

syncTM Weekly highlights from the North Carolina Department of Commerce



(Photo courtesy of News 14 Carolina)

Obama talks jobs, economy in Charlotte

President Barack Obama praised a new government report on jobs during a visit to a Celgard plant in Charlotte April 2. According to a U.S. Dept. of Labor report released the same day, businesses added 162,000 jobs to their payrolls in March.

The president said that government actions "have broken this slide and are helping us to climb out of this recession."

Celgard received a \$49 million grant from the U.S. Dept. of Energy in 2009. Gov. Bev Perdue announced in January that the company will create 289 jobs and invest a total of \$91 million in expanded and new infrastructure in Mecklenburg and Cabarrus counties over the next five years. The company was awarded a Job Development Investment Grant and a One North Carolina fund grant to assist with the expansion.

Also instrumental in the facility expansion were U.S. Sen. Kay Hagan and U.S. Rep. Larry Kissell; the N.C. departments of Commerce and Transportation, N.C. Community Colleges, cities of Charlotte and Concord, counties of Mecklenburg and Cabarrus, Charlotte Chamber and Cabarrus Chamber/Economic Development Corp.

[Obama discusses economy at Charlotte Celgard plant](#) (News 14 Carolina, April 2)



Offshore oil expansion to include N.C. coast

President Barack Obama on March 31 announced an expansion of oil and gas exploration along the entire southern Atlantic coastline, including all of North Carolina. He described the decision as one of energy security, strengthening the economy over the short and long term.

"We'll protect areas that are vital to tourism and the environment," Obama said.

The administration plan calls for seismic exploration in the mid- and south Atlantic to learn more about what oil and natural gas resources might exist. Lease sales could proceed from there, but not before 2012.

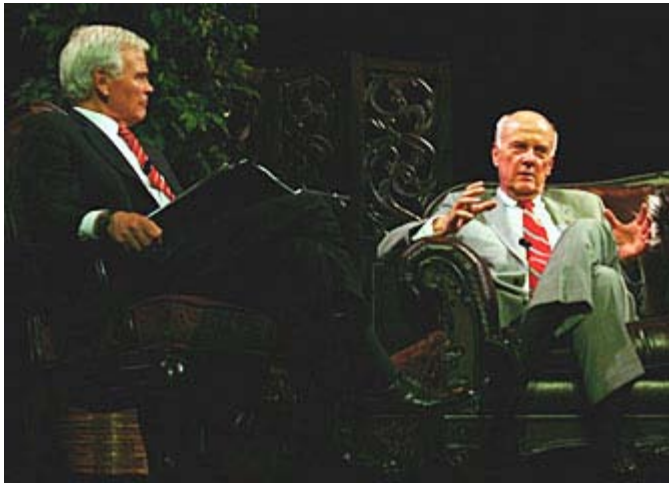
"The federal government is moving forward with this plan with or without us," Gov. Bev Perdue said in a statement. She also said she would remain "aggressively engaged in protecting North Carolina's environment and economy."

[Dread of offshore drilling dwindles](#) (The News & Observer - Raleigh, April 1)

[Offshore oil expansion to include N.C. coast](#) (The Charlotte Observer, March 31)



(Left-right) John Hardin, executive director of the



(Left-right) Moderator D.G. Martin talks with N.C. Dept. of Commerce Sec. Keith Crisco.

Crisco speaks at AdvantageWest Economic Summit

More than 300 economic development professionals came together March 29 for an economic summit organized by AdvantageWest. "Pathways to a New Economy," held at Pack Place in downtown Asheville, featured a networking reception followed by a panel discussion with experts presenting a broad range of views on economic and business issues in Western North Carolina and beyond.

Among the panelists was N.C. Dept. of Commerce Sec. Keith Crisco. Other panelists were AdvantageWest Board member Mike Fulenwider, president and CEO of Fulenwider Enterprises Inc., in Morganton; Martin Lancaster, attorney and former president of the N.C. Community College System; Sen. Martin Nesbitt of the N.C. General Assembly; and Nelson Schwab III, co-founder and managing partner at Carousel Capital. D.G. Martin, host of "North Carolina Bookwatch," on UNC-TV, was the moderator. Segments of the discussion are available for viewing on the [AdvantageWest Web site](#). [View video of the summit here](#).

Hewitt Associates to add 463 in Mecklenburg

Gov. Bev Perdue on March 31 announced that Hewitt Associates, one of the world's largest providers of human resources outsourcing and consulting services, plans to add 463 jobs to its Charlotte workforce over the next three years. The announcement was made possible in part by a Job Development Investment Grant. The N.C. Dept. of Commerce's Uconda Dunn was the developer on this project.

"Creating jobs is my number one priority. Hewitt's decision to expand in Mecklenburg County means new jobs for hundreds of North Carolinians," Perdue said. "This announcement by an international industry leader can only strengthen North Carolina's already strong reputation as a business-friendly state with a skilled and knowledgeable workforce."

