

syncTM Weekly highlights from the North Carolina Department of Commerce



Commerce issues 2013 economic development tier rankings

N.C. Department of Commerce Secretary Keith Crisco on Nov. 30 announced the county tier designations for 2013. The designations, which are mandated by state law, determine a variety of state funding opportunities to assist in economic development. [Download the county tier designations.](#)

"Our mission is to improve the economic well-being and quality of life for all North Carolinians. We want all of our residents to have good jobs regardless of where they live in the state," Crisco said. "These tier rankings provide important tools that help attract and retain businesses in all parts of North Carolina."

Using a statutory formula outlined in the 2006 Tax Credits for Growing Businesses (more commonly referred to as Article 3J tax credits), the Department of Commerce assembles required statistics for each of North Carolina's 100 counties, applies the formula and assigns a tier designation ranking from one to three. Tier 1 counties are the most economically distressed and Tier 3 counties are the least. Eligible businesses that locate in lower-tiered counties are eligible for some grant programs and larger tax credits than those that locate in higher-ranked areas. [Read more.](#)

[12 N.C. counties to change their tier designations](#) (*Triangle Business Journal*, Nov. 30)



N.C. Department of Commerce Secretary Keith Crisco speaking at the Latino business forum in Raleigh

Crisco keynotes Latino business forum

N.C. Department of Commerce Secretary Keith Crisco was the keynote speaker at the N.C. Hispanic and Latino Business Network Forum in Raleigh on Nov. 30. Presented by the Office of Hispanic/ Latino Affairs at the Office of Governor Bev Perdue, the forum showcased the strength of Hispanic and Latino businesses and entrepreneurs in the state, the integral nature of Hispanic and Latino businesses and the communities they serve, and the future areas of opportunity and concern for the state's entrepreneurs.

"More than 20 Spanish-speaking countries are heavily represented in North Carolina. And more than 21,000 businesses in the state are Hispanic-owned. That's a considerable level of contribution to our economy," said Crisco. He also mentioned that the Department maintains foreign trade offices in Brazil and Mexico to assist companies with exporting to Latin America.

Fayetteville call center schedules opening for May

A call center initially employing 150 people will open in Fayetteville by May, a company spokeswoman said Nov. 27.



Biogen Idec Building 26 in Research Triangle Park (Photo courtesy of Business Wire)

Biogen Idec opens new RTP facility

Biogen Idec has dedicated a new facility in Research Triangle Park, consolidating its 300-person Patient Services operation with the existing RTP campus. The new 190,000-square-foot building is anticipated to achieve LEED-Gold certified status in the coming months and will accommodate increasing levels of manufacturing activity at the site. The official groundbreaking for the building was in April 2011.

"With the opening of this beautiful facility, Biogen Idec has united on one site more than 1,000 people dedicated to meeting the needs of patients with serious diseases," said Biogen Idec CEO George A. Scangos, Ph.D. "The expansion of our footprint in RTP underscores our commitment to providing a secure supply of medicines and to helping patients overcome obstacles to receiving them."

"North Carolina is a leader in biotech and Biogen Idec is an important part of that success," said Governor Bev Perdue. "This new facility will further strengthen the company's manufacturing and Patient Services operations, in addition to helping ensure its continued success in North Carolina."

As the "front door" to the Biogen Idec campus in North Carolina, the five-story Building 26 will initially house 500 employees. The building was designed by the O'Brien/Atkins design firm of Durham, and the construction manager was R.N. Rouse & Co. of Goldsboro. Biogen Idec is based in Massachusetts. [Read more.](#)

[Biogen Idec holds dedication for new RTP building](#) (*The Herald-Sun* - Durham, Nov. 29)



'Hunger Games,' Hurricane Irene efforts result in international PR awards

The Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International has honored the PR efforts of the N.C. Department of Commerce's Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development with two [Adrian Awards](#). The N.C. Hunger Games Film Tourism Promotion was awarded Gold in the

Sykes Enterprises will open its first customer "contact center" in North Carolina with long-term goals of hiring 500 employees, said Andrea B. Thomas, the director of marketing communications for Sykes in Tampa, Fla.

[Fayetteville call center schedules opening for May](#) (*The Fayetteville Observer*, Nov. 27)

Manufacturing Solutions Center dedicates new headquarters in Conover

On Nov. 29, N.C. Department of Commerce Secretary Keith Crisco spoke at the grand opening of the [Manufacturing Solutions Center](#) in Conover. Matt Erskine, acting secretary for economic development at the U.S. Economic Development Administration also spoke at the ceremony.

The MSC, a product testing and research and development facility, is a division of Catawba Valley Community College. "The Manufacturing Solutions Center is a great example of how we can speed up the time it takes to get new products to market," stated Crisco during his remarks.

The MSC relocated to 30,000 square feet in Conover Station from its former 10,000-square-foot space at CVCC.

[Manufacturing center expands in Conover](#) (*N.C. News Network*, Nov. 30)



A Christmas tree farm in Ashe County

N.C. provides White House Christmas tree for the 12th time

First Lady Michelle Obama kicked off the holiday season by welcoming the White House Christmas tree, a 19-foot Fraser fir from Ashe County that will be displayed in the Blue Room. With daughters Malia and Sasha, first dog Bo and several others, she welcomed the tree and its growers from Peak Farms in Jefferson. Farm owners Rusty and Beau Estes are this year's grand champion winners of the National Christmas Tree Association, which has provided the White House tree each year since 1966. This will be the 12th time that North Carolina has supplied the White House tree, more than any other state

Marketing Program Consumer category. The Division's Hurricane Irene Crisis Preparation and Response in North Carolina was awarded Bronze in the Crisis Communication/Recovery Communication category. The awards will be presented at a ceremony in New York City in January, where a complete list of winners will be announced. The HSMAI received nearly 1,000 entries from around the world for the 2012 Adrian Awards.

