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NEWS & OPPORTUNITIES FROM N.C. COMMERCE



(L-R) Bill Bullock, Senior Vice President, N.C. Biotechnology Center; Governor Cooper; Richard Staub, President, Research & Development Solutions, IQVIA; Brian O'Dwyer, Chief Executive Officer, Q2 Solutions; and Wendy Jacobs, Chair, Durham County Commissioners.

749 New Jobs for Durham County as Clinical Lab Company Q2 Solutions Announces

Q2 Solutions, a leading clinical trial laboratory services organization, will establish a new facility in Durham to help develop the next generation of precision medicines, creating 749 jobs, **Governor Roy Cooper** announced November 27.

Q2 Solutions will invest \$73 million in the project, which will grow in two phases over seven years.

"Because of our strong biotechnology talent, North Carolina has become a hub for contract research organizations of all sizes," said **Governor Cooper**. "In the fight against disease, innovative research companies like Q2 Solutions get the data to make life-changing drugs available to people who need it faster and safer, and we are proud of our state's role to help them do that work."

Q2 Solutions, a joint venture of IQVIA (formerly Quintiles) and Quest Diagnostics, offers end-to-end laboratory services and secure, enterprise-wide biospecimen and consent management solutions. The new lab facility will provide innovative genomics testing to support clinical trials globally.

"We are thrilled to partner with the state of North Carolina on this exciting job creation project. The market for genomic testing



(L-R) Ray Mayo, Chair, Wayne County Commissioners; Michael Aram, Founder & Creative Director, Michael Aram, Inc.; Secretary Copeland; Goldsboro Mayor Chuck Allen; Goldsboro Mayor Pro Tem Bill Broadaway; and Mark Pope, President, Wayne County Development Alliance.

Design Firm Michael Aram to Create 118 Jobs in Wayne County

Michael Aram, Inc., an internationally renowned luxury design company, will create 118 jobs as it relocates a logistics center to Wayne County, **Governor Roy Cooper** announced today (December 10).

The company will invest nearly \$5.7 million in the facility, to be located in Goldsboro. **Commerce Secretary Anthony M. Copeland** led an event to mark the milestone earlier this morning.

"North Carolina's many advantages for retailers and manufacturers continue to attract the nation's top brands to our state," said **Governor Cooper**. "From our convenient east coast location to our strong transportation networks, Michael Aram's decision reaffirms North Carolina's strength as a business location."

Michael Aram, Inc., founded by award-winning artist Michael Aram, is a privately held company that creates beautiful and distinctive objects. Mr. Aram is most recognized for his signature gift and tabletop offerings in metal. However, he also designs and produces large-scale sculptures, furniture, lighting, home fragrance, textiles, porcelain, and fine jewelry. Aram's work is sold in over 60 countries through his Los

in clinical trials has expanded rapidly over the past 5 years and, with the increased information provided to clinical development programs from genomic data, we are expanding our capacity and offerings in North Carolina," said **Brian O'Dwyer, CEO Q2 Solutions**. "To complement the expansion in genomics, we are also creating a dedicated Translational Science and Innovation Laboratory which will provide flexible, rapid and tailored assay development and testing laboratories for our customers who are increasingly seeking to utilize novel translational biomarkers across development programs. This new facility will provide a state-of-art solution to the industry with multiple laboratory disciplines under one roof for biomarker development and delivery."

"North Carolina practically invented the clinical trial industry, and Q2 Solutions' decision today marks a new milestone in the state's leadership role with this important industry," said **North Carolina Commerce Secretary Anthony M. Copeland**.

Although wages will vary depending on position, the average salary for the new positions will reach as high as \$89,379. The Durham County average wage is \$68,731.

Two Job Development Investment Grants (JDIGs) helped finalize the company's decision. Over the course of the 12-year terms of both grants, the project will add an estimated more than \$1 billion to North Carolina's economy. The first JDIG agreement, which supports the first phase of the project, authorizes the potential reimbursement to the company of up to \$4,293,750, spread over 12 years. The JDIG supporting the second phase of the project is expected to go into effect in 2023 and authorizes the potential reimbursement to the company of up to \$5,301,000, also paid over 12 years.

