

syncTM Weekly highlights from the North Carolina Department of Commerce

Sturm, Ruger & Company to Create More Than 450 Jobs in Rockingham County

Governor Pat McCrory and North Carolina Commerce Secretary Sharon Decker announced today that Sturm, Ruger & Company, Inc. will establish a new manufacturing facility in Rockingham County. The company plans to create more than 450 new jobs in North Carolina by the end of 2017 and invest more than \$26 million in the new Mayodan location. [Melissa Smith](#) served as the developer for the project for the N.C. Department of Commerce.

"Advanced manufacturing companies like Ruger know that North Carolina is just the place for their company to grow and flourish," said Governor McCrory. "The skilled manufacturing jobs that they'll create will strengthen the Rockingham County economy and demonstrates the strong talent pool and attractive quality of life that characterizes this region of the state."

Sturm, Ruger & Company is one of the nation's leading manufacturers of high-quality firearms for the commercial sporting market, and a major producer of precision steel investment castings. Ruger produces hundreds of thousands of firearms each year for hunting, target shooting, collecting, self-defense, law enforcement and government agencies. The company currently employs more than 2,000 people at facilities in New Hampshire, Connecticut and Arizona.

"We are committed to creating new jobs in North Carolina and one major area of focus is advanced manufacturing," said Secretary Decker. "We applaud the Ruger management team for their commitment to investing in North Carolina and welcome them to our family of strong corporate partners."

"Ruger has created 900 jobs over the last five years and we hope to continue this growth in Mayodan," said Ruger President and CEO Mike Fifer. "There is a phenomenal work force in the area. We've had two job fairs. The response has been tremendous and the caliber of the potential employees is really impressive." [Read more.](#)

Commerce Working with N.C. Rural Center to Develop Transition Plan

The N.C. Department of Commerce is currently meeting with board members and staff from the N.C. Rural Economic Development Center and the Office of State Budget and



N.C. Department of Commerce Launches New Job-Search Website

The N.C. Department of Commerce has launched a new job-search website helping talented job seekers and employers connect with each other. The new system, [NCWorks Online](#), provides a one-stop platform to streamline the job search process, while improving security and reducing annual operational costs by more than \$2 million.

"NCWorks Online is an example of increasing our department's efficiency and providing stronger customer service to the citizens of North Carolina, especially those who are unemployed," said N.C. Commerce Secretary Sharon Decker. "I applaud our [Workforce Solutions team](#) for creating this website that will help those North Carolinians who need it most."

NCWorks Online is a no-fee service that provides several benefits to job seekers and employers. Job seekers can search through job posts pulled from thousands of websites and receive alerts through e-mail and text message. Employers can post jobs to find the talent they need, as well as take advantage of real-time labor market information that will assist them in making competitive offers to recruit high-talented workers.

"Given its proven track record in other states, we're excited about how NCWorks Online will improve the ability of job seekers and businesses to improve their searches for employment and talented workers, respectively," said Assistant Secretary for Workforce Solutions Roger Shackelford.

Management to develop a seamless transition plan for the existing Rural Center programs and grants. OSBM has authorized payments for 17 grants submitted for funding by the Rural Center. The grants total nearly \$1.6 million.

"There is a high spirit of cooperation as we work with the Rural Center and OSBM to review existing grants," said N.C. Commerce Secretary Sharon Decker. "We're committed to an effective smooth transition so that grants can continue to be funded."

Laura Kendall has been retained on an interim basis to manage the transition process with Commerce and the Rural Center. Kendall will serve as a consultant and liaison to facilitate the process of grants and programmatic review. She is being retained for 60 days. Kendall is the former president of Tanner Companies. She has also worked as the chief financial officer for Delhaize America and Food Lion.

"We're looking forward to our continued relationship with the N.C. Department of Commerce and honoring our commitment to rural North Carolina," said Rural Center board member Brian Crutchfield. "We've already made great progress in our meetings with Laura Kendall, and I'm confident we'll continue to move in a positive direction."

Commerce is taking steps to establish the new Rural Economic Development Division and Rural Infrastructure Authority as outlined in the state budget. The programs will support rural communities by making targeted investments that create jobs and improve key infrastructure. The Department will begin taking applications for new rural grants on Oct. 1.

