

sync[®] NEWS & OPPORTUNITIES FROM N.C. COMMERCE



N.C. Commerce Secretary Tony Copeland (right) with Principal Chief Richard Sneed of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

Secretary Copeland Visits Western N.C. for Hometown Strong Events

North Carolina Commerce Secretary Anthony M. Copeland participated in a series of meetings and events last week in conjunction with Governor Cooper's Hometown Strong initiative.

Hometown Strong is an unprecedented initiative that restructures state government's approach to addressing the needs of North Carolina's rural communities. Hometown Strong creates a partnership between state agencies and local leaders to champion rural communities. The effort leverages state and local resources, identifies ongoing projects and community needs, and implements focused plans to boost the economy, improve infrastructure and strengthen North Carolina's hometowns.

The Hometown Strong team visited Graham and Swain counties October 2-3.



Florence Website Makes Business Recovery Resources Easy to Find

North Carolina's strong and comprehensive response to Hurricane Florence is well underway, and business interests in your community are encouraged to visit a web page that's pulling together in one place all of the available resources for business recovery.

The website, sbtcd.org/hurricaneflorence, is published by the Small Business and Technology Development Center (SBTDC), in conjunction with N.C. Commerce and a host of state and federal partners.

Business owners and other company leaders can also talk with an experienced business counselor at Business Link North Carolina (BLNC), the state's hotline for information and resource referrals, including storm recovery resources. **The counselors are available toll-free at (800) 228-8443, Monday through Friday from 8:00am through 5:00pm.**

North Carolina's visitor call center, managed by Commerce's Visitor Services team, experienced three times its normal call volume during the storm and immediate aftermath. More than 16,000 calls were received from travelers and others seeking highway and traffic updates, plus advice concerning evacuation shelters and other accommodations.

N.C. Commerce employees are also leading an "NCWorks for Florence Relief" Drive in conjunction with the upcoming NCWorks Partnership Conference, opening tomorrow (October 10) in Greensboro. The conference will host around 1,000 workforce development professionals from across the state. Conference attendees have been asked to



Pryor Gibson (left), director of the Hometown Strong initiative with Secretary Copeland.



Secretary Copeland tours Oak Valley Hardwoods in Robbinsville with company president Jimmy Lee.



Secretary Copeland addresses a group in Bryson City.

bring nonperishable food items and household items with them. Volunteers at the conference will collect the donations and prepare them for delivery to help residents in the areas that remain devastated by Hurricane Florence.

Governor Appoints Three New Members to the Rural Infrastructure Authority (RIA)

Governor Roy Cooper has appointed the following people to the Rural Infrastructure Authority:

- **Jan Hayes** of Sanford as a representative of a tier 1 or 2 county. Hayes is the managing partner for Hayes Group Consulting, LLC. She has served as the chair of the Lee County Board of Education and the Lee County Partnership for Children.
- **Bill Webb** of Ellerbe as a representative of a tier 1 or 2 county. Webb is a Partner at Kitchin, Neal, Webb, Webb & Futrell PA. Webb also served on the North Carolina Local Government Commission.
- **Commissioner Jeff Smith** of Edenton as a Representative of a tier 1 or 2 county. Smith is the chair of Chowan County Commissioners and president of the Chowan County Farm Bureau. He is a past president of the NC Peanut Growers Board.

New Career Pathway to Get Charged Up with Kickoff Event

A new NCWorks Certified Career Pathway for energy lineworkers will be in the spotlight at an upcoming kickoff event to mark the milestone.

The Energy Lineworker Certified Career Pathway celebration will be held October 22 at the LeGrand Center in Shelby.

NCWorks Certified Career Pathways are education and training plans that help job seekers enter particular industries. These pathways are designed by employers in collaboration with the state's workforce development and education professionals. Career pathways outline and define the following:

- Necessary courses at the high school and college level

Updates on the Governor's initiative to strengthen rural North Carolina can be found on the [Hometown Strong website](#).

New Opportunity for North Carolina Tech Companies To Accelerate Growth with Matching Grant Funds

New applications are being accepted by the One North Carolina Small Business Matching Funds Program, an important source of capital for North Carolina's technology companies. The program provides money to help small businesses develop and commercialize innovative new technologies.

Applications will be accepted until June 30, 2019, or until funds have been exhausted for the program's 2018-2019 fiscal year funding cycle.

Under the program, the State of North Carolina awards matching grants of up to \$50,000 to businesses that have recently won a highly-competitive Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) or Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) grant. These federal SBIR and STTR grants are the single largest source of early stage technology development and commercialization funding for small businesses—more than \$2.5 billion annually nationwide.

"Small businesses in North Carolina conduct some of the most innovative research and technology development in the state, activities that are critical to the future growth of our state's economy," said Secretary Copeland. "This program further ensures that North Carolina is well positioned to remain a top competitor in the global marketplace."

North Carolina is among a handful of forward-thinking states with a matching program to leverage federal technology funding and help homegrown businesses commercialize innovative technologies and create jobs. South Carolina, Kentucky and Virginia all modeled their current efforts after North Carolina's pioneering program.

Since its inception in 2006, North Carolina's program has:

- Enabled over 250 small businesses throughout the state to create or retain more than 900 high-wage, high-skill private sector jobs;
- Helped North Carolina companies develop and commercialize hundreds of technologies in sectors such as medical devices, computer software, military technologies, energy, and textiles;
- Generated a 20-to-1 return on the state's grant dollars by attracting more than \$515 million in external private investment and more than \$122 million in additional federal funds;
- Generated more than \$125 million in first-year annual sales directly related to the products and services developed and commercialized using the state's matching support.

The 2018-2019 Solicitation for the Program, as well as program information, application instructions, and supporting materials are a nccommerce.com/sti.

Required credentials

- Experience required and the employers in a given area who provide work-based learning activities related to that field
- Various certificates and degrees in the related field

For more information about the event, contact N.C. Commerce's [Marie Griffin](#).

N.C. in the News

- [Officials Survey Business After Florence](#) (*WilmingtonBiz* - October 5)
- [N.C. airports receive funding from state transportation board](#) (*Stanly News & Press* - October 5)
- [How 'fierce' is competition for tech talent? Job fair draws 450 applicants for 2,000 openings](#) (*WRAL TechWire* - October 4)
- [NC small business program opens applications for matching grants up to \\$50K](#) (*WRAL TechWire* - October 4)
- [PHOTOS: International trade takes spotlight at CBJ awards event as NC exports keep record pace in 2018](#) (*Charlotte Business Journal* - September 28)

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.](#)

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