

SVNCTM Highlights from the North Carolina Department of Commerce



Downtown Revitalization Leaders Honored at Main Street Conference

North Carolina Commerce Secretary John E. Skvarla, III and Assistant Secretary Dr. Patricia Mitchell highlighted downtown revitalization efforts across the state at an awards celebration in Morganton March 19.

The N.C. Main Street Awards Conference featured 23 awards to participants in the N.C. Main Street and Small Town Main Street programs. Winners are recognized for excellence in downtown revitalization efforts in categories that include promotion, organization, design and economic restructuring.

"Congratulations are in order for North Carolina's Main Street Champions and award winning programs," said Secretary Skvarla. "Their hard work breathes new life into downtowns all across our state and provides opportunities for small business as well as entertainment options for our citizens."

The North Carolina Main Street program helps small towns preserve their historic fabric. Local resources help participants build on their community's unique characteristics to create vibrant central business districts. This year's award winners were chosen by a panel of independent judges from dozens of applications submitted by Main Street participants throughout the state.

The Small Town Main Street program is designed to provide downtown revitalization assistance to small towns with a population of less than 7,500 that are not likely, due to size or resource limitations, to pursue the regular program. Admittance into the Small Town Main Street program is through a competitive application process.



Secretary Skvarla breaks ground for Packrite's expansion with company owners and High Point's Mavor

Speciality Packaging Firm to Add 100 New Jobs in Guilford County

Packrite, LLC will expand its operations in Guilford County and create 100 new jobs over the next five years. The company plans to invest \$8.9 million in building and equipment in the city of High Point over the course of the first year. North Carolina Commerce Secretary John Skvarla attended an event at the company celebrating the announcement on March 17.

"Packrite is a home-grown, locally-owned North Carolina company that has a successful history in High Point," said Governor Pat McCrory. "This is a company that was started during a down economy and has grown to be an industry leader in just a few short years."

Secretary Skvarla added, "Packrite is a company that is unique to its industry and has been successful in creating its own niche. By deciding to expand here and keep all of its operations in North Carolina, the company is demonstrating its confidence in our great workforce and resources."

Packrite was founded in 2008 by Mary and Michael Drummond. By 2012, the company was ranked #205 (#1 in Manufacturing) in Inc. magazine's list of fastest growing 500 privately-owned companies in America. The company manufactures high end fluted graphic packaging and folded paperboard packaging for a variety of uses and products.

2014 N.C. SMALL TOWN MAIN STREET AWARDS

- ORGANIZATION: Cherryville Cherryville Small Town Main Street Master Work Plan
- PROMOTION: Benson Say "I Do" In Benson
- ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING: Tryon St. Luke's Plaza



North Carolina Commerce Secretary John Skvarla, Governor Pat McCrory, and North Carolina Cultural Resources Secretary Susan Kluttz at the N.C. Main Street Conference in Morganton

2014 N.C. MAIN STREET AWARDS

- ORGANIZATION:
 - Best Public-Private Partnership in Downtown Revitalization
 - Sanford Chatham Street Parking Lot
 Best Innovation
 - Best Innovation
 - Burlington The Elon University and Downtown Burlington Partnership for Revitalization
 - Eden Rockingham Community College Center for Brewing Sciences
 - Best Public Relations Effort
 - Morganton
 Morganton's Main Stre

- Morganton's Main Street Program Energizes Downtown

- Best Fundraising Effort
 - Fuquay-Varina Dinner on Depot Street
- PROMOTION:
 - Best Downtown Special Event or Event Series
 - Wake Forest Wake Forest Dirt Day
 - Best Image-Building Campaign
 - Morganton City of Morganton Wayfinding Program
- ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING:
 - Best Economic Development Incentive
 - Burlington The Burlington Downtown Corporation Small Grants Program
 - Best Adaptive Reuse Project
 - Elkin The Liberty Renovation Project
 - Newton Repurposing of 19 College Avenue
 - Salisbury Emma's of Salisbury
 - Best Upper Floor Redevelopment
 - Eden Washington Street Lofts
 - Goldsboro Edgerton Building
 Apartments
 - Wilson Nash Street Lofts
 - Best Business Retention, Expansion or Recruitment Effort
 - Morganton Creative Arts Center

Packrite currently has 78 employees in Guilford County.

