



Porter's Group Will Create 44 Jobs in Cleveland County, Investing \$3.75 Million in Expanded Operations

Governor Pat McCrory, N.C. Commerce Secretary John E. Skvarla, III, and the Economic Development Partnership of N.C. announced June 2 that Porter's Group LLC will expand its North Carolina presence with a new facility in Cleveland County. The company will hire an additional 44 workers over the coming three years as it invests \$3.75 million there.

"North Carolina's manufacturing industry continues to drive exciting opportunities in every part of our state," said **Governor McCrory**. "The global competitiveness of companies like Porter's Group is what makes North Carolina the No. 1 state in the Southeast for manufacturing jobs."

Porter's Group, which does business as Porter's Fabrications, custom manufactures fabricated metal parts for buyers in automotive, energy, construction and other industries. Founded in 1964, the privately-held company employs an existing workforce of 152 in North Carolina. Porter's Group is both ISO-9000 certified and accredited by the European Certification Body. It has numerous supplier awards to its credit.

"Congratulations to this global metalworks leader in its choice of North Carolina to create jobs and grow its business," said **Secretary Skvarla**. "The commitment by Porter's Group to meeting its customers' high expectations is a key factor of the company's continued success."

Porter's Group will add production positions at its new facility. Salaries will vary by position, but will average more than \$40,091 per year. Cleveland County's current annual wages average \$34,899.

"We look forward to our continued growth and success in Cleveland County and we would like to thank the City of Kings Mountain, Cleveland County and the State of North Carolina for their ongoing support," said **John Higgins, CEO, Porter's**



Stanley Kingsberry with his magnetic wrenches.

NCWorks @ Work: Offering a Network of Resources Beyond the Basics

Entrepreneurs often speak of the importance of building a network of diverse people to support their new ventures. For Stanley Kingsberry, he found a network of supporters at a place he didn't expect - his local NCWorks Career Center.

Kingsberry is getting assistance for his educational training through the NCWorks Career Center in Jackson County, but he's finding particular value in the power of the networks and relationships available through the center.

Kingsberry's life-changing business idea hit him in the head - literally. Working as a mechanic in Fayetteville, he was removing a fastener from a Volvo engine and the piece fell and hit him hard enough to draw blood. That's when Kingsberry came up with a simple idea: a magnetic wrench that would hold those loose parts in place. That way, mechanics could do their jobs safely and cut down on having to replace missing parts.

"Someone came up with a magnetic screwdriver, but how come no one thought about a magnetic wrench?" said Kingsberry, who currently lives in Silva.

Kingsberry had personal support for his idea early on. His wife, a veteran of the U.S. Army, saw the potential for military applications. Fellow mechanics thought the wrench was a great idea. However, Kingsberry planned to finish school before he devoted more time to developing the wrench. He had moved to western North Carolina and

Group.

Porter's Group's expansion in North Carolina was made possible in part by a performance-based grant of up to \$90,000 from the One North Carolina Fund.

Since Governor McCrory took office in January of 2013, North Carolina has witnessed the net creation of more than 280,000 private-sector jobs.

In addition to [North Carolina Commerce](#) and the [Economic Development Partnership of N.C.](#), other partners in the project include the [North Carolina General Assembly](#), the [North Carolina Community College System](#), [Cleveland County](#), [City of Kings Mountain](#), and the [Cleveland County Economic Development Partnership](#).

[Read more.](#)



N.C. Commerce Secretary John Skvarla with Simon Selwood of SoBran Sciences at the N.C. Pavilion at the 2016 BIO International Convention in San Francisco. SoBran Sciences, a Contract Research Organization (CRO) recently announced an expansion in Greensboro.

Skvarla Scouts Opportunities on West Coast Business Development Trip

N.C. Commerce Secretary John Skvarla is in California today (June 7) meeting with biotechnology industry executives at the 2016 BIO International Convention, being held at the Moscone Center in downtown San Francisco. North Carolina hosts business prospects in an exhibit pavilion organized by the North Carolina Biotechnology Center.

started the Automotive Systems Technology program at Southwestern Community College. His secret got out, though, after he wrote about the wrench in an English paper and his professor told the school's administration about his idea.

The power of the NCWorks network quickly became apparent.

