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## NEWS & OPPORTUNITIES FROM N.C. COMMERCE



Secretary Copeland (left, second row) participated in a virtual event earlier today to announce Farmina's new North American headquarters.

## Leading Italian Pet Nutrition Company Selects Rockingham County for 129-Job North American HQ

Farmina Pet Food USA, a provider of scientifically-developed foods and personalized nutrition services for dogs and cats, will establish its North American headquarters in Reidsville, **Governor Roy Cooper** announced today (December 8). The company's plans in Rockingham County include the creation of 129 jobs over five years and a capital investment of nearly \$28.5 million.

"We welcome Farmina Pet Food to North Carolina, and are proud to be the base for its North American operations. Their choice will add jobs to Reidsville and our excellent workforce and infrastructure will serve them well as they continue to grow," **Governor Cooper** said."

Farmina Pet Food USA LLC is part of family owned and operated Farmina Pet Foods Holding, whose small-animal nutrition business began in Italy in 1965. The global company utilizes the best natural ingredients in manufacturing both wet and dry dog and cat food products containing natural antioxidants and no GMOs. Farmina remains headquartered in Italy and operates manufacturing facilities in Italy, Brazil and Serbia. It currently has a sales and marketing office in New York City. The company's North Carolina location will include manufacturing, R&D and warehousing operations.

"As a family-owned and operated business, we believe that



## Commerce Issues 2021 Economic Development Tier Rankings

The North Carolina Department of Commerce released the county tier designations for 2021 last week (November 30). The designations, which are mandated by state law, play a role in several programs that assist in economic development.

22 counties will change tier designations for 2021.

The 2021 rankings comply with the methodology prescribed by the North Carolina General Assembly in General Statute §143B-437.08, which identifies four economic factors to be compiled and calculated by N.C. Commerce and then used to analyze and rank each of North Carolina's 100 counties. Each county is then assigned its tier designation ranking from one to three. Tier 1 counties are generally the most economically distressed and Tier 3 counties are generally the least economically distressed.

The rankings are based on an assessment of each county's unemployment rate, median household income, population growth, and assessed property value per capita. The law calls for 40 counties to be designated as Tier 1, 40 counties to be designated as Tier 2, and 20 counties to be designated Tier 3.

Counties moving to a less distressed tier ranking include Beaufort, Camden, Carteret, Chowan, Jones, Macon, Onslow, Perquimans, Pitt, Polk, and Transylvania.

Counties moving to a more distressed tier ranking include Alexander, Brunswick, Buncombe, Burke, Cherokee, Davie, Haywood, Hoke, New Hanover, Randolph, and Rowan.

Tier designations determine eligibility and guidelines for several different grant programs that N.C. Commerce administers including the

Reidsville is the perfect fit for our values of quality and continuous innovation, from the workforce to the production technologies. Utilizing ingredients from Europe, Farmina's North Carolina kitchen will make to order our Natural&Delicious and Vetlife dry nutritional solutions for cats and dogs," said **Farmina Holding CEO and Owner Angelo Russo**. "A state-of-the-art microbiological and chemical lab will be equipped to carry out the company's strict quality control procedures, establishing a new benchmark for creating pet nutrition solutions in the U.S. We plan to further invest in the Southeast to develop a network of family-owned regional farms that meet our farm-to-table ingredient quality standards."

The North Carolina Department of Commerce led the state's efforts to recruit Farmina, which also considered other U.S. destinations. The company's new jobs will offer salaries averaging \$46,722 per year, creating a \$6.15 million annual payroll impact in the region. Rockingham County's overall wages currently average \$35,146 per year. Farmina's North Carolina workforce will include positions ranging from machine operators and shipping clerks to veterinarians and chemical technicians.

"Farmina's selection of North Carolina for this significant investment provides ample evidence that our infrastructure, workforce, cost structure and global market access enable leading companies to meet their strategic business objectives," said **Commerce Secretary Anthony M. Copeland**. "We welcome Farmina as the newest member of our manufacturing community and appreciate the outstanding work of our partners and allies who helped make today's announcement possible."

Farmina's new presence in North Carolina will be facilitated, in part, by a Job Development Investment Grant (JDIG) approved by the state's Economic Investment Committee earlier today. Over the 12-year term of the grant, the project is estimated to grow the state's economy by more than \$857 million. Using a formula that takes into account the new tax revenues generated by the 129 new jobs, the JDIG agreement authorizes the potential reimbursement to the company of up to \$1.833 million over 12 years.

State payments occur only after verification by the departments of Commerce and Revenue that the company has met incremental job creation and investment targets. Projects supported by JDIG must result in positive net tax revenue to the state treasury, even after taking into consideration the grant's reimbursement payments to the recipient company. The provision ensures all North Carolina communities benefit from the JDIG program.

