

syncTM Weekly highlights from the North Carolina Department of Commerce



Sen. Don Davis changes a tire during the the NASCAR House vs. Senate Pit Crew Challenge today in Raleigh.

N.C. celebrates \$16.9B in '08 tourism spending

Gov. Bev Perdue announced today (May 12) that domestic visitors to and within North Carolina spent a record \$16.9 billion in 2008, an increase of 2.1 percent from 2007. The number was higher than the previous record of \$16.5 billion set in 2007.

The visitor spending figures are the preliminary results of an annual study conducted by the U.S. Travel Association for the Division of Tourism, Film, and Sports Development. The study uses sales and tax revenue data, and employment figures to determine the overall impact of visitor spending in North Carolina. [See the report.](#)

Also today, North Carolina is celebrating National Travel and Tourism Week at events scheduled in Raleigh and throughout the week with celebrations at the Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development's nine welcome centers across the state.

National Travel and Tourism Week, May 9-17, is a collective effort to promote the power of travel through customized events in communities nationwide. This year, the first-ever U.S. Travel Rally Day will take place across America today to promote the message that "Travel Matters." The goal is to create better awareness of the industry's contribution to the state's economy and to recognize the cultural and social benefits created by travel and tourism.

The N.C. Travel Industry Association (NC TIA) held a "Tourism Day Extravaganza" at the Legislative Building in Raleigh to emphasize to lawmakers the importance of the tourism industry to the state, its tax base and its economy. Events



Winston-Salem Mayor Allen Joines

Joines appointed to Economic Development Board

Gov. Bev Perdue announced May 6 that Winston-Salem Mayor Allen Joines will serve as chairman of the North Carolina Economic Development Board starting July 1.

"As mayor of Winston-Salem, Allen Joines has shown tremendous leadership and been instrumental in creating and attracting jobs to the area," Perdue said. "I am confident he will do a great job helping grow North Carolina's economy."

The Triad Business Journal has named Joines one of "The Triad's Most Influential People" for the past four years in a row. He also was named "Man of the Year" in 2003 by The Winston-Salem Chronicle and received the "Dare to Dream" award for his efforts with racial healing as part of the Martin Luther King Jr. Commemoration in 2005. Joines received his bachelor's degree from Appalachian State University and his master's degree in public administration from the University of Georgia.

The board advises the secretary of the Dept. of Commerce and the governor on economic policy, industrial recruitment and expansion, trade policy and travel and tourism. The board has 37 members, each serving a four-year term. The governor appoints 23 members. The senate president pro-tem and

included The NASCAR House vs. Senate Pit Crew Challenge at the N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences, coordinated by Visit Charlotte, in which members of the N.C. House and Senate competed to see who could prep a NASCAR automobile in the shortest time. The Senate won three out of five tries. Members of the Senate team were Sen. Andrew C. Brock, Sen. Martin L. Nesbitt Jr. and Sen. Don Davis. Members of the House team were Rep. Grier Martin, Rep. Grey Mills, Rep. Darren Jackson and Rep. Justin P. Burr. The Red Bull Racing Team assisted the senators and representatives. [See video of the Senate team in action.](#) [See video of the House team.](#)

Crisco tours Craven County sites



(Left-right) Tryon Palace Commission Chairman Bob Mattocks, Assistant Sec. for Tourism, Marketing and Global Branding Lynn Minges, Commerce Sec. Keith Crisco, Director of the Governor's Eastern Office Tate Johnson, and Economic Developer for Craven County Jim Davis, are shown at Tryon Palace in New Bern.

On May 8, Commerce Sec. Keith Crisco, Assistant Sec. for Tourism, Marketing and Global Branding Lynn Minges, and Commerce developers Rod Forsythe and Martyn Johnson visited several tourism and economic development sites in Craven County. Among the sites visited were Tryon Palace, Craven Community College's Aviation Systems Technology Program and the Marine Corps Air Station at Cherry Point, where base expansion plans were discussed.

Commerce promotes biotech at BIO 2009

North Carolina's role as a key life sciences player will be on display at the state's pavilion at the [2009 BIO International Convention](#), May 19-21, in Atlanta. One hundred North Carolinians from 35 sponsoring companies and organizations will also participate. Last year's event in San Diego brought together more than 20,000 attendees from 70 countries and featured 2,000 exhibitors from every aspect of the biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries.

