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Weekly highlights from the  
North Carolina Department of Commerce



Asheville artist Hoss Haley works with a student. (Image courtesy [HandMade in America](#))

## Professional craft brings millions to Western N.C.

N.C. Dept. of Cultural Resources Sec. Linda Carlisle on April 3 unveiled the findings of a new research study which shows that the professional craft industry contributes \$206.5 million into Western North Carolina's economy each year.

The report, "Economic Impact of the Professional Craft Industry in Western North Carolina," is an update of the first such study, undertaken in 1995 by the Walker College of Business at Appalachian State University. That survey reported the economic impact of craft across the region to be \$122 million. [Read more.](#)

## RTP to host Science Parks World Conference

This June, Research Triangle Park will be the lead organizer of the 26th International Association of Science Parks (IASP) World Conference on Science and Technology Parks. This is an



(Left – right) Phoebe Fox of Ferrington Village, Donna Carpenter of Visit Charlotte and Heidi Walters, director of international marketing, showcase North Carolina to two U.K. tour operators.

## 11 U.K. travel agents learn about N.C.

Heidi Walters, director of international marketing for the Division of Tourism, Film & Sports Development, teamed with Division partners Visit Charlotte and Ferrington Village for an international sales mission in the United Kingdom March 30-April 4. The group made sales calls on key operators and media in London, Manchester, Liverpool and Edinburgh, and conducted training at seven tour operators' offices. Training was held at the European US Airways call center in Liverpool for more than 60 reservationists. This center fields calls from Europe and redirects worldwide calls from consumers, corporate travelers and travel agents.

The purpose of the training was to educate frontline staff on travel opportunities in North Carolina and to encourage potential visitors to travel to the state.

The Division of Tourism, Film & Sports Development has targeted the European market

international event that will attract more than 800 representatives from innovation centers and research parks around the world. Among the scheduled plenary sessions are: "Transforming Regional Economies," "Characteristics of Competitive Places," and "Knowledge Ecosystems." Gov. Beverly Perdue, Sen. Kay Hagan and GlaxoSmithKline CEO Andrew Witty are all scheduled to speak at the event, which will take place June 1–4, 2009.



## Grandfather Mountain becomes state's newest park

Grandfather Mountain, long one of North Carolina's most popular tourist attractions, is now officially a state park. Gov. Beverly Perdue signed legislation March 31, formally authorizing the park.

An agreement for the state to purchase the undeveloped backcountry portion of Grandfather Mountain was announced in September 2008. Funding for the \$12 million acquisition will come equally from the Parks and Recreation and Natural Heritage trust funds. Grandfather Mountain State Park will be composed of these 2,456 acres, which the state will purchase from the Morton family later this spring.

"The creation of a signature state park at Grandfather Mountain is a big step in adding to the quality of life and beauty of our great state while we also preserve North Carolina's spectacular public lands for future generations," said Gov. Perdue. "Thanks to the Morton family and our conservation partners, visitors from inside and outside of North Carolina will be able to enjoy the majesty of this wonderful mountain for generations to come." [Read more.](#)

## Conference to provide insight into sustainable energy

With sustainable energy emerging as a key component of the

for more than 15 years, primarily to support international travel to North Carolina. In 2007 (the latest year the data is available) North Carolina saw 358,000 overseas visitors, an increase of 18% over 2006. To encourage travel to North Carolina, the Division has launched several travel Web sites in international markets such as [uk.VisitNC.com](http://uk.VisitNC.com), [de.VisitNC.com](http://de.VisitNC.com) (Germany) and [jp.VisitNC.com](http://jp.VisitNC.com) (Japan).



## Crisco moderates Global Engagement Summit panel

On March 30, UNC-Chapel Hill's Center for International Understanding and the International Business and Trade Caucus of the N.C. General Assembly conducted a Global Engagement Summit. Commerce Sec. J. Keith Crisco moderated one of the panels. More than 100 business, university, and governmental leaders participated in the summit. [View a copy](#) of the presentation of the state's global benchmarks.

## Precor project progressing

Precor Inc., an international manufacturer of physical fitness equipment, has broken ground on its new facility in Greensboro. The project, recruited by the Division of Business & Industry (B&I) and announced in late December 2008, will require an investment of \$26.2 million and create 142 jobs when completed.

