

syncTM Weekly highlights from the North Carolina Department of Commerce



(Left-right) Gov. Bev Perdue and Dr. Anthony Atala at the announcement of the creation of the first N.C. Innovation Council.

Perdue establishes Innovation Council

Gov. Perdue on Nov. 16 announced the creation of the first N.C. Innovation Council. The purpose of the Council is to foster strategic investments and policies in the growing knowledge and innovation economy. Perdue made the announcement after touring a lab at Wake Forest Institute for Regenerative Medicine in Winston-Salem.

"To continue growing jobs in North Carolina, we must make sure this state is poised to compete globally in the 21st century," said Perdue. "Innovation is North Carolina's launch pad to success in the global economy, and it's a primary way for us to maintain and sharpen our competitive edge." [Read more.](#)

Executive Order No. 29 establishes the N.C. Innovation Council and empowers it to advise the governor on:

- Coordinating public and private investments and policies to promote innovation
- Moving innovative ideas from the lab to the marketplace more efficiently
- Strengthening collaboration among business, academia, state and local government

Creativity means business in N.C.

Commerce Sec. Keith Crisco and Cultural Resources Sec. Linda Carlisle on Nov. 24 unveiled the findings of new research showing that the Creative Industry in North Carolina accounts for nearly 300,000 jobs, just over 5 and one-half percent of the state's workforce, and contributes \$41.4 billion

Novartis opens first U.S. flu vaccine plant in N.C.

Swiss pharmaceuticals manufacturer Novartis AG opened the doors Nov. 24 to its new Holly Springs plant. The plant is the company's first in the U.S. to produce flu vaccines with cell cultures rather than with egg-based methods. Gov. Bev Perdue, Commerce Sec. Keith Crisco and N.C. Biotechnology Center President and CEO Norris Tolson were among the officials expected at the opening.

[Novartis opens first U.S. plant for flu vaccine in N.C.](#) (WRAL-Raleigh, Nov. 24)



Gov. Bev Perdue discusses damage by Tropical Storm Ida to Dare County with county officials.

Perdue makes emergency declaration for Dare County

Gov. Bev Perdue on Nov. 16 signed an emergency declaration to help Dare County recover from the heavy rain and flooding that saturated the area last week as Tropical Storm Ida moved through North Carolina. The declaration of a State of Emergency is the first step in seeking federal funds to help clear debris and repair N.C. 12. The declaration enables the N.C. Department of Transportation to request funding assistance from the Federal Highway Administration.

"Our local and state emergency management and transportation officials have worked tirelessly since the storm rolled in last week," Perdue said. "Crews are working as quickly as possible to reopen the road and coming up with alternative emergency routes in the meantime. With the tremendous amounts of rain that soaked our entire state and the high

to North Carolina's economy.

The new study, "Creativity Means Business: Economic Contributions of North Carolina's Creative Industry," was prepared by the Policy, Research, and Strategic Planning Division of the N.C. Department of Commerce. The analysis follows Creative Economy research commissioned in 2007 by the North Carolina Arts Council.

"People with creative ideas, innovators, and entrepreneurs bring investment and jobs to our communities," said Gov. Bev Perdue. "This report highlights the creative spark in North Carolina, and will be a big help in economic development." [Learn more about the study and read the report.](#)

Perdue requests disaster assistance for Haywood County businesses

Gov. Bev Perdue on Nov. 17 requested assistance from the federal government for businesses affected by the rockslide on I-40 in Western North Carolina. In asking for a U.S. Small Business Administration disaster declaration, the governor sought funding to help businesses in Haywood County cover normal operating expenses. If approved, the declaration will make low-interest loans available to help eligible business owners pay expenses until the interstate reopens. Also eligible will be Buncombe, Henderson, Jackson, Swain and Transylvania counties.

Several business owners have asked the state for financial assistance after they experienced a dramatic decrease in business activity over the past three weeks.

Water bottling company to invest in McDowell County

Gov. Bev Perdue on Nov. 18 announced that North Cove Springs will expand its production facility in McDowell County. The company will invest more than \$6.3 million and create 138 jobs in Marion. The announcement was made possible in part by a \$310,000 grant from the One North Carolina Fund. Commerce's Cindy Messer was the developer on this project.

North Cove Springs of Marion is a regional producer of bottled water from natural springs. North Cove bottles, markets and distributes the spring water and naturally flavored water beverages to regional and national retailers.

North Cove is entering a joint venture with Able Rebuilders to expand water production by adding another bottling line at the existing Marion facility. While salaries will vary by position, the project's 138 new jobs will pay an average annual wage of \$28,141, not including benefits. That is higher than the McDowell County annual average wage of \$27,976. [Read more.](#)

[Marion water bottling plant to add 138 jobs](#) (Asheville Citizen Times, Nov. 19)

Knit-Rite to bring jobs to Richmond County

Gov. Bev Perdue on Nov. 17 announced that Knit-Rite Inc., a national producer of specialized socks and hosiery for the medical market, will expand its manufacturing plant in Richmond County. The company will invest more than \$1.1

winds, we're extremely fortunate that there was not more damage."

