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Weekly highlights from the
North Carolina Department of Commerce



Thrive newsletter, website win awards

The ThriveNC newsletter and [website](#), produced by the N.C. Department of Commerce, have both won awards from the [Southern Economic Development Council](#). The website won the State - Superior award, and the newsletter won the State Division - Merit award.

STI to bring 62 jobs to Cleveland County

Governor Bev Perdue on Aug. 30 announced that Kings Plush Inc, doing business as Specialty Textiles Inc, will expand their manufacturing facility to increase production capacity for residential upholstery fabrics in Kings Mountain. The company expects to create 62 full time jobs and invest \$4.9 million over three years. The project was made possible in part by a \$56,000 grant from the One North Carolina Fund. The N.C. Department of Commerce's Uconda Dunn was the developer on this project.

"The story of North Carolina's business success lies in our ability to adapt and grow with changing markets," said Perdue. "With the support of the One North Carolina fund, STI will stay on the cutting edge of the textile industry."

The company manufactures doobby and jacquard fabrics used in promotional, mid-range and high-end segments of the residential upholstered furniture industry. STI has the

AKG breaks ground on Mebane facility

Officials broke ground Sept. 2 on a \$3.3 million expansion that will add up to 90 jobs at AKG of America's Mebane facility. The N.C. Department of Commerce's Bernard Torain was the original developer on this project.

The expansion will take place over about five years at the company's North American headquarters, at 7315 Oakwood Street Extension in Mebane. The initial, three-year expansion will add 76 jobs. AKG makes heat exchangers and cooling systems.

Positions created by the 42,000-square-foot expansion will include production and professional jobs with an average annual salary of \$42,710 plus benefits.

Mebane's facility beat out an AKG plant in Mitchell, S.D., for the expansion.

N.C. Department of Commerce Secretary Keith Crisco attended the ceremony and praised AKG for its commitment to North Carolina and its 30-year home in Mebane. He attributed the expansion to the state's business-friendly climate and workforce training and education at community colleges.

[Ground breaks on AKG facility bringing 90 jobs](#) (The Times News - Burlington, Sept. 2)

opportunity to capture additional sales by increasing the current supply of chenille yarn. The expansion will take place over three years, adding 32,000 square feet to the current facility. [Read more](#).



Workforce Development Conference to take place in Greensboro

The N.C. Department of Commerce's Division of Workforce Development will host the 24th annual N.C. Workforce Development Conference Oct. 12-14 at the Koury Convention Center, Sheraton Four Seasons in Greensboro. Slated to speak include motivational speaker Judson Laipply and Authoring Action, a group of teen authors from Winston-Salem. There will also be a panel of state leaders including N.C. Department of Commerce Secretary Keith Crisco on the topic of the State of the N.C. Workforce. For more details on the 58 breakout sessions and registration information, visit the conference [website](#). If you would like to join the conference as an exhibitor please contact [Robbin Broome](#), conference coordinator, to make arrangements.

Democratic convention starts site to draw vendors

Democratic National Convention organizers broadened their outreach to Charlotte-area businesses recently, launching a new vendor directory and briefing contractors interested in bidding on renovations to Time Warner Cable Arena. The goal: Help local companies get some of the millions of dollars expected to be spent on the 2012 convention.

[Democratic convention starts site to draw vendors](#) (The Charlotte Observer, Sept. 1)



N.C. Department of Commerce Assistant Secretary for Tourism, Marketing and Global Branding Lynn Minges

Minges to lead state tourism offices at national level

Lynn Minges, N.C. Department of Commerce Assistant Secretary for Tourism, Marketing and Global Branding, was recently elected as chair of the [National Council of State Travel Directors](#). Minges most recently served as vice chair of the organization and has been a board member since 1999.

NCSTD is an industry council of the U.S. Travel Association, a national, non-profit organization representing all components of the \$758 billion travel industry which aims to increase travel to and within the United States. Established in 1969, the NCSTD leverages the collective strength of state tourism offices to influence public policy issues impacting tourism.

