

Collaboration for Prosperity Zone Annual Report and Report on performance metrics for Community Planners

Citation of Law or Resolution:	S.L. 2016-94
Section Number:	Section 15.10 (a) and 15.10 (b)
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Receiving Entities:

The Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Agriculture and Natural and Economic Resources
The Joint Legislative Economic Development and Global Engagement Committee
The Fiscal Research Division

Submitting Entity:

N.C. Department of Commerce, Rural Economic Development Division, Main Street and Rural Planning Center

August 5, 2019

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Agriculture and Natural and Economic Resources
The Joint Legislative Economic Development and Global Engagement Committee
The Fiscal Research Division

FROM: Elizabeth H. Parham, Director
NC Main Street and Rural Planning Center

SUBJECT: Collaboration for Prosperity Zone Annual Report and Report on performance metrics for Community Planners

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Section Number: Section 15.10 (a) and 15.10 (b)

BACKGROUND

The intent of the State's eight Collaboration for Prosperity Zones created by the General Assembly in G.S. 143B-28.1 is to establish geographically uniform zones in this State to facilitate collaborative and coordinated planning and use of resources, to improve cooperation with other governmental and nonprofit entities at the local and regional level, to facilitate administrative efficiencies within State government, and, to the extent feasible, to establish one-stop sources in each region for citizens and businesses seeking State services at a regional level.

In the Sections 15.10 (a) and 15.10 (b) of this statute the Department of Commerce is required to submit an annual report outlining the performance of following criteria in the various Prosperity Zones:

- (1) Jobs anticipated to result from efforts of the employees, including the name and contact person for each company creating new jobs in the zone.
- (2) The location of each project, including the development tier designation of the location
- (3) Project leads that were not submitted to the Department for possible discretionary incentives pursuant to Chapter 143B of the General Statutes.

North Central <i>(This work is performed and data collected by the Economic Development Partnership of NC)</i>					
Jobs	Company	Contact	County	Tier	Submitted for Incentives
18	Frontier Spinning Mills, Inc.	Bob Joyce	Lee	2	Yes
40	Caterpillar (GCF-61)	Rudy Watkins	Lee	2	Yes
0	Bridgestone Americas Tire Operations, LLC	Jennifer Lantz	Wilson	2	Yes

19	Apex Investments Inc (A.D. Tubi Inossidabili SpA - Siler City)	Alyssa Bryd	Chatham	3	Yes
32	Southeastern Specialty Vehicles	Dennis Jarvis	Vance	1	Yes
24	Linamar Forgings Carolina - Selma	Chris Jones	Johnston	3	No
277	Millennia Patient Services - Call Center	Krista Ikirt	Nash	2	No
12	Heritage Mulch Company	Stacy Woodhouse	Warren	1	Yes
23	DILL Air Controls Products	Vanessia Cooke-Alvarado	Granville	2	Yes
72	Altec Industries Inc	Don Moss	Granville	2	Yes
17	Triad Corrugated Metal - Sanford	Dominick Aquino	Lee	2	Yes
534 total					

Northeast <i>(This work is performed and data collected by Economic Development Partnership of NC)</i>					
Jobs	Company	Contact	County	Tier	Submitted for Incentives
79	Reser's Fine Foods, Inc	Steven Snyder	Halifax	1	Yes
42	AirBoss Rubber Compounding	Cathy Scott	Halifax	1	Yes
25	Newman's Seafood	Richard Newman	Beaufort	1	Yes
13	Grover Gaming	Alan Mizelle	Pitt	2	Yes
50	Daedalus Composites, LLC	Michael Reardon	Chowan	1	Yes
75	Telephonics	Joe Mihelic	Pasquotank	1	Yes
284 total					

Northwest <i>(This work is performed and data collected by Economic Development Partnership of NC)</i>					
Jobs	Company	Contact	County	Tier	Submitted for Incentives
21	OneH2, Inc	Paul Dawson	Catawba	2	Yes
15	Plastics Technology Inc. (PTI)	Michael Simmons	Catawba	2	Yes
16	Toolcraft Inc of NC	Levonda Smith	McDowell	1	Yes
10	United Chemi-Con Manufacturing	Stephen V. Katz	Ashe	1	Yes
40	Star Snax, LLC	Randall Wilson	Catawba	2	Yes

