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Weekly highlights from the
North Carolina Department of Commerce



Site Selection Magazine

Site Selection: N.C. is No. 1 in South Atlantic

[Site Selection](#) magazine released its rankings on new and expanded project activity for 2011. North Carolina moved up two spots this year, capturing fourth place nationally and No. 1 in the South Atlantic region. North Carolina logged 310 qualifying projects during 2011, which was a 38 percent increase over 2010.

In addition Statesville-Mooresville once again was selected the No. 1 micropolitan region for new and expanding industry. This marks the sixth time in the past eight years that Statesville-Mooresville has held the top spot. The region finished second in 2010 and is now reclaiming its No. 1 spot in 2011. [Read more from ThriveNC.com.](#)



A sample of the new NC Tourism Campaign

Tourism Office launches new marketing campaign

The N.C. Department of Commerce's Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development announced on March 1 the launch of its new marketing campaign to promote leisure travel to North Carolina. The state's 'Deeper Connections' message strategy focuses on finding the next level of vacation, relaxation and realization to make trips more meaningful, enriching and enlightening.

'We're excited about 'Deeper Connections' because it is based on research and represents a natural evolution of our strategic position, which has long been rooted in the state's natural scenic beauty and inviting hospitality,' said Lynn Minges, assistant secretary of tourism, marketing and global branding for the Department of Commerce. 'Current consumer research trends remind us travelers are looking for fulfilling destinations that provide distinctive experiences and lasting memories, and there's no better place for that than North Carolina.' The consumer insight was complemented by input from more than 500 industry leaders from around the state who participated in online surveys and marketing workshops conducted by the division.



N.C. Department of Commerce Deputy Secretary Dale Carroll at the dedication of ABB's Smart Grid Center of Excellence

ABB dedicates Smart Grid Center of Excellence on NCSU's Centennial Campus

On March 5, ABB held a ceremony to dedicate their state-of-the-art Smart Grid Center of Excellence on the Centennial Campus of N.C. State University. Speakers included City of Raleigh Mayor Nancy McFarlane, N.C. State Chancellor Randy Woodson, ABB North America CEO Enrique Santacana, ABB Smart Grid VP Brad Luyster and N.C. Department of Commerce Deputy Secretary Dale Carroll. In addition to the new center, ABB employs more than 1,600 workers in North Carolina at seven facilities from the mountains to the eastern region. This fall the company will open a new transmission cable manufacturing plant in the Charlotte region that Governor Bev Perdue announced in 2010.



Registration discount available for Aviation Week conference

Aviation Week, the world's premier media organization tracking the aviation industry, has taken note of North Carolina's growing importance in aviation manufacturing by selecting the state to host a new conference focused entirely on the needs of manufacturers and suppliers in this sector. The [Civil Aviation Manufacturing Conference](#) will be held in Charlotte May 8-9. *Aviation Week* conferences typically draw senior business executives from leading companies across the sector.

The new messaging strategy and marketing campaign will help differentiate the state by celebrating iconic North Carolina experiences — tracing the footsteps of Blackbeard, observing the wild horses of the Outer Banks, tuning in to the state's rich and varied music heritage, drinking in the scenery on the Blue Ridge Parkway and other routes, pursuing outdoor adventure, cheering for racing legends, golfing across a range of terrains, and savoring the celebrated fare of chefs, winemakers, and craft brewers and distillers that has made North Carolina a top culinary destination. [Read more.](#)

Several local media outlets, including [The News & Observer](#) and [WTVD of Raleigh](#), covered the release. Assistant Secretary Lynn Minges was also interviewed on News 14 Carolina.



Assistant Secretary of Tourism, Marketing and Global Branding Lynn Minges on WTVD



Tourism division collaborates with partners to capitalize on 'The Hunger Games'

In anticipation of the March 23 release of the movie "[The Hunger Games](#)," the N.C. Department of Commerce's Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development is collaborating

Registration for the conference is now open. Because the State of North Carolina is a gold-level sponsor for the conference, discount conference registration is available for in-state aviation-aerospace companies and economic development partner organizations. For more information on this discount offer, contact David Rhoades in the N.C. Department of Commerce's Marketing Division at (919) 715-6556 or by email at drhoades@nccommerce.com.

