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Weekly highlights from the
North Carolina Department of Commerce



Dr. Joe DeSimone of UNC-Chapel Hill and N.C. State University, speaks about his success in using nanotechnology.

Conference promotes emerging nanotech field

The N.C. Nanotechnology Commercialization Conference was held March 25 and 26 at the Raleigh Convention Center. More than 215 attendees gathered to discuss the emerging field of nanotechnology and how commercializing it can help grow North Carolina's economy. The conference was organized by the N.C. Board of Science & Technology and the Small Business and Technology Development Center (SBTDC).

During a luncheon keynote speech, Gov. Beverly Perdue stressed the importance of nanotechnology in transforming North Carolina into a "hub for innovation." She marvelled at how nanotechnology plays an important role in everything from making Navy war ships more water resistant, to fabrics that adapt to keep you cool or warm in hostile climates, to "smart" foundation make-up that can change color to exactly match your skin. Gov. Perdue was introduced by Sec. of Commerce J. Keith Crisco, who called nanotechnology an important subject for the future of North Carolina.

Gov. Perdue launches NCOpenBook.gov

Gov. Beverly Perdue on March 30 launched the first wave of NCOpenBook.gov, a government transparency website for searching state contracts and grants.

NCOpenBook.gov provides a database of approximately 2,500 state contracts and 5,000 grants that are now available in a searchable format. The Office of State Budget and Management is working with state agencies and departments to streamline their contract databases so that North Carolina will have a comprehensive searchable database online this year. [Read more.](#)

Promotion in Canada touts historic NASCAR race

The Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development recently launched a promotion in Canada to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Coca-Cola 600 NASCAR race in Charlotte.

The consumer contest launched in the Racing Fan Guide, which appeared March 24 in the Toronto Sun and is being supported with a series of print and online ads. The contest was supported by Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority and their partners: The Wyndham Wingate Hotel, Enterprise Car Rental and Lowe's Motor Speedway. In addition, the state ran a half-page ad in the Racing Guide and received a half page of editorial, featuring an article about visiting the race shops in the surrounding region as well as a highlight on the opening of the NASCAR Hall of Fame.

[Click here](#) to view the online ad campaign.

Dr. Joe DeSimone, a pioneer in nanotechnology research and professor at UNC-Chapel Hill and N.C. State University, spoke about his success in using nanotechnology to engineer unique particles for specific needs, such as delivering drugs to targeted cells for more effective cancer treatment. Holder of over 100 patents and a successful entrepreneur who has commercialized almost a dozen companies, Dr. DeSimone inspired the audience with his keynote speech titled "The value of commercializing nanotechnology."

Select presentations and photos from the conference will be available soon on the [website](#).

[N.C. nanotech conference plots profits from protons](#) (WRAL - Raleigh, March 25)

The governor also spoke to the press after her appearance at the nanotechnology conference. [Click here](#) to see it.

Forbes magazine names Raleigh best for business and careers

Forbes magazine, in its annual Best Places for Business and Careers rankings, said no metro area in the U.S. can compare to Raleigh. It was the third year in a row that Raleigh topped the list. In addition, Durham was ranked No. 3 on the Forbes list. Greenville finished second on the list of best small metro areas. The magazine cited the Triangle's strong job growth – both past and projected – low business costs and highly educated work force. N.C. placed six metros among the top 20 on Forbes' list. Asheville ranked sixth, Wilmington 13th, Winston-Salem 18th and Charlotte 19th. [Read the article](#).

2009 Economic Index released

Commerce's Policy, Research & Strategic Planning Division has released its 2009 Economic Index, a tool created to assist the state's economic development leaders with capitalizing on North Carolina's economic strengths and addressing its weaknesses. The Index provides a snapshot of how the state is performing, using 16 economic indicators and 47 specific measures. Based on the most current data available at the time of publication, the index tracks North Carolina's performance over time to provide an objective, long-term evaluation of the state's economy.

The Index compares North Carolina to six states (Georgia, Massachusetts, Michigan, Pennsylvania, South Carolina and Virginia) and the United States as a whole. Comparison states were selected based on the following characteristics: Georgia, South

Press outlets profile N.C. attractions

Three national press outlets recently ran feature stories on North Carolina museums, towns and regions.

On March 17, The New York Times ran a special arts insert that included several North Carolina sites. The Mint Museum of Art in Charlotte led off the article "Putting a new emphasis on 'family friendly,'" about how art museums are finding innovative ways to attract families. The Levine Museum of the New South in Charlotte was included in "1 part history, 2 parts shrine," and the N.C. Zoo in Asheboro was mentioned in "In Zoo Cuts, It's Man vs. Beast," an article about the challenges zoos are facing due to the economy.