25	Marves Industries LLC	Elias Gomez	Burke	2	Yes
12	Buechel Stone, LLC	April Dowland	McDowell	2	Yes
29	Jeld-Wen, Inc.	Dan Jacobs	Wilkes	2	Yes
168 total					

Piedmont Triad <i>(This work is performed and data collected by Economic Development Partnership of NC)</i>					
Jobs	Company	Contact	County	Tier	Submitted for Incentives
10	mesur.io	Michael Prorock	Caswell	1	Yes
11	Trinity Furniture Inc	Jorge Laguereula	Randolph	2	Yes
10	ACC Coatings, LLC	Todd Tucker	Surry	2	Yes
20	PEMMCO Manufacturing, Inc.	Rick Powell	Randolph	2	Yes
44	Grass America Inc	Dianne Jones	Forsyth	2	Yes
12	EG Industries	Wade Stauffer	Randolph	2	Yes
17	Comfort Bilt LLC	Terry Bralley	Davie	2	Yes
24	Liberty Trailers, LLC (DBA Ferree Trailers)	Kevin Franklin	Randolph	2	Yes
12	Ambella Home Collection	George Moussa	Randolph	2	Yes
15	Speedline Corp	Marinko Milos	Rockingham	2	Yes
33	National OnDemand, Inc.	Peter Bishop	Alamance	2	Yes
0	Lotus Bakeries	Aaron Hirschl	Alamance	2	Yes
11	Aeolus Filter Corporation	Mike Harriman	Randolph	2	Yes
11	Covenant Made Custom Cabinet Company	Eric Erb	Randolph	2	Yes
14	Hubbell Industrial Controls	Diane James	Randolph	2	Yes
244 total					

South Central (Sandhills) <i>(This work is performed and data collected by Economic Development Partnership of NC)</i>					
Jobs	Company	Contact	County	Tier	Submitted for Incentives
208	Booz Allen Hamilton	Teresa Lynch	Cumberland	2	Yes
66	Cascades Moulded Pulp, Inc. (Wagram)	Mario Infante	Scotland	1	Yes
25	Campbell Soup Supply Company LLC	Serene Hardin	Robeson	1	No
30	Impact Plastics, Inc.	Bill Burke, Jr.	Richmond	1	Yes
76	AmeriQual Group Holdings, LLC	Sandy Rasche	Montgomery	2	Yes

251	Steven Roberts Original Desserts, LLC	Mabel Hall	Robeson	1	No
15	Carolina Hearts Home Care	Brigitte Laney	Scotland	1	Yes
671 total					

Southeast <i>(This work is performed and data collected by Economic Development Partnership of NC)</i>					
Jobs	Company	Contact	County	Tier	Submitted for Incentives
488	House of Raeford Farms Inc	Ken Qualls	Duplin	2	Yes
30	Alta Foods LLC	Don Barnes	Wayne	1	Yes
518 total					

Southwest <i>(This work is performed and data collected by Economic Development Partnership of NC)</i>					
Jobs	Company	Contact	County	Tier	Submitted for Incentives
50	Roush Yates Manufacturing Solutions	Robert (Bob) Uzman	Iredell	3	No
33	Southern Fabricators Inc	Rocky II Carpenter	Anson	1	Yes
49	Huber Technology	Henk-Jan van Ettehoven	Lincoln	3	No
44	Enforge LLC	Dawn McCormick	Stanly	2	Yes
20	Berry Global, Inc.	Tom Hill	Iredell	3	Yes
40	Aptar Group	Wagner Pompeo	Lincoln	3	No
12	CYES Factory LLC	Tedros Kebede	Stanly	2	Yes
22	Keselowski Advanced Manufacturing LLC	Steven Fetch	Iredell	3	No
141	BestCo	Andrea Brownell	Iredell	3	Yes
18	Carolina Paper Company	Jason deBuhr	Stanly	2	No
82	Badger Sportswear Inc	Yudeshnee Pillay	Iredell	3	Yes
25	Barrday Protective Solutions	Chinkal Patel	Mecklenburg	3	No
403	Greenheck	Rich Totzke	Cleveland	2	Yes
939 total					

