

# sync<sup>®</sup> NEWS & OPPORTUNITIES FROM N.C. COMMERCE

## WEITRON

### Refrigerant Packaging Company Will Invest \$12.8 Million in Martin County

Weitron, Inc., a packager and distributor of refrigerant gases, has selected Martin County for a new production facility, creating 31 jobs, **Governor Roy Cooper** announced April 19. The company plans to invest \$12.8 million in a plant in Everetts.

"Companies far and wide know that rural North Carolina provides great business locations," **Governor Cooper** said. "There's no better endorsement of North Carolina's many advantages than a growing business like Weitron deciding to invest in our state and our people."

Weitron is a worldwide supplier of refrigerant for a number of industries, including automotive, residential and commercial air conditioning applications. The company, headquartered in Newark, Delaware is working to meet growing demand for new refrigerant formulas with less environmental impact than legacy options.

"From the state's workforce training programs to our superior transportation infrastructure, North Carolina offers companies everything they need to succeed," said **North Carolina Commerce Secretary Anthony M. Copeland**. N.C. Commerce and the Economic Development Partnership of N.C. were instrumental in supporting the company's investment decision.

While compensation will vary by position, average salaries for the new jobs will be \$32,839, above the current average annual wage in Martin County of \$28,287.

"Weitron considered several options," said **Deborah Dayton, President of Weitron**. "North Carolina fit all of our strategic goals. Its workforce will allow us to provide quality products and we can get products to our customers in a timely manner



*Volunteers from Commerce's Labor & Economic Analysis team helped rebuild and clean computers for the Kramden Institute.*

### Commerce employees pitch in during National Volunteer Week

From bagging groceries for seniors and rebuilding computers for students and families to gathering personal care items for members of the military, N.C. Commerce employees showed their dedication to service during National Volunteer Week, April 23-29.

Employees in Raleigh and across the state reported spending more than 400 hours performing community service at 40 different non-profits and charitable organizations. Some divisions organized group activities and others volunteered individually.



*The task of sorting potatoes fell to volunteers from Commerce's Workforce Solutions team at the Food Bank of North Carolina.*

In addition to local churches, schools, museums, animal shelters, nursing homes and other organizations from Wilkes County to Pitt County, some of the statewide groups that benefitted from Commerce employees' time included:

- Food Bank of North Carolina
- USO of North Carolina
- Inter-Faith Food Shuttle
- Habitat for Humanity

given the location and transportation resources" **Ryan Carpenter, VP of Operations**, added, "It is a high priority for us to provide the next generation of environmentally friendly refrigerants. We will have this facility up and running shortly."

A performance-based grant of \$90,000 from the One North Carolina Fund will help facilitate Weitron's expansion in Martin County.

In addition to [North Carolina Commerce](#) and the [Economic Development Partnership of N.C.](#), other key partners in the project include the [North Carolina General Assembly](#), the [North Carolina Community College System](#), [N.C. Department of Transportation](#), the [Golden Leaf Foundation](#), the [North Carolina Railroad](#), [CSX Corporation](#), [NCEast Alliance](#), [Edgecombe Martin Electric Membership Corporation](#), the [Martin County Committee of 100](#), [Martin County](#), and the [Martin County Economic Development Corporation](#).

[Read more.](#)

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## Rural Communities Will Receive \$10.6 Million to Support Economic Growth

The North Carolina Rural Infrastructure Authority (RIA) approved 22 grant requests on April 20, totaling \$10,637,897. The requests include commitments to create a total of 252 new jobs. An additional 510 new jobs associated with these grants had been previously announced.

"Modern infrastructure is a key component for attracting business," said **N.C. Secretary of Commerce Anthony M. Copeland**. "These grants will help counties and towns meet the needs of business by upgrading water and sewer systems, buildings, and industrial access points all across the state."

In the latest round of grants, the RIA approved two grants from the state's Industrial Development Fund - Utility Account program in Shelby and Henderson.

The RIA approved one request from Martin County under the state's Economic Infrastructure program.

