

syncTM Weekly highlights from the North Carolina Department of Commerce



(Left-right) Gov. Bev Perdue discusses the U.S. Energy Dept.'s competition for energy "hubs" with U.S. Energy Sec. Steven Chu.

Perdue talks energy, economy in D.C.

Gov. Bev Perdue blogged about her recent trip to Washington, D.C., to discuss the economy, jobs and North Carolina's place on the national and international stage.

The governor wrote about her visit with U.S. Energy Sec. Steven Chu, and their discussion of the Energy Dept.'s upcoming competition to create a series of renewable energy "hubs," one of which could be located in North Carolina. She also met with senior White House officials and several other governors about the economy and jobs.

"While GDP and corporate activity is rebounding, and the stimulus passed early this year is making a real difference, I will not rest until we have brought down the unemployment that has spiked so high in our State and nationally this year," she wrote. [See the blog post and photos from the trip.](#)

N.C. Treasurer announces \$250M 'innovation fund'

The office of [State Treasurer Janet Cowell](#) has announced plans to start a \$250 million "innovation fund" designed to make money for the North Carolina pension fund and create jobs in the state. The fund is designed to invest in companies that have "significant operations" in the state. The treasurer's office is scheduled to announce the investment firm that will manage the fund this week. More information can be found in the request for proposals on the state treasurer's [Web site](#).



I-95 South Christmas tree honors military

Each year, the N.C. Christmas Tree Association and the N.C. Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services provide Christmas trees and wreaths for the Division of Tourism, Film & Sports Development's lobby and for each of the state's nine Welcome Centers. The trees promote North Carolina's Christmas tree industry, which is ranked second in the nation in the number of trees harvested and first in the nation in terms of dollars made per tree.

Kat Littleturtle, travel counselor at the I-95 South Welcome Center in Robeson County, spearheaded the effort to decorate the center's tree this year, and she selected a patriotic theme. With Fort Bragg just up I-95 from the center, Kat and the staff at the Welcome Center decided to decorate the tree with American flags, purple ribbons to represent the Purple Heart medal and the Purple Heart Highway, and yellow ribbons with names of members of the armed services. Red, white and blue lights and matching stockings on the hearth complete the theme. They call the tree "Heart is Where the Home Is," and travelers are invited to place their active-duty family members'

[New fund will invest in state businesses](#) (The News & Observer - Raleigh, Dec. 3)

Fiber maker to invest in Rockingham County

Gov. Bev Perdue on Dec. 2 announced that SANS Technical Fibers LLC, an international manufacturer of synthetic nylon filament and yarn for the high-performance, military, automotive and other markets, will expand its plant in Rockingham County. The company will invest more than \$2.8 million and create 25 jobs in Stoneville. The announcement was made possible in part by a \$60,000 grant from the One North Carolina Fund.

"North Carolina remains a top choice for successful companies adapting to compete in a global marketplace," Perdue said. "Our exceptional quality of life and skilled workforce continue to attract companies looking for the perfect location to expand and prosper."

SANS Technical Fibers, headquartered in Gastonia, is a wholly owned subsidiary of AECI Limited of South Africa. AECI has consolidated its fiber-producing operations to the Stoneville plant, which currently employs about 100 people. Commerce's Melissa Smith was the developer on this project. [Read more.](#)



(Left-right) Robeson County Manager Ken Windley, Commerce Deputy Sec. Dale Carroll, Industrialist of the Year and Fabtex founder Craig Davis, and Robeson County Office of Economic Development Director Greg Cummings

Carroll Keynotes Robeson County EDC Industry Appreciation Banquet

On Dec. 3, the [Robeson County Office of Economic Development](#) held its annual industry appreciation banquet in Lumberton. Fabtex founder Craig Davis was recognized as Industrialist of the Year. Deputy Commerce Sec. Dale Carroll served as keynote speaker and presented an update on economic development priorities of Gov. Bev Perdue and Commerce Sec. Keith Crisco. Carroll concluded his remarks by answering questions from the audience in a town hall format. For more information on the banquet, including some of Carroll's comments and responses to questions, please click on the article in The Robesonian below.

[Fabtex founder honored as county's top industrialist](#) (The

names on the tree.

Welcome Center Manager Demetrius Hunt said, "We just had our first couple come in and they were so moved by the tree. Kat just put the first name on the tree for their son, who will be leaving before Christmas. It is wonderful."

The I-95 South Welcome Center also displays trees featuring a coastal Christmas (with blue bows and bulbs, sea shells and lighthouses), a North Carolina Christmas (with symbols such as cardinals, dogwoods, grey squirrels, bumble bees, channel bass), and a Native American Christmas (with native ornaments, a corn angel on top and a Pendleton blanket around the bottom).



(Left-right) Jan Kirby and Tim Haas during the Dec. 5 premiere.