"Lynn Minges is an internationally-recognized leader in the travel industry who knows the powerful economic impact travel and tourism can have on state and local communities," said Roger Dow, president and CEO of the U.S. Travel Association. "She is an excellent advocate for North Carolina, and our industry will greatly benefit from Lynn's leadership as chair of the National Council of State Tourism Directors."

The travel and tourism sector is a bright spot in the U.S. economy, generating 7.4 million jobs with an estimated economic impact of \$758 billion in 2010.

In North Carolina, domestic visitors spent a record \$17 billion in 2010, an increase of 9

Economic Overview released for August

The N.C. Department of Commerce's Division of Policy, Research and Strategic Planning has released its Monthly Overview of North Carolina's Economy for August. The overview states that North Carolina's economic growth has been slow over the last few months, and the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate is slowly rising. This is consistent with national trends. Nationally, confidence consumers have in the economy has decreased sharply over the last month. This coincides with the continuing of the debt crisis in Europe and the S&P's downgrade of U.S. debt. Short-term fluctuations in the data indicate signs of trouble, however, many economic indicators continue to point to a slow recovery. [Read the overview.](#)

N.C. accounts for nearly 1/5 of new jobs among *Site Selection* subscribers

In the *Site Selection* Impact Report for August 2011, *Site Selection* subscriber companies announced more than \$9 billion in new facility projects and created 7,097 new jobs. Subscriber companies in 24 U.S. states, including North Carolina, as well as 25 different countries, accounted for the 102 projects listed in the report.

North Carolina accounted for 1,276, or nearly one-fifth, of the new jobs reported for August. Additionally, \$306 million was invested by these companies in the state. Manufacturing accounted for 50 percent of reporting companies in North Carolina. Among the manufacturers noted was Merck and Company, a biotechnology company that invested \$91 million and created 75 jobs. [Read more.](#)

N.C. business executive profiled in *NYT*

Jerry Helling, president of North Carolina furniture company Bernhardt Design, was profiled in the Aug. 31 edition of *The New York Times* for his company's collaboration with design students. The article follows Helling around to stores in New York where he picks out well-designed back-to-school accessories. According to the article, Helling developed a course on designing furniture for production at the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, Calif., and helped found the International Contemporary Furniture Fair Studio in New York.

[Back-to-School accessories](#) (*The New York Times*, Aug. 31)

percent from 2009. Visitor expenditures directly generated 183,880 jobs and nearly \$4 billion in payroll income within North Carolina in 2010. Visitor spending in the state also directly generated close to \$1.5 billion in tax revenue for state and local governments in 2010, up 10 percent from 2009.

In her role as assistant secretary for Tourism, Marketing, and Global Branding for the N.C. Department of Commerce, Minges provides leadership and strategic direction for the state's tourism, film, sports and wine industries while marketing the state as the preferred location for domestic and international business.

"It is my honor to represent North Carolina and partner with my colleagues across the country on major public policy issues affecting the tourism sector," Minges said. "Working together, we can provide a unified voice for our industry and advocate in support of favorable travel policies."

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 - Sept. 6, 2011

New projects assigned:	265
Projects announced:	112
Jobs announced:	10,405
Capital investment announced:	\$1.969B
Industry visits by existing industry staff:	1,099
Calls to Business Link N.C.:	12,549

N.C. in the News

This Week's Highlights

- [Plan for wind farm floated](#) (*The News & Observer* - Raleigh, Sept. 6)
- [Irene adds to repair work on coastal lighthouses](#) (*The Washington Daily News*, Sept. 6)
- [Raleigh to host solar conference](#) (*The News & Observer* - Raleigh, Sept. 5)
- [Wake Co. becomes haven for defense companies](#) (*Elite Magazine* - Fayetteville,

Sept. 1)

(919) 733-4151

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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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