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Weekly highlights from the  
North Carolina Department of Commerce



## Aircraft maintenance company to add 25 jobs in Forsyth County

Governor Bev Perdue on Jan. 19 announced that Piedmont Propulsion Systems LLC, a leader in military, regional airline and general aviation turboprop overhaul and repair, will expand in Forsyth County. The company plans to create 25 jobs and invest more than \$1.6 million during the next three years in Winston-Salem. The project was made possible in part by a \$50,000 grant from the [One North Carolina Fund](#). The N.C. Department of Commerce's [Jan Critz](#) was the developer on this project.

"My top priority is creating jobs," Perdue said. "We have been able to aggressively grow the aerospace sector in the Triad and North Carolina because of our history of investing in education and building a highly skilled workforce. These investments must continue, along with our investments in infrastructure and transportation that have created our top-ranked business climate."

Piedmont Propulsion Systems was founded in 1948 under Piedmont Airlines and is currently owned by First Aviation Services Inc. The company repairs and overhauls composite and metal blades, actuators, hubs, governors and control units for major propeller manufacturers. Piedmont Propulsion Systems currently employs 31 full-time and 4 part-time employees at its facilities in Winston-Salem. As part of the project, the company will renovate and move into space at the Smith-Reynolds Airport. [Read more.](#)



## Chemical manufacturer to create 19 jobs in Caldwell County

Governor Bev Perdue on Jan. 20 announced that Lubrimetal Corporation, a member of the Lubrimetal family of companies, will locate a new facility in Caldwell County. The company plans to create 19 jobs and invest \$1.9 million over the next three years in Granite Falls. The project was made possible in part by a \$38,000 grant from the [One North Carolina Fund](#). The N.C. Department of Commerce's [Joe Holbrook](#) was the developer on this project.

"My top priority is creating jobs," Gov. Perdue said. "Our history of investing in education and workforce and job training programs has created a strong business climate where manufacturers can thrive in a global market. We must get back to supporting these programs so that more companies like Lubrimetal will move to or expand in North Carolina." [Read more.](#)



## Emerging Issues Forum to focus on Gen Z

The 27th Annual Emerging Issues Forum,

## Lincolnton Furniture to join First Lady during State of the Union

A North Carolina furniture maker who attended a recent White House economic gathering will be a guest of the first lady at tonight's State of the Union address.

The White House says Bruce Cochrane's story of opening [Lincolnton Furniture](#) and bringing manufacturing jobs back to a region devastated by outsourcing highlights the challenges that Americans can overcome.

[N.C. furniture maker to join first lady tonight](#) (*Charlotte Observer*, Jan. 24)

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## Yarn manufacturer to create 90 jobs in Beaufort County

Governor Bev Perdue on Jan. 18 announced that Spinrite Services LLC, a manufacturer of craft yarns, will locate a facility in Beaufort County. The company plans to create 90 jobs and invest \$9.1 million over the next three years in Washington. The project was made possible in part by a \$180,000 grant from the [One North Carolina Fund](#). The N.C. Department of Commerce's [Donna Phillips](#) was the developer on this project.

"Creating jobs is my top priority," Perdue said. "Spinrite's expansion is the result of our top-ranked education and workforce training programs and highlights why we need to fund them. Those programs are an essential ingredient in our nationally acclaimed business climate that attracts companies like Spinrite and enables them to thrive." [Read more.](#)

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## Raleigh named healthiest city for women

The South might be notorious for rates of obesity and associated illnesses when compared to the rest of the U.S. However, North Carolina is pushing back on that reputation and setting an example not only for the South, but the entire nation. According to a report from Reuters, Women's Health magazine rated Raleigh the healthiest city in America for women.