Grants under the state's federally-funded Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) - Economic Development program were made to the towns, cities, and communities of Valdese, Shelby, Edgecombe County, Selma, Robersonville and Martin County.

Under the state's Building Reuse program, the RIA approved 13 grants in locations statewide.

In addition to reviewing and approving funding requests, the N.C. Rural Infrastructure Authority formulates policies and priorities for grant and loan programs administered by N.C. Commerce's Rural Economic Development team. Its 15 voting members are appointed by the Governor, Speaker of the House and Senate President Pro Tem. The North Carolina Secretary of Commerce serves as a non-voting member of the Authority.

Details on each of the RIA awarded projects is [available online](#).

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Jobs for Life

- Special Olympics

"Every North Carolinian can play a role in improving our communities and our state," **Gov. Roy Cooper** said in declaring National Volunteer Week in North Carolina. "From helping victims of disasters like Hurricane Matthew and last year's wildfires recover to providing meals for the hungry, volunteerism can make a difference at every level."



*In this composite photo, meet North Carolina's International Trade Representatives: from left to right, top row - Sumio Shibata (Japan); second row - Annabel Rong (China), Nancy Ward (Canada), Paul Sinclair (Europe); third row - Laura Camberos (Mexico), and William Chu (Hong Kong). The original photo was taken in Asheville on April 21.*

## International Trade Team Holds Annual Road Show

North Carolina's International Trade representatives wrapped up the 2017 Global Road show earlier this month. The Road Show, a series of seminars designed to help North Carolina businesses learn more about exporting, brought representatives from the state's six foreign offices to the state. In one-on-one consultations with North Carolina companies, the trade experts offered advice and plans to help increase exports of each company's products and services.

The week included more than 160 appointments as well as 'lunch and networking' sessions in Wilmington, Raleigh, Kannapolis and Asheville. The lunchtime presentations and Q&A's included insight on international market opportunities as well as inspiring stories from North Carolina firms that



Governor Cooper with Ben Wright, General Manager of Company Shops Market in Burlington.

## Governor Cooper Celebrates Small Business Week

In celebration of National Small Business Week (April 30-May 6), **Governor Roy Cooper** visited the Company Shops Market in Burlington, a food co-op owned by local members. The Company Shops Market received a N.C. Main Street Solutions Fund Grant of \$299,000 in the 2009-2010 program year. The grant enabled the project to renovate an old A&P grocery store, and raise private funds from various corporate and private donors.

The venture now boasts 3,500 members, 13-full time and 16 part-time employees.

Numerous local farmers and co-op members attended the May 1 event and provided **Governor Cooper** with samples of local produce and a tour of the market. He talked with co-op **General Manager Ben Wright** about the project's success and what it's done for investment and growth of other businesses in downtown Burlington, including a coffee shop, new restaurants and a craft brewery.

"We know that small businesses are the backbone of the economy," Cooper said. He talked about the importance of the NC Main Street Solutions Fund, which is included in his budget proposal.

Small business firms make up nearly 98 percent of North Carolina's business community and employ over 1.5 million people - 44.8% of the state's private sector workforce.

are finding great success overseas.

The representatives from China, Hong Kong, Japan, Mexico and Europe also attended the High Point Furniture Market, where they interacted with overseas buyers and shared country-specific information on targeted foreign markets.

Last year, North Carolina companies exported most than \$30 billion worth of goods and services around the world. More companies are growing jobs in the state due to increased international sales.



## Downtown Newton Selected to Become Crowdfunding Demonstration Site

Newton, a North Carolina Main Street Community, has been selected to become a Demonstration Site for a new, locally focused crowdfunding platform as part of a research project funded by the United States Department of Agriculture. Downtown Newton is one of only four communities nationally to be chosen to launch the crowdfunding platform and demonstrate its effectiveness as an economic development tool.

"We are very excited to be one of only a few communities selected nationwide to have access to this program," said **Shannon Johnson, the Downtown Newton Development Association's (DNDA) Main Street Program manager**. "The DNDA expects the projects that are funded to really have an impact on some of our downtown businesses. Ultimately, the DNDA would like to utilize this type of funding as a catalyst to more significant financial options for downtown business growth."

