

# sync<sup>®</sup> NEWS & OPPORTUNITIES FROM N.C. COMMERCE



## Ontex Group Announces Plans to Create 403 Jobs in Rockingham County

Ontex Operations USA, LLC part of Belgium's Ontex Group NV, has plans to establish significant new operations in Rockingham County that would create up to 403 new jobs by 2025, **Governor Roy Cooper** announced today (May 27). The company will manufacture a range of personal care and hygiene products that will be sold through leading retailers in the USA and Canada. Expenditures for the land, building, and operating assets including those made by Ontex will generate an investment of \$93.3 million.

Publicly-held Ontex [Euronext: ONTEX] is a leading international maker of high-quality consumer products for baby care, feminine care and adult care for retailers, healthcare providers and institutional customers across 110 countries. Founded in 1979 and headquartered in Aalst-Erembodegem, Belgium, Ontex employs a worldwide workforce of 10,000. Its products are also sold in North America through its affiliate Valor Brands.

"Following the previously-announced decision to invest in manufacturing in the eastern part of the country to complement shipments from abroad, we are proud to announce the forthcoming opening of Ontex' first U.S. production site," **Ontex CEO Charles Bouaziz** said. "With this meaningful step we accelerate the execution of our strategic priority to increase our U.S. presence."

"Today's announcement by Ontex demonstrates that companies from around the world remain confident in North Carolina and its economy," **North Carolina Commerce Secretary Anthony M. Copeland** said. "All the pieces in place

## Beverage Company to Add 226 New Jobs in Burke County

Unix Packaging, a California-based contract manufacturer of branded and private label beverages, will create 226 new jobs in Burke County, **Governor Roy Cooper** announced today. The company will invest \$19 million to locate its first East Coast manufacturing facility in Morganton.

"Companies like Unix Packaging continue to choose North Carolina as the right choice for East Coast operations," said **Governor Cooper**. "This decision shines a bright spotlight on North Carolina's strong economy and ability to support growing companies amid this global pandemic."

Unix Packaging, founded in 2010, specializes in turn-key production of functional beverages, flavored water, alkaline and vapor distilled water, carbonated soft drinks, and other specialty beverages such as kombucha. Headquartered in Montebello, Cal., the company will establish its third state-of-the-art facility for manufacturing, bottling, and packaging beverage products for well-known national retailers. In addition to its Morganton production facility, Unix will also operate a warehouse for storage of raw materials and finished products.

"Unix Packaging is very excited to commence operations in Morganton, North Carolina," said **Bobby Melamed, CEO of Unix Packaging**. "After extensive research, we determined Morganton, North Carolina is the ideal location for our first east coast facility, and we have been welcomed with open arms by the State and local agencies. We look forward to contributing to this community by creating jobs and making longstanding investments that will benefit the community as a whole."

"North Carolina's exceptional workforce, market access and infrastructure continue to make it an unbeatable destination for manufacturers of every kind," **North Carolina Commerce Secretary Anthony M. Copeland** said. "The arrival of Unix Packaging will help sustain the state's economic momentum as we overcome the adversity brought by the COVID-19 pandemic." The North Carolina Department of

before COVID-19 – our modern infrastructure, unbeatable workforce and convenient access to markets – will still be in place after the crisis is over."

Ontex's new facility in Rockingham County plans to employ production workers, maintenance personnel, logistics specialists, supervisors and other staff. New positions would offer yearly wages averaging \$40,130 in total cash compensation, creating a \$16.2 million annual payroll impact for the surrounding community. Rockingham County's overall average annual wage is \$35,146.

The arrival of Ontex will be facilitated, in part, by a Job Development Investment Grant (JDIG). Over the 12-year term of the grant, the project is estimated to grow North Carolina's GDP by more than \$1.2 billion. Using a formula that takes into account the new tax revenues generated by the 403 new jobs, the JDIG agreement authorizes a potential reimbursement to the company of up to \$3,080,000 over 12 years. State payments occur only after verification by the departments of Commerce and Revenue that the company has met incremental job creation and investment targets.