In addition to the Department of Commerce, North Carolina's presence at *Aviation Week's* Civil Aviation Manufacturing Conference is made possible by generous support from the [Charlotte Regional Partnership](#), [North Carolina's Eastern Region](#), the [N.C. Global TransPark](#), and the [Piedmont Triad Partnership](#).

More information on the conference can be found online at ThriveNC.com.



Small Business Commissioner Scott Daugherty speaks at the Google press conference last month

Google launches website program for N.C. small businesses

Google launched its North Carolina 'Get Your Business Online' kick-off at the Big Chill in Charlotte on Feb. 24. The N.C. Department of Commerce and the [Small Business Technology Development Center](#) were lead sponsors of the event.

The free day-long event attracted more than 500 participants. Three workshop tracks were available. These included how to get a free website, how to run a small business online, and a thorough introduction to Google AdWords. Google-hosted websites are free for one year for participating small businesses and \$6.99 a month thereafter. Attendees were uniformly upbeat and enthusiastic about Google's offerings.

Commissioner for Small Business Scott Daugherty, Small Business Ombudsman Christine Ryan, and Business Link North Carolina Counselor Harry Swendsen represented Commerce at the event. Daugherty and Google's Vice President of Global Display Sales & Strategy Richard Alfonsi spoke at a press conference during the event.

N.C. small businesses may explore the program by going to [Google's website](#).

[Google kicks off program to get N.C. small businesses online](#)
(The News & Observer – Raleigh, Feb. 27)

with strategic partners to showcase locations, venues and businesses throughout Western North Carolina and the Charlotte region that supported the making of the film. The Division is working across all marketing platforms to leverage the national and international exposure generated by "The Hunger Games" to drive travel demand in North Carolina. The [North Carolina "Hunger Games experience"](#) will be featured in several areas on VisitNC.com, highlighting locations where the film was shot, as well as outdoor experiences available in the state that relate to the movie.

The Division and its partners recently hosted a group of journalists on a familiarization tour to build interest in North Carolina's "Hunger Games experience." The group visited notable locations beginning in Hildebran, the site of "District 12," and ending in "Panem" (Charlotte). The tour featured a number of businesses that became favorites of the film's cast.

"The Hunger Games" chose to shoot entirely in North Carolina because of the [North Carolina film incentive](#) coupled with the varied locations the story demanded. In addition, the [N.C. Film Office](#) actively worked with the production company to get them to North Carolina. The N.C. Film office recruited and, with the assistance of in-state partners, hosted production designers and producers on scouting trips in the state. The effort led to the making of what was the biggest movie ever filmed in North Carolina at that time.

['Hunger Games' activities at fever pitch in Cleveland County, N.C.](#) (*The Charlotte Observer*, March 2)



(Left-right) Honorary Consul of France Marie Claire Ribeill, Ambassador of France to the U.S. François Delattre, and Commerce Director of Foreign Operations Derek Chen at the SKEMA Business School grand opening

French business school opens Raleigh campus

On Feb. 29, N.C. Department of Commerce Secretary Keith Crisco and several other department officials attended the grand opening of the Raleigh campus of the [SKEMA Business School at N.C. State University](#). SKEMA's Dean

Registration open for N.C.'s annual nanotech conference

Registration for the [N.C. Nanotechnology Commercialization Conference](#) is open. The conference, to be held at the historic American Tobacco Campus in downtown Durham April 4-5, is the largest and most important nanotech industry event in the South. It will bring together nanotech stakeholders including public and private nanotechnology companies, nanotechnology innovators, cutting edge start-ups, leading scientists, investors and executives from Fortune 100 companies.

The event is co-hosted by [The NanoBusiness Commercialization Association](#), the N.C. Department of Commerce and the [Center of Innovation for Nanobiotechnology](#). [Early discount registration](#) and [the conference agenda](#) are available online.

