

syncTM Highlights from the North Carolina Department of Commerce



N.C. Commerce Secretary John Skvarla (right) with Mohawk Industries executive Michel Vermette

Mohawk Industries Selects Rockingham County for Expansion

Governor Pat McCrory, N.C. Commerce Secretary John E. Skvarla III and the Economic Development Partnership of N.C. announced May 21 that Mohawk Industries will expand its manufacturing facility in Rockingham County and create 105 new jobs over the next five years. The company plans to invest \$8 million in the city of Eden.

"Mohawk has been a great corporate citizen to Rockingham County and to North Carolina," said Governor McCrory. "By adding these new manufacturing jobs and making significant capital improvements, Mohawk is demonstrating that North Carolina's workforce and business climate is a vital component of the company's future."

Mohawk currently employs more than 170 individuals at its Eden location, where the prestigious Karastan brand of carpets and rugs are manufactured. Mohawk employs almost 1,200 employees across North Carolina in all of its divisions.

Mohawk Industries is the world's largest flooring manufacturer. The company offers a complete line of flooring products including carpet and rugs, ceramic tile, laminate, wood, sheet vinyl and luxury vinyl tile.

"Anytime an existing North Carolina company chooses to expand here, it sends the signal across the country that North



N.C. Commerce Secretary John Skvarla and Haliwa-Saponi Chief Ogletree Richardson

Skvarla Meets Haliwa-Saponi Tribal Leaders

N.C. Commerce Secretary John Skvarla paid a visit May 20 to Hollister to meet with leaders of the Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe. The Secretary discussed economic issues impacting the region and the tribe. He also received a briefing about the tribe's local history as well as future goals and current projects.

There are 4,300 enrolled members of the Haliwa-Saponi tribe, and the tribe's territory covers four counties in North Carolina - Halifax, Warren, Nash, and Franklin.

The Chief of the tribe is Ogletree Richardson, elected to office in June 2014 for a three year term. She is the first woman to hold the office.

The visit to Hollister was part of Secretary Skvarla's ongoing program to meet with people across the state to gather local perspectives and to brief partners on the many ways the Commerce Department can assist local leaders in meeting economic challenges in their areas.

Carolina is a great place to do business," said Secretary Skvarla. "Nothing compares to what North Carolina has to offer when it comes to being a business-friendly state."

Salaries will vary by job, which will include machine operators, maintenance, support staff and management positions. The annual salary range for the new jobs will be \$35,000 to \$40,000, a similar range to comparable existing jobs at the Eden facility. The average annual salary for Rockingham County is \$34,446.

"The first Karastan rug at the Eden facility was produced in 1928, and this project represents a revitalization of this important site," said Brian Carson, president of Mohawk's North American Flooring division. "We are delighted that more than 100 people in the region will become part of our talented and dedicated team at Eden. These fine craftspeople create some of the most beautiful and enduring products in our industry. We look forward to investing in equipment as well as making significant process and infrastructure improvements to ensure a brighter future for this historic facility and the great people who work here."

The project was made possible in part by a performance-based grant from the One North Carolina Fund of up to \$765,000. The One NC Fund provides financial assistance, through local governments, to attract business projects that will stimulate economic activity and create new jobs in the state. Companies receive no money up front and must meet job creation and investment performance standards to qualify for grant funds. These grants also require and are contingent upon local matches.

In addition to the [N.C. Department of Commerce](#) and the [Economic Development Partnership of N.C.](#), other partners that helped with this project include: [North Carolina Community College System](#), [Duke Energy](#), [Rockingham County Economic Development](#), [Rockingham County](#), and the [City of Eden](#)

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Wilson Medical Center CEO Bill Caldwell accepts Prevention Partners' 2015 Excellence Recognition Award. Also attending, from left: Hiba Chohan, Prevention Partners; COO Bert Beard, Paula Furiness, Wellness Services coordinator; FNS Director Dan Cantu; Caldwell; CNO Laura Lowe; Julie Knaack, Prevention Partners; Shannon Jackson, FNS clinical dietitian supervisor; Kay Johnson, clinical dietitian; Nora Finch, director of Organizational Development/Health & Wellness; Hannah Prentice-Dunn, Prevention Partners; and CFO Melissa Packer.