The Division helped cast a bright spotlight on N.C. destinations by garnering expansive and valuable media coverage of film sites used in "The Hunger Games." The Division's PR team, including DCI in New York, proactively pitched the film's travel angle to print, broadcast and online outlets for several months, and it paid off in a big way. NBC's "Today Show" featured [a segment about North Carolina film locations used in the blockbuster movie](#). The 3:44-minute segment featuring North Carolina reached a national audience of 12,206,542, generating \$538,268 in advertising equivalency on the popular morning show program. The Division's PR team pitched to freelance writer Diane Daniel, who responded with a piece for *The New York Times*: "It's Panem in N. Carolina for 'Hunger Games' Fans." The story ran both in print and [online](#). During a media tour of "The Hunger Games" film locations, PR Manager Margo Metzger escorted Pete Holley, U.S. editor for *The Sun*, the biggest newspaper in the U.K. He responded with 1.5 pages of coverage both in print and [online](#).

To combat the impact of Hurricane Irene on North Carolina's tourism industry, the Division used all of its resources. All sections of the Division worked in close collaboration with industry partners and other state agencies as soon as the hurricane's projected path first tracked across the state. From pro-active messages before the storm, to fielding calls from residents and visitors during the storm, to recovery marketing efforts to protect Labor Day weekend and beyond, the Division made every effort to protect the state's tourism industry. After conferring with Eastern North Carolina tourism partners, the Division developed and implemented a post-storm online advertising campaign to get the "we are open" message out to potential visitors throughout North Carolina as well as in the Richmond, Norfolk/Tidewater and Columbia markets. The message reinforced to visitors both in and out of state that a visit from Hurricane Irene did not keep life on North Carolina's coast from returning to normal in most areas in time for Labor Day weekend.



U.S. Figure Skating Championships return to Greensboro in 2015

Figure skating's national championships are returning to Greensboro. The Greensboro Coliseum will host the U.S. Figure Skating Championships - the organization's largest event - Jan. 18-25, 2015. The announcement was made at a news conference at the coliseum on Nov. 28. The coliseum will play host for the second time.

In 2011, attendance for the eight-day event in the main arena was 110,787, with an additional 50,805 drawn to the FanFest

since the contests started. This also marks the second time that Rusty Estes has supplied the White House tree. He and partner Jessie Davis and their River Ridge Tree Farms in Creston supplied the White House tree for President Bush in 2008.

According to the [N.C. Christmas Tree Association](#), North Carolina has 1,600 growers producing an estimated 50 million Fraser fir Christmas trees growing on over 25,000 acres. Fraser Fir trees represent over 90 percent of all species grown in North Carolina. North Carolina is ranked second in the nation in number of trees harvested. Trees from North Carolina are shipped across the country and internally for the holidays.

[N.C. sees bumper crop of Christmas trees this year](#) (*The News & Observer* - Raleigh, Nov. 28)

[First lady welcomes 19-foot Fraser Fir as White House Christmas tree](#) (*The Washington Post*, Nov. 23)

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 - Dec. 4, 2012

New projects assigned:	363
Projects announced:	119
Jobs announced:	13,798
Capital investment announced:	\$2.94B
Industry visits by existing industry staff:	1,136
Calls to Business Link N.C.:	17,941

N.C. in the News

This Week's Highlights

- [AMS buys building, moving HQ to Charlotte](#) (*Charlotte Business Journal*, Nov. 28)
- ['Iron Man 3' gave life to southeastern N.C. business](#) (*The News & Observer* - Raleigh, Nov. 28)
- [A-B Tech plans craft beverage institute](#) (*Citizen-Times* - Asheville, Nov. 28)
- [Seeger Green Energy moving to Design Center](#) (*Charlotte Business Journal*, Nov. 28)

and practice rink set up in the Special Events Center. Greensboro was the first host site to put all three parts of the event under one roof - a big hit with fans and skaters. The 2011 event featured 252 skaters. But since then, U.S. Figure Skating has added juvenile and intermediate competition to the event, which has added about 100 more skaters to the competition.

The coliseum has changed, too. Since hosting the 2011 championships, the city has made or will make more than \$24 million worth of renovations to the complex including new padded seats, a bigger new video board on the scoreboard and improved sightlines from the suites.

[Greensboro to host 2015 U.S. Figure Skating Championships](#) (WGHP, Nov. 28)

28)

- [#2 Best cities for stocks: Charlotte, N.C.](#) (CNBC, Nov. 27)
- [Red Bull opening distribution center in Morrisville](#) (Triangle Business Journal, Nov. 27)
- [Electrolux to bring 80 more jobs to Charlotte](#) (Charlotte Business Journal, Nov. 27)
- [Hunting: An overlooked economic driver in N.C.](#) (The Gaston Gazette, Nov. 23)
- [Nanotechnology conference to be held in Winston-Salem](#) (Winston-Salem Journal, Nov. 22)

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