

syncTM Weekly highlights from the North Carolina Department of Commerce

Governor McCrory Launches "Partnership for Prosperity": A New Economic Development Approach

Governor Pat McCrory announced plans yesterday (April 8) to pursue a "Partnership for Prosperity," an effort to change the way we foster economic growth in North Carolina.

New legislation will create a separate nonprofit corporation to center economic development functions for the state. A board of directors, chaired by the governor, will oversee the Partnership and have governance of all recruitment and retention activities. The functions include small business development, entrepreneurship, international investment and import/export, along with travel & tourism.

"We are going to unleash North Carolina's economic potential with a bold new approach to recruit and retain business," said Governor McCrory. "The Partnership will allow us to grow more jobs, and better-paying jobs for North Carolina."

The new partnership will leverage existing state funds to get the private sector more involved in economic development. In the long run, fewer state dollars will be needed to run the programs currently operated by the N.C. Department of Commerce and several non-profit organizations receiving state funding.

"We have to be able to move faster, primarily in terms of job recruiting," said N.C. Commerce Secretary Sharon Decker. "Our economic development efforts must also recognize that one size does not fit all, and the economies of all communities are important to us."



Patrick Yarn Mills, located in Kings Mountain, installed a 105-



(Left-right) Catawba County Economic Development Corporation Business Recruitment Director Julie Pruett, TAIJI Group (USA)'s TianTian Yin, N.C. Department of Commerce Senior Economic Developer Bernard Torain, TAIJI Group (USA) President Meizong Yin and Operations Director Norm Meres, and Commerce Economic Developer April Kappler

Commerce assists new Chinese company with opening in Conover

Folks in the Hickory area are used to jobs connected to the textile industry moving overseas but a Chinese company recently located in Conover and hopes to create dozens of jobs for local citizens.

Catawba County Economic Development Corporation announced in January that Wuxi Taiji Paper Industry Company Ltd. would put its first U.S. manufacturing location in Conover and hire 78 workers over the next four years. The company bought the former Prestige Pillow 50,000-square-foot building.

TAIJI Group (USA) Inc. will make spiral-wound cardboard tubes and cores used in multiple industries, including the textile industry. Currently the company has three engineers from China installing the production equipment, which also arrived from China after a month-long trip into the port of Charleston. The Chinese engineers will assist also in setting up five production lines and their technical processes. The company plans to begin trial production later this month and be up and running by May.

Catawba County Economic Development Corporation Business Recruitment Director Julie Pruett said the jobs will include

kilowatt rooftop solar system with the help of the U.S. Energy Department's State Energy Program.

Yarn mill goes solar

The last family-owned yarn-spinning manufacturer in Kings Mountain has adopted renewable energy technology to power its plant and create clean energy jobs thanks to funding from the U.S. Energy Department's State Energy Program.

The N.C. Department of Commerce's Energy Office distributed \$2.3 million in Recovery Act grant funding to 18 renewable energy projects across the state. Patrick Yarn Mills, which received a \$154,000 grant, did not waste any time putting the funding to work. The company installed a 105-kilowatt rooftop solar photovoltaic system designed by North Carolina-based Argand Energy and built with 468 American-made PV panels. As part of the installation process, Patrick Yarns also replaced its black tar-and-gravel roof with a cool roof that helps cut heating costs by reflecting the sun.

The solar array project, which produces enough energy annually to power 14 homes, is helping reduce the company's energy bills. Energy from the array is used to power the spinning machines - which the company uses to create high-performance fibers from materials as varied as hemp, stainless steel and recycled beverage bottles - and excess energy is sold back to the grid. In 2011, the PV system provided nearly 141,000 kilowatt hours to the city, and since the solar array was installed more than two years ago, it has generated enough energy to power 1,732 60-watt light bulbs for eight hours a day for a year.

While other family-owned spinning plants in the small mill town of Kings Mountain have closed and larger corporations have moved their manufacturing overseas, Patrick Yarns has kept its manufacturing facility in Kings Mountain.

Patrick Yarns, which currently employs approximately 170 people in Kings Mountain, is an eco-friendly business that uses energy-efficient lighting and motors, produces no greenhouse gases and is working toward its goal of zero landfill waste. To watch the solar array in action, check out [the company's solar energy monitoring web app](#).