Perdue toured portions of Dare County and the Outer Banks on Nov. 17 and met with local emergency and transportation officials.



(Left-right) Business & Industry Director Susan Fleetwood, General Counsel Karen West and Office of Science & Technology Executive Director John Hardin

Commerce promotes three to leadership positions

Commerce Sec. Keith Crisco on Nov. 18 announced three promotions. Karen West has been named the department's general counsel. John Hardin is now executive director for the department's Office of Science & Technology. Susan Fleetwood is now director of the department's Business & Industry (B&I) Development Division. West and Hardin had been serving in acting capacities; Fleetwood was previously director of strategic projects for B&I

"We are very fortunate to have three such talented individuals here at Commerce," said Crisco. [Read more.](#)

Perdue, Microsoft unveil new partnership to offer job training

Gov. Bev Perdue on Nov. 19 announced that North Carolina will join forces with Microsoft in an innovative, public-private partnership to provide free technology training to individuals across the state. Perdue joined Gail Thomas Flynn, Microsoft's vice president of state and local government, at the Harris Campus of Central Piedmont Community College in Charlotte to applaud the unique partnership titled "Microsoft Elevate America."

"This partnership will provide North Carolinians with another opportunity to retrain for today's new economy," Perdue said. "At a time when businesses are seeking a highly qualified, well trained workforce, Elevate America can provide potential employees with new skills to succeed."

Microsoft is partnering with the N.C.

million and create 24 jobs in Ellerbe. The announcement was made possible in part by a \$24,000 grant from the One North Carolina Fund. Commerce's Martie Butler was the developer on this project.

Knit-Rite Inc., headquartered in Kansas, produces prosthetic and diabetic socks, compression hosiery and orthotic textiles. The company owns Therafirm Compression Products in Ellerbe, which operates as a separate division and currently employs 44 workers. [Read more.](#)



Commerce Sec. Keith Crisco speaks during the Greenville-Pitt County Chamber of Commerce Power Lunch Nov. 17 in Greenville. (Photo by Greg Eans, courtesy of The Daily Reflector)

Crisco: N.C. economy bouncing back

Commerce Sec. Keith Crisco discussed North Carolina's rebounding economy Nov. 17 during the Greenville-Pitt County Chamber of Commerce Power Lunch in Greenville. More than 50 business leaders attended the event. Crisco said the economy is slowly on the rise despite low consumer confidence levels, and touted the state's skilled workforce and the number of colleges and universities.

The Daily Reflector of Greenville quoted Crisco as saying, "North Carolina has so much going for it and we are making progress. It may be slow because of national and international issues, but we are coming out of this."

[Secretary: N.C. economy is rebounding](#) (The Daily Reflector - Greenville, Nov. 17)



Community College System, Commerce's Division of Workforce Development and the N.C. Employment Security Commission to distribute a total of 23,700 training vouchers during the next 90 days across the state. Courses range from basic technology literacy to intermediate-level technology skills. A portion of the vouchers will be issued to North Carolina residents for Microsoft Certification Exams, all at no cost to the recipients. [Read more.](#)

[North Carolina Becomes 8th State to join Elevate America](#) (R&D Magazine, Nov. 23)

Carroll participates in Town Hall meeting

Video of a Town Hall Meeting featuring Commerce Deputy Sec. Dale Carroll is now available online. The meetings are part of UNC-TV's "North Carolina Rising" program, and feature panelists representing local leadership in education, policy and industry. [See the video.](#)



(left-right) National Turkey Federation Chairman Walter Pelletier, Agriculture Sec. Steve Troxler, Courage the Turkey, Bryant and Debbie Worley

Wayne County turkey to receive presidential pardon

A turkey raised on a Wayne County farm is this year's recipient of the traditional Thanksgiving presidential pardon. Courage, a 40-pound bird that was raised by Bryant and Debbie Worley of Princeton, will accompany the family to Washington, D.C., to be pardoned Nov. 25 by President Barack Obama. Afterward, the turkey will fly first class to Disneyland where it will serve as honorary marshal of the Thanksgiving Day parade and live the remainder of its life on the Disneyland Reindeer Ranch.

[Princeton turkey to get presidential pardon](#) (WRAL-Raleigh, Nov. 23)

Walden predicts N.C. to emerge from recession over two years

(Left-right) International Trade Division Business Development Manager Glenn Jackman, Commerce Sec. Keith Crisco, Cecelia Leonard, wife of conference organizer Jim Leonard, Policy Research and Strategic Planning Economist Tammy Lester, conference organizer Jorman Fields from International Market Solutions, and Policy, Research and Strategic Planning Economist Sara Nienow

Commerce sponsors military textiles conference

Commerce sponsored a full-to-capacity Greensboro conference Nov. 10 focusing on North Carolina textile sector opportunities and developments in military and performance-related markets. The conference, "Military/Performance Textiles: A Strong Market for N.C. Companies," included speakers from the private sector, academia and state and federal government who offered insights on research, trends, U.S. military purchasing guidelines, foreign military markets, marketing strategy and other topics.