Joining the [North Carolina Department of Commerce](#) and the [Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina](#) in facilitating Farmina's arrival in North Carolina are key partners that include the [North Carolina General Assembly](#), the [North Carolina Community College System](#), [Rockingham County](#), the [City of Reidsville](#), the [Rockingham County Center for Economic Development](#), [Small Business and Tourism](#), and [Duke Energy](#).

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 into more economically distressed areas of the state.

For more information about the tier designation system visit: [nccommerce.com/grants-incentives/county-distress-rankings-tiers](https://nccommerce.com/grants-incentives/county-distress-rankings-tiers).

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## Manufacturer Sturm, Ruger & Company to Bring 60 New Jobs to Rockingham County

Sturm, Ruger & Company, Inc., a leading U.S. designer and manufacturer of commercial and sporting firearms, will grow its North Carolina workforce with an expansion at its Rockingham County production facility, **Governor Roy Cooper** announced today. The company's goal is to add roughly 60 jobs and invest approximately \$10 million at its site in Mayodan over the next three years.

"North Carolina's skilled workforce continues to make our state a smart choice for growing manufacturers," **Governor Cooper** said. "Today's expansion by Sturm, Ruger & Co. highlights our state's commitment to growing with companies and is a strong investment in the future of Rockingham County."

Founded in 1949, Connecticut-based Sturm, Ruger [NYSE: RGR] is one of the nation's largest manufacturers of firearms. Its award-winning products are bought by hunters, collectors and hobbyists, as well as law enforcement organizations, security firms and government agencies. Sturm, Ruger established its \$26 million production facility in Mayodan in 2013, and its workforce there currently totals 490. It also has plants in New Hampshire and Arizona.

"We are thrilled to achieve so many goals with this project," said **Mickey Wilson, Sturm, Ruger's vice president of Mayodan operations**. "This expansion will help us to grow our business and further expand our diverse lineup of rugged, reliable firearms, while at the same time expanding our presence in Rockingham County."

The North Carolina Department of Commerce led a team of partners in supporting Sturm, Ruger's decision to expand its North Carolina operations. The company had considered other U.S. business destinations. Salaries for the new jobs are expected to average \$44,033 per year, creating an annual payroll impact for the region of more than \$2 million per year. Rockingham County's overall



Photo courtesy of Chick-fil-A Supply

## Governor Cooper Announces Chick-fil-A Supply® Will Create 160 Jobs at New Mebane Distribution Center

Chick-fil-A®, one of the nation's leading quick service restaurant companies, will locate a major distribution center in Alamance County, investing an estimated \$52 million to build the new facility, **Governor Roy Cooper** announced December 1. The project, part of Chick-fil-A Supply®, the company's new distribution service focused on supplying food and products to its restaurants, will create 160 jobs at the North Carolina Industrial Center in Mebane. It is scheduled to open in early 2022.

"North Carolina attracts the nation's most well-known brands because of our strong workforce and steady leadership, even in a crisis," said **Governor Cooper**. "Alamance County is the right location with the right infrastructure to make Chick-Fil-A's new approach to the restaurant's supply chain a success."

Chick-fil-A, Inc. is one of the nation's largest privately held restaurant companies. The chain, founded in 1967, is known for its original chicken sandwich and serves customers freshly prepared food in more than 2,600 restaurants in 47 states, Washington, D.C. and Canada. While enjoying strong continuing growth, the company has also faced an increasingly complex logistics challenge to keep up with demand. In 2019, the company launched a new approach to distribute ingredients and products to its restaurants, creating Chick-fil-A Supply, LLC, its own distribution company. A wholly owned subsidiary of Chick-fil-A, Inc., Chick-fil-A Supply helps address Chick-fil-A restaurants' unique needs, such as frequent, high-volume deliveries in challenging delivery environments. The company's facility in Mebane will be its second permanent, full-scale distribution center, joining the first full-scale facility near the company's headquarters in Georgia.

"Building Chick-fil-A Supply's next distribution center in North Carolina allows us to support the incredible growth of the area," said **Josh Grote, senior director, Chick-fil-A Supply**. "Specifically, Mebane provides great access to talent and is in close proximity to major transit routes, enabling us to best serve our customers: Chick-fil-A franchised Operators, licensees, and their teams."