Western <i>(This work is performed and data collected by Economic Development Partnership of NC)</i>					
Jobs	Company	Contact	County	Tier	Submitted for Incentives
15	Reich LLC	Mathias Goetz	Buncombe	3	No
33	Gaia Herbs, Inc.	Brian Traylor	Transylvania	2	Yes
28	Buchi	Jeff Buscher	Madison	2	Yes
9	Hayesville Family Practice	Lewis Kelly	Clay	1	Yes
20	Moog Components Group	Terry Martin	Cherokee	2	Yes
12	Erlanger - Murphy Medial Center	Mark Kimball	Clay	1	Yes
40	Cardinal Tissue, LLC	Vince Reese	Rutherford	1	Yes
35	SSD Designs	Sara Samuelson	Rutherford	3	Yes
27	Affinity Living Group	Hunter Trefzger	Rutherford	2	Yes
219 total					

All Prosperity Zones					
Jobs					
3577 total					

- (4) Proactive local government outreach to share information and planning services that are available

Planners in each Prosperity Zone are required to share information with all local government(s) in their service area. This has primarily been accomplished through visits to local governments, presentations at regional meetings, and electronic distribution of program materials on upcoming initiatives pertaining to economic development planning services. Also, Rural Planners meet at least quarterly with the Economic Development Partnership of NC (EDPNC), Regional Industry Manager for their respective region and at least annually with the other state agency representatives from their Prosperity Zones.

- (5) Coordination of regular meetings with Prosperity Zones agency representatives to increase collaboration of services and resources to local communities

Since 2014, the various Prosperity Zone agency representatives have worked hard to increase collaboration of services in a way that has brought significant impact to local communities. Initially, agency representatives from the Economic Development Partnership of NC, Department of Transportation and Division of Environmental Quality worked together to establish their presence in each prosperity zone. The group of agency representatives continues to grow though and, as of today, also includes representatives from the NC Community College System, NC Works (NC Commerce), Rural Planners (NC Commerce, Rural Economic Development Division), North Carolina State University Industry Expansion Solutions and a variety of local partners. Each prosperity zone has a co-location where Prosperity Zone agency representatives hold office hours and meet with partners and clients.

Marketing materials and contact information for the various representatives is available in each co-location.

In addition to collaborating in co-locations, the Prosperity Zones agency representatives also travel together to hold joint meetings with local partners and clients throughout the prosperity zone. Some specific examples are included below:

MANUFACTURER RESOURCE EVENTS HELD IN EVERY PROSPERITY ZONE

Throughout 2018-19, a series of events was held in each prosperity zone designed to promote the various resources available to North Carolina Manufacturers. At each event, representatives from NCDOC, NC Works, NCCCS, EDPNC, NCSU IES and DEQ were on hand to present on the services they offered to manufacturers. Topics like operational efficiencies, export assistance, workforce development and energy savings were discussed at the events and several follow up meetings were discussed as a result.

EDPNC BRINGS TOGETHER CONTACTS FROM AROUND THE STATE FOR THE ENERGIZING RURAL NORTH CAROLINA EVENT

"During the summer of 2018, the EDPNC team brought together contacts from more than 70 different counties for the conference, "Energizing Rural North Carolina: The Building Blocks of Successful Economic Development". The event emphasized ways to help move the needle in small towns and rural communities, whether they're in the farthest corners of the state or near major metro areas. The event attempted to understand why rural communities, each with their own assets and challenges, need to have essential building blocks in place before they can have meaningful job creation. The two-day conference was meant to inspire attendees to identify and pursue local strategies to bolster five pillars of rural prosperity — infrastructure, workforce, education, health and local leadership. North Carolina-based subject matter experts spoke frankly on the challenges and opportunities within each of the building blocks."

MANUFACTURERS FROM EVERY PROSPERITY ZONE TRAVEL TO DURHAM FOR MFG CON 2018

mfgCON is North Carolina's premiere conference for manufacturing and innovation and this year organizers partnered with contacts from every prosperity zone on an event held in Durham. The goal of the event is to share best practices, practical advice, and helpful tips for creating a safer, more efficient and more profitable manufacturing sector in NC. We also use the event as an opportunity to celebrate certain manufacturers with awards that highlight their work in areas like workforce development and sustainability.