Pitt County receives \$42k biotech grant

The [Pitt County Development Commission](#) has received a \$42,000 [Regional Development Grant](#) from the [N.C. Biotechnology Center](#) to launch a study of the best ways Eastern North Carolina can tap into the economic benefits of biotechnology.

[Biggins Lacy Shapiro & Company](#), headquartered in Princeton, N.J., will perform the biotechnology competitive positioning analysis. Led by Andy Shapiro, the firm's location economics advisor, the study will determine the most promising biotechnology sectors for which Pitt County and [North Carolina's Eastern Region](#) are best positioned to compete for economic development projects.

[Biotechnology](#) is a major target industry for North Carolina as well as North Carolina's Eastern Region. With the study's findings, Pitt County can better utilize marketing dollars to position itself and the region in targeted biotechnology sectors. 'By narrowing the scope based on a comprehensive analysis of our assets and a comparative review of competing markets, we can maximize our efforts and develop a more structured, effective marketing and recruitment plan,' says Kelly Andrews, the Commission's associate director. [Read more](#).

Biofuels Center launches Business and Innovation Support Accelerator

The [Biofuels Center of North Carolina](#) has opened the Biofuels Company Accelerator to support the development of biofuels and related technology projects, researchers, and companies. A first component of North Carolina's Biofuels Campus, in Oxford and Granville County, the facility provides leased laboratory facilities, shared equipment, and business development support from both the center and other agencies.

Funds for upfitting eight laboratories and other spaces came from both state and federal sources. U.S. Congressman G. K. Butterfield of North Carolina's first congressional district secured a \$250,000 grant from the [U.S. Department of Energy](#) for the extensive refurbishing just completed. [Read more](#).

[Biofuels Center adds facility](#) (*The News & Observer* – Raleigh, Feb. 29)

Alice Guilhon, Ambassador of France to the U.S. François Delattre, NCSU Chancellor Dr. Randy Woodson and Jean-Pierre Mascarelli, vice-president of the Alpes-Côte d'Azur region of France spoke at the ceremony along with Crisco. Bob Geolas, president of the [Research Triangle Park Foundation](#), gave an overview of the RTP region.

NCSU expanded its international connections after signing an agreement with the French business school SKEMA (School of Knowledge Economy and Management), which selected NCSU over several other locations for its U.S. campus. Classes are held on Centennial Campus, NCSU's research park and technology campus.

The French school will offer several undergraduate and graduate business programs, ranging from one to two semesters, with the first group of about 250 students arriving for spring semester earlier this year. Classes are taught in English.

SKEMA's academic strategy is to open its own campus in countries it believes will have a major influence on global business. It currently has campuses in China and Morocco, in addition to three campuses in France. [Learn more](#).

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 6, 2012

New projects assigned:	76
Projects announced:	23
Jobs announced:	3,935
Capital investment announced:	\$1.16B
Industry visits by existing industry staff:	213
Calls to Business Link N.C.:	3,842

January Economic Overview released

The N.C. Department of Commerce has released its Monthly Overview of North Carolina's Economy for January 2012. North Carolina experienced another unemployment rate decline during the first month of the year. The continued decline in unemployed workers, combined with an uptick in workers, helped bring the unemployment rate down to 9.9 percent. Tourism is also improving, with recorded hotel occupancy rates 3.9 percent higher than the totals from last year. [Read the overview.](#)

N.C. in the News

This Week's Highlights

- [Merck growing faster in Durham](#) (*Triangle Business Journal*, March 2)
- [Training incentives](#) (*The StarNews* -- Wilmington, March 1)
- [Renewable energy course offered](#) (*The News & Observer* – Raleigh, March 1)
- [Textile company to create 60+ new jobs](#) (*Shelby Star*, Feb. 29)
- [Jacksonville students compete in NASA challenge](#) (*The Associated Press*, Feb. 28)
- [Program matches up unemployed employers](#) (*The Dispatch* – Lexington, Feb. 28)

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