Raleigh women prioritize prevention and are pro-active when it comes to their health, according to the research, which combined survey information with data from various sources. Their attitude toward health aligned with the data, which revealed high life expectancy rates among Raleigh women.

scheduled for Feb. 6-7 at the Raleigh Convention Center, will focus on Gen Z. According to the Institute for Emerging Issues, which conducts the forum, Gen Z is "the most highly connected, globally aware and digitally savvy group in our history. While they may be named for the last letter of the alphabet, they represent the future of North Carolina. They are revolutionizing the workplace, the marketplace and our communities."

Forum speakers include Governor Bev Perdue, *Fast Company* Editor and Managing Director Robert Safian and U.S. Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus.

N.C. Department of Commerce Secretary Keith Crisco speaks about Gen Z's impact on North Carolina's economic development in a video produced by the Institute for Emerging Issues. [See the video.](#) [Learn more.](#)

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*Installation of 900 LED street lights in Asheville's River District and Kenilworth began in May, 2011. (Photo courtesy the City of Asheville Blog)*

## Asheville installing LED street lights from Cree

The city of Asheville is in the second stage of installing 3,643 LED street lights made by Durham-based Cree.

The installation is projected to create annual savings in energy and maintenance costs of \$260,000, Cree reported.

Cree acquired the LEDway street lights being installed by Asheville last year when it purchased Wisconsin-based Ruud Lighting for \$525 million. [Read more about the project](#) on the City of Asheville Blog.

[Asheville project gives boost to Cree](#) (*The News & Observer* - Raleigh, Jan. 24)

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[Read more.](#)



## Durham named Most Tolerant City

Durham has been named America's Most Tolerant City, besting Honolulu and San Francisco, by The Daily Beast. Raleigh was also on the list at No. 18. [Learn more.](#)

## ***Bike Magazine*** features locations in Transylvania County

The January/February issue of *Bike Magazine* features several locations around Transylvania County, calling the county "America's Best Kept Secret." In addition to the cover, the magazine's annual gear guide, dubbed "[The Bible of Bike Tests](#)," found ideal equipment testing in Transylvania County, which has more than 100,000 acres of publicly owned forest land, more than 300 miles of single-track trails and an additional 700 miles of multi-use trails, such as fire roads and Forest Service roads.

That deeply ingrained biking culture was a magnet for *Bike Magazine*, editor and writer Vernon Felton said. He said the magazine has known about natural resource-rich Western North Carolina for the past decade. "The bulk of the riding is really in Brevard. This was an opportunity to talk about the area that hasn't been discovered. To the outside observer, mountain biking is just mountain biking, but to us, it's split into different types of riding," Felton said. "Transylvania County has everything – relatively smooth trails for people who want to ride with less risk of going over the handlebars, to more technical riding. There is a wide range of stuff. It's kind of a rarity. We were also looking at an area with a supportive community for cyclists." *Bike Magazine* has a circulation of about 45,000 and is considered one of the top mountain biking magazines in the country. It picks a different destination for its gear-testing issue each year.

## Four N.C. businesses win Good Food Awards



## N.C. expects positive effects from U.S. tourism initiatives

The N.C. Department of Commerce's Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development applauded Thursday's initiatives by President Barack Obama to boost international tourism.

"We've been actively positioning North Carolina as a preferred international travel destination for nearly 20 years," said N.C. Commerce Secretary Keith Crisco. "Attracting international visitors to North Carolina is very important because they tend to stay longer and spend more of their money at North Carolina businesses."

The president's initiatives, which include national parks promotion, increased tourist visa processing, and adding Charlotte Douglas International Airport and three others to the Global Entry program, are designed to bolster employment, which is at the heart of North Carolina's tourism marketing activity.

"Today's announcement marks a turning point for our industry and provides us with unparalleled opportunity to work toward a national travel and tourism strategy," said Assistant Secretary of Tourism, Marketing and Global Branding Lynn Minges. Minges said. "These efforts to make it easier for international visitors to get here will have a positive impact on North Carolina's economy because their spending supports jobs and adds to tax revenues in the state."

