.C. Welcome Center in Polk County

Welcome centers help support highway safety

Gov. Bev Perdue has declared April Work Zone Safety Awareness Month, and the Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development's nine Welcome Centers are working closely with the N.C. Dept. of Transportation (NCDOT) to organize displays at each center to promote highway safety during this time. Welcome centers in North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, Georgia, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama are all participating in similar efforts. In North Carolina, the NCDOT has provided each Welcome Center with traffic cones, construction barrels and informational brochures to draw attention to this safety campaign. Each center has been encouraged to be creative and promote safety while promoting North Carolina's attractions, accommodations and events. This Division of Tourism initiative complements NCDOT efforts to promote work zone safety awareness and education during Work Zone Safety Awareness Month in North Carolina and to support the national initiative during National Work Zone Awareness Week.

- [State must eliminate caps on film incentives](#) (The Associated Press, March 26)
- [N. C. Sec. of Commerce Keith Crisco visits Kinston to speak with local leaders about economy](#) (enctoday.com, March 25)
- [Slim Jim plant lures suitors](#) (The News & Observer - Raleigh, March 25)
- [N.C. hospitality industry is hiring](#) (The News & Observer - Raleigh, March 25)
- [A-B Tech recruiting for jobs program](#) (Asheville Citizen-Times, March 25)

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