Nearly \$3.2 million could move into the state's Industrial Development Fund - Utility Account due to conditions of the JDIG award.

Partnering with the [North Carolina Department of Commerce](#) and the [Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina](#) on this project were the [North Carolina General Assembly](#), the [North Carolina Community College System](#), [Durham County](#), and the [Greater Durham Chamber of Commerce](#).



(L-R) Rob Boyette, Chair, Wilson County Commissioners; Amanda Taylor, Wilson Site Leader, Merck; Tom McCubbins, Senior VP, Merck; Secretary Copeland; and C. Bruce Rose, Mayor, City of Wilson at the expansion announcement December 4 in Wilson.

Merck Expands Again in Wilson County, Adding 55 Jobs and \$57 Million Investment

Biopharmaceutical powerhouse Merck has chosen to expand again in Wilson. The company will invest \$57 million and create 55 jobs in Wilson, **Governor Roy Cooper** announced

Angeles and New York City flagship stores, as well as department stores and specialty retailers.

"Relocating our operations to Goldsboro is both a point of pride and a testament to the strong economic opportunity of North Carolina," said **Michael Aram, Founder and Creative Director**. "We're excited for this new chapter in our company's history and are grateful that the state is making tremendous efforts to attract national businesses, such as ours, that will contribute to rural communities and their economic success. We couldn't be happier to be a part of the economic redevelopment of Goldsboro. Already, we're seeing how profoundly knowledgeable and hardworking the local community is."

"Companies that seek efficient and convenient access to their customers find North Carolina an ideal location to build a distribution hub," said **Secretary Copeland**. "In addition to our natural geographic advantages, our state's workforce is known for its dependability and commitment to hard work. I look forward to seeing how our people will help this company reach new heights in our state."

Salaries for the new jobs will vary by position but the average annual wage will be \$35,620, in line with the Wayne County average annual wage of \$35,485.

A performance-based grant of \$200,000 from the One North Carolina Fund will help facilitate Michael Aram, Inc.'s new operation in North Carolina. The company will also benefit from a grant recently awarded by the North Carolina Rural Infrastructure Authority. This grant, formally awarded to Wayne County on October 17, will support the reuse of a 234,972-square-foot building in Goldsboro.

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 [North Carolina Community College System](#), the [N.C. Rural Infrastructure Authority](#), [Duke Energy](#), [North Carolina's Southeast](#), [Wayne County](#), the [City of Goldsboro](#), and the [Wayne County Development Alliance](#).

December 4.

Commerce Secretary Tony Copeland led an event in Wilson to celebrate the expansion.

The expansion will establish a filling and packaging line for the company's RotaTeq® vaccine, which is used to prevent rotavirus gastroenteritis in children.

"Merck is a cornerstone of pharmaceutical development and manufacturing, and good jobs will continue to grow with today's announcement in Wilson," said **Governor Cooper**.

Merck, with headquarters in Kenilworth, New Jersey, discovers and develops medicines and vaccines for many of the world's most challenging diseases. The company operates in more than 140 countries and stays at the forefront of research to advance the prevention and treatment of diseases that threaten people and communities around the world.

Rotavirus gastroenteritis can cause fever, vomiting and diarrhea that can be severe and lead to dehydration and hospitalization. Merck's investment at the Wilson site will increase the company's overall supply of this important medicine.

"Merck is delighted to announce its second significant investment at our Wilson plant in less than a year," said **Sanat Chattopadhyay, Executive Vice President and President, Merck Manufacturing Division**. This latest commitment will enable us to introduce a new and innovative filling and packaging technology to assist in the production of our important RotaTeq® vaccine. We appreciate all the support we've received for this project from Governor Cooper, Secretary Copeland and his staff, and from Wilson County."