[Commerce's Decker taps liaison for N.C. Rural Center](#)
(Triangle Business Journal, Aug. 8)

North Carolina's Exports Boom in First Half of 2013

The U.S. Department of Commerce's International Trade Administration (ITA) reports North Carolina merchandise exports increased 6 percent in the first half of 2013 compared to the same period in 2012, growing from \$14.1 billion to \$14.8 billion.

"These results show that there is increasing global demand for products made or grown in North Carolina," said Governor Pat McCrory. "Our administration is committed to providing businesses the support they need to get their products to the international marketplace."

According to the ITA, North Carolina's merchandise export sales for the first half of 2013 boomed in many top destinations, including India (up 86 percent), France (67 percent), Ireland (62 percent), Saudi Arabia (44 percent) and China (12 percent). Key merchandise export categories include chemicals, machinery manufactures, transportation equipment, computer and electronic products, and textiles.

The International Trade Division of the N.C. Department of Commerce works with North Carolina companies to enter worldwide markets and develop export opportunities. Services that international trade experts provide include market research, establishing best market prospects, identifying customers and partners, and other value-added services. The N.C. Department of Commerce maintains offices around the globe to support export activity and to facilitate direct investment in North Carolina. The U.S. Export Assistance

"We're confident this new and efficient system will help strengthen our economy as more talented job seekers and employers connect with each other."

NCWorks Online was developed by the Florida-based Geographic Solutions, which has developed similar job-search systems for 18 other states. It replaces NC JobConnector, which had served as the Division's online job-search tool. NCWorks Online will also eliminate the need for eight additional information systems, which is expected to save \$10.2 million over the next five years.

[N.C. launches new website for job-seekers](#)
(WRAL.com, Aug. 5)



Downtown Hayesville, recently selected to be part of the Small Town Main Street program

New N.C. Small Town Main Street Communities Selected

The N.C. Department of Commerce announced on Aug. 12 that six new communities have been chosen to participate in the Office of Urban Development's 2013 [Small Town Main Street program](#). Belhaven, Hayesville, Marshville, Mayodan, Robersonville and Valdese were selected through a competitive application process that included 18 communities from across the state. Designation of these six new towns brings the total number of the state's Small Town Main Street communities to 50.

"Small towns across North Carolina continue to lead by example," said N.C. Commerce Secretary Sharon Decker. "By incorporating a blend of arts and cultural amenities into our towns, we will continue to provide a vibrant Main Street setting for emerging business leaders and active citizens."

Small Town Main Street, which began in eastern North Carolina in 2003 and was expanded to include the entire state in 2007, provides downtown revitalization assistance to selected smaller towns (under 7,500 in population) that lack the resources to pursue the N.C. Main Street program.

"It is equally important for North Carolina's smaller towns to capitalize on their opportunities for re-investment within their

Center in Charlotte also works with companies to enhance export opportunities.

[Learn more about Commerce's International Trade Division.](#)



N.C. Commerce Secretary Sharon Decker (seated center) speaks with some of the high school students in the Caterpillar Apprenticeship in Welding program at the Lee County Innovation Center.

Decker tours Lee County Innovation Center

N.C. Commerce Secretary Sharon Decker liked what she saw during an Aug. 8 tour of the Lee County Innovation Center in Sanford. The center houses Central Carolina Community College's Industry Training Center. The ITC provides manufacturing workforce training for industries in the college's service area of Chatham, Harnett and Lee counties, and beyond.

Decker toured the facility to see and hear about that training and to meet local government and business leaders.

"I'm impressed," Secretary Decker said following the tour. "Manufacturing is so important to North Carolina's recovery from the recession. It's encouraging to me to see what this college and Lee County are doing."

The Innovation Center grew out of the decision by Lee County in 2010 to buy a closed manufacturing facility in the Industrial Park. The goal was to transform it into the heart of industry workforce training in the area.

Central Carolina Community College's Industry Services Center utilizes almost all of the Innovation Center for its industry training programs. In the past fiscal year, more than 600 workers in industries in the college's service area of Chatham, Harnett and Lee counties, as well as other counties, have been trained or retrained in the latest manufacturing skills. Much of the training is done at no cost to industry within the service area. Companies outside of the service area pay for the training.