Tourism division targets Canadian travel agents this spring

The N.C. Department of Commerce's Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development is partnering with several tour operators in Canada this spring to encourage visitation to

administration, sales and production. The first phase of hiring has begun with an operations director and salespeople.

"We are determined to be a respected tube and core supplier in North America," says Mr. Meizong Yin, the company's president.

TAIJI Group is following what appears to be a trend to localize manufacturing. In other words, if a company sells in the U.S., it makes its products in the U.S. However, TAIJI Group plans to modify its products to fit the American market, such as adding more sizes of tubes to its line of products.

Conover was competing against areas throughout the state, as well as locations in Virginia, Pruett said. Pruett and the N.C. Department of Commerce's economic developers [April Kappler](#) and [Bernard Torain](#) have been working with the company since September on site location and start-up issues. The company did not receive any financial incentives from the county or state, but it may get tax credits for the jobs it creates, as well as the machinery and production equipment it purchases.

"It makes good business sense to locate their U.S. operation in Catawba County which is the most specialized area for manufacturing in North and South Carolina," Pruett said. "We were fortunate to have an available building with adequate ceiling heights and square footage that would meet the client's needs."

The company also chose Conover because it is centrally located near its customers, Pruett said.

Parent company Wuxi Taiji Paper Industry Company Ltd. was established in China in 1994. In addition to the Chinese market, the company also has customers that are leading multinational companies in South East Asia, Europe and North and South America.

"We want to purchase and hire locally," said Yin. "We consider ourselves an American company."

DCA assists Carteret County with strategic planning process

The Northeastern Regional Office of the N.C. Department of Commerce's Division of Community Assistance is beginning an exciting project in Carteret County. DCA, working with East Carolina University's Municipal Management Initiative, recently completed a strategic plan in the Town of Newport, and one of the steering committee participants was Carteret County Economic Development Council Director Myles Stempin. Stempin, impressed with DCA's facilitation of the planning process, approached the Northeastern Regional Office about the possibility of replicating the strategic planning

North Carolina. Air Canada is running a "Book 'n Win" promotion with all travel agencies across Canada at the agent level. Travel agents will be eligible to win a prize package including airfare to the NASCAR Hall of Fame and a weekend stay at the Ballantyne Resort in Charlotte. The goal is to increase awareness of North Carolina as a premier leisure destination for golf, culinary, shopping and more.

In 2011 total person-trips to North Carolina by Canadian visitors were more than one million. Overnight Canadian visitors spent over \$144 million in the state during 2011, up 17% from the previous year. The highest spending on record for Canadian visitors to the state occurred in 2011.

ARC supports food security in Western N.C.

The [Appalachian Regional Commission](#) office of the N.C. Department of Commerce's Division of Community Assistance is a supporting member of the [Western N.C. Food Policy Council](#), which is bringing together food producers, policy leaders, food security agencies, and economic advocates to address policy needs for agricultural development and food insecurity in the seven western counties of North Carolina: Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Swain, Macon, Jackson and Haywood. This council aims to build more effective programs and policies to strengthen WNC's food economy and economic security for all persons and to mitigate the effects of food insecurity in the WNC region, especially for children and seniors, by advocating for more effective policies and stronger local economies.

Over the next three months, the WNCFPC will be focusing their efforts in part on the integration of agriculture into strategic and economic development plans at the county, municipal, and regional level by bringing planners and economic developers to the table for discussions of agriculture/local foods economic development in Region A and continuing advocacy and education efforts on the need for broadband access in Western North Carolina.



Statewide N.C. Science Festival runs this month

The [N.C. Science Festival](#) is a 16-day educational blitz that this month fields roughly 300 events statewide. The festival highlights the educational, cultural and financial impact of science in North Carolina. The goal is to spur bright kids' interest in technical fields and to make all ages of people more aware of the impact all sciences have on everyday life.

The 2013 Science Summit, a signature, invitation-only event of the Festival, will be held on April 11 at N.C. State University's Centennial Campus. The summit will provide a platform for science and technology leaders to focus the attention of business and policy makers on the importance of strengthening science and technology capacities across the

efforts in all of the municipalities in Carteret County and with the county itself.

