

# sync<sup>TM</sup>

Weekly highlights from the  
North Carolina Department of Commerce



Photo courtesy of PLI

## Keycard manufacturer to create 42 jobs in Buncombe County

On May 18, Governor Bev Perdue announced that Plasticard Locktech International, a specialty printer of plastic and paper products, will expand its facility in Buncombe County. The company plans to create 42 jobs and invest \$4.4 million over the next three years in Asheville. The project was made possible in part by an \$84,000 grant from the [One North Carolina Fund](#). The N.C. Department of Commerce's [Bill Payne](#) was the developer on this project.

"Creating jobs is my top priority," Perdue said. "PLI's choice to locate in Buncombe County is a testament to our excellent workforce and top-notch business climate. It's great news when home-grown companies decide to expand their operations right here in North Carolina."

PLI, headquartered in Asheville, is the world's largest hotel keycard manufacturer. The company also makes products such as gift cards, membership cards, door hangers, magnets, posters and display banners. PLI currently employs 200 workers at its Asheville plant. The company has also opened a global distribution center in The Netherlands and plans to establish similar facilities in Hong Kong and other parts of the world.

Salaries will vary by job function, but the total payroll for the new jobs will exceed \$1.1 million.



(Left-right) UNC Kenan-Flagler Business School Triad Alumni Club President Charles Freeman and N.C. Department of Commerce Secretary Keith Crisco

## Crisco speaks to UNC business school alumni club in the Triad

N.C. Department of Commerce Secretary Keith Crisco spoke to the UNC Kenan-Flagler Business School Triad Alumni Club at a breakfast meeting on May 11. The meeting was held at the Piedmont Club in Winston-Salem.

"In the past six months alone, right here in the Triad, we've announced that several companies have pledged to create nearly 1,500 jobs and invest over \$120 million in the next three to eight years," Crisco told the group.



High Point Market

## Spring High Point Market yields success

The 2012 Spring High Point Market, which

"I am extremely proud and excited for the continued growth PLI is experiencing. As a resident of the Asheville area for more than 20 years, it has always been important to me that we support the local community and economy," said PLI CEO Mark Goldberg. "Growing from just three employees to now 200 is a testament to our success and commitment to Asheville and North Carolina as a whole."

"PLI is actively hiring for all shifts and nearly all positions, for both sales and production," added Chief Sales and Marketing Officer Peter Krauss. "Although we had been actively courted by other cities and states to expand our business elsewhere, our decision to do so here in Asheville is further proof of our commitment to the state, the city and our employees. We are always seeking skilled and eager workers that want to join a winning team." [Read more.](#)



(Left-right) Mountain Area Workforce Development Board Member Bill Ragland, N.C. Department of Commerce Deputy Secretary and COO Dale Carroll, Chief of Planning and Policy Development for Commerce's Division of Workforce Solutions Brenda Savage, Mountain Area Workforce Development Board Director Phil Monk

## WNC workforce professionals hold professional seminar

Over 125 workforce professionals from Western North Carolina gathered at the N.C. Arboretum in Asheville on May 10 to engage in a professional seminar during Workforce Development Professionals Month. [Workforce Development Professionals Month](#) is observed in North Carolina during the month of May to honor all individual professionals who play a vital role in our workforce development system.

Event speakers included N.C. Department of Commerce Deputy Secretary and COO Dale Carroll, Commerce Assistant Secretary for Workforce Solutions Roger Shackelford, Regional Manager for Commerce's Division of Workforce Solutions Jim McMahan, and speaker and author Peggy Collins. Mountain Area Workforce Development Board Chair Bob Kendrick acted as master of ceremonies. The Mountain Area Workforce Development Board hosted the event, which was sponsored by the eight western local workforce development board directors, along with the N.C. Employment and Training Association.

concluded on April 26, was an overall success. Final numbers indicate the market continues to grow and continues to gain significantly in international visitors. One hundred-seven countries were represented at the market, accounting for 13 percent of the total 45,169 registered attendees. This figure is up approximately 20 percent over the previous two markets.

The N.C. Department of Commerce's International Trade Division was well represented by the Furniture Export Office, also located in High Point, and its foreign trade representatives from Brazil, Japan, China, Mexico and Canada. They represented clients from their own countries to many North Carolina furniture manufacturers. They also set up separate tours of new clients' showrooms to better understand the offerings of those companies and represent them to the foreign distributors in their respective countries.

Aside from spending time with many of his clients in their showrooms, Furniture Export Office Director Mike Padjen worked with buying contingents from Ukraine, China, Turkey and Brazil in setting up visits to many North Carolina furniture companies. Export business continues to grow through these focused international efforts.

