



Golden LEAF Board Budgets \$25 Million for Major Site Development

The Golden LEAF Foundation and the Rural Infrastructure Authority announced on April 7 the details of a collaboration to provide funding to large industrial sites across North Carolina. The funding is aimed to reduce the time needed for development and to increase competitiveness for major projects with substantial job creation and private capital investment.

The Golden LEAF Board of Directors voted to reserve up to \$25 million over the next three years to support public infrastructure needs for the Major Site Development Initiative (MSDI) in rural, tobacco-dependent and economically distressed areas.

Golden LEAF's efforts complement earlier commitments. In February 2016, the Rural Infrastructure Authority voted to reserve \$10 million from the Industrial Development Fund - Utility Account for eligible expenses related to the MSDI. In addition, Duke Energy will contribute support toward the analysis of readiness of sites to qualify for this program. Other funders may join the initiative.

"The Major Site Development Initiative provides the collaboration and focus to move the economic needle," said **Dan Gerlach, Golden LEAF President**. "We are providing substantial resources to reduce the preparation time and increase the competitiveness of sites across North Carolina."

"Creating assets that prep industrial properties for job creation calls for a team approach," said **John Skvarla, North Carolina Commerce Secretary**. "When paired with other resources, the Utility Fund (financed by Job Development Investment grants) can help construct the modern infrastructure the state needs to compete effectively for projects with economic significance."

In order to be considered for funding, applicants must have public ownership or public control of a site that is at least 150 contiguous acres. Competitive applications will demonstrate appropriate local financial support, show recent private sector interest in developing an industrial project at the site, and have a strategy to market the site to identified clients. Each project should result in a site that is ready for development as a result



NC Competes for Jobs Tour Stops at New Bern and Elizabeth City This Week

Governor Pat McCrory invites local community leaders to join **N.C. Commerce Secretary John Skvarla** and his economic development and workforce team for the *NC Competes for Jobs* Tour. The tour stops in New Bern tomorrow (April 13) and in Elizabeth City on Thursday (April 14).

The sessions will convene at 1:00 p.m. The New Bern event is being held at the New Bern Convention Center and the Elizabeth City session will gather at the College of the Albermarle.

The *NC Competes for Jobs* events offer attendees a fast-paced, information-packed session outlining solutions N.C. Commerce offers to local leaders for the work of growing their local economies.

Attendees learn more about:

- Grants and loans available for local economic development
- Available assistance to plan and build local infrastructure, water and sewer
- Finding and training local workers, using the state's NCWorks system
- Regulatory reforms to the state's business climate
- Changes in the state's tax rates
- The team at N.C. Commerce, and how to contact the right people who can help

There is still time to RSVP for these events; to do so, send an email to rsvp@nccommerce.com. For information about future tour stops, [email James Estes in the Secretary's office.](#)

of the improvements. An independent evaluation of the site's readiness and qualifications will be provided.

[Read more.](#)

NCWorks @ Work: Personalized Career Counseling Leads to Healthcare Career

In late 2013, Ashley Russell was unsure of her next step. She needed to find a job after having been let go from her old company, but she only had experience as a flight attendant and student loan processor.

"I was a little scared, because I only had a high school education," said Russell.

A family friend referred Russell to her local NCWorks Career Center, so she made an appointment and met with a career advisor. She completed assessments and learned she would be a good fit for the Health Information Technology program. The career center helped her find the funding to enter the program at Davidson County Community College.

For two years, Russell faced a rigorous curriculum during her program, as well as a group of peers that did not respect their instructors. She separated herself from the disruptive students by keeping herself focused on her goals. While her classmates were complaining, Russell networked, volunteered, and attended job fairs.

Russell was eventually offered the opportunity to work at Moses Cone Memorial Hospital as a clinical site intern, and she jumped at the chance to impress her clinical manager. After she completed her internship, Russell continued to volunteer, and she made herself available to the coding department. The hospital offered her a job before she graduated from school. She is now a pro fee coder, managing doctor's fees and loving her job.

"They've been nice to everyone and friendly, and it's a good family oriented environment," said Russell. "They work with you when you need time off, they help you with anything you need, and they have really good incentives to stay with them as an employee."

NCWorks Career Centers help people find jobs by providing skills assessments and access to training, as well as help with networking, resumes, and cover letters. Russell has also referred friends to her local career center, which is operated by the DavidsonWorks Workforce Development Board, a partner in the NCWorks initiative.

"I'm so grateful for DavidsonWorks because without them, I wouldn't be where I am now," said Russell.

NCWorks @ Work is a SYNC series highlighting success stories from North Carolina's integrated workforce development system. More information about [NCWorks is online.](#)



The prototype of a license plate featuring North Carolina's new brand. Artist concept subject to change.

Sign Up for New State Brand License Plate

Applications continue to pour into the N.C. Brand Team based at Commerce from people across the state interested in displaying the North Carolina brand logo on their cars, trucks and other licensed vehicles.

N.C. Commerce is leading the campaign to issue the new license plate, which will be the latest option for motorists under the N.C. Department of Transportation's specialty license plate program. Plans for the plate include the inspirational tagline "Nothing Compares" along with the new state brand logo, a green and blue "NC" encompassing the outline of a long leaf pine, symbolic of our state's deep historic roots and scenic diversity from the mountains to the sea.

To begin the process of claiming your new 'Nothing Compares' plate, visit this special page on Commerce's website: nccommerce.com/nc-license-plate.

Show your pride on your ride in North Carolina: where everything is possible and Nothing Compares!

N.C. in the News

- [Charlotte Douglas jumps to fifth-busiest airport in nation](#) (*Charlotte Observer* - April 11)
- [State economic team talks building business](#) (*Rockingham Now* - April 8)
- [Supporters to begin marketing Greensboro-Randolph Megasite 'to the world'](#) (*Triad Business Journal* - April 7)
- [Redesigning downtowns](#) (*News & Features, UNCG.edu* - April 4)
- [Grifols Therapeutics Plans \\$210 Million Expansion In Clayton, North Carolina](#) (*Area Development* - April 4)
- [New president named for NC community college system](#) (*News & Observer* - March 31)

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SYNC is North Carolina Commerce's electronic

newsletter for local government officials, private-sector allies, state policy makers, and other economic development leaders. We offer unfiltered details about new economic development projects and events, useful news about your peers, and opportunities to synchronize with statewide programs and tools in order to advance economic development in your community. [Send your story ideas to the editor.](#)

(919) 814-4600

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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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