By law, projects supported by JDIG must result in positive net tax revenue to the state treasury, even after taking into consideration the grant's reimbursement payments to a recipient company. The provision ensures all North Carolina communities benefit from the JDIG program. Ontex's Rockingham County operations are projected to generate \$30.3 million in state tax revenue over the life of the grant.

"The fact that major global companies are announcing significant investments in North Carolina during a pandemic says all the right things about North Carolina's workforce and tax policies," said **N.C. Senate President Pro Tem Phil Berger**. "We welcome Ontex Global to Rockingham County and look forward to helping them become a fixture in our manufacturing economy for years to come."

The [North Carolina Department of Commerce](#) worked closely with the [Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina \(EDPNC\)](#) in a collaborative effort to facilitate Ontex's selection of Rockingham County. Other key partners in the project include the [North Carolina General Assembly](#), the [North Carolina Community College System](#), the [N.C. Rural Infrastructure Authority](#), [Rockingham County](#), the [Rockingham County Center for Economic Development, Small Business and Tourism](#), the [Piedmont Triad Regional Workforce Development Board](#), and [Duke Energy](#).

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## Pryor Gibson Joins Commerce as New Assistant Secretary for the Division of Employment Security

Today, **North Carolina Secretary of Commerce Tony Copeland** announced that **Pryor Gibson** will serve as the Assistant Secretary for the Division of Employment Security (DES). He assumes the role immediately, and will be responsible for the Division's operations, communication and accountability.

"Pryor Gibson is a forceful presence to lead DES during this unprecedented economic stress," said **Secretary Copeland**.

"It is always an honor to serve the people of North Carolina, and I am ready to take on the challenges at DES helping people get back on their feet and back in the economy" said Gibson.

Prior to this appointment, Gibson served as Director of

Commerce led a collaborative state effort to attract the company.

Among the positions Unix Packaging will create in Morganton are operators, forklift drivers, shipping specialists, mechanics and office workers. The average annual salary for the new positions could exceed to \$39,000, with a payroll impact of more than \$8.8 million per year for the local economy. The current average annual wage in Burke County is \$36,801.

A performance-based grant of \$500,000 from the One North Carolina Fund will help facilitate Unix Packaging's location to Burke County. The One N.C. Fund provides financial assistance to local governments to help attract economic investment and to create jobs. Companies receive no money upfront and must meet job creation and capital investment targets to qualify for payment. All One N.C. grants require a matching grant from local governments and any award is contingent upon that condition being met.

In addition to the [North Carolina Department of Commerce](#) and the [Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina](#), other key partners in the project include the [North Carolina General Assembly](#), the [N.C. Rural Infrastructure Authority](#), the [North Carolina Community College System](#), [Western Piedmont Community College](#), [Western Piedmont Council of Governments](#), [Burke County](#), [City of Morganton](#), [ElectriCities](#), and [Burke Development, Inc.](#)

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## On Our Radar

- [In Memoriam: Andrea Harris Opened Doors For Minority-Owned Businesses In North Carolina](#) - (WUNC-FM - May 26)

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## N.C. in the News

- [Key Elements of State Broadband Programs](#) (Pew Charitable Trusts - May 26)
- ['An exciting milestone': North Carolina takes first step on offshore wind study](#) (Energy News Network - May 22)

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## About Us

SYNC is North Carolina Commerce's electronic newsletter for local government officials, private-sector allies, state policy makers, and other economic development leaders. We offer unfiltered details about new economic development projects and events, useful news about your peers, and opportunities to synchronize with statewide programs and tools in order to advance economic development in your

Hometown Strong, Governor Roy Cooper's initiative to stimulate economies and help businesses thrive in North Carolina's rural communities by focusing on infrastructure improvement, broadband access, and workforce training. He previously served as Director of Business Services at the Division of Workforce Solutions at N.C. Commerce.

Lockhart Taylor will assume a different role at the Department of Commerce with separate duties and responsibilities.

Pryor Gibson is a former member of the North Carolina General Assembly representing Anson, Montgomery, Stanly and Union counties. Gibson's business experience includes a decade at TimeWarner Cable Construction, Executive Vice President of the North Carolina Forestry Association, and as Senior Adviser for Governor Bev Perdue. Gibson is an Anson County native.

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