

sync[®] NEWS & OPPORTUNITIES FROM N.C. COMMERCE



(L-R) Mike Butts, Chair, N.C. Travel & Tourism Board; Beth Gargan, Deputy Secretary of Communications & External Affairs, N.C. Commerce; Mary Baggett Martin, Owner, Blockade Runner Beach Resort; and Wit Tuttle, Executive Director of VisitNC.

Annual State Tourism Conference Awards Industry Leaders, Offers Knowledge and Networking

Leaders from tourism-oriented businesses and community organizations have gathered in Wilmington this week for the [Visit North Carolina 365 Conference](#), the state's premier conference for travel and tourism professionals. The conference opened last Sunday and draws to a close today (April 2).

During the conference, VisitNC honored four North Carolina tourism leaders, including recipients for an award just introduced by the program, the new Esse Quam Videri Award.

Both **Stephen Hill of Mother Earth Brewing** and **Vivian Howard of Chef & the Farmer** were honored with the new award, named for their leadership in developing Kinston as a destination for leisure travel. Hill, a Kinston native, along with son-in-law Trent Mooring opened a craft brewery in 2009 and called it Mother Earth to reflect their commitment to environmental sustainability. Howard, a farmer's daughter who grew up in the Deep Run community, is known by food lovers nationwide for the PBS series "A Chef's Life" (2013-18).

Mary Baggett Martin of the Blockade Runner in Wrightsville



N.C. Commerce Chief of Staff George Sherrill in Wilson earlier today at Fresenius Kabi.

Pharma Manufacturer Fresenius Kabi Celebrates 'Topping' Milestone for Wilson Facility

North Carolina Commerce's Chief of Staff **George Sherrill** traveled to Wilson earlier today to offer congratulations and participate in a ceremony marking a construction milestone for an important company in the state's biotechnology and life sciences industry cluster.

Fresenius Kabi, a global health care company that specializes in medicines and technologies for infusion, transfusion and clinical nutrition, is expanding its manufacturing operations in Wilson County. Governor Roy Cooper announced the expansion in November, 2017. The project is bringing hundreds of new jobs and more than \$100 million in investment to Wilson.

A 'topping off' ceremony is a traditional builders' rite typically held when the last beam (or its equivalent) is placed atop a structure during its construction. Today's ceremony brought together company executives and state and local officials, umbrellas in hand, to celebrate this important economic development milestone.

Beach and the **Fussell Family of Rose Hill-based Duplin Winery** were honored as new members of the Winners Circle, an annual award for significant and continuing contributions to the tourism industry. Martin, a longtime advocate on environmental issues, has extended her leadership beyond Blockade Runner by serving on the N.C. Travel & Tourism Board, the Southeast Tourism Society board, the N.C. League of Conservation Voters board and other organizations. Duplin Winery, which produced its first 20 cases of muscadine wine in 1975, is in its third generation of ownership by the Fussell family. Under the leadership of **Dave Fussell, president and CEO**, and **Jonathan Fussell, head of retail operations**, production has grown to 450,000 cases a year and visitation to 150,000.

North Carolina remains the sixth most-visited state with 46 million people visiting in 2017. Tourism generated record visitor spending of \$23.97 billion, or \$66 million per day. Daily contributions to state and local tax coffers averaged \$5.4 million. The tourism industry-supported employment topped 225,000 jobs to set another record for the state.

[Read the original press release.](#)



Secretary Copeland (left) helps Governor Cooper cut the ribbon in Durham March 22.

Governor Cooper, Secretary Copeland Celebrate Cutting-Edge Gene Therapy Company bluebird bio

bluebird bio, a clinical-stage gene therapy company, hosted **Governor Roy Cooper** and **Secretary of Commerce Anthony M. Copeland** for a ribbon-cutting ceremony at their growing facility in Research Triangle Park. The event was held March 22.

"North Carolina is proud to bring bluebird bio's cutting-edge work to Durham," said **Governor Cooper**. "bluebird is developing treatments for devastating diseases that could change the course of medicine. And, with the Triangle's highly-skilled workforce, it will continue to be a leader in the biotech field."

In November 2017, bluebird bio acquired a 125,000 square-foot manufacturing facility in Durham. A \$63 million investment is renovating the former Argos facility into two stories of lab, manufacturing, and office space, with 40,000 square-feet kept open for future expansion. Construction is now complete, and the site will produce clinical and commercial supply of lentiviral



Annie Izod.

Izod Named as NCWorks Commission Executive Director

Annie Izod has been appointed Executive Director of the NCWorks Commission. Izod, a member of the NCWorks Commission staff since 2016, has served in the role in an interim capacity for the past few months.