Commerce Sec. Keith Crisco offered keynote remarks supporting industry efforts in finding new markets. Featured speakers included Blan Godfrey, dean of N.C. State University's College of Textiles; Lt. Col. Kevin Stoddard, deputy director for clothing/textiles at the Defense Supply Center, Philadelphia; and Jennifer Stewart, who specializes in defense procurement at the Canadian Embassy in Washington, D.C. In addition, the office of U.S. Rep. Larry Kissell, D-8th District, offered his remarks on new U.S. government requirements for military and security purchases.

The conference was organized by Jim Leonard and Jorman Fields of International Market Solutions, a textile-related consulting firm in Greensboro. More than 180 people attended the conference.

More information and all event materials and presentations are available [online](#).

Crisco supports the arts at two events

Commerce Sec. Keith Crisco discussed how a strong commitment to the arts can help North Carolina attract business during a Nov. 18 meeting and panel in Raleigh. The meeting, themed "A Business Case for Supporting the Arts," and sponsored by Progress Energy, showcased why and how area corporations have supported the arts and to thank them for doing so. Cultural Resources Sec. Linda Carlisle joined Crisco at the event.

Crisco was also among the speakers at a Nov. 19 luncheon to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Arts Council of Winston-Salem & Forsyth County. More than 400 people, including featured speaker Joan Mondale, the wife of former Vice President Walter Mondale, attended the event. Mrs. Mondale is an accomplished potter and arts champion, and is serving as honorary chairwoman of the council's "Six Days in November" series of arts events. Carlisle and Transportation Sec. Gene Conti also spoke at the Winston-Salem event.

[Honoring a Vision: Joan Mondale salutes Winston-Salem's history of arts, innovation](#) (Winston-Salem Journal, Nov. 20)

[The power of art](#) (Winston-Salem Journal, Nov 19)

North Carolina will climb slowly out of recession over the next two years, with the state's metropolitan areas leading the way.

That is the prediction of Mike Walden, William Neal Reynolds professor and North Carolina Cooperative Extension economist in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at North Carolina State University.

Walden prepares an economic outlook for the state every six months. In his "North Carolina Economic Outlook: Winter 2009," he sees the end of what some have called the "Great Recession," the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Walden sees the North Carolina unemployment rate peaking early in 2010 at between 11.3 and 11.5 percent. From that point, unemployment will gradually improve. North Carolina's unemployment rate stood at 5 percent in December 2007, and Walden does not foresee a return to that number in the near future. The economist sees the jobless rate falling to 9.8 percent by the end of 2010 and to 8.9 percent at the end of 2011. See Walden's [Economic Outlook](#).

Metrics from B&I Division

Below are year-to-date metrics tracked by the Division of Business and Industry (B&I) 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 - Nov. 23, 2009

New projects assigned:	397
Projects announced:	110
Jobs created:	13,059
Capital invested:	\$2.85B
Industry visits by existing industry staff:	1,309
Calls to the Business ServiCenter:	23,062

N.C. in the News

This Week's Highlights

- ['Smart grid' making jobs](#) (The News & Observer - Raleigh, Nov. 24)
- [Governor touts economic impact during tour of Morehead City Port](#) (ENC Today, Nov. 23)
- ['A new day' for power in N.C.](#) (The News

N.C. unemployment at 11 percent

North Carolina's unemployment rate rose to 11 percent in October, returning the state to the same rate as in June after dropping in recent months. The figures, released Nov. 20 by the N.C. Employment Security Commission, show the number of unemployed rose by 4,537 in October.

"We've had ups and downs concerning the number of people employed and unemployed, but we haven't experienced any significant changes," said ESC Chairman Moses Carey Jr. in The News & Observer.

[N.C. unemployment rises to 11 percent](#) (The News & Observer, Nov. 20)

& Record - Greensboro, Nov. 23)

- [Vaccine plant lifts Holly Springs](#) (The News & Observer - Raleigh, Nov. 23)
- [Texas-based Total Facility Solutions expanding in Raleigh, creating 50 new jobs](#) (Triangle Business Journal, Nov. 20)
- [Wakefield Group's Steve Nelson tapped by Gov. Perdue for eco devo slot](#) (Triangle Business Journal, Nov. 19)
- [Sony Ericsson closing RTP site](#) (The News & Observer - Raleigh, Nov. 19)
- [Give back the Yadkin, dammit](#) (The Independent Weekly - Durham, Nov. 18)

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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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