Asbury Carbons, Inc. Selects North Carolina for New Facility

Asbury Carbons, Inc. will locate a new facility in Robeson County, creating 25 new jobs during the next three years with a company investment of more than \$8 million in Lumberton. Governor Pat McCrory made the announcement May 18.

"Asbury Carbons chose North Carolina because of our state's excellent access to both rail and ports, particularly in Robeson County," said Governor McCrory. "Asbury is a family business with an international reach. It concluded North Carolina provided the strategic location that would allow the company to grow and thrive in the 21st century."

Asbury Carbons, Inc. is a 119-year-old family managed business based in Asbury, New Jersey. The business processes graphite and other carbons, minerals and materials. Asbury supplies its products to a wide-range of industries such as brake lining manufacturers, ceramics manufacturers, LED manufacturers and others.

It has six locations in the United States, and one each in Canada, Mexico and the Netherlands.

"Asbury Carbons told us it was looking to become an established part of the community and we're pleased the business picked the Southeastern North Carolina region," said Secretary Skvarla.

"After a long and thorough vetting process the site we selected in Robeson County stood head and shoulders above other sites being considered," said company Vice President-COO Noah Nichelson. "The support of the local and state economic development organizations has been incredible, manifesting in this generous One North Carolina grant. Asbury looks forward to becoming an outstanding member of the Robeson County community."

The project was made possible in part by a performance-based grant from the One North Carolina Fund of up to \$100,000. The One NC Fund provides financial assistance, through local governments, to attract business projects that will stimulate economic activity and create new jobs in the state. Companies receive no money up front and must meet job creation and investment

Wellness is Cultural at Wilson Medical Center

Visitors approaching Wilson Medical Center easily spot the hospital's quarter-mile walking trail lining the parking lot. Employees, including corporate staff, walk and run on the track alongside patients, their family members, and the greater community.

The fitness trail joins policies, programs, and benefits that support employee health and wellness at the Wilson facility, a new member of the Duke LifePoint network of hospitals. The medical center recently earned the national Excellence Recognition for top marks in all four topics of WorkHealthy America: nutrition, physical activity, tobacco, and overall culture of wellness.

Inside the hospital, walking maps designate paths on multiple floors to help employees take short walking breaks, with distance and number of steps corresponding to each path noted. Educational materials in the hospital's library provide employees with an assortment of health and wellness resources. The hospital theater presents regularly scheduled showings of educational videos for employees on topics such as heart health and stress management. The hospital cafeteria offers nutritious and delicious options, labeled with nutrition content. The healthiest food options carry an easily recognizable "Be Healthy" label.

Strong leadership commitment has guided Wilson Medical Center's journey to wellness. Department leaders take charge of team-based events such as Relay for Life and the Heart Walk by garnering widespread participation and fostering healthy competition among hospital staff. Monthly wellness challenges, fitness events, and personal health goal setting all contribute to a year-long, point-based, goal-focused employee challenge.

Wellness is such a strong part of the medical center's culture that when new hires receive an outline of employee benefits available to them, it includes the hospital's nutrition, physical activity, and tobacco-free wellness policies. By creating such a strong culture of wellness and communicating it effectively to employees, Wilson Medical Center sets a fine example of healthy lifestyles for its greater community.

Healthy Places Change Lives is a partnership between the N.C. Department of Commerce and Prevention Partners, a nonprofit based in Chapel Hill. Prevention Partners guides schools, workplaces, hospitals and clinics to address the leading causes of preventable disease. The non-profit's Healthy Together NC initiative aims to reach at least 10 organizations in all 100 counties of the state by 2025. Learn more at ForPrevention.org/HealthyTogetherNC

performance standards to qualify for grant funds. These grants also require and are contingent upon local matches.

In addition to the [N.C. Department of Commerce](#) and the [Economic Development Partnership of N.C.](#), other partners that helped with this project include: [North Carolina Community College System](#), [N.C. Department of Transportation](#), [North Carolina Ports](#), [North Carolina Railroad Company](#), [North Carolina's Southeast Economic Development Partnership](#), [Robeson County Office of Economic Development](#), [Robeson County](#) and the [City of Lumberton](#).