PROSPERITY ZONE REPRESENTATIVES COLLABORATE ON WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT EVENTS

One of the most important issues facing NC businesses is finding qualified workforce. Throughout the year Prosperity Zone representatives (EDPNC, NC WORKS, NCCCS and others) have worked together to address the needs of businesses in their communities. Several events focused on workforce development have been held throughout FY 2018-19 including the Apprenticeship NC conference (Wilmington), NCWorks Partnership Conference (Greensboro), mfgCON (Durham) and Energizing Rural NC (Pinehurst).

PROSPERITY ZONE PARTNERS PARTICIPATE IN MANUFACTURING DAY EVENTS ALL OVER THE STATE

Manufacturing Day is a celebration of modern manufacturing meant to inspire the next generation of manufacturers. Manufacturing Day occurs each year on the first Friday in October — last year

Manufacturing Day was on October 4, 2018. More than 70 MFG Day events took place in NC, from Currituck County (Barco) to Asheville. Many of the events were held at the local community college and some are held in manufacturing facilities. At these events, NC DOC, NC DOT, NC DEQ and EDPNC joined businesses to support the events. Each event was unique, but most entail a business bringing in busloads of students from High Schools and Community Colleges to see firsthand what a career in manufacturing can lead to for the students. In many cases, the parents of the students were also invited to the events.

PROSPERITY ZONE PARTNERS TEAM UP TO INTRODUCE RECYCLING BUSINESS TO AMAZON

When a North Carolina recycling company wanted to connect with the new Amazon Distribution Center in Garner about its recycling program, they reached out to DEQ's Wendy Worley, head of the Recycling and Materials Management Section. Wendy then connected with David Lee, the designated DEQ representative to the North Central Prosperity Zone for the Division of Environmental Assistance and Customer Service and David immediately contacted EDPNC's Harry Swendsen. Harry then obtained a contact from Garner Economic Developer Joseph Stallings, and that information was quickly conveyed back through channels to the original requester. It's a small example of the responsive collaborations developed by EDPNC and its partners to better serve the business community.

MULTIPLE PROSPERITY ZONES TEAM UP TO SUPPORT CHARLOTTE-BASED COMPANY

Angstadt Arms is a rapidly growing firearms company based in the industrial area of northern Charlotte. The company has been in business for a little over three years, but it's already enjoying success on an international scale with its products. The company's main platform is an AR-style firearm that is built from the ground up to use Glock magazines. Parts are also available for customers around the globe to build their own firearms if they choose. Angstadt has only recently begun to tap into EDPNC resources and first met with EDPNC South Central PZ Rep Phillip Shumaker at the Shot Show in Las Vegas. Phillip introduced the client to EDPNC Southwest PZ Rep Melanie O'Connell Underwood who made them aware of upcoming EDPNC educational seminars on ITAR and Export Compliance. EDPNC Northwest PZ Rep Bill Slagle met with the company's Compliance Manager at an event in Hickory and from there Melanie scheduled a site visit with the company owner and the Mecklenburg County Existing Industry Director, Gretchen Carson. During the local visit the company expressed interest in learning more about the ability for international sales and joining NC at trade shows. Melanie shared info on the upcoming Go Global Road Show and the company immediately reached out to Jen Vogelsberg and scheduled appointments for a Go Global visit in the Southwest Region. During Road Show, the company was able to meet with all of our International offices. The referrals from Phillip and Bill Slagle put in motion a visit with their own RIM, and connections to strong potential for future international sales, a big win for the company. Other referrals went sent were for Veterans resources, waste reduction resources to get help with cardboard, and a connection to Industrial Expansion Solutions.