Among the North Carolinians appearing at BIO 2009:

- Former Gov. Jim Hunt
- Paul Hanle, president, Biotechnology Institute
- Mitch Horowitz, vice president, Battelle Technology Practice

speaker of the house each appoint four members.

Rowan County gets new textile manufacturer, 223 jobs

Gov. Bev Perdue announced May 5 that Sustainable Textile Group LLC, a national manufacturer of fabric made from pre-consumer waste, will establish a new facility in Rowan County. The company plans to invest \$11 million and create 223 jobs in China Grove during the next two years. The announcement was made possible in part by a \$300,000 grant from the One North Carolina Fund.

Sustainable Textile Group LLC is part of the Sustainable Solutions Network of companies, which includes Sustainable Solutions Inc., Strateline Industries LLC and Circle LLC. The companies offer a wide range of sustainable products and services. Those include non-woven fabrics made from regenerated cotton fibers. The fabric is used in items such as personal wipes and other non-woven materials for the home furnishing, medical and automotive industries.

Sustainable Textile Group plans to start a new operation in the vacant Hanes facility in China Grove. The plant will produce yarns from regenerated fibers. The 223 new jobs will pay an annual average wage of \$29,141, not including benefits.

"The common misconception is that 'green' always costs more. It is our goal to produce items that are first of all better products, cost the same or less and are sustainable. Utilizing 'waste' as a raw material, we create high-quality products that are then sold globally," said Joy Nunn, founder and CEO of Circle LLC, where sustainable patents and technologies are owned and managed.

Group announces Fayetteville recycling venture

DAK Americas LLC and Shaw Industries Group Inc announced a joint venture to be named Clear Path Recycling that will require an investment of \$70 million and create 106 jobs. Clear Path Recycling will create a new recycling facility in Fayetteville that will produce Recycle PET (RPET) from post-consumer PET bottles. The company plans to recycle more than 280 million pounds annually of PET bottles or about 5 billion bottles.

Nice Blends announces plans for Columbus County

There will also be a moderated North Carolina panel session May 20 on the Future of Industrial Biotechnology. Norris Tolson, President and CEO, North Carolina Biotechnology Center, will moderate. [The Friends of North Carolina](#) organization will host a networking reception for industry leaders at the Fox Theatre on May 19.

Perdue recommends 16 Western N.C. projects for ARC funding

Gov. Bev Perdue on May 11 announced 16 community and regional Western North Carolina projects she will recommend to receive a total of \$4 million from the Appalachian Regional Commission. She made the announcement in Brevard at Transylvania Vocational Services Inc., a company participating in one of the projects.

ARC was created by Congress in 1965 to improve the lives of the people in Appalachia. Federal funding is allocated to the 13 states that make up the Appalachian region. North Carolina counties eligible to receive funding are Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Cherokee, Clay, Davie, Forsyth, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, McDowell, Macon, Madison, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Stokes, Surry, Swain, Transylvania, Watauga, Wilkes, Yadkin and Yancey. [Read more.](#)

Workforce to vote on strategic plan

Commerce's Commission on Workforce Development will meet May 20 at the McKimmon Center on the campus of N.C. State University to vote on the 2009-2011 strategic plan. A draft of the plan has been released. The public input for the plan ended May 4, yielding minor suggestions for change. [See a draft of the plan.](#)

Commerce releases economic report

Commerce's Division of Policy Research & Strategic Planning has released its [economic report for March 2009.](#)

Among the findings:

- Unemployment rates increased at a slower rate or declined.
- Industry employment continues to decline in both traditional and knowledge-based sectors.
- Closings and layoffs were the highest since the start of the recession.
- Foreclosure rates continue to decline and home sales are on the rise.

The report also finds that the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for North Carolina in March 2009 was 10.8% -- up slightly from 10.7% in February. But despite the "leveling" of the unemployment rate in March, the state's unemployment rate increased significantly more than the nation over the last two quarters.

Eighty-six counties experienced a decrease in their unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) between February and March. Scotland had the highest unemployment rate (16.6%), followed by Edgecombe (16.3%), Graham (16.1%) and McDowell (16.0%). Ten counties had unemployment rates above 15%, while 75 counties had rates of 10% or more. The counties with the lowest unemployment

facility

Nice Blends Corp. announced plans to open a food-processing facility in Whiteville that will require an investment of \$2.5 million and create 54 jobs over three years. Nice Blends will produce sweet potato fries, sweet potato pies, fried chicken breaching and packets of salt and pepper at the Columbus County facility. The company is moving its operations from New York City.