This more recent commitment is the second major expansion Merck has announced in North Carolina in 2019. In July, the company announced it would begin producing its GARDASIL® and GARDASIL 9® recombinant human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine in the state, supported by expansion of company facilities in Durham and Wilson. In the earlier announcement, the company committed to invest more than \$680 million in the state, with \$30 million of that investment earmarked for Wilson.

"Nothing beats first-hand knowledge, and Merck's previous experience in our state gave them the confidence to bring this new business line here," said **North Carolina Commerce Secretary Anthony M. Copeland**. "In just one year, this company has now invested \$737 million in North Carolina, proving again that we're a hotbed for the life science industry."

Although wages will vary depending on position, Merck's average salary for all the new positions will reach \$59,273. The current average wage in Wilson County is \$44,012.

A performance-based grant of \$200,000 from the One North Carolina Fund will help facilitate Merck's expansion in Wilson County.



Commerce Secretary Tony Copeland (right) accepts a ceremonial gift from Sunlight Batteries' CFO Michael Mastorakis at the announcement event in Greensboro December 5.

Greek Battery Manufacturer to Create 46 Jobs in Guilford County for their First North American Operation

Sunlight Batteries USA, an industrial battery manufacturer, member of the Greek multinational Group Olympia, will create 46 jobs in Guilford County, **Governor Roy Cooper** announced December 5. The company will invest \$6.5 million in machinery and infrastructure to establish their first North American assembly and distribution facilities in Greensboro.

"Global manufacturers like Sunlight batteries see great potential in North Carolina, from our location to our highly skilled workforce" said **Governor Cooper**.

Headquartered in Greece, Systems Sunlight, the parent company of Sunlight Batteries USA, has been specializing in energy storage and industrial batteries manufacturing since 1991. Sunlight exports to more than 100 countries in all continents. Sunlight Batteries will assemble and distribute lead and lithium batteries at the Greensboro facility.

"The establishment of Sunlight in the US market is a significant milestone to our growth plan," said **Robby Bourlas, Chief Executive Officer of Sunlight Batteries**. "With the launch of Sunlight Batteries USA, we create our largest assembly hub and a strategic geographic presence in a market we have been exporting to for the last six years. This proximity will allow us to offer our highest quality products along with the best possible delivery times in order to better serve the demanding needs of the US market. Our total investment of \$6.5 million over the next three years is a starting point to support our organic growth but we are also evaluating other strategic investment opportunities."

"North Carolina has the fifth largest manufacturing economy in the nation," said **North Carolina Commerce Secretary Anthony M. Copeland**. "With the largest

Partnering with the [North Carolina Department of Commerce](#) and the [Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina](#) on this project were the [North Carolina General Assembly](#), [Wilson County](#), and the [Wilson Economic Development Council](#).

Little Leaf Farms Will Create 100 Jobs and Build High-Tech Greenhouse Complex in Yancey County

A new wholly owned subsidiary of Little Leaf Farms, LLC, an innovative producer of fresh lettuce, will build a state-of-the-art greenhouse complex in Yancey County, creating up to 100 jobs, **Governor Roy Cooper** announced December 3. The company will invest up to \$86 million in Burnsville in a multi-phased planned expansion.

"North Carolina is known for innovation and agriculture. Projects like Little Leaf's new greenhouse mean a better product and more sustainable practices to grow crops and jobs in Yancey County," said **Governor Cooper**.

Little Leaf Farms, with headquarters in Devens, Massachusetts, is disrupting the traditional West Coast-dominated lettuce industry by producing and delivering high-quality leafy greens for local grocery markets at competitive prices. The company has incorporated many innovative features into its high-tech hydroponic greenhouses, including using 100 percent captured rainwater and utilizing advanced fertilization and irrigation systems that use 90 percent less water than field-grown greens. The company's project in Yancey County will construct up to 20 acres of greenhouses, allowing it to expand its product reach into more East Coast markets. The company currently sells its products in more than 2,000 grocery stores in the northeastern United States.