EDPNC WORKING WITH OTHER PARTNERS ON STATE SECTOR STRATEGY COUNCIL TO DEVELOP STRATEGY FOR INDUSTRY LED PARTNERSHIPS

In June 2018, the NCWorks Commission gathered a wide group of individuals involved in economic development to discuss the formation of a NC State Sector Strategy Council to assist North Carolina in developing a strategy to align and improve employer engagement efforts around workforce development. Sector strategies are actions, goals and policies that enable education, workforce development, and economic development partners to meet the needs of specific industry sectors and are the organizing vehicle to ensure these strategies are effective. A sector partnership is a collaboration of businesses from the same industry and labor market region that work with education, workforce

development, economic development and community organizations to address workforce and other competitive needs of their industry. Across North Carolina, workforce development, education and economic development organizations are hard at work meeting the needs of businesses and connecting people to jobs. However, without a coordinated strategy to ensure that resulting initiatives are targeted and aligned, there is a risk of duplicating efforts and developing programs without an integrated understanding of business needs. Ultimately, this could lead to a disconnect between workforce supply and demand, with long-term consequences for North Carolina's businesses and communities. To address these challenges, a NC State Sector Strategy Council was brought together to clarify a state mission and strategy for supporting collaborative business engagement through industry-led sector partnerships. The ultimate goal of the Council is to support the development of local and regional sector partnerships that help develop efficient and effective responses to industry needs.

There have also been several statewide activities that involve the Prosperity Zones agency representatives on specific strategic, statewide initiatives, including:

COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The North Carolina Department of Commerce began a pilot project in the fall of 2016 with two Prosperity Zones (the Southwest and Southeast Prosperity Zones) to develop SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analyses and encourage strategic initiatives within the regions.¹ By early 2019, the Department completed this work with the remaining six Prosperity Zones.

The goals of this initiative were to 1) identify meaningful economic regions of the state, as defined by labor markets of interconnected counties; 2) develop a data-driven shared understanding of regional strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats; 3) initiate a dialogue among state, regional, and local stakeholders; and 4) identify and advance strategic regional initiatives to improve economic conditions in each region.

The Department of Commerce's Labor and Economic Analysis Division (LEAD) worked closely with regional representatives of the Division of Workforce Solutions, the Rural Economic Development Division, and the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina (EDPNC), as well as other regional and local stakeholders throughout the process. A summary of regional collaborations related to this initiative was provided for five of our Prosperity Zones in Commerce's 2018 Collaboration for Prosperity Zone Annual Report and Report on performance metrics for Community Planners report. This report provides highlights from the remaining three Prosperity Zones (North Central, Piedmont-Triad, and Sandhills), as well as updates from three zones highlighted in the 2018 report (Northeast, Northwest, and Southwest).

(¹ The 2016 pilot project was carried out in conjunction with Carolina Demography at UNC-Chapel Hill with funding provided by the Belk Foundation.)

NORTH CENTRAL PROSPERITY ZONE

(Beaufort, Bertie, Edgecombe, Halifax, Hertford, Martin, Nash, Northampton, Pitt, Wilson)
RAMP (Regional Advance Manufacturing Pipeline) East is a collaborative regional workforce initiative involving Commerce, the Carolina Gateway Partnership, community colleges, local workforce boards, economic developers, and K-12 educators. The goal of the initiative is to create interest and build skills

that will meet the projected demand for the region's advanced manufacturers over the next 5 years. Customized training, work-based learning, and WIOA-funded training is being leveraged to accelerate growth of available talent in both capacity and competencies. In addition, the group is enhancing the recruitment of underserved populations within the region, including emerging workforce, transitioning veterans, and adult learners. This project encompasses ten counties and covers geography in both the North Central Prosperity Zone and the Northeastern Prosperity Zone. Currently, the workforce boards in Region Q and Turning Point, who cover the ten counties, have hired dedicated recruiters to assist in outreach efforts. Further, the region's community colleges have begun a strategic planning process for developing relevant coursework.

(Durham)

Commerce, the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina (EDPNC), Durham Technical Community College, and the Durham Workforce Development Board are working on a collaborative effort, called Youth On, to mobilize employer engagement in work-based learning opportunities in Durham County. This project is being led by Durham's Office of Economic and Workforce Development and has established three-year goals for participation of youth aged 16-24. The goal of the initiative is to create interest and build skills that will meet the projected demand from area employers over the next 5 years. Outreach to youth participants is being administered through Durham Public Schools and Durham Technical Community College, while outreach to employers is happening through EDPNC, the Community College System, DWS, local chambers and associations, and the Office of Economic and Workforce Development. The initiative will provide 300 opportunities in summer of 2019, 600 in summer of 2020, and 1,000 work-based experiences in 2021. This initiative is open to all industries, but high levels of participation have already been demonstrated in the healthcare, information technology, and advanced manufacturing industries. In addition, the initiative hopes to ease participants' daily commutes through better connections to local employers.