The Division's PR team worked with writer Sheila Callahan about a story on the Yadkin Valley area which appeared in the March issue of "Cooking Light." In addition to mentioning the many wineries in the area, the article included suggestions on where to eat, what to do and where to stay.

Finally the Division assisted writers Lynn and Cele Seldon for an article on Ocracoke, which appeared in the March 8 Travel section of the Atlanta-Journal Constitution. The article included information about the village, the lighthouse and ferry service, and also offered highlights of what to see and do.

[Putting a new emphasis on 'family friendly'](#) (The New York Times, March 17)

[1 part history, 2 parts shrine](#) (The New York Times, March 17)

[In zoo cuts, it's man vs. beast](#) (The New York Times, March 17)

[North Carolina's Yadkin Valley](#) (Cooking Light, March)

[Ocracoke Island's sand and sea work magic](#)

Carolina and Virginia represent Southeastern competitor states; Michigan and Pennsylvania are comparable manufacturing states; Massachusetts is a leading technology state.

The index also includes a special analysis section on the impact of the recession on North Carolina workers, businesses, industries and families. Key measures evaluated include: unemployment rate, industry employment, announced business closings and permanent layoffs; foreclosures and home sales. In this section, each analyzes data from December 2007, the official start of the recession, to the latest month data is available, January, 2009. [Read the full report.](#)

N.C. unemployment at 10.7%

According to the N.C. Employment Security Commission (ESC) figures released March 27, North Carolina's Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rate for February, 2009, was 10.7%, a full percentage point jump from January's rate of 9.7%, and an increase of 5.5 percentage points from Feb 08 (5.2%). That's a 106% increase in one year.

North Carolina has had a much more rapid increase in unemployment than the nation as a whole over the last quarter of 2008 and into the first quarter of 2009.

View the Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rates for December 2007 through February 2009 [here](#).

[Jobless reports from states show highest rates in decades](#) (The News & Observer - Raleigh, March 27)

Report assesses needs of N.C.'s small businesses

How is North Carolina positioned to help businesses navigate the recession and assist them with their greatest needs? In an effort to find out, the [Small Business and Technology Development Center](#) (SBTDC) recently completed its 2008 Needs Assessment, which surveyed organizations that most closely work with and assist small- and mid-size businesses. According to the results, only 11% of respondents stated that North Carolina is "not very supportive" of entrepreneurship and small business. On the other hand, 38% of respondents felt that North Carolina is "very" or "extremely" supportive of entrepreneurship and small business.

The survey identified five main issues where existing small businesses could use the most help, including financial management and analysis. Several small business populations, including rural businesses and young entrepreneurs, were identified

(Atlanta Journal-Constitution, March 8)

Gov. Perdue announces \$56 million for National Guard facility

Gov. Beverly Perdue announced March 25 that work will begin shortly on a \$56 million N.C. National Guard Joint Force Headquarters facility in Raleigh. The facility will also house offices of the Division of Emergency Management, the Highway Patrol and the Dept. of Transportation. The project, which is expected to create up to 4,200 jobs, will be open to bids next week with work to start as soon as early summer and to be finished within two years. [Read more.](#)

ECU, Commerce announce community enhancement grants for Eastern N.C.

East Carolina University and the Dept. of Commerce are collaborating on an innovative Community Development Block Grant program designed to strengthen less-prosperous communities in Eastern North Carolina. The "Talent Enhancement Demonstration Grants" are designed to provide technical assistance and financial resources to increase competitiveness and build stronger, more vibrant and more capable communities. Deadline for applications is March 31, 2009.

ECU's Office of Engagement, Innovation and Economic Development (OEIED) and Commerce's Office of Rural Development are managing the program. Local governments may apply for the grants, which focus on new endeavors a community has not had the resources to undertake and increasing the productivity of existing community programs such as housing development and community revitalization.

Commerce will provide grants of up to \$75,000 to selected counties or municipalities for capacity building and related technical assistance in partnership with the OEIED. The total amount of funding for this initiative is \$600,000. Priority for funding will be given to communities that have

as lacking adequate services. [See the report.](#)

The SBTDC is a member of the [Business Link North Carolina network \(BLNC\)](#).

Studio head talks to Fox News about the benefits of filming in N.C.