The project was made possible in part by a performance-based grant from the One North Carolina Fund of up to \$100,000. The One NC Fund provides financial assistance, through local governments, to attract business projects that will stimulate economic activity and create new jobs in the state. Companies receive no money up front and must meet job creation and investment performance standards to qualify for the reimbursement. These grants also require and are contingent upon local matches.

In addition to the <u>N.C. Department of</u> <u>Commerce</u> and the <u>Economic Development</u> <u>Partnership of N.C.</u>, other partners that helped with this project include: <u>North</u> <u>Carolina Community College System</u>, <u>NCWorks</u>, the <u>High Point Economic</u> <u>Development Corporation</u>, and the <u>City of</u> <u>High Point</u>.

Read more.



Company officials from Ply Gem greet Governor McCrory

Governor McCrory Commends Ply Gem on Expansion Progress

Governor Pat McCrory stopped by Ply Gem, an exterior building product manufacturer, for a tour recently while in Columbus County.

The company received a performance-based reimbursement in 2013 from the One North Carolina Fund, soon to be known as the Job:GRO Capital program.

"Ply Gem's success shows why we need to pass our comprehensive N.C. Competes job recruitment plan," said Governor McCrory. "This will continue to create economic opportunities for the people of our state."

Industrial Commission Fraud Unit Steps Up Investigations

State businesses that operate without required workers' compensation coverage should take notice - greater scruitny of their actions are underway and penalities could be in store.

Andrew T. Heath, Chairman of the North

Recruitment Initiative

- Waynesville Wells Events & Reception Center
- DESIGN:
 - Best Historic Rehabilitation Project
 - Edenton Historic Preservation of the 1886 Roanoke River Lighthouse
 - Best Facade Rehabilitation Project for \$15,000 or Less
 - Clinton Facade Improvement Project at 117 Vance Street
 - Best Outdoor Space Improvement
 - Elkin 2013-2014 Main Street Mural Grant Project
 - Hendersonville Downtown Hendersonville Main Street Streetscape Rehabilitation Project

Videos featuring each <u>Main Street Award winner</u> are available <u>online</u>. For more information about the N.C. Department of Commerce's Main Street program, visit <u>www.nccommerce.com</u>.

Read more.

Press Release: North Carolina's Main Street Conference Underway with Record Attendance



NCACPA staff members head out for fresh air last month as part of a WorkHealthy initiative launched in January

CPA Association Embarks on Wellness Journey

For a small, 27-employee organization, the North Carolina Association of CPAs has committed to making big changes to create a healthier working environment. Three months into its launch of WorkHealthy America, indicators point to the staff embracing the new effort.

"It's been very gratifying to see how very simple additions walking groups, exercise ball chairs, a smoothie bar - have made a substantial change in the morale and culture of our office," says Chief Operating Officer Sharon Bryson.

Ben Hamrick, immediate past chair of the association, introduced Bryson to Prevention Partners and WorkHealthy America. Hamrick's Asheville CPA firm, Johnson Price Sprinkle, has earned WorkHealthy's Excellence Recognition, the highest national standard for healthy workplaces. Bryson Carolina Industrial Commission released an update March 16 on the Commission's initiative to thoroughly investigate any state business that operates without required workers' compensation coverage. This initiative was launched in early 2014.

"The mandate to carry workers' compensation insurance is important to employees and employers alike," said Chairman Heath. "Employees who suffer compensable work injuries deserve the medical care they need to get back to work so they can provide for their families. For employers, workers' compensation insurance is a business expense, and employers who unlawfully avoid coverage should not be given a competitive advantage over legitimate employers who do provide coverage. Our goal is not only to penalize uninsured businesses, but also to ensure that they acquire and maintain proper workers' compensation insurance coverage."

Chairman Heath credited the Commission's fraud alerting tool, the Noncompliant Employer Targeting System (NETS) with enabling the Commission's Fraud Unit to quickly identify covered employers that do not have a current workers' compensation insurance policy. NETS uses data from various state agencies to create a list of potentially noncompliant businesses.

