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Weekly highlights from the
North Carolina Department of Commerce



In SYNC: Commerce Secretary Sharon Allred Decker

Sharon Allred Decker was sworn in as the N.C. Secretary of Commerce on Jan. 5. She brings more than 30 years of experience in business and commerce to the position.

After graduating summa cum laude from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Decker spent more than 17 years with Duke Power Company, now Duke Energy. She began with the company in consumer services and moved rapidly through the ranks to become the youngest and first female vice president in Duke Power's history. Her work at Duke Power led to the creation of its 24-hour customer service center, an organization that still serves as a model for the industry.

Decker left Duke Power as Chief Communications Officer to become the founding president of The Lynnwood Foundation, which was created to restore the Duke Mansion in Charlotte as a conference center, and to begin the William States Lee



Historic downtown Salisbury will host this year's N.C. Main Street Conference

Annual Main Street conference approaches

The N.C. Department of Commerce's N.C. Main Street Center, Urban Development Division, will hold the 2013 North Carolina Main Street Conference, the downtown revitalization event for the state, in historic downtown Salisbury Jan.30-Feb. 1. The conference will feature fresh, new collaborative partnerships that are creating locally owned enterprises, cultural and entertainment venues, downtown housing, schools and a mix of activities.

It's no longer downtown business as usual. Innovative ideas are attracting people, interest and investment, making communities more resilient and better positioned to endure tough economic times and expand markets and opportunities. Learn how communities can create innovative change for a sustainable future at the Main Street Conference.

The conference will begin with noted destination marketing expert Roger Brooks, president and CEO of Destination Development International, identifying the ingredients for an outstanding downtown. The conference will end with a thought-provoking session on instilling creativity in downtown from Renee Piechocki, director of the Office of Public Art for the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council and Office of City Planning. The awards program on the evening of Jan. 31 will honor the outstanding achievements of the state's Main Street communities and will recognize those people who champion Main Street in their communities. For more

Leadership Institute. While at Lynnwood in 1998, she also served as the chair of the Charlotte Chamber and was named Charlotte Woman of the Year. She moved to Rutherfordton in 1999 to serve as president of the Doncaster division of Tanner Companies.

In 2004, she created and served as the CEO of the Tapestry Group, a non-profit that helps individuals lead healthy lives in body, mind and spirit. In addition to her work with Tapestry, Decker is wife to her husband, Bob, a mother of four, a lay pastor in the Presbyterian Church (USA) and a student at the Christopher White School of Divinity, completing her Master of Divinity Degree with a concentration in Spiritual Formation. She completed an internship last year as Director of Graduate Ministries for the Center for Christian Study in Charlottesville, Va., where she served as chaplain to students at the Darden School of Business and the University of Virginia School of Law. She remains a member of the Board of the Center for Christian Study. Decker has served on the boards of three Fortune 500 companies.

[Sharon Decker's wild ride takes latest turn](#) (*The Charlotte Observer*, Jan. 13)



N. C. Department of Commerce Office of Science and Technology Executive Director John Hardin

Hardin to speak at national meeting

N. C. Department of Commerce Office of Science and Technology Executive Director John Hardin has been invited by the chancellor of Vanderbilt University to participate in an upcoming panel discussion at the National Academies meeting on Jan. 16 at Vanderbilt in Nashville, Tenn. The discussion is titled "Revitalizing the Partnership: Role of States in Higher Education and Economic Development." Other state economic development leaders from Tennessee, Georgia, and Ohio will make up the panel. It is part of a larger meeting that is a follow-up to the National Academies' report on "[Research Universities and the Future of America: Ten Breakthrough Actions Vital to Our Nation's Prosperity and Security.](#)"

Requested by members of Congress, the report assessed the competitive position of America's research universities and took steps to determine what Congress, the federal government, state governments, the private sector and universities themselves can do to ensure America's research institutions maintain their excellence and promote the economic health of the nation.

information and to register, go to www.ncmainstreetcenter.com.

Asheville's Culinary Scene Featured in Food & Wine

Through the efforts of the N.C. Division of Tourism, Film & Sports Development, working in partnership with the Asheville Convention and Visitors Bureau, Asheville's culinary scene received coverage in the February 2013 edition of *Food & Wine* magazine.

The Division's public relations team worked in partnership with Food & Wine Magazine, which included the information in both print and online.

Food & Wine online, based in New York, N.Y., reaches 1,144,891 readers. The estimated value of the online coverage is \$10,590. As mentioned, this article also appeared in the February 2013 print issue, and we will share the total readership and estimated value of the print and online feature when the issue hits newsstands this month.

[Why food lovers are loving Asheville](#) (*Food & Wine*, February, 2013)



ABA attendees are greeted as they arrive for the opening ceremony at the Charlotte Convention Center

Tourism division, Charlotte showcase state as ABA brings tour operators to N.C.