Northeastern Regional Office Chief Planner Lee Padrick, Senior Planner Chuck Halsall and Community Development Planner Trey Smith met with Stempin, Kenny Flowers of ECU's Municipal Management Initiative, and the Carteret County Mayors Association on Feb. 20 to discuss how a countywide strategic planning effort could move forward. The approach proposed by DCA is to work with the four towns located in western Carteret County along Highway 24 and Highway 58 (Bogue, Cape Carteret, Peletier, and Cedar Point) during the summer months, work with Morehead City and Beaufort during the late summer/early fall, then work with the beach towns (Atlantic Beach, Pine Knoll Shores, Indian Beach, and Emerald Isle) during the winter months. After developing strategic plans for the municipalities, DCA then will work with Carteret County's unincorporated areas. The final product will be a countywide economic development strategic planning document, using the towns' plans as a starting base.

The Northeastern Regional Office, located in Washington, will begin working with the Carteret County municipalities next month, and hopes to replicate this process in other counties after completion of this project in late 2014.

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 - April 9, 2013

New projects assigned:	122
Projects announced:	33
Jobs announced:	5,321
Capital investment announced:	\$504M
Industry visits by existing industry staff:	351
Calls to Business Link N.C.:	5,942

N.C. in the News

This Week's Highlights

state. Summit participants will work across sectors to generate ideas that offer innovative solutions and concrete actions to meet North Carolina's future science and technology needs. Cross-sector connections and post-summit community events will help to move these strategies to action faster—and smarter – than ever before.

N.C. Department of Commerce Secretary Sharon Decker will participate in a session during the summit entitled "The Economic Impact of Science and Technology in North Carolina."

After a trial run in September 2010, the N.C. Science Festival launched in April 2012 and is now an annual event, running April 5-21 this year. The festival is a collection of events staged in towns, cities and wildlife areas from Bryson City and Burnsville in the mountains to Nags Head and Ocracoke on the Outer Banks. Museums and science centers are heavily involved, as are clubs, library systems, colleges and universities. Corporate sponsors help foot the bill.

Through hands-on activities, science talks, lab tours, nature experiences, exhibits and performances, the festival engages a wide range of public audiences while inspiring future generations. The emphasis is on reaching families, and the festival initially had a K-12 emphasis. That outreach has grown to engage collegians, parents and grandparents.

This festival provides the opportunity to cultivate a positive environment that encourages children to pursue science-related careers and encourages businesses to invest in North Carolina. In an era when recent reports indicate that the United States is losing ground as the world leader in science and technology, and fewer students than ever are pursuing careers in science and technology, the N.C. Science Festival energizes our state's effort to respond to these challenges while building new and stronger relationships among the education, business and cultural leaders who will lead that response.

[AmEx study: N.C. third in nation for growth in women-owned firms](#) (*Charlotte Business Journal*, April 4)

- [Newton receives \\$10,000 ElectriCities grant for site certification](#) (WSOC, April 3)
- [N.C. named 'most improved' for small-biz friendliness](#) (*Charlotte Business Journal*, April 3)
- [Excitement building for Open double at Pinehurst No. 2](#) (wralSPORTSfan.com, April 3)
- [N.C. small-business lending up \\$290M through federal program](#) (*The Charlotte Observer*, April 3)
- [Brewers pour passion into N.C. Beer Month](#) (*The Sanford Herald*, April 3)
- [N.C. State dedicates \\$115.2M Hunt Library](#) (WRAL, April 3)
- [Ryan McDaniels named to Lake Norman economic-development post](#) (*Charlotte Business Journal*, April 3)
- [Company plans move to Eden](#) (*Rockingham Now*, April 2)
- [Germany-based toymaker brings North American HQ to Charlotte](#) (*The Charlotte Observer*, April 2)
- [Carolina's expansive wine list](#) (*The New York Times*, April 1)
- [CEO: Red Hat will hire 600-800 people in 2013](#) (*Triangle Business Journal*, April 1)
- [Chamber summit eyes ways to boost economy](#) (*Rocky Mount Telegram*, March 31)
- [Outer Banks lighthouse almost ready for Opening Day](#) (*The Virginian-Pilot*, March 30)
- [BD CEO: Wilson manufacturing facility marks ground zero](#) (*Triangle Business Journal*, March 29)

(919) 733-4151

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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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