[High Point market leaves exhibitors optimistic](#) (*Furniture Today*, May 8)



N.C. Small Business Person of the Year Oscar Wong of Highland Brewing Company in Asheville

## N.C. celebrates National Small Business Week

[Business Link North Carolina](#), a division of the N.C. Department of Commerce, celebrates and thanks small businesses for being a vital part of the state's economy during [National Small Business Week](#), May 20-26. In North Carolina, 98 percent of employer businesses are considered small, with fewer than 500 employees. This means that as small



(Left-right) Dunn Emergency Services Director Gary Whitman, Food Lion President Cathy Green Burns, N.C. Department of Commerce Deputy Secretary and COO Dale Carroll, Dunn Mayor Pro Tem Carnell Robinson, and U.S. Representative Renee Ellmers at the dedication (photo courtesy of Dunn Daily Record)

## Food Lion dedicates modernized, expanded distribution center in Dunn

On May 8, Food Lion dedicated a modernized and expanded distribution center in Dunn that was damaged by a tornado in April 2011. The state-of-the-art facility is approximately 1.3 million square feet and employs more than 700 associates. The *Fayetteville Observer* published on May 8 excerpts from the Food Lion executive's speech at the event:

"I was in California that day when I got a phone call," said Food Lion President Cathy Green Burns. "It was from Tim Shipman. He's our corporate director of loss prevention. When he calls it's not just to say hello. As soon as we finished talking, I got a second call. It was from [N.C. Governor] Beverly Perdue. Her first two words were, 'What can we do to help?' That sort of cooperation and support from everyone has meant so much to us," Burns said.

[Delhaize America and Food Lion announce grand re-opening of distribution center in Dunn, N.C.](#) (PR Newswire, May 8)



(Left-right) N.C. Department of Commerce Assistant Secretary for Tourism, Marketing and Global Branding Lynn Minges and Commerce's Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development Director of Tourism Marketing Wit Tuttell with the Vote Travel Bus in

businesses grow, employment and the overall economy grows.

One North Carolina business owner with 34 employees, Oscar Wong, was honored at the national awards luncheon in Washington, D.C., on May 21 as the N.C. Small Business Person of the Year for his work as president of craft brewer [Highland Brewing Company](#) in Asheville. It is difficult to run a business, especially a small one. In true fashion, Wong does a little of everything and even acts as receptionist on occasion.

Small businesses need assistance to get started, and last year BLNC responded to more than 17,000 requests for information throughout the state. BLNC is a one-stop portal for information, licensing requirements and other valuable resources for starting and growing a small business. Contact a BLNC counselor through the toll-free number (800) 228-8443.



## International bluegrass awards show coming to Raleigh in 2013

Raleigh is drawing the highest-profile event in bluegrass to the state many consider to be the music's ancestral home. The [International Bluegrass Music Association](#) awards show, the genre's equivalent to the Grammy Awards, is coming to town. Mayor Nancy McFarlane announced on May 16 that the city has landed the IBMA awards show and convention for 2013-15. Musicians and fans hailed the move as a positive one both for the association and for the lively-but-lonesome sounds of bluegrass, with its characteristic high-pitched singing and high-level musicianship on fiddle, banjo, mandolin and guitar.

The 2011 convention's events in Nashville drew a reported 16,000 total visitors, more than half from out of town. Raleigh city officials project similar figures for next year's World of Bluegrass, estimating the local economic impact at more than \$9.9 million. Activities range from the concerts and award shows to professional seminars on music-business matters and booths displaying instruments and other bluegrass-related items. [Read](#)

Charlotte. Minges holds a giant check signifying the \$1 billion in state tax receipts generated in 2011 as a result of visitor spending

## Vote Travel bus visits Charlotte

The N.C. Department of Commerce's Assistant Secretary Lynn Minges and Director of Tourism Marketing Wit Tutnell greeted the U.S. Travel Association's "Vote Travel" bus in Charlotte last week, seizing a public relations opportunity to explain the economic value of tourism. Charlotte was one of 38 cities the unique bus visited on its cross-country tour to raise awareness on the impact of travel on the U.S. economy. The event marked the conclusion of N.C. Travel & Tourism Week, which recognizes travel and tourism as a major industry that is vital to the economic stability and growth of the state. For the first time, state tax receipts as a result of visitor spending topped \$1 billion in 2011 and have increased more than 50 percent in the last 10 years. [Learn more](#) about the Vote Travel bus.