[EUE Screen Gems](#) has produced many films, including recent hits "Nights in Rodanthe" and "Secret Life of Bees" as well as TV shows "One Tree Hill" and "Dawson's Creek." The studio is building one of the largest soundstages in the world in Wilmington, with a watertank that will be the largest and deepest in North America. Studio President Chris Cooney recently talked with Fox News about the business of making movies in North Carolina, stressing the cost-effectiveness of shooting in Wilmington rather than Hollywood or Canada.

In 2006, North Carolina passed a 15% film tax credit and saw immediate growth in film industry spending. The film industry created thousands of jobs and induced spending in the millions of dollars at local businesses. In the film incentive's first year (2007), spending increased 61% to \$160 million statewide. Since the passage of the North Carolina Film Incentive, other states with virtually no film industry have passed aggressive film incentives (Georgia 30%, Illinois 30%, New York 30% Michigan 40%) threatening North Carolina's market share. In 2008 film production spending in North Carolina decreased 42% while Georgia, Michigan and others saw their share of the market double and even triple in some jurisdictions.

[See video](#) of the interview with Chris Cooney on YouTube.



been designated Tier 1, meaning they are among the state's least prosperous, and 21st Century Communities, a program that provides to targeted communities assistance with the development of broad-based and comprehensive economic development plans and incentives. [Read more.](#)

[Click here](#) for details on Community Development Block Grants.

N.C. in the News

This Week's Highlights

- [Forbes ranks GSO, W-S on biz lists](#) (Triad Business Journal, March 30)
- [Wilmington ranked No. 13 on list of best for business](#) (The Star-News – Wilmington, March 29)
- [334 IBMers losing their jobs at RTP](#) (The News & Observer – Raleigh, March 28)
- [Forbes reports North Carolina a good place for Business](#) (WWAY – Wilmington, March 27)
- [What recession? Raleigh, Durham top Forbes list](#) (WRAL - Raleigh, March 27)
- [Independent Container Line docks in Wilmington](#) (WWAY - Wilmington, March 26)
- [Container vessel to make first Wilmington port call](#) (The Star-News - Wilmington, March 25)
- [Wilmington's Port welcomes another new shipping line](#) (WECT - Wilmington, March 26)
- [N.C. nanotech conference plots profits from protons](#) (WRAL - Raleigh, March 25)
- [Nanotech conference focuses on profit](#) (The Associated Press, March 25)
- [Ingersoll Rand is cutting 75 more jobs in Davie](#) (Winston-Salem Journal, March 25)
- [Official: Focus on positives of N.C.](#) (Fayetteville Observer, March 25)
- [Raleigh lands \\$42M commitment for new National Guard facility](#) (Triangle Business Journal, March 25)
- [Thousands target local jobs](#) (Hickory Daily Record, March 25)
- [State awards funds to companies](#) (Durham

DigitalChalk CTO Troy Tolle (far left), AdvantageWest Sr. Director Pam Lewis (third from right), Deputy Commerce Sec. Dale Carroll (far right) and Google executives celebrate at the Googleplex in California with students from Appalachian State University.

ASU team wins national contest

A working bicycle made from plastic bottles was the winning entry in the first annual [Juicy Ideas](#) contest organized by AdvantageWest Economic Development Group. The contest was also supported by [Google](#) and DigitalChalk as a way to encourage entrepreneurship and communicate a message of environmental responsibility.

The bicycle was fabricated by a team of four industrial design students from Appalachian State University narrowly defeating a wind generator made with plastic bottles by students from Western Carolina University. A group of students from Piedmont Community College in Morganton also made the top five by developing wall insulation using plastic bottles. [Read more](#) about the group's winning entry.

Gov. Perdue to lead education and workforce development town hall meeting

Gov. Beverly Perdue will lead a town hall meeting on improving education and workforce development in North Carolina April 1 at Cape Fear Community College in Castle Hayne. She will be joined by Dr. Scott Ralls, president of the North Carolina Community College System, and Dr. Bill Harrison, chairman and CEO of the State Board of Education. The hour-long discussion begins at 3:30 p.m. and is open to the public.

Herald-Sun, March 24)

- [BRAC RTF featured in March issue of economic development journal](#) (CarolinaNewswire.com, March 24)
- [Clayton leaders visit Lexington to learn about Streetscape](#) (The Dispatch - Davidson County, March 23)
- [Grants offer more funds for housing repair work](#) (Goldsboro News-Argus, March 23)
- [Aiming for the Cream of the Crop](#) (Business Facilities magazine, Feb. 2009)

(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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