"Little Leaf Farms is excited to be coming to North Carolina and Yancey County in particular," said **Paul Sellew, CEO of Little Leaf Farms**. "We are proud to be both leading the transformation of our food system to higher quality and locally grown products and contributing to the local economy."

"Although agriculture and food production are a traditional industry in North Carolina, the level of innovation we're seeing in this sector is impressive," said **North Carolina Commerce Secretary Anthony M. Copeland**. "From our business-friendly economic climate to our efficient transportation networks and strong workforce, we're confident Little Leaf Farms has selected the best place in the country for the next phase of their growth."

Although wages will vary depending on the position, the average salary for the new jobs will reach \$53,700. The average wage in Yancey County is \$32,490.

Little Leaf Farm's project in North Carolina will be facilitated, in part, by a Job Development Investment Grant (JDIG). Over the course of the 12-year term of this grant, the project is estimated to grow the state's economy by \$636 million. Using a formula that takes into account the new tax revenues generated by the new jobs, the JDIG agreement authorizes the potential reimbursement to the company of up to \$1,366,200 spread over 12 years.

Because Little Leaf Farms selected Yancey County, classified by the state's economic tier system as Tier 2, the company's JDIG agreement also calls for moving as much as \$151,800 into the state's Industrial Development Fund - Utility Account. The Utility Account helps rural communities finance necessary

manufacturing workforce in the Southeast and our transportation infrastructure, international companies like Sunlight Batteries will be very successful here."

Although wages will vary depending on the position, the average for all new positions could reach up to \$47,978. The current average annual wage in Guilford County is \$47,955.

A performance-based grant of \$100,000 from the One North Carolina Fund will help facilitate Sunlight Batteries' operation in Guilford County.

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 [North Carolina Community College System](#), [N.C. Department of Environmental Quality](#), [Greensboro Chamber of Commerce](#), the [City of Greensboro](#), the [Guilford County Economic Development Alliance](#), [Guilford County Workforce Development Board](#), [High Point Economic Development Corporation](#), and [Duke Energy](#).

Seven Counties Change Position as 2020 County Tier Rankings Released

The North Carolina Department of Commerce released the county tier designations for 2020 on November 27. The designations, which are mandated by state law, play a role in several programs that assist in economic development.

Seven counties will change tier designations for 2020.

Counties moving to a less distressed tier ranking include Gates, Hoke, and Surry. Counties moving to a more distressed tier ranking include Caldwell, Onslow, Pitt, and Wilkes.

Tier designations determine eligibility and guidelines for several different grant programs that N.C. Commerce administers including the One North Carolina Fund, building reuse, water and sewer infrastructure, and the downtown revitalization Main Street program. Tier designations also play a role in the state's performance-based Job Development Investment Grant (JDIG) program, serving as a mechanism to channel funds for infrastructure improvements to less populated areas of the state.

More information about the Tier system and the 2020 county rankings are available at nccommerce.com.

infrastructure upgrades to attract future business.

Partnering with the [North Carolina Department of Commerce](#) and the [Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina](#) on this project were the [North Carolina General Assembly](#), the [North Carolina Department of Agriculture](#), the [North Carolina Community College System](#), [North Carolina State University](#), the [University of North Carolina at Asheville](#), [Yancey County](#), and the [Yancey County Economic Development Commission](#).

Season's Greetings

It's been a busy year of activity for North Carolina's economic development community. We hope you can enjoy some well-deserved rest when the holidays arrive.

N.C. Commerce will observe state holidays from Tuesday, December 24 through Thursday, December 26. The department will observe New Year's Day on Wednesday, January 1.

SYNC will return to your inbox on Tuesday, January 7. Season's Greetings!

On Our Radar

- [American Factories Demand White-Collar Education for Blue-Collar Work](#) (*Wall Street Journal* - December 9)

N.C. in the News

- [Raleigh is the second best place in the country to land a tech job, trade group says](#) (*News & Observer* - December 5)
- [Merck To Invest \\$57 Million Into NC Expansion: Adding Filling And Packaging Line For RotaTeq® Vaccine](#) (*Pharmaceutical Online* - December 5)

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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