PIEDMONT-TRIAD PROSPERITY ZONE

(Region-wide)

The Piedmont Prosperity Zone team has undertaken an effort to reduce barriers to employment for workers (and potential workers) across the region. On March 14, 2019, regional staff convened a workshop focused on improving communication between regional and state resources in workforce and economic development. To best diagnose regional barriers to employment, the workshop's audience included NCWorks Career Center managers, workforce board directors in the Piedmont-Triad Region, industry leaders, and economic development resources. Regional staff also plan to assess the region's current public transportation options, how they relate to major employers, and whether transportation enhancements could help better connect workers with jobs. Further, the team is continuing to pursue a program eliminating barriers to employment created by traffic tickets with outstanding fees and fines in Forsyth County. In addition, Guilford Technical Community College is currently developing a trade pathway for incarcerated individuals, a population facing particular difficulties when reentering the workforce, that are seeing a release in two years (or less) and are currently working for Correction Enterprises.

SOUTH CENTRAL (SANDHILLS) PROSPERITY ZONE

(Scotland)

The Sandhills Prosperity Zone team has created an initiative to address the unemployment rate in Scotland County, whose rate has remained one of the most stubbornly high in the state in recent years, through several economic development initiatives in partnership with the Scotland County Economic Development Commission. First, the team recently organized an event highlighting programs offered by the state and the Manufacturing Extension Partnership for existing companies in the region, particularly large manufacturers. A downtown revitalization and development strategy for the City of Laurinburg is also underway to assist in the attraction of new businesses and growth of existing businesses. The team is also mobilizing local career fairs for existing companies (on-site), as well as a pool of smaller local companies, to promote the services offered by NC Works for both employers and job seekers. Finally, regional staff will collaborate with local economic developers to identify businesses in need of immediate assistance with expansions, hiring, business management, training, etc., making consistent contact with all large manufacturers in the county.

(Moore, Montgomery, Richmond)

Staff in the Sandhills will also work to grow economic development initiatives relating to hospitality, outdoor recreation (including Uwharrie), and connecting the rural/urban gap through these initiatives. There are approximately 1.5 million visitors to Uwharrie each year, but most make day trips because there are relatively few places to stay overnight in the area, other than camping. Staff has begun to identify and help resolve this issue through a multi-pronged approach. In 2018, the team hosted an Outdoor Recreation Listening Tour initiated by the Department of Commerce to identify opportunities to grow relevant industries and those related. The development of strategic economic development plans, which include hospitality and outdoor recreation components, is underway for municipalities in the Moore-Montgomery-Richmond region. The team will identify businesses in these industries who need to hire skilled workers and connect them with a pipeline, as well as develop pipeline strategies with grade school and Community Colleges for hiring. In addition, regional staff will collaborate with the local Community Colleges (Richmond, Sandhills, and Montgomery) to develop programs that will foster a regional shift in the region towards these industries.

UPDATES FROM THE NORTHEAST PROSPERITY ZONE

(Halifax)

The Northeast Prosperity Zone team is actively working with partners and businesses to grow and retain jobs in Halifax County through strategic planning, productivity enhancement training, and career development opportunities. The team is working with towns in Halifax County to develop and implement customized economic development plans that create jobs and business opportunities. Staff has worked recently with Littleton, Weldon, and Halifax on updating their economic development strategies and downtown revitalization plans in collaboration with the Downtown Strong Initiative. Staff also worked with Town of Weldon as a partner on their February 2019 “Healthy Places for Healthy People” Implementation Plan. In addition, productivity enhancement training will continue to be offered through Halifax Community College’s customized training services for local companies hoping to increase global competitiveness, increase profits, and create jobs. Further, the team is assisting Reser’s Fine Foods (announced expansion that will create 79 jobs), Airboss of America and other manufacturing companies throughout Halifax County overcome obstacles that might hinder them from expanding. A recent Building Renovation grant from Commerce’s Rural Economic Development Division will help both