World Trade Day to be celebrated in Raleigh

On May 19, the International Trade Division will partner with other organizations engaged in international business to celebrate World Trade Day 2009 at N.C. State Fairgrounds in Raleigh. Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler will be the keynote speaker. The event will showcase an Export Seminar and attendees will discuss the tools necessary to compete in the global marketplace. Other areas of focus include the information technology industry, agricultural products and the biotechnology sector. [Read more.](#)

CEOs to meet in Cary

The [2009 N.C. CEO Forum](#) will take place May 15 at Prestonwood Country Club in Cary. Forbes CEO and former presidential candidate Steve Forbes will deliver the keynote address and take part in a question and answer session. Commerce Sec. Keith Crisco will deliver opening remarks about how the economy has affected North Carolina business. Gov. Bev Perdue is slated to speak at the end of the day.

Metrics from B&I Division

Below are year-to-date metrics tracked by the 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.

January - May 11, 2009

New projects assigned:	168
Projects announced:	34
Jobs created:	3,470
Capital invested:	\$568.1 million
Direct Account Interactions	

rates remained almost the same month-over-month: Orange, 6.1%; Durham, 7.7%; Watauga, 7.9%; Gates, 7.9%; and Chatham, 7.9%.

Biotech firm to add 128 jobs in Wake

Gov. Bev Perdue announced May 6 that Bayer CropScience LP, a leading plant science company specializing in crop protection, non-agricultural pest control, seeds and plant biotechnology, will expand in Wake County. The company plans to create 128 new jobs and invest \$10.2 million during the next five years in Morrisville.

The state's Economic Investment Committee voted unanimously to award a Job Development Investment Grant to Bayer CropScience LP to facilitate this expansion. While wages will vary by position, the average annual wage for the 128 new jobs is \$101,018 not including benefits, which exceeds the Wake County average wage of \$43,160.

Bayer CropScience LP is a subsidiary of Bayer CropScience AG, part of the German company Bayer AG. Bayer CropScience LP, headquartered in Research Triangle Park, employs 2,400 people in the United States, including 476 workers in North Carolina. The company's biotechnology activities are focused on improving agricultural crops such as vegetables, cotton, canola and rice, as well as creating plant-based solutions to help fill increasing global demands for food, fiber and fuel.

The company plans to open the Bayer CropScience Research and Development Innovation Center in Morrisville, leasing existing laboratory and office space to conduct basic plant research across a range of technology and crop platforms. Additionally, the Innovation Center will house the company's BioAnalytics and Regulatory Affairs functions, which support the development and commercialization of biotech products. [Read more.](#)

(industry visits by existing industry staff):	630
Calls to the Business ServiCenter:	10,002

N.C. in the News

This Week's Highlights

- [Progress Energy praised for local investment](#) (Richmond County Daily Journal, May 11)
- [Council to hear details of Dell cuts](#) (Greensboro News & Record, May 10)
- [Burt's Bees moving into American Tobacco complex in space swap with Motricity](#) (Triangle Business Journal, May 7)
- [Biotech firm to expand with N.C. research center](#) (The Associated Press, May 6)
- [Salisbury OKs incentives Henkel's proposed \\$23 million expansion](#) (The Salisbury Post, May 6)
- [Firms seek workers for financial services jobs](#) (The Charlotte Observer, May 6)
- [Wells to lay off 548 in uptown](#) (The Charlotte Observer, May 6)
- [N.C. county to get 220 textile jobs](#) (Fayetteville Observer, May 6)
- [Bayer CropScience to add 128 jobs in Morrisville](#) (WRAL - Raleigh, May 6)
- [Tray-making plant to open in Mocksville, bring 50 jobs over two years](#) (Winston-Salem Journal, May 6)
- [54 jobs come with food processing company](#) (News 14 Carolina, May 4)
- [MiTek to add 29 jobs in Edenton](#) (The Chowan Herald, May 4)
- [American Express to close N.C. travel office](#) (Fayetteville Observer, May 5)

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