The president of Kingsberry's community college invited him to speak to the Board of Trustees and connected him with Western Carolina University and Haywood Community College. Kingsberry's school contacts also put him in touch with local economic developers and leaders in workforce development, including Southwestern Workforce Development Board, a partner in the NCWorks initiative. Susan Waldorf, a case manager for the workforce board, introduced Kingsberry to his current business partner Bob Vitale, who had the equipment necessary to mass-produce the wrench.

Kingsberry greatly appreciates all the help that Waldorf provided him.

"If I didn't call her, she would call me and say, 'What's wrong?' I told her I didn't want to bug her. She said to call her every day," said Kingsberry. "Now, where can you go to find someone like that who wants you to be successful?"

The U.S. military is also interested in Kingsberry's success, and U.S. senators Richard Burr and Thom Tillis have both met with Kingsberry regarding his patent. By holding bolts in place, the wrench could prevent mechanics from losing pieces in the ocean or the desert sand.

The help has paid off. Kingsberry is in the process of completing his automotive systems program, and both he and Vitale are setting up their business. They've gained a lot of attention in their community, and they're expanding their national reach, as well. Type the phrase "magnetic wrench" into Google and their business is the first search result.

"My wrench can do all the same things their wrenches can do, but their wrenches can't do what mine does: hold a fastener in place," Kingsberry said. "It's like having another set of hands."

NCWorks @ Work is a SYNC series highlighting success stories from North Carolina's integrated workforce development system. More information about [NCWorks is online.](#)

More than 15,000 representatives from biotech and life science companies are meeting at the annual convention, which runs through Thursday (June 9).

While on the west coast, Secretary Skvarla is also taking the opportunity to meet with executives from other companies located in the Bay Area.

[Fact Sheet: Bioscience Industry in N.C.](#)

[Press Release from North Carolina Biotechnology Center.](#)



(Left-right) Morinaga America Foods President Toshiaki Fukunaga, Orange County Commission Chairman Earl McKee, Governor McCrory, Morinaga & Co., Ltd. Chairman Gota Morinaga, Mebane Mayor Glendel Stephenson, Consul General of Japan in Atlanta Takashi Shinozuka.

Governor McCrory Celebrates Grand Opening of Morinaga

Governor Pat McCrory celebrated the grand opening of Morinaga Co. & Ltd. in Mebane May 26. Morinaga was one of the first companies Governor McCrory met with after entering office to help recruit them to North Carolina. In September 2013, the governor announced the company's plans to create 90 new jobs and invest \$48 million in a 120,000 square foot production plant in Orange County.

"This is a great day for our economy, for central North Carolina, and for our entire state," **Governor McCrory** said. "Seeing Morinaga's growth from recruitment to groundbreaking to grand opening has been a testament of North Carolina's economic comeback in the last three years."

Morinaga's Orange County facility is the company's first production facility outside of Asia. Morinaga produces a wide array of confectioneries, including milk caramel, chocolates, cookies, cocoa mix and frozen desserts such as ice cream sandwiches and sundae cups. Its North Carolina products will primarily consist of blending syrup, sugar, flavorings and other



File photo of Ft. Bragg troops.

Partnership Promotes Hiring of Veterans by Hotels and Restaurants

N.C. Commerce's Workforce Solutions team has joined with the [North Carolina Restaurant and Lodging Association \(NCRLA\)](#) to encourage employers to hire military veterans.

"By working with partners such as the NC Restaurant and Lodging Association, we can ensure a pipeline of talented workers for our employers, create sustainable jobs for our vets and grow our local economies," said **N.C. Commerce Secretary John Skvarla**.

Officials from NCRLA and N.C. Commerce made their appeal at a Memorial Day event in north Raleigh. "I encourage hiring managers across the state to give veterans a chance," said **Peter Turner, managing director of DDNC**, which owns and operates a dozen Dunkin' Donuts franchises across the Triangle. "I think you'll find they're going to give 200 percent."

Turner retired from the U.S. Navy in 2007 with the rank of Commander. He says the work ethic, collaborative skills and accountability gained through military service makes veterans ideal employees in the civilian sector, especially in food-related enterprises like his. "In either case, there's a checklist, and you'd better be ready to go at 6:00 a.m.," Turner told the gathering.