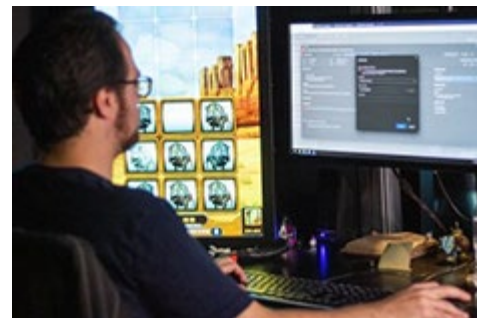
"North Carolina offers the top business climate in the United States," said **North Carolina Commerce Secretary Anthony**

annual wages average \$35,146. Sturm, Ruger's new positions will include production associates and supervisors.

"Expansions by existing companies are compelling evidence that North Carolina's economic assets and business climate remain competitive with other leading destinations," said **N.C. Commerce Secretary Anthony M. Copeland**. "I congratulate Sturm, Ruger for its impressive growth and also commend the state and local partners and allies that have supported the company's success in Rockingham County."

A performance-based grant of \$150,000 from the One North Carolina Fund will help facilitate Sturm, Ruger's North Carolina expansion.

Joining the [North Carolina Department of Commerce](#) and the [Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina](#) in the collaborative effort to support this project were the [North Carolina General Assembly](#), the [North Carolina Community College System](#), [Rockingham County](#), the [Town of Mayodan](#), and the [Rockingham County Center for Economic Development, Small Business and Tourism](#).



A developer at work. Photo courtesy Grover Gaming

## Grover Gaming's Expansion Brings 200 New Jobs to Greenville

Grover Gaming Inc., a software development and design company with offices and distribution facilities in seven U.S. states, will expand its Greenville headquarters, adding 200 positions to its existing North Carolina workforce, **Commerce Secretary Anthony M. Copeland** announced today. The company will invest \$12.5 million in its operations in Pitt County during the coming

**M. Copeland.** "Chick-fil-A Supply's decision to locate this important new operations center in our state demonstrates that corporations recognize the many advantages of doing business here."

Although wages will vary by job position, the aggregate, minimum average salary will reach \$62,429, bringing a payroll impact of \$10.1 million to the region each year. The current average wage in Alamance County is \$41,611.

Chick-fil-A Supply's project in North Carolina will be facilitated, in part, by a Job Development Investment Grant (JDIG) approved by the state's Economic Investment Committee earlier today. Over the course of the 12-year term of this grant, the project is estimated to grow the state's economy by nearly \$389 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 \$1,562,400, spread over 12 years.

Chick-fil-A Supply's JDIG agreement also could move as much as \$173,600 into the state's Industrial Development Fund – Utility Account for use by rural communities elsewhere in the state. The Utility Account helps finance necessary infrastructure upgrades in more economically challenged areas of the state to attract future business to those locations.

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](#), [Duke Energy](#), [Alamance County](#), the [City of Mebane](#), the [Alamance County Economic Development Foundation](#), and the [Alamance County Chamber of Commerce](#).



## Furniture Manufacturer to Invest \$5.4 Million and Create 50 New Jobs in Caswell County

Riverside Furniture Corporation, a furniture and home furnishings manufacturer, will create 50 new jobs with a \$5.4 million investment for a warehouse and distribution center in Caswell County, **Governor Roy Cooper** announced December 4.

"Growing companies know they can succeed with North Carolina's skilled workforce, location, and infrastructure to support their distribution operations. Riverside Furniture's increased presence fits with North Carolina's reputation as the furniture capital of the world," said **Governor Cooper**.

Founded in 1946, Riverside Furniture Corporation designs, manufactures and distributes residential furnishings to 3,000 furniture retailers across the United States. Since opening their first plant in Arkansas nearly 75 years ago, the company has experienced exponential growth. Riverside's additional 300,000-square-foot of distribution and warehouse operations in Caswell County will reduce shipment lead times to retailers in the Eastern United States from receipt of order. In addition to this next phase of growth, Riverside is currently renovating the

four years.

"This homegrown North Carolina software enterprise is among the fastest-growing companies in the country, and eastern North Carolina will continue to be host to its corporate headquarters," **Secretary Copeland** said. "Grover Gaming's expansion highlights our well-equipped workforce, livable communities and modern business amenities that appeal to innovation-minded companies."

Grover Gaming, founded in Greenville in 2013, designs and develops software, game content and gaming systems. Its products are respected throughout the gaming industry for their vivid design, high-resolution graphics and entertaining gameplay. The privately-held company's rapid growth has led to recognition in the annual Inc. 5000 list for each of the past two years, moving from a rank of #2,660 in 2019 to #194 in 2020. This ranking places Grover Gaming in the top 4 percent of the nation in revenue growth, making it the fastest growing company in eastern North Carolina. Its nationwide workforce of 190 currently includes 126 employees in North Carolina.