For the second time in five years, Charlotte hosted the American Bus Association's Annual Marketplace, one of the premier industry events for group travel. More than 3,000 tourism industry professionals attended the trade show last week, with all receiving a healthy dose of memorable group travel experiences in Charlotte, the region and the state. Attendees enjoyed networking opportunities through more than 100,000 scheduled, face-to-face business appointments, evening events, dine-arounds, sightseeing tours, tradeshow exhibits and more. The N.C. Department of Commerce's Division of Tourism, Film and Sports

N.C. nano directory and nano map now available

The staff of the N.C. Board of Science and Technology, in collaboration with staff from the Center of Innovation in Nanobiotechnology, recently made available on the N.C. Department of Commerce's website a [directory of N.C. nanotechnology companies](#) and a [cross-referenced Google map of their locations](#). These resources, which are part of the Board's efforts to promote nanotechnology as a cross-cutting, enabling technology for multiple industries across the state, are in response to requests frequently received regarding the location of nanotech-focused research and development and commercial organizations in the state. Currently, North Carolina has at least 100 companies and 25 R&D and educational organizations working to maximize the benefits of nanotechnology.

The directory and map are continuously being updated. To add a nanotechnology company to the directory and map, please [contact the staff of the Board of Science and Technology](#).



Commerce will be promoting the state's life sciences industry at international events this spring

New marketing opportunities for N.C. life sciences companies in Brazil and Spain

The N.C. Department of Commerce's International Trade Division is currently recruiting North Carolina companies for two upcoming international events focused on the life sciences. [Bio-Europe 2013](#) will be held March 11-13 in Barcelona, Spain. More than 1,300 biotech-focused companies from 44 countries will join the Division at Bio-Europe for business-to-business meetings and more.

Following Bio-Europe, the state will sponsor a booth at [Hospitalar](#) in Sao Paulo, Brazil, May 21-24. For 20 years, Hospitalar has offered an international fair for products, equipment, services and technology for hospitals, laboratories, pharmacies, health clinics and medical offices. This event is known as the largest healthcare exhibition in Latin America. For more information on participating in these events, please contact Director of Global Commerce [John Loyack](#).

Development and Visit Charlotte were extremely excited to host a convention that plays such a vital role in the group travel industry. According to the ABA, motorcoach travel in North Carolina had a direct economic impact of \$1.1 billion and provided more than 18,000 jobs in 2012.

The Opening Ceremony featured the Division's Director of Tourism Marketing Wit Tuttell welcoming everyone back to North Carolina. Mike Butts, executive director of Visit Charlotte, told the delegates of the exciting events planned throughout Charlotte for the week and Mike Helton, president of NASCAR, revved up ABA attendees with a presentation touting the bright future of the sport and its impact on ABA businesses.

The Division was proud to be the title sponsor for the Marketplace's first evening event at Discovery Place. The event called "The Big Sh'Bang" encouraged guests to experience the wonders of the state and see Discovery Place's \$31.6 million full venue facelift. Monday's evening event, "Rev It Up at the NASCAR Hall of Fame," illustrated the past, present and future legacy that makes the sport one of the nation's most popular. Tuesday evening, the Division and 36 of its partners hosted 72 tour operators for an event at one of Charlotte's trendiest restaurants, Mez. The evening provided a time for destination marketing organizations, hotels and attractions to have some one-on-one networking time with many influential U.S. and Canadian tour operators.

The Division took 48 appointments with tour operators during the week, promoting group travel throughout the state. And with more than 70 other North Carolina appointment-taking partners, tourism in the state was heavily promoted to all operators. Most of its constituents and the Division met early Tuesday morning to share leads and discuss market trends. The Division will have these qualified leads available in the coming weeks.

N.C. in the News

This Week's Highlights

- [Local firm to create 25 new jobs in Wilmington](#) (*Greater Wilmington Business Journal*, Jan. 11)
- [Areva expands operations in the Carolinas](#) (*Charlotte Business Journal*, Jan. 11)
- [Solar farms leading to jobs](#) (*Times-News - Burlington*, Jan. 10)
- [Oman's U.S. ambassador stresses trade deals at Wilmington meeting](#) (*StarNews - Wilmington*, Jan. 10)
- [SLIDESHOW: 20 North Carolina companies at the CES in Las Vegas](#) (*Triangle Business Journal*, Jan. 9)
- [County signs off on economic plan](#) (*Rockingham Now*, Jan. 9)



Golf is one of the popular activities for seniors in the Southern Pines-Pinehurst area.

Biz Journals' On Numbers: Southern Pines-Pinehurst among top Southern retirement rankings

On Numbers, a *Business Journals* exclusive, has developed a [six-part formula](#) to gauge the relative popularity of 233 Southern metropolitan and micropolitan areas among persons who are 65 or older. While the top 13 areas in the Southern states are located in Florida, No. 14 is Southern Pines-Pinehurst. On Numbers' formula is designed to identify those markets that have sizable and rapidly growing populations of senior citizens. Other areas that made the Top 100 include Asheville (No. 28), Wilmington (No. 33), Morehead City (No. 41), Elizabeth City (No. 58), Lincolnton (No. 62), Forest City (No. 73), Mount Airy (No. 81), and New Bern (No. 89). A complete list of the Southern rankings can be found [here](#).

- [Randolph approves using N.C. grant for megasite development](#) (*The Business Journal of the Greater Triad*, Jan. 8)
- [Boeing deal means GE has yet another engine order](#) (*StarNews* - Wilmington, Jan. 7)
- [Gaston College to expand with Advanced Manufacturing Center](#) (*News 14 Carolina*, Jan. 7)
- [Biotech company to renovate, hire for Leland plant](#) (*Port City Daily* - Wilmington, Jan. 7)

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