Housed within the North Carolina Department of Commerce, the Commission recommends policies and strategies that enable the state's workforce and businesses to compete in the global economy. The Commission serves the role as the state's Workforce Development Board, as defined under the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

Izod brings more than 10 years of experience in public policy analysis, program evaluation, and qualitative and quantitative research to her new role, gained by previous employment

vector, which is a critical component of the company's gene and cell therapies.

When announcing the North Carolina site, bluebird emphasized the Triangle's talent pool. Representatives from bluebird bio, Durham Technical Community College, and the N.C. Community College System have designed a comprehensive support package that includes assistance in the recruitment and screening of potential employees, as well as the development and delivery of a training plan to ensure success of the company and the workforce.



Travel counselors visit Replacements, Ltd. during the Southeast Travel Counselors Alliance conference.

Southeastern Travel Counselors Exchange Information at Greensboro Conference

Welcome Center directors, managers, and travel counselors from eight states in the Southeast U.S. met for an annual conference held in Greensboro this week.

N.C.Commerce and its Visitor Services unit hosted the Southeast Travel Counselors Alliance, which works to keep open lines of communications between the states' Welcome Centers, with the goal of facilitating smooth operations during emergencies and promoting cooperation and sharing information when possible.

Kaya Littleturtle, Cultural Coordinator of the Lumbee Tribe, welcomed the attendees to North Carolina offering the words of thankfulness and singing a song of honor. **Commerce's Visitor Services Program Manager Wally Wazan** offered an overview of North Carolina's Welcome Center program, **VisitNC's Wit Tuttell** showcased the state's "Firsts That Last" marketing campaign and **Commerce's Karen Lee** led a session on communications.

The gathering was sponsored by the Greensboro CVB, Quaintance-Weaver, and Replacements Ltd. The three-day meeting included a behind-the-scenes tour of the Proximity, the group's host hotel, to showcase its sustainable initiatives, along with visits to Replacements Ltd., the International Civil Rights Center & Museum and the Guilford Native American Art Gallery.

National Spotlight Shines on Capital Area Workforce Development Board, Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce

The National Association of Workforce Boards awarded its

with the federal government and two research universities. She is a Ph.D. candidate in Public Administration at N.C. State University, where she has taught Political Science courses.

More information on the NCWorks Commission can be found at the nccommerce.com website.

On Our Radar

- [Co-branding sought between PTI megasite, Carolina Core](#) (*Winston-Salem Journal* - March 28)
- [Lead for North Carolina receives \\$500,000 grant](#) (*Daily Tar Heel* - Chapel Hill - March 27)
- ['Cleantech Corridor' from Triangle to Charlotte taking steps toward reality](#) (*WRAL TechWire* - March 19)
- [Upcoming Event: Southeast Region Federal and Defense Textile Summit \(April 23-24, 2019\)](#) (*North Carolina Military Business Center*)

N.C. in the News

- [Flo Boosted Hotel Industry. But Demand Was Higher Before Storm. Experts Say](#) (*WilmingtonBiz.com* - April 1)
- [Thomasville to receive expertise on downtown improvements](#) (*The Dispatch* - Davidson County - March 27)
- [Manufacturer picks Triangle for HQ: CEO predicts 500 jobs](#) (*Triangle Business Journal* - March 26)
- [Pollockville plots long road to hurricane recovery](#) (*Kinston.com* - March 22)
- [Thermo Fisher Scientific Expands Pharma Division in Greenville, North Carolina](#) (*Area Development* - March 20)
- [Downtown Lenoir wins state awards](#) (*Hickory Daily Record* - March 20)
- [Company to Create New Jobs. Invest more than \\$1M in Stanly](#) (*Stanly News & Press* - March 19)
- [Wadesboro chosen for Downtown Strong initiative](#) (*Anson Record* - March 19)

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.](#)

prestigious Laurie Moran Partnership Award to the Capital Area Workforce Development Board and the Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce last week. The award was announced in Washington DC on March 24.

"I am really proud to share this award with the Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce," said **Pat Sturdivant, Executive Director of the Capital Area Workforce Development Board**. "As partners, we understand that an important part of economic development is ensuring a skilled workforce can support business and economic growth. Receiving the Laurie Moran Award signifies that we are doing it right."

The Laurie Moran Partnership Award is given jointly to a workforce development board and chamber of commerce that have formed a significant partnership to advance the workforce and economic development of their local region. The award is named in honor of Laurie Moran, who served in Danville, Virginia on a local workforce board and was President of the Danville Pittsylvania County Chamber of Commerce from 2002 until her passing. The National Association of Workforce Boards established the award to honor workforce boards and chambers of commerce that build bridges similar to the one Moran built in her community, jointly promoting the importance of interdependence of workforce and economic development.

"It is an honor to be recognized with the Laurie Moran Partnership Award," said **Adrienne Cole, president and CEO of the Raleigh Chamber**. "We are privileged to partner with the Capital Area Workforce Development Board. Their expertise and unwavering collaboration is vital to developing our world-class employment base."

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