The Commission assessed and collected approximately \$678,000 in civil penalties in fiscal year 2013-2014, a 43% increase from last year and a 621% increase from penalties collected in fiscal year 2011-2012. In the first half of the current fiscal year, the Commission has already collected approximately \$587,000 in penalties.

Read more.



Educational Courses Focus on Big Data

Registration is open now for the second year of Data Matters, a short course series aimed at business managers, data analytics specialists, academic researchers, data center administrators, and anyone else who grapples with big data issues. Last year's workshop series attracted participants from across the county, including academics, business professionals, and government officials.

The Data Matters Short Course Series will be held June 22 - 26, 2015 at the Friday Center for Continuing Education, 100 Friday Center Drive, Chapel Hill. The series will feature tworemembers thinking her organization was also doing a fairly good job of focusing on wellness, so scoring poorly on the first WorkHealthy assessment was "eye opening."

"I know employee health is essential to our organization's success. I didn't realize we could be doing so much more to promote overall wellness," said Bryson.

A staff team calling themselves "Bringing Healthy Back" is leading the effort. The team is careful to survey employees about their wellness interests, priorities, and progress. The initiative's launch included \$50 health and wellness vouchers that staff can spend on things such as exercise equipment and gym memberships.

"We want employees to feel empowered to make their own individual wellness decisions," said Bryson. "We've started providing more nutritious items in our kitchen, and I've noticed we're replacing the healthier items more frequently than the available candy and sweets. Staff has been motivated to share tips and mobile apps to help guide and promote a healthy lifestyle, and employees feel supported not only by management, but by each other."

NCACPA has already improved by two letter grades representing an average of six significant policy changes, as guided by WorkHealthy.

Bryson shares this advice to businesses considering wellness initiatives: "Take the online assessment to see where you stand, and this will ultimately help identify the areas that most need improvements. Create a small internal team who will support creating a healthy workplace environment. Finally, start small and gradually introduce the concept to your staff so no one feels overwhelmed."

Healthy Places Change Lives is a partnership between the N.C. Department of Commerce and Prevention Partners, a nonprofit based in Chapel Hill. Prevention Partners guides schools, workplaces, hospitals and clinics to address the leading causes of preventable disease. The non-profit's Healthy Together NC initiative aims to reach at least 10 organizations in all 100 counties of the state by 2025. Learn more at ForPrevention.org/HealthyTogetherNC

day courses on Monday and Tuesday and Thursday and Friday, and one-day courses on Wednesday. Participants will be able to choose from a wide range of data-related topics, including information visualization, data curation, data mining and machine learning, the Internet of Things, health informatics, social network analysis, and more.

Data Matters is sponsored by the National Consortium for Data Science (NCDS), the Odum Institute for Social Science Research at UNC Chapel Hill, and the Renaissance Computing Institute (RENCI).

For more information, including course descriptions and online registration, visit www.datamatters.org.

N.C. in the News

This Week's Highlights

- Wells Fargo: 'North Carolina's economy has clearly shifted into high gear (Charlotte Business Journal - March 30)
- N.C. development partnership CEO: Hunt for an auto plant may lead to Korea (Charlotte Business Journal - March 27)
- Vertex Rail CEO Describes Firm's Hiring Efforts At Expo (WilmingtonBiz - March 25)
- <u>CPCC to provide Sealed Air employees</u> with \$1.3M in job training (Charlotte Business Journal - March 23)
- Industry pitches offshore oil, gas (Carteret County News-Times - March 22)
- Ports CEO Talks Opportunities At Trade <u>Gathering</u> (*WilmingtonBiz* - March 20)
- Community broadband debate centered in Wilson (News & Observer - March 20)
- <u>NC Commerce chief touts necessity of</u> incentives (Independent Tribune - Concord N.C. - March 19)
- Thomson Plastics locates in Davidson County: 50 jobs, \$2.5M investment (Fox8 - WGHP - March 19)
- N.C. Commerce Sec. Skvarla talks DENR, the Senate, JDIG and manufacturing at TBJ Power Breakfast (Triangle Business Journal - March 19)
- McCrory bashes N.C. Senate incentives plan: Berger swings back (Charlotte Business Journal - March 19)
- Crowdfunding event: NC is 'out of business' without incentives, Commerce Secretary says (WRAL TechWire - March 18)

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