Illinois-based Hewitt Associates (NYSE:HEW) consults with more than 3,000 companies and administers human resources, health care, payroll and retirement programs to millions of employees and retirees worldwide. The company currently employs about 23,000 workers in more than 30 countries, including 534 workers in North Carolina.

Office of Science and Technology; Ed Kitchen, board chair of Gateway University Research Park; and James Ryan, founding dean of the Joint School of Nanoscience and Nanoengineering

Nanotech conference attendees excited about future

The [2010 N.C. Nanotechnology Commercialization Conference](#) wrapped up April 1 at the Koury Center in Greensboro. The conference was organized by the N.C. Board of Science & Technology, with help from partners such as the Small Business and Technology Development Center, Piedmont Triad Partnership, Greensboro Partnership and the Joint School of Nanoscience and Nanoengineering. More than 250 people attended the event.

N.C. State Treasurer Janet Cowell spoke to the conference about the N.C. Innovation Fund. Joe Raguso, CEO and president of IntrinsicMaterials, and Josh Wolfe, co-founder and managing partner of Lux Capital, were the keynote speakers.

[Conference sees big future for nanotechnology](#) (The News & Record - Greensboro, April 4)



(Left-right) Russ Sawchuk, director of the N.C. Dept. of Commerce Canadian office; U.S. Consul General Phillip Chicola; U.S. Foreign Commercial Service Commercial Officer Cheryl Schell; and Bill Speer of Speer & Associates of Vancouver; at the reception at the Consul General's residence in Vancouver.

Commerce participates in Canadian sustainable products fair

The Globe 2010 Trade Fair took place in Vancouver, B.C., March 24-26, with more than 400 exhibitors displaying leading-edge

The 463 new jobs will be primarily human resources administration and information technology positions and will pay an average salary of approximately \$43,600 a year plus benefits.

[Hewitt Associates to add almost 500 Charlotte jobs](#) (Charlotte Business Journal, April 1)



Left-right) U.S. Rep. Howard Coble, N.C. Dept. of Commerce Deputy Sec. Dale Carroll and Precor CEO Paul Byrne at the ribbon cutting for Precor's grand opening in Greensboro.

Precor holds grand opening in Greensboro

On March 30, N.C. Dept. of Commerce Deputy Sec. Dale Carroll joined U.S. Rep. Howard Coble and Precor CEO Paul Byrne at the company's grand opening in Greensboro. Carroll thanked the partners that worked with Commerce and Greensboro Economic Development Alliance to recruit Precor's combination manufacturing, showroom and distribution center to North Carolina. He also recognized Precor for earning the LEED CI Gold Certification by the U.S. Green Building Council for their new facility in Greensboro.

[Precor facility earns LEED certification](#) (The Business Journal of the Greater Triad, March 29)

[Precor Opens Guilford County Plant](#) (WGHP - Greensboro, March 30)

Israeli biofuels company chooses N.C.

HCL CleanTech, a U.S.-Israeli biofuels technology development company, has chosen North Carolina as the site for its administrative headquarters and first pilot plant.

The Biofuels Center of North Carolina assisted the company and will provide office space in Oxford in its Biofuels Accelerator on the Biofuels Campus. The pilot plant will be located at Southern Research Institute's Advanced Energy and Transportation Technologies Center in Durham.

"HCL CleanTech will invest millions of dollars to move the company to North Carolina and build the pilot plant," said Eran Baniel, president and CEO of HCL CleanTech. "Looking forward to the commercialization of our process, we hope that with state and county assistance, and a successful pilot, we might provide the pulp and paper industry [in North Carolina]

sustainable solutions, and advanced environmental products and services from around the world. The conference also featured more than 150 international speakers in over 40 seminars and workshops.

Russ Sawchuk, director of the North Carolina trade and investment office in Canada, attended the event and co-hosted a reception for exhibitors with the U.S. Consulate General in Vancouver, other U.S. state offices in Canada and HSBC Canada.

Sawchuk also participated in the 10th Annual National Buyer Seller Forum in Edmonton, Alberta, March 23-25. The event brought hundreds of buyers and sellers from across North America to discuss supply chain opportunities in the oil sands industry in Alberta. The forum was supported by the Ontario, Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador provincial governments.

N.C. tourism gains market share, generates additional state tax revenue

Overnight travel market share for North Carolina increased slightly from 4.3 percent to 4.4 percent in 2009, even as overnight visitation decreased 7 percent to 27.8 million visitors. This is an indication that, while fewer U.S. residents traveled in 2009, North Carolina was host to more of those who did travel. North Carolina remains the sixth most visited state in the country, following Pennsylvania very closely in terms of overnight visitors. Other states in the top five are California, Florida, Texas, and New York.

N.C. Dept. of Commerce Assistant Sec. for Tourism, Marketing and Global Branding Lynn Minges announced these preliminary results from two studies -- the 2009 Travel Economic Impact Study and the 2009 TravelsAmerica study, which provides demographic and volume data on visitors to and within the state -- at the 2010 N.C. Governor's Conference on Hospitality and Tourism in New Bern. While economic conditions have impacted businesses all across the state -- including those in the tourism industry -- North Carolina is not alone and is in fact performing slightly better than many of its U.S. competitors.