TV series celebrates premiere in Caldwell County

On Dec. 5, the [Caldwell County Chamber of Commerce, AdvantageWest Economic Development Group](#), Caldwell Community College & Technical Institute and Commerce participated in a Hollywood-style premiere night for a new TV series. "Southern Fresh," starring gourmet chef Tim Haas and master gardener Jan Kirby, both natives of Western North Carolina, will be shot in the region. Starting in 2010, the series will be broadcast in 42 states via the RFD TV network. Deputy Commerce Sec. Dale Carroll and his wife, Cindy, joined friends and partners from across Western North Carolina to congratulate Tim and Jan. [Learn more.](#)

NCBIO to hold forum Dec. 9

[The N.C. Biosciences Organization](#) will hold a forum titled "New Paradigm for Financing: How to Create a Successful Virtual Company" Dec. 9 at the N.C. Biotechnology Center in Research Triangle Park. The forum will focus on models for virtual pharmaceutical companies. Panelists will discuss best practices for launching and creating a successful virtual biotech company. [Learn more.](#)

Commerce participates in international marketing program

A new marketing program to attract European companies to North Carolina was launched last week by Commerce's Marketing Division and the state's seven regional partnership organizations. The year-long program is part of a nationally syndicated initiative known as Global Location Link, which includes support from the U.S. Dept. of Commerce. The program is an integrated marketing effort that employs the latest techniques in direct mail, telemarketing and Web-based platforms to reach company executives who are considering expansion into the United States. The program's Web site, where North Carolina appears as a featured location, includes modern customization features that will deliver personalized Web pages for each visiting executive, as well as extensive visitor tracking systems.

As many as 42,000 executives in Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom will be reached during the 12-month program. [See the Web site.](#)

Duke Energy to locate training center in Cleveland County

Duke Energy announced Dec. 4 that it will locate a corporate training center in Cleveland County. [The Cleveland County Economic Development Partnership](#) has been working with the county and other local officials for over a year on Project Catalyst.

The facility will be located on a 30-acre site in the Cleveland County Industrial Park (1040 Beason Creek Road, Kings Mountain). This 150,000-square-foot facility will serve as a corporate training center with available parking for up to 900 vehicles.

November economic overview released

On Dec. 3, Commerce's Policy, Research & Strategic Planning Division released its Monthly Overview of North Carolina's Economy for November 2009. North Carolina's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased to 11 percent. North Carolina's unemployment rate has remained relatively constant since February 2009 but the labor force contracted by 52,000 people between February and September 2009. [Read the overview.](#)

Among the findings:

- Non-farm employment increased slightly between September and October.
 - Announced business closings and layoffs increased slightly.
 - Existing home sales increased, but new housing units authorized declined.
 - Retail sales and highway use tax collections are down when compared to last year.
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U.S. Airways to begin flights to Rome from Charlotte

N.C. winemaker profiled in New York Times

Chatham Hill Winery was mentioned in the Nov. 28 New York Times article "Wines, with notes of M.B.A." The article profiled various winemakers who left the business world to start their boutique wineries. Chatham Hill is owned by husband-and-wife team Marek Wojciechowski and Jill Winkler. Wojciechowski helped found the Research Triangle Park company Alderon Biosciences. The winery is located in a building near Research Triangle Park. Some of Wojciechowski's partners even invested in the winery. [Read the article.](#)

Development Board presentations online

Presentations given at the Nov. 19-20 Economic Development Board meeting are now available online. The meeting materials, including all presentations, are available [here.](#)

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 - Dec. 7, 2009

New projects assigned:	403
Projects announced:	115
Jobs created:	13,356
Capital invested:	\$2.86B
Industry visits by existing industry staff:	1,348
Calls to the Business ServiCenter:	23,709

N.C. in the News

This Week's Highlights

- [Rooftop solar 'is the future'](#) (The News & Observer - Raleigh) Dec. 7)
- [Manufacturing areas lead surprise job comeback](#) (The Associated Press, Dec. 7)
- [N.C. business leaders talk taxes with state staffers](#) (The Associated Press, Dec.

U.S. Airways announced Dec. 4 that they will begin nonstop flights to Rome from Charlotte-Douglas International Airport. In the past year, the airline has added nonstop flights to Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, Paris and Honolulu from its Charlotte hub. Flights to Rome will begin May 13, and can be booked beginning Dec. 12.

Spokeswoman Michelle Mohr told The Charlotte Observer the airline believes there is enough demand from southeastern customers for the new flight. In a statement, US Airways Senior Vice President Suzanne Boda said: "Rome is one of US Airways' most popular European destinations. Our new service from Charlotte will offer our customers throughout the southeastern United States another convenient option for traveling to the Eternal City."

[From Charlotte, ciao Roma!](#) (The Charlotte Observer, Dec. 4)

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- [Triad man is on White House radar](#) (The News and Record - Greensboro, Dec. 7)
- [Time and money are everything in BRAC growth](#) (The Fayetteville Observer, Dec. 7)
- [Jobs report is strongest since the start of the recession](#) (The New York Times, Dec. 7)
- [N.C. law pulls jobs](#) (Winston-Salem Journal, Dec. 4)
- [N.C. among worst in newly jobless, with more than 5,500 filing claims in single week](#) (Triangle Business Journal, Dec. 4)
- [More downtown businesses tap sun for energy](#) (The Asheville Citizen-Times, Dec. 4)
- [Statesville wins \\$80M textile plant](#) (Charlotte Business Journal, Dec. 4)

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