As part of the initiative, NCRLA is asking its members to use their local NCWorks Career Centers and online job database to connect with veterans with new careers. In 2015, NCWorks served nearly 35,500 veterans, 10,500 of whom found jobs after being assisted by their career centers.

Commerce's partnership with NCRLA complements a larger statewide strategy known as NC4ME designed to smooth the transition of North Carolina-based service men and women into the state's civilian workforce. Approximately 78,000 active duty military personnel in North Carolina are expected to leave the service by 2018 due to a draw-down in force levels.

ingredients to produce soft candy.

McCrorry Administration Implements Federal Program to Recoup Taxes Owed by Employers

N.C. Commerce's Division of Employment Security (DES) has begun to collect unpaid unemployment insurance taxes from employers through a federal program called the Treasury Offset Program (TOP).

The Division implemented TOP originally for the recovery of unemployment insurance benefit overpayments to claimants in 2013. In January 2016, DES leveraged this process to implement the recovery of unpaid employer taxes. States have recently been given permission by the federal government to run the TOP program for unpaid unemployment insurance taxes.

"This is part of our larger effort to bring certainty to North Carolina businesses by reforming our unemployment system and taking the trust fund from bankruptcy to solvency in 30 months," said **Governor Pat McCrorry**. "The employers who file and pay on time deserve the assurance that we will hold accountable those employers who don't meet their obligations."

This program is expected to only affect a small number of the employers who pay unemployment insurance taxes. In 2015, 91% of employers filed timely while 93% paid their unemployment taxes on time.

"This program has been very effective in recovering funds owed to the Division," said **DES Assistant Secretary Ted Brinn**. "Employers are given an opportunity to settle the debt before we use the program. In anticipation of our implementation of the program, we mailed out the notification letters required by the federal program in early November. That effort, along with TOP has netted DES \$1.3 million in unpaid taxes."

TOP is used to intercept eligible federal payments to delinquent debtors, in accordance with the Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996 and other legal authorities. Federal law requires state agencies to certify that the debt is valid, delinquent, and legally enforceable and that the agency has complied with all due process pre-requisites prior to offset. This means that, at least 60 days prior to submission of the debt to TOP, the creditor agency has sent a notice to the debtor stating the amount and type of debt and the agency's intention to refer the debt to TOP for offset. The creditor agency must also provide the debtor with the opportunity to resolve the debt through a repayment agreement and/or to dispute the agency's claim.



The prototype of a license plate featuring North Carolina's new brand. Artist concept subject to change.

"North Carolina's restaurants and hotels offer a wide range of job opportunities for people at all stages of their careers, and it's no different for our veterans," said **Lynn Minges, president and chief executive officer of NCRLA**. The organization serves the interests of 20,000 restaurants and lodging businesses in North Carolina. "We've found that veterans' experience in logistics, communications and management serve them well in the restaurant and hospitality industries."

Nationwide, about 66,000 restaurants are owned all or in part by veterans, industry research shows.

N.C. in the News

- [Can a snappy new brand help kick-start development in Gaston County?](#) (*Charlotte Observer* - June 3)
- [USCG. airport have \\$384M impact on NC economy](#) (*Daily Advance* - Elizabeth City - June 1)
- [Site selectors visit Richmond County during regional tour](#) (*Richmond Co. Daily Journal* - May 31)
- [Duke picks Rowan County site for economic development program](#) (*Salisbury Post* - May 29)
- [Local, state business leaders gather in Shelby](#) (*Shelby Star* - May 29)
- [Report: NC economy surges 'very strong' 3.4%](#) (*WRAL TechWire* - May 26)
- [McCrorry opens Japanese candy plant in Orange County](#) (*News & Observer* - May 26)
- [Former Statesville industry recruiter named to Lexington agency](#) (*Charlotte Business Journal* - May 23)

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 community. [Send your story ideas to the editor.](#)

Sign Up for New State Brand License Plate

Claim your new 'Nothing Compares' license plate to display on your vehicle by visiting this special page on N.C. Commerce's website: nccommerce.com/nc-license-plate.

Show your pride on your ride in North Carolina: where everything is possible and Nothing Compares!

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