companies renovate their facilities, expand their job bases, and create more investment for Halifax County. In addition, one industry-specific workforce initiative involved a collaboration between Halifax Community College, the regional NCWorks Career Center, and the Center for Energy Education to increase the potential candidates for work in the solar energy industry. This involves coordinating pre-hire classes and applicant recruitment activities to meet the needs of solar energy companies in the region. To date, 98 people have successfully completed this program and approximately 40% have been hired by solar companies. Two additional solar projects are expected to start in Spring 2019.

(Chowan)

The team will also assist Chowan County with identifying new job creation opportunities through strategic planning, workforce services, and economic development grant funding, with a focus on expanding manufacturing and the boat-building industry in particular. Over the next year, the team will continue to work with the Town of Edenton, a NC Main Street community, to update their downtown revitalization implementation plan to identify investment-ready projects. Regional staff plan to offer an array of programs and resources to enhance the local manufacturing workforce, including vanpooling to address transportation needs, conducting applicant recruitment, screening, and assessment services to provide a well-qualified candidate pool. The team will also work with local industries to create a short-term pathway program that will create a pipeline of skilled workers for potential job openings in manufacturing. This program will be offered by College of the Albemarle's Continuing Education Department in partnership with Northeastern Workforce Development Board. In particular, the team plans to assist Regulator Marine, and other marine related companies, in conjunction with the Town of Edenton in order to best access Commerce programs and incentives that would allow Regulator to expand their facility by \$6.5 million in new investment and create 32 new jobs over the next 2 years. The team also plans to work with Daedalus Yachts in a similar fashion in hopes that they will expand their facility with over \$5.7 million in new investment and the creation of 40 new jobs. Further, staff will work with these two boat manufacturers to provide customized industry training as they increase their workforce over the next several years, including increasing the skills of both incumbent and new hires.

UPDATES FROM THE NORTHWEST PROSPERITY ZONE

(Burke)

Work in Burke is a 10-year campaign to educate young people and their parents about job opportunities in Burke County and the training required to pursue a career in those fields. Campaign leaders, including the regional Commerce team, are dedicated to helping students make informed decisions about career pathways and hope to emphasize the importance of postsecondary education, gaining marketable skills and being lifelong learners. The core goals of the campaign are twofold: 1) change perceptions about local jobs and training opportunities and 2) fill the future workforce pipeline in Burke County. After interviewing and surveying over 300 parents, students, employers, and citizens, the Work in Burke campaign was designed and launched in 2017. Unique content that showcases local career opportunities is being continuously developed. Work in Burke is also coordinating with Burke County Public Schools and Western Piedmont Community College to engage local employers by making them Work in Burke Partners. Together they are exposing young people to local career possibilities, giving them opportunities to experience careers firsthand through internships, building deeper relationships between companies and schools, and supporting students through scholarship and mentorship programs. In the Fall of 2018, all 6th-12th graders in Burke County Public Schools completed a survey to gauge perceptions of the manufacturing, healthcare, and trade sectors to compare with 2017 baseline data. Almost all measurements moved in a positive direction by at least two percentage points

UPDATES FROM THE SOUTHWEST PROSPERITY ZONE

(Gaston and Lincoln)

The Southwest Prosperity Zone team continued actively working on the Gaston-Foster Care Initiative. In April, seven youth and young adults participating in the Gaston-Lincoln Foster Care Initiative toured Daimler Trucks in Mount Holly. The manufacturing plant produces Freightliner medium-duty Business Class truck models. Before the tour, participants heard from a career panel of individuals previously in foster care and received information from representatives of Gaston College and the NCWorks NextGen program, which provides training and development services to eligible individuals ages 16-24. Representatives of the NC Department of Commerce, the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina, Gaston County and Lincoln County economic development organizations, the Department of Social Services from Gaston and Lincoln Counties, and Centralina Council of Governments also took part in the tour.