"We are excited by this partnership with the State of North Carolina," said **Garrett Blackwelder, Grover Gaming's Founder and CEO**. "Through the hard work of our amazing team, we are experiencing tremendous growth and are in a position to create hundreds of new jobs in eastern North Carolina. It is very encouraging that the State recognizes this growth and is willing to support our expansion in the community that means so much to us."

The North Carolina Department of Commerce led a collaborative effort to support Grover Gaming's expanded presence in the state. New positions at the company will include software developers, game designers and artists, project managers, quality assurance engineers, accounting and human resource specialists, and others. New positions will offer salaries that average \$50,645 per year, creating an annual payroll impact of nearly \$11.2 million for the region. Pitt County's overall average annual wage is currently \$41,008.

Grover Gaming's North Carolina expansion will be facilitated, in part, by a Job Development Investment Grant (JDIG) approved by the state's Economic Investment Committee earlier today. The project is estimated to grow the state's economy by \$466.6 million over the 12-year term of the grant. Using a formula that takes into account the new tax revenues generated by the 200 new jobs, the JDIG agreement authorizes the potential reimbursement to the company of up to \$3,476,000 over 12 years.

State payments occur only after verification by the departments of Commerce and

historic YMCA on Main Street in High Point to create a state-of-the-art showroom and product development center for year-round utilization for the furniture industry.

"Riverside's investment in North Carolina, including both the new High Point showroom and the Caswell County distribution center, is a combined \$15 million, which is a reflection of our growth as a company and the expansion of service to our customer base," said **Fred Henjes, Chief Executive Officer and President of Riverside Furniture Corporation**. "Because the distribution center is situated on 50 acres of land, the campus will give us the ability to expand."

"Riverside Furniture is applying a 21st century touch to one of North Carolina's earliest manufacturing industries," said **Commerce Secretary Anthony Copeland**. "We commend them for the success that has led to this exciting expansion and look forward to supporting their continued growth."

The North Carolina Department of Commerce led a team of partners in supporting Riverside Furniture's decision to locate to North Carolina. New positions will include shipping and receiving staff, forklift operators and supervisors. Annual salary for the positions is expected to average \$39,260, creating a payroll impact of more than \$1.9 million per year for the surrounding community. Caswell County's overall average annual wage is \$36,427.

A performance-based grant of \$150,000 from the One North Carolina Fund will help facilitate Riverside Furniture's expansion. The One NC Fund provides financial assistance to local governments to help attract economic investment and to create jobs. Companies receive no money upfront and must meet job creation and capital investment targets to qualify for payment. All One NC grants require a matching grant from local governments and any award is contingent upon that condition being met.

In addition to the [North Carolina Department of Commerce](#), the [Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina](#) and [Caswell County](#), other key partners in the project include the [North Carolina Community College System](#) and [Piedmont Community College](#).

Revenue that the company has met incremental job creation and investment targets. Projects supported by JDIG must result in positive net tax revenue to the state treasury after taking into consideration the grant's reimbursement payments to the recipient company. The provision ensures all North Carolina communities benefit from the JDIG program.

The N.C. Department of Commerce and the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina (EDPNC) joined numerous state and local partners in supporting the project. They include the North Carolina General Assembly, the North Carolina Community College System, the North Carolina Department of Transportation, the Golden LEAF Foundation, Pitt County, the City of Greenville, the Greenville Utilities Commission, and the Greenville ENC Alliance.

The [North Carolina Department of Commerce](#) and the [Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina](#) joined numerous state and local partners in supporting the project. They include the [North Carolina General Assembly](#), the [North Carolina Community College System](#), the [North Carolina Department of Transportation](#), the [Golden LEAF Foundation](#), [Pitt County](#), the [City of Greenville](#), the [Greenville Utilities Commission](#), and the [Greenville ENC Alliance](#).

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## On Our Radar

- [With Key Metrics Increasing Rapidly, North Carolina to Begin Modified Stay at Home Order to Slow COVID-19 Spread](#) (Governor Cooper's Press Office - December 8)
- [Wind Works: Southern Virginia Looks to Green Energy as a Job Source](#) (The Dogwood - Southern Virginia - December 4)

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## N.C. in the News

- [Albemarle awarded Smart Communities Grant by ElectriCities](#) (Stanly News & Press - December 7)
- [Global manufacturer to build \\$38 million plant in Hendersonville](#) (Hendersonville Lightning - December 7)
- [County commissioners chairman sees silver lining in improved unemployment rate](#) (Salisbury Post - December 6)
- [State designates Burke County distressed](#) (News Herald - Morganton - December 6)

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## 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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