[Read more.](#)



(L-R, inset) Commerce Deputy Secretary Will Miller and JLUS Project Manager Will Best visit Seymour Johnson AFB and one of the F-15 Strike Eagles stationed at the base.

## **\$2 Million Grant to Help Businesses Impacted by Defense Cuts**

North Carolina has won a grant worth nearly \$2 million from the U.S. Department of Defense to help North Carolina businesses and communities impacted by reductions in defense spending. N.C. Military and Veterans Affairs Secretary Larry Hall made the announcement April 12.

North Carolina will use the grant to devise a plan to lessen the impacts of defense cuts related to the 2011 Budget Control Act. Data on defense spending for fiscal year 2015 show that prime defense contracting activity in North Carolina has decreased by \$1 billion since 2011.

Also recently, Commerce Deputy Secretary Will Miller and Will Best, Commerce's Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) project manager participated in RAZOR TALON, a U.S. Military air, land and sea exercise held in the eastern United States, coordinated by Seymour Johnson AFB. The United States Air Force, Marines, Navy, Army and Coast Guard participated in this monthly exercise, receiving one of a kind training which directly mirrors how the forces would operate during a major conflict.

North Carolina airspace contributes a great deal of value to the training opportunity.



Christopher Guy and Governor Cooper.

## **Governor Celebrates Furniture Market, New Showroom in High Point**

**Governor Roy Cooper** visited High Point April 21 for a series of events celebrating the opening of the spring edition of the High Point Furniture Market.

The furniture market is a major economic event for the state, with a reported annual impact of more than \$5 billion. The market is also a major source of jobs for North Carolina, including the many manufacturing jobs that stem from sales generated during the Market.

During one stop of his visit, Governor Cooper cut the ribbon as luxury lifestyle brand Christopher Guy opened a new showroom in downtown High Point. The new 20,000 square foot showroom will feature the company's signature designs, and will include



Apex mayor Lance Olive (left) with ATI CEO Bob Little

## ATI Industrial Automation Breaks Ground On Expansion

ATI Industrial Automation broke ground April 21 for an operations expansion at its corporate and manufacturing headquarters in Apex. The company reports that this latest operations expansion will be the largest in its 28-year history, adding 275 manufacturing, engineering and sales jobs and increasing its Apex facility to 185,000 square feet

ATI notes that continued worldwide demand for the company's robotic end-effector products has fueled the impressive growth, prompting three major operations expansions in the past six years. The expansion is planned for completion in the first quarter of 2018.

ATI was formed in 1989 out of a small office in Garner by engineers Keith Morris, Robert Little, and Dwayne Perry. Since then, the employee-owned firm has grown from a handful of employees to 285 with corporate and manufacturing headquarters in Apex, NC, and business offices in Michigan, China, Mexico and Brazil.

50 new pieces debuting at the spring market.

## On Our Radar

- [Governor Cooper's Budget: Common Ground Solutions for NC](#)
- [Gov. Cooper Names Frank Emory Chair at EDPNC](#)

## N.C. in the News

- [Wilson native named chairman of EDPNC](#) (*Daily Reflector* - Greenville - May 2)
- [Governor outlines economic recruiting pitch in CLT](#) (*Charlotte Business Journal* - May 1)
- [Gov. Cooper: N.C. should keep Economic Development Partnership, spend more on schools](#) (*Charlotte Observer* - May 1)
- [Gov. Cooper Kicks Off Small Business Week In Burlington](#) (*WFMY-TV* - May 1)
- [Cooper tours Burlington co-op](#) (*The Times-News* - Burlington - May 1)
- [Benson Wraps Up Strategy Sessions](#) (*The Daily Record* - Dunn - May 1)
- [How Universities and Talent are Turning North Carolina into a 3D Printing Hub](#) (*Industry Week* - April 28)
- [Carolina's Innovation Showcase features promising commercial, social ventures](#) (*UNC.edu* - April 25)

## 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.](#)

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