The Innovation Center includes an eight-bay welding lab, virtual welder, and portable robotic welding education center. An Industry Skills Lab provides training on pumps, hydraulics, pneumatics, process controls, mechanical, industrial control panel, and related manufacturing skills. The ITC also houses a simulated work environment, and a large area for other training. Much of the training equipment has been donated by

communities," said Liz Parham, director of the Office of Urban Development at the N.C. Department of Commerce, which oversees the N.C. Main Street program. "Our Small Town Main Street program assists towns in identifying and leveraging their local assets in order to accomplish their downtown economic development goals."

Participating communities receive two years of concentrated, monthly on-site technical services from Small Town Main Street staff. Following the initial two-year period, communities may choose to continue in the program, receiving more limited services on an as-needed basis.

Small Town Main Street, like the N.C. Main Street program, utilizes the Four-Point Approach methodology, a comprehensive downtown revitalization process focused on organization, design, promotion and economic restructuring that was developed by the National Main Street Center.

For more information about the Small Town Main Street program, contact [Liz Parham](#) at (919) 571-4900.

Visitor Spending Rises in All North Carolina Counties in 2012

Governor Pat McCrory and N.C. Commerce Secretary Sharon Decker announced yesterday (Aug. 12) that all of the state's 100 counties saw increases in visitor spending in 2012.

Data from the N.C. Department of Commerce's Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development showed that three counties (Mecklenburg, Wake and Guilford) had more than \$1 billion in visitor spending in 2012 while Dare, Buncombe, Forsyth and Durham all had more than half a billion in spending.

Domestic visitors to and within North Carolina spent a record \$19.4 billion in 2012, an increase of five percent from 2011. State tax receipts as a result of visitor spending neared \$1 billion in 2012 and local tax revenues directly resulting from visitor spending totaled more than \$579 million. Visitor expenditures directly generated 193,610 jobs and more than \$4.3 billion in payroll income within North Carolina in 2012.

"Tourism is a key tenet of our economic development strategy for North Carolina, and it means jobs for our citizens - nearly 200,000 of them across North Carolina," said Governor McCrory. "It's encouraging that every corner of North Carolina is benefitting from tourism. More than 45 million people experienced our state's beauty, from our famous mountains to our incredible coast and our vibrant cities and fascinating towns in between."

industry or purchased with grants.

Decker also spoke with some of the high school students participating in the Caterpillar Apprenticeship in Welding program. That program, which started last year, is a joint effort by Caterpillar Inc.'s Sanford fabrication facility in the Industrial Park, CCCC, Lee County Schools, and the N.C. Department of Labor. Training takes place at the college's Lee County Campus, the Industry Training Center and Caterpillar.

"I am so proud of you for entering this program," Decker told the apprentices. "Apprenticeship programs are really important; they are the wave of the future. Do a great job - that's how we can recruit more industries to our state." [Read more.](#)



The future site of Aberdeen Carolina & Western Railway Company's headquarters in Candor

Railroad to Locate Headquarters in Montgomery County

Aberdeen Carolina & Western Railway Company President Robert Menzies announced on Aug. 12 plans to develop a new venture and headquarters for the company located in Candor at the former Commodore Homes Corporation building. The company plans to create 25 new jobs and invest \$3.3 million over the next five years. The N.C. Department of Commerce's [Melissa Smith](#) was the developer on this project.

Currently, ACWR employs 34 employees in Montgomery County. Menzies shared that the first phase is already underway to retrofit the 91,000-square-foot warehouse facility and turn it into a rail-served facility that will include 4,600 feet of new track and a modern locomotive pit where the newly established subsidiary, ACWR Shops LLC, will repair and retrofit locomotives, as well as passenger and freight cars.

"Our Vice President of Mechanical Dale Parks has been building the [locomotive, freight railcar and passenger car repair](#) part of our business for over five years. We have exceeded capacity at our facility in Star, and we are already attracting interest from companies wanting to know when we will be ready to start working on their locomotives," Menzies stated.

"While we will maintain our operation in Star, the second phase of our efforts will include transitioning our headquarters to the Candor site," Menzies stated. The longer-term goal for ACWR is to develop the rest of the 78-acre [industrial site for other industries needing rail freight transportation](#) and to bring jobs and a stronger tax base to Montgomery County.