N.C. Department of Commerce Secretary Keith Crisco (back row, center) with the export excellence award recipients

## International Trade Division recognizes export award recipients

The N.C. Department of Commerce's International Trade Division is making great strides with the State Trade and Export Promotion grant program to help the state's small businesses increase their export sales. As a part of the STEP grant program, the Division recognized the state's leading export small businesses at the inaugural export excellence awards luncheon at the offices of the Research Triangle Regional Partnership on May 16. Also in recognition of World Trade Week, Commerce Secretary Keith Crisco presented awards to the following companies for their exporting achievements: Acroprint of Raleigh, Kalisher of Carrboro, Parata Systems of Durham, Protochips of Raleigh, Roehrig Engineering of Lexington, Thinline of Durham and Value Clothing of Salisbury.

## Teaming forum attracts more than 400 N.C. businesses

More than 400 North Carolina subcontractors and 30 major prime construction multiple-award contract holders attended the Consolidated Federal Construction Teaming Forum on May 8, hosted by the N.C. Military Business Center, Central Carolina Community College, CCCC Small Business Center, the Sanford Area Chamber of Commerce, Lee County

[more.](#)

## Biotech center awards nearly \$4M in loans, grants

Young life-science companies, researchers and educators received \$3.96 million in loans and grants from the [N.C. Biotechnology Center](#) during the first quarter of this year.

The awards, in eight programs, went to successful applicants across the state to support life-science entrepreneurship, technology commercialization and education.

These funding activities have proven essential since the Biotech Center was established in 1984 for growing the nation's third-largest biotech cluster. Biotechnology companies number more than 500 with 58,000 employees and an average salary of more than \$78,000. [Read more.](#)

## 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 - May 21, 2012

|  |         |
|--|---------|
| <b>New projects assigned:</b>                      | 172     |
| <b>Projects announced:</b>                         | 50      |
| <b>Jobs announced:</b>                             | 6,004   |
| <b>Capital investment announced:</b>               | \$1.69B |
| <b>Industry visits by existing industry staff:</b> | 530     |
| <b>Calls to Business Link N.C.:</b>                | 8,163   |

## N.C. in the News

### This Week's Highlights

- [Cone Denim's old factory is back in fashion](#) (*Business Week*, May 17)
- [CEO tells energy professionals EPRI is hiring in Charlotte](#) (*Charlotte Business Journal*, May 17)
- [Apple: N.C. data center to use all renewable energy](#) (*WRAL Tech Wire*, May 17)
- [ECU earns regional Kellogg award for outreach](#) (*ECU News Service*, May 17)
- [Gastonia fine-tunes its business incentive](#)

Economic Development, the Procurement Technical Assistance Center, and the N. C. Institute for Minority Economic Development.

"As a prime contract holder, we appreciated the opportunity to meet hundreds of specialty subcontractors at this event," said Gary Ferguson of East Carolina Mechanical of Jacksonville. "The relationships we established will help us meet our requirements for subcontractors on current and future contracts."

The prime construction contractors attended the forum to build teaming relationships with N.C. subcontractors for current and future projects at the five military installations within the state. "Our relationship with the North Carolina Military Business Center has been an important part of our efforts to locate and utilize small disadvantaged businesses within the local community," said Brenda Furst of Mortenson Construction of Minneapolis, Minn. "These relationships have helped to grow our subcontractor database, as well as assist us with successful outreach events."

Companies currently working or interested in the federal construction marketplace should mark their calendars for the 2012 N.C. Federal Construction & Infrastructure Summit to be held in Wilmington on Oct. 11. The FEDCON Summit will bring together more than 800 representatives of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Veterans Affairs, GSA Public Buildings Service, other federal agencies and installations, general and specialty contractors, designers, and construction suppliers in North Carolina. For more information on the FEDCON Summit, [visit the website](#). Registration will open in mid-summer for both attendees and exhibitors, and sponsorship opportunities are currently being accepted.

- [program](#) (*Gaston Gazette*, May 16)
- [GroWNC inspires neighboring counties to think like a region](#) (*Smoky Mountain News*, May 16)
- [Wake Tech's specialized programs a boon for economy](#) (*The Cary News*, May 15)
- [Quicken mortgage unit is hiring in Charlotte](#) (*Charlotte Observer*, May 15)
- [In a first, new map tracks economic, demographic, education data across N.C.](#) (*WRAL Tech Wire*, May 15)
- [Canadian Consulate to close in Raleigh](#) (*WUNC*, May 14)
- [Programs aim to put local veterans back to work](#) (*Times News - Burlington*, May 14)

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