North Carolina saw a larger proportion of in-state visitors in 2009, both for overnight and daytrips. In-state overnight travel increased from 34 percent in 2008 to 36 percent in 2009. Overall daytrip travel volume increased almost 7 percent last year, as is evident in the increase in visitation to many of North Carolina's state and national parks.

Domestic visitor spending in North Carolina last year was nearly \$15.6 billion, down 7.7 percent from 2008. Tax receipts as a result of

with a new opportunity."

HCL CleanTech is a leading developer of full process technology for conversion of woody biomass to fermentable sugars and advanced biofuels. [Read more.](#)

N.C. to receive HUD grants for job training

U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Sec. Shaun Donovan announced March 31 that public housing agencies across the U.S., Guam and Puerto Rico will receive nearly \$49.3 million to provide low-income people with the necessary job training to put them on a path toward self-sufficiency. North Carolina housing agencies have been awarded \$1,628,128, which will be critical to residents in their quest to become financially self-reliant.

Funded through HUD's Housing Choice Voucher Family Self-Sufficiency Program (HCV/FSS), the grants allow public housing agencies (PHAs) to work with welfare agencies, schools, businesses, and other local partners to develop a comprehensive program to help participating individuals develop the skills and experience to enable them to obtain jobs that pay a living wage.

"In today's economy, this program is needed more than ever to help families obtain the skills that lead to jobs," said Donovan. "On the heels of President Obama signing the jobs bill that will boost job creation, I'm pleased HUD is providing this funding to local housing authorities that will keep caseworkers on the job to assist families in HUD's voucher program find employment." [Read more.](#)

Commerce participates in Duke India Business Forum

Kuldip Wasson, business development manager with the N.C. Dept. of Commerce's International Trade Division, participated in the Duke India Business Forum held March 28 at the Fuqua School of Business in Durham. The event provided a platform for business leaders, professionals, faculty and students to share their perspectives on continuing economic liberalization and reforms that have fueled India's economic growth. Panel discussions and keynote speeches examined the challenges and opportunities in sectors ranging from technology and healthcare to finance and infrastructure. In addition, the participants also discussed the impact of the global financial crisis and the uncertainty created for North Carolina companies conducting business in India as well as companies seeking to expand globally.

the visitor spending were down 6.3 percent at the local level, yet receipts increased 1.3 percent at the state level, primarily due to increased sales tax rate. Total (federal, state and local) tax receipts through visitor spending were over \$2.5 billion in 2009.

Visitor expenditures directly generated 182,900 jobs and over \$3.9 billion in payroll income within North Carolina in 2009. Employment in the tourism related sectors decreased 4 percent from 2008 to 2009.

To view the 2009 visitor spending and demographic data, visit the [Tourism research Web page](#) and click on one of the Fast Facts files.

Fort Macon visitor center receives LEED Gold certification

The new Fort Macon State Park Coastal Education and Visitor Center in Atlantic Beach has received a gold rating in the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program of the U.S. Green Building Council. The facility is the first non-university, state-owned building to earn the distinction. Sustainable features that contributed to the gold rating include a sophisticated rainwater collection system and storm water runoff controls, low-energy lighting, water-saving fixtures and preferred parking for fuel-efficient vehicles. Also, several tons of concrete construction debris was collected to contribute to an artificial, offshore reef, an idea that came from the park ranger staff. [Read more.](#)

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 - April 5, 2010

New projects assigned:	121
Projects announced:	22
Jobs created:	3,862
Capital invested:	\$411.9M
Industry visits by existing industry staff:	309
Calls to the Business	6,432



(Left-right) N.C. Dept. of Commerce International Trade Division Director Jean Davis and Tom Kurke, chief operating officer at GeoMagic, discuss international trade issues during a seminar at the March 16 business development forum.

ITD participates in emerging markets event

N.C. Dept. of Commerce International Trade Division Director Jean Davis and other division members joined international trade specialists March 16 for a business development forum in Research Triangle Park. The event, which outlined challenges and opportunities in emerging markets such as Brazil, India, China and Europe, drew about 80 participants. Partners included the Council for Entrepreneurial Development, the Raleigh office of the U.S. Export Assistance Center, the N.C. Chinese Business Association, The Indus Entrepreneurs Organization and the World Trade Association. Business Development Manager Jim Roberts organized the speakers and served as moderator for the event, which was held at CED headquarters.

ServiCenter:

N.C. in the News

This Week's Highlights

- [Businesses talk about 'green' opportunities](#) (The Fayetteville Observer, April 1)
- [Monroe Holds Economic Development Strategy With Charlotte Regional Partnership](#) (City of Monroe, April 1)
- [Inventor promises new jobs for Gaston County](#) (Gaston Gazette, April 1)
- [Poultry jobs to grow in N.C.](#) (The News & Observer, March 31)
- [ConAgra employees adjust to job market changes](#) (The Garner Citizen, March 31)

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