In addition, two other B&I projects have announced expansions. Kolcraft, maker of toddler furniture, announced an expansion of its Aberdeen facility. The expansion will create 27 additional jobs and require a \$530,000 investment. TheraFirm, maker of compression hosiery and diabetic socks, announced an expansion of its Ellerbe facility. The company will invest \$375,000 and hire 10 new employees.

nation's economic recovery, the Sixth Annual N.C. Sustainable Energy Conference, in Raleigh April 14-15, couldn't be more timely. The event, titled "The New Reality: A Time to Act," will feature keynote speakers Duke Energy CEO Jim Rogers and N.C. House Speaker Joe Hackney. Breakout sessions will be offered on a variety of topics, including solar technology, wind power, green energy investment and clean transportation. The State Energy Office is sponsoring the conference. [Click for details and to register.](#)

## Innovative tool aids economic and community development

The N.C. Economic Development Intelligence System (EDIS) is a free award-winning statistical, analytical and mapping tool designed to aid economic and community development decision-making. In the first quarter of 2009 alone, more than 22,000 people used it to search businesses, compile county-by-county labor statistics, and find buildings and sites for specific locations.

EDIS goes beyond traditional data and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping by providing vital demographic and economic data for user-selected geographic areas, eliminating the need for users to search and consolidate information from various sources.

EDIS has received several awards, including an InfoWorld 100 award, given to 100 companies annually that have made the best use of technology to enhance their business. In addition, the Urban and Regional Information Systems Association (URISA) recognized EDIS as a distinguished system in government. URISA is a nonprofit association of professionals who use Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and other information technologies at the state, provincial and local government level to better enhance government services.

In March, John Correllus of the Policy, Research & Strategic Planning Division presented EDIS at the Gartner Business Intelligence Summit in Washington, D.C., to business intelligence leaders and professionals worldwide.

If you want to see how others are using EDIS to support their missions, [please watch the EDIS video.](#)

## Carroll participates on development panel

Dep. Commerce Sec. Dale Carroll participated on a panel March 31 at the American Farm Bureau Federation's first-ever Rural Development Conference. The conference was hosted by the N.C. Farm Bureau and held at the bureau's Raleigh office March 31-April 2. Carroll participated in the panel "Giving Local Leaders the Tools

## Minges elected to executive committee for U.S. Travel Assoc.

Assistant Sec. for Travel, Tourism and Global Branding Lynn Minges was elected to the Executive Committee of the [U.S. Travel Association](#) board of directors during the board's March 27 quarterly meeting in Washington, D.C. The national board helps to shape policy issues that affect the nation's \$780 billion travel and tourism industry and serves all facets of the industry.

## Metrics from B&I Division

Below are year-to-date metrics tracked by 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 (BLNC) Business ServiCenter. [See the full graphic of the results.](#)

- New projects assigned YTD: 118
- Projects announced YTD: 19
- Jobs created YTD: 1,688
- Capital invested YTD: \$399,855,000
- Direct Account Interactions (industry visits by existing industry staff) YTD: 489
- Calls to the Business ServiCenter YTD: 7,650

## N.C. in the News

### This Week's Highlights

- [Keith Crisco, N.C. commerce secretary](#) (Triangle Business Journal, April 6)
- [Analysis: Georgia becoming a rival to N.C. for film industry](#) (Wilmington Star-News, April 5)
- [Dell cuts more jobs: At least 50 eliminated, sources say; Dell will not confirm or deny](#) (Winston-Salem Journal, April 3)



They Need to Make a Difference" along with members of the Rural Economic Development Center, Golden LEAF and others.

## Workforce hosts GAO officials

Commerce's Division of Workforce Development recently hosted U. S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) officials who are reviewing the state's preparation and accountability for American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds. The officials included Cornelia Ashby, director of education, workforce and income security issues, Bryon Gordon, assistant director, and Scott Spicer, senior analyst. The GAO is targeting 16 large states, including North Carolina, for information gathering and reporting to Congress on the Recovery Act. North Carolina is receiving \$79,827,136 in additional Workforce Investment Act funds under the Recovery Act to be administered through the Division and the 24 local Workforce Development Boards.

- [La-Z-Boy to consolidate jobs in N.C.](#) (The News & Record, Greensboro, April 3)
- [Ply Gem to cut 160 jobs, shift others](#) (Triangle Business Journal, April 2)
- [Fuel Systems lays off 61 in Charlotte](#) (Charlotte Business Journal, April 1)
- [Burt's Bees could get Durham incentives to take American Tobacco space](#) (Triangle Business Journal, March 31)

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