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North Carolina Receives Site Selection's "Top Competitive State" Award

North Carolina jumped to first place among all states in Site Selection magazine's 2014 'Top Competitive States' Award. The ranking provides further proof that the state must continue to support job creation programs like NC Competes.

"It's great to see North Carolina recognized for our outstanding business climate, but we know that we can't rest on our accomplishments," said Governor McCrory. "We need a long-term solution to promote job creation in order to maintain this ranking."

The Competitiveness Award, one of the publication's economic development performance measurements, is awarded annually based on data tracked in Conway Data Inc.'s New Plant Database. According to the magazine's tracking system, North Carolina's 2014 project performance was strong.

North Carolina ranked sixth in the total number of facility projects, fourth in total projects per capita. It's important to note that many of these projects were made possible in part by performance-based job creation programs included in the NC Competes



Listening Session Participants in Forest City, N.C.

ARC Hosts Regional Listening Session in Forest City

The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) organized a regional listening session on May 15th in Forest City. The exercise was designed to better inform ARC's upcoming 2016-2020 strategic plan.

Dr. Patricia Mitchell, Assistant Secretary for the Department of Commerce's Rural Economic Development Division, ARC's Federal Co-Chair, Earl Gohl, and ARC federal and state program staff hosted the listening session. The well-attended event drew 120 participants, some having travelled from South Carolina, Georgia and Tennessee.

The Appalachian Regional Commission is developing the new five year strategic plan to serve as a guide for its economic and community development efforts in Appalachia. Gathering input from citizens, local leaders, and representatives of public, private and non-profit organizations from across the thirteen state region is one part of the comprehensive planning process.

To aid in the effort of gathering community input, ARC is also conducting a Public Survey, from now until June 19. It is open to all community members. To participate in this brief survey, click on [this survey link](#). The question should take 10 minutes or less to complete.

Town of Mars Hill Awarded BizConnect Broadband Pilot Grant

The Town of Mars Hill has been awarded a grant under the BizConnect Broadband Pilot Grant Program. The program provides grants to North Carolina municipalities to fund broadband to business locations that are unserved or underserved by connectivity. The grant announcement was made May 22.

Mars Hill received a grant of \$13,435 to install fiber-optic infrastructure to the manufacturing site of Advanced Superabrasives. The increased bandwidth is expected to enable the company to add as many as 15 new jobs.

The North Carolina General Assembly provided one-time funding to the Department of Commerce for FY 14-15 to be used to "encourage private sector broadband providers to extend connectivity to unserved areas that are otherwise not economically feasible for deployment." From that appropriation, the NC Broadband team developed the BizConnect Pilot

package.

Project performance is a major component of the award's scoring system, which is based on a 10-part index of investment criteria. States are awarded points according to their performance in each of these categories. North Carolina scored 409 points on the magazine's scale.

In the rankings, North Carolina is followed by Louisiana (408.5 points), Texas (406), South Carolina (405.5) and Tennessee (404).

"In today's competitive world, companies are looking for every business advantage they can find," said North Carolina Commerce Secretary John E. Skvarla, III. "That means every location seeking to attract companies must work even harder to create the conditions necessary for businesses to be successful."

N.C. in the News

- [Deutsche Bank: We're hiring tech talent in Cary](#) (*Charlotte Business Journal* - May 21)
- [City approves \\$2.3M contract for megasite work](#) (*Charlotte Business Journal* - May 21)
- [In N.C. incentives debate, Skvarla responds to Rucho](#) (*Charlotte Business Journal* - May 21)
- [Duke to close Asheville coal plant and build a \\$750 million natural-gas replacement](#) (*Charlotte Business Journal* - May 19)
- [With Jet, Honda Enters New Realm](#) (*Wall Street Journal* - May 18)
- [Raleigh-to-Charlotte rail improvements are on track](#) (*Charlotte Business Journal* - May 14)

Program in partnership with the Rural Economic Development
Division of the Department of Commerce.

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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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