The visitor spending figures come from an annual study commissioned by the Division of Tourism and conducted by the U.S. Travel Association. The study uses sales and tax revenue data plus employment figures to determine the overall impact of visitor spending in North Carolina.

For individual county listings, [click here.](#)

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 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 - August 12, 2013

New projects assigned:	241
Projects announced:	78
Jobs announced:	11,115
Capital investment announced:	\$1.1B
Industry visits by existing industry staff:	791
Calls to Business Link N.C.:	12,642

N.C. in the News

This Week's Highlights

- [After sequestration cuts, Industries of the Blind staffs up again](#) (*The Business Journal of the Greater Triad*, Aug. 8)
- [Charlotte, other N.C. metro areas on Forbes list of Best Places for Business and Careers](#) (*Charlotte Business Journal*, Aug. 8)
- [N.C. exports rise 6% in first half of 2013](#) (*The Business Journal of the Greater Triad*, Aug. 8)
- [County announces new economic development initiative](#) (*Greater Wilmington Business Journal*, Aug. 8)
- [Greensboro summit aims to expand firms' global connections](#) (*The Business Journal of the Greater Triad*, Aug. 8)
- [Lincoln County lawn tractor manufacturer expects to be back on track in a month or two](#) (*Charlotte Business Journal*, Aug. 7)
- [Beer Guy: Sierra to test brew soon](#)

This project was made possible in part by N.C. Department of Transportation funding through the N.C. General Assembly. This financial assistance is dedicated for rail projects in North Carolina that will stimulate economic activity and create new jobs. For ACWR, this funding will be applied towards the necessary 4,600 feet of new track infrastructure.

"We are proud to be part of the Montgomery County business community and are excited about not only our business, but how we can work with the Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation to attract new rail centric businesses to our property that will result in new jobs and more opportunity to those of us who call Montgomery County home," Menzies added.

Other partners that helped with this project include: Montgomery County, The Town of Candor and Duke Energy Progress.

Alexander County EDC Video Focuses on Economic Development, Quality of Life

The Alexander County Economic Development Corporation recently released a new video that will serve as a marketing tool to help bring businesses, industries and visitors to Alexander County.

The video spotlights the well-known businesses and industries in the county, such as Craftmaster Furniture, and promotes the county's many attractions, including Rocky Face Mountain Recreational Area, The Hiddenite Center and the Emerald Hollow Mine.

The video is now available on [Alexander County's website](#), the [EDC's website](#), the Alexander County PEG Channel (Charter Channel 3), [YouTube](#) and [Vimeo](#).

(*Citizen-Times* - Asheville, Aug. 7)

- [Gossage looks to make most of opportunity](#) (*The Apex Herald*, Aug. 7)
- [American Underground to open new space in downtown Raleigh](#) (*Triangle Business Journal*, Aug. 7)
- [Wilmington area scores three No. 1 movies in a year](#) (*StarNews* - Wilmington, Aug. 6)
- [N.C. State economist predicts statewide manufacturing revival, construction surge, education boom](#) (*Triangle Business Journal*, Aug. 6)
- [Cardinal Innovations to add 150 jobs, looks for N.C. site](#) (*Charlotte Business Journal*, Aug. 6)
- [Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship receives gift, signs lease](#) (*Greater Wilmington Business Journal*, Aug. 5)
- [N.C. expects to hire 60 employees to implement new software system](#) (*News & Observer* - Raleigh, Aug. 5)
- [\\$3.13 m invested in Tryon in 2012-2013](#) (*Tryon Daily Bulletin*, Aug. 2)

(919) 733-4151

[Business Services](#) | [Community Services](#)
[Tourism Services](#) | [Workforce Services](#) | [Press Room](#)

Building Location:

301 North Wilmington Street
Raleigh, NC 27601-1058

Mailing Address:

4301 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-4301

[Invite a Friend](#) [Unsubscribe](#) [Subscribe](#) feedback@nc-sync.com [SYNC archive](#)

© 2013 North Carolina Department of Commerce | SYNC™ is a trademark of the N.C. Department of Commerce.