According to the U.S. Travel Association, international tourism represents a significant part of North Carolina's \$17 billion tourism industry:

- International travelers spend \$590 million a year in North Carolina.
- That total accounts for 7,500 jobs in the state.
- The spending generates \$98 million in federal, state and local tax revenue.

Elements of the new initiative carry special resonance for North Carolina. The Blue Ridge Parkway, which routes travelers across 250 miles of scenery in the western part of the state, is the most visited section of the U.S. National Park System, and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park is the most visited

Four North Carolina artisan food small businesses have won [Good Food Awards](#) for 2012. Escazu Chocolates in Raleigh was recognized in the Chocolate category, Counter Culture Coffee, headquartered in Durham, for its Buna Ababa – Haru in the Coffee category, Miss Jenny's Pickles in Kernersville for its Habanero Bread and Butter Pickles in the Pickles category, and Farmer's Daughter Brand in Hillsborough for its Strawberry Honeysuckle Jam in the Preserves category. The Good Food Awards were created through a collaboration of food producers, farmers, food journalists and independent grocers organized by Seedling Projects. This team has nominated judges from across the country. The Good Food Awards recognize that truly good food – the kind that brings people together and builds strong, healthy communities -- contains all of these ingredients in addition to responsible food production and superior taste.

Also, Raleigh is in the running for *Southern Living's* [The South's Tastiest Towns](#). Raleigh is among the ten finalists with the contest noting, "With an obsessively local food scene and forward-thinking chefs, Raleigh is rich in homegrown ingredients -- and attitude -- with a proud sense of place." Voting is open through Jan. 31. The winner will be announced in *Southern Living's* April issue.

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## Ambulance company moving to Wilmington

A major ambulance company is moving its corporate headquarters to Wilmington, signing a multiyear lease for space in the Cotton Exchange.

First Med Inc. operates in eight states and has 2,400 employees, CEO Michael Franks said Jan. 17.

[Ambulance company moving to Wilmington](#) (*The Star-News* - Wilmington, Jan. 17)

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## CIA investment arm pours more money into solar tech firm Semprius

Semprius has secured another \$3 million in financing, including more funding from the investment arm of the Central Intelligence Agency.

The Durham-based company, which focuses on modules utilized in solar power panels, also named a Duke Energy executive to its board of directors.

Among the investors in the latest funding is a new backer for Semprius - Morgan Creek Capital Management.

Other participants were In-Q-Tel, the CIA group that has already helped fund Semprius' development, and Illinois Emerging Technologies Fund.

[CIA investment arm pours more money into solar tech firm Semprius](#) (WRALtechwire, Jan. 13)

national park. Other properties in the National Park System include the Cape Hatteras and Cape Lookout national seashores. [Read more.](#)



## Charlotte to be on display during Democratic National Convention

This year's Democratic National Convention will shrink from four days to three, and [include public events at the Charlotte area's two largest venues](#) -- Bank of America Stadium and Charlotte Motor Speedway. In lieu of the convention opening on Monday, Sept. 3 -- Labor Day -- organizers plan to hold an event at the speedway to showcase not only the Charlotte region but the South. Convention CEO Steve Kerrigan said the speedway event will be dedicated to "families and the community hosting the convention."

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## N.C. in the News

This Week's Highlights

- [Durham scientists study plants for biofuel production](#) (*The News & Observer* - Raleigh, Jan. 23)
- [State approves new STEM teacher certification program](#) (WRALtechwire, Jan. 23)
- [Lenovo to launch teacher mobile app program](#) (WRALtechwire, Jan. 23)
- [Asheville key card maker locks up market](#) (*The Citizen-Times* - Asheville, Jan. 20)
- [Southwest Airlines will fly to Charlotte](#) (*The Charlotte Observer*, Jan. 20)
- [Saxapahaw, N.C., middle of somewhere, becomes a draw](#) (*The New York Times*, Jan. 20)

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