The purpose of the Gaston-Foster Care Initiative is to place individuals aging out of foster care with employers in Gaston and Lincoln Counties. The Initiative resulted from a SWOT Analysis completed for the Southwest Prosperity Zone by the North Carolina Department of Commerce in the fall of 2016.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLANNING PROJECTS

Over the course of the past year Planners in the eight regions have continued to provide economic development strategic planning in various communities. These planning efforts have focused on helping rural communities identify local (and regional) economic assets, create strategies for developing these, and identify implementation resources to help build community readiness for greater economic prosperity. These projects result in an economic development plan for the community and often lead to implementation-based services from the planning staff as well. A survey was completed by several rural communities to determine the value of planning projects. County economic development directors, county managers, tourism development directors, town managers, and other local officials completed the survey. As a result of assistance provided, communities said the planning services were very useful and they were able to develop and adopt new economic development strategies, hire an Economic Development Director, receive grants, attract new businesses' and identify local economic opportunities. These planning services have brought about both private and public investment. State and Federal grants have been requested and funds have been received related to the projects. Grants include (but are not limited to) infrastructure, building facade, bicycle and pedestrian planning. As a result of the planning, many towns have begun to partner with their counties for funding, services, and support.

Communities have indicated that jobs have been created and retained due to the projects. As part of the services provided, many members of the community engage with the planning process and the implementation projects. This leads to higher success within the community. Rural planning for economic growth is an ongoing process and assistance continues for communities who strive to implement their plans.

The following comment by a town manager from the survey results reflects the goals of the Rural Planning Center "the program is allowing our community to continue to thrive. They have resources that

through partnership and effort, help bring things to our community that increase the quality of life for our citizens and enhance opportunities for our visitors.”

- (6) Completion of strategic economic development plans, downtown revitalization project plans, implementation services, market studies, Geographical Information Systems (GIS) mapping, and assistance with development policies for local governments that can be measured for economic impact, including investment, business growth, and jobs as a result of the planning effort.

	North Central	Northeast	Northwest	Piedmont Triad	South Central	Southeast	Southwest	Western
Strategic Plans	7	2	5	7	8	3	4	2
Downtown Revitalizations Plans	1		1		1	1		
Implementation Services	2	2	9	6	4	4	1	
Market Studies	4	2	1	4	3	2	3	1
GIS Mapping	4	2	3	3	4	2	3	4
Assistance with Development Policies	2				1	1		

- (7) Existing business expansion activities, service requests, and number of contacts and inquiries.

<i>(This work is performed and data collected by Economic Development Partnership of NC)</i>	Existing Industry	Existing Industry
Prosperity Zone	Direct Account Interactions	Companies Supported
North Central	252	201
Northeast	175	118
Northwest	227	147
Piedmont-Triad	223	159
South Central	212	162
Southeast	113	77
Southwest	270	220
Western	216	142
Total Existing Industry	1688	1226

<i>(This work is performed and data collected by Economic Development Partnership of NC)</i>	International Trade	International Trade
Prosperity Zone	Requests for Assistance	Companies Supported
North Central	369	128
Northeast	80	38
Northwest	161	56
Piedmont-Triad	333	117
South Central	101	32
Southeast	164	38

Southwest	299	110
Western	139	48
Total International Trade	1645	567

Total Existing Industry and International Trade	3334	1793
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(8) New business location activities and number of contacts and inquiries.

<i>(This work is performed and data collected by Economic Development Partnership of NC)</i>	New Industry	New Industry
Prosperity Zone	Direct Account Interactions	Companies Supported
North Central	165	164
Northeast	84	82
Northwest	129	123
Piedmont – Triad	132	130
South Central	109	109
Southeast	37	37
Southwest	188	184
Western	111	105
Total Existing Industry	955	934

<i>(This work is performed and data collected by Economic Development Partnership of NC)</i>	International Trade	International Trade
Prosperity Zone	Requests for Assistance	Companies Supported
North Central	96	79
Northeast	24	18
Northwest	37	32
Piedmont – Triad	70	66
South Central	22	17
Southeast	26	16
Southwest	88	69
Western	38	27
Total International Trade	401	324

Total Existing Industry and International Trade	1356	1258
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