

syncTM Weekly highlights from the North Carolina Department of Commerce

Surface Application Manufacturer to Create 30 Jobs in McDowell County

Governor Pat McCrory and N.C. Commerce Secretary Sharon Decker announced March 19 that XO.STEEL, LLC is locating its North Carolina manufacturing operations in McDowell County. The company plans to create 30 new jobs and invest \$350,000 over the next three years in Old Fort. [Martyn Johnson](#) served as the developer on the project for the N.C. Department of Commerce.

"We've created an atmosphere of job creation, growth and investment for innovative companies," said Governor McCrory. "This new steel coatings business will provide job opportunities to keep talented workers in McDowell County."

XO.STEEL, LLC is being established to produce an advanced surface application which prevents corrosion and protects mild steel. Raw material will be processed, manufactured, palletized and shipped to end users globally. Operations will begin in the second quarter of 2014.

"In yet another positive sign in our state's economic and job growth, I'm pleased XO.STEEL is committed to helping North Carolina grow and create quality jobs," said Secretary Decker. "After months of hard work and collaboration, XO.STEEL has joined the long list of companies that recognize our state's economic and business climate is improving."

XO.STEEL, LLC has initial plans to construct an 8,000 square foot manufacturing facility in rural McDowell County, with expansion options to ultimately increase the facility to more than 24,000 square feet.

Salaries will vary by job function, but the average annual wage for the new jobs will be \$37,067 plus benefits. The McDowell County average annual wage is \$30,576.

"In determining a location for our manufacturing facility, the adjacency to I-40 and a skilled and a ready-to-work labor force made Old Fort ideal. Our products will be exported worldwide, and while locating the plant at a large port would have made better sense logistically, the leadership teams from McDowell County Economic Foundation, Advantage West and N.C. Department of Commerce leadership teams worked hard to demonstrate the significant advantages of a well-trained and committed workforce right here at home," said John McEntire, plant supervisor and a fourth-generation



Secretary Decker and Firestone Division President Jim Pridgen

Secretary Decker Tours Firestone Facility in Kings Mountain

N.C. Commerce Secretary Sharon Decker visited Firestone Fibers and Textiles Company's production facility in Kings Mountain March 17. The tour was part of the Secretary's ongoing engagement program with business leaders across the state.

This facility, led by Jim Pridgen, President and Site Executive, is a "Steward" in the Department of Environmental and Natural Resources' (DENR) Environmental Stewardship Initiative (ESI). The ESI is a three-tiered voluntary program designed to encourage, motivate, and support member organizations that have made a commitment to improve environmental performance. Environmental "Stewards" have achieved the highest level of the program and have agreed to mentor those at the lower levels (which are "Rising Steward" and "Partner"). These organizations exemplify how profits and environmental responsibility are not mutually exclusive, but are strategies to thrive for on the local, state, and global stages.

Year-to-date Metrics

Below are year-to-date metrics tracked by the N.C. Department of Commerce's Division of Business and Industry Development 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

McDowell County native.

The project was made possible in part by a performance-based grant from the One North Carolina Fund of up to \$90,000. The One NC Fund provides financial assistance, through local governments, to attract business projects that will stimulate economic activity and create new jobs in the state. Companies receive no money up front and must meet job creation and investment performance standards to qualify for grant funds. These grants also require and are contingent upon local matches.

"Since coming to Raleigh, my focus has been creating jobs and promoting economic development," said Representative Josh Dobson. "The new policies being promoted by Governor McCrory and Secretary Decker have led to a tremendous resurgence in manufacturing and growth across our region."

"My office will continue to work with Governor McCrory and Secretary Decker to promote policies that enhance North Carolina's workforce and lead to increased employment opportunities," said Senator Ralph Hise.

Partners that helped with this project include: the N.C. Department of Commerce, N.C. Community Colleges, McDowell Technical Community College, McDowell County and The McDowell Economic Development Association, Inc.

Southern Business & Development Ranks Several N.C. Locations Highly

A prominent economic development industry trade magazine recently ranked several North Carolina locations with top honors.

Southern Business & Development magazine's Top 10's issue named Rocky Mount and Rowan County to its "Ten Exceptional Markets to Locate Your Reshored Traditional Industry" list.

The city of Monroe and Gaston County ranked in a list of top 10 "Low Cost Manufacturing Locations" near major Southern airports. Monroe also ranked on a list outlining outstanding supplier sites for Boeing.

The Winter 2014 issue is available online. [Read more.](#)

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 - March. 24, 2014

New projects assigned:	82
Projects announced:	25
Jobs announced:	1,216
Capital investment announced:	\$108M
Industry visits by existing industry staff:	170
Calls to Business Link N.C.:	4,635

N.C. in the News

This Week's Highlights

- [Charlotte named the top U.S. city for high pay, low expenses](#) (*Charlotte Business Journal* - March 24)
- [Lenovo plant in Whitsett scores SECU contract for 8,000 PCs](#) (*Business Journal of the Greater Triad*- March 24)
- [McCrory envisions bright future for Lenovo](#) (*Triangle Business Journal*- March 21)
- [Cary Chamber hires economic development director to succeed Sandy Jordan](#) (*Triangle Business Journal*- March 19)

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