



*N.C. Commerce Secretary John Skvarla with Mertek Solutions' Founder Jerry Pedley celebrate Manufacturing Day with company employees in Sanford, October 7.*

## Secretary Skvarla Highlights Manufacturing Week

**N.C. Commerce Secretary John E. Skvarla, III** visited companies in Greensboro and Sanford last week to draw attention to one of the state's most important economic engines, the manufacturing sector. Governor McCrory proclaimed October 3-7 as North Carolina Manufacturing Week.

"We have a highly diversified manufacturing economy that makes a lot of different things," said **Secretary Skvarla**, addressing a group of employees at ABCO Automation. The Guilford County company makes advanced solutions for manufacturers around the world, including Pfizer, RJ Reynolds, BD and Proctor & Gamble. Founded there in 1977, ABCO now employs a 130-person workforce. "This is a company that stays below the radar while it grows a customer base of 300," said **Skvarla**. "It's the essence of North Carolina."

North Carolina manufacturers employ 461,000 workers - more than any state in the southeastern United States. It accounts for over \$88 billion in annual production, nearly 20 percent of North Carolina's gross domestic product. The sector's economic impact is powerful: for every \$1.00 spent in manufacturing, North Carolina's economy generates \$2.09, according to N.C. Commerce's Labor and Economic Analysis team.



*The NCWorks Mobile Career Center.*

### NCWorks Mobile Career Center Makes Introduction

North Carolina Commerce's Workforce Solutions team introduced the NCWorks Mobile Career Center last week in Greensboro in conjunction with two state workforce conferences being held there. The mobile unit, a rolling job resource center serving both citizens and companies, provides ready access to a wide-range of career services at remote locations and events statewide.

"In today's economy, everyone needs quick access to the resources that will advance a career or help a company recruit workers," said **N.C. Commerce Secretary John Skvarla**. "When you see the NCWorks logo, you know you're in the right place to get help, whether you see it on our new mobile unit or over one of the 80 career centers located across the state."

The NCWorks initiative, among other goals, unifies the brand identity of the state's integrated workforce development system, allowing both citizens and business owners to quickly identify and access available state resources in their local community.

"A successful workforce system takes many partners to be effective," said **Will Collins, N.C. Commerce's Assistant Secretary for Workforce**. "The NCWorks Mobile Career Center is yet another tool we're pleased to offer, allowing partners like the local Workforce Development Boards to bring resources right where they're needed."



Secretary Skvarla (left) tours ABCO Automation with company president Brad Kemmerer.

ABCO is a founding member of the [Guilford Apprenticeship Partners \(GAP\)](#), a program established last year to promote apprenticeships as a career pathway for students and a workforce pipeline for manufacturers in Guilford, Randolph and Rockingham counties. "We're very excited to help develop fine young talent," said **Brad Kemmerer, ABCO's president**.

Mertek Solutions, a six-year-old company in Sanford that designs and makes automated assemble and testing systems for manufacturers such as Corning and Moen, also utilizes apprentices as part of its 45-person workforce. "Twenty of our employees actually began with our company as apprentices," said **Jerry Pedley, Mertek's founder**.

Secretary Skvarla joined Pedley at Mertek's open house, a landmark event which Mertek organizes each year on National Manufacturing Day. About 200 high school students from Lee and surrounding counties munched hot dogs and watched demonstrations on robotics. "We think it's important to get kids to think about manufacturing careers early on, and this event is one way we can do that," said **Pedley**.

[Read more about the ABCO event.](#)

[Read more about the Mertek event.](#)



(Left-right) Tong Li of Wave Computation Technologies; Olivia Garza and Romualdo Garza of G&A America; Richard Lovato of Tactical Support Equipment; Kuldip Wasson of EDPNC; John Berry, U.S. Ambassador to Australia; and Jack Curtis of Global Communications Technology.

## N.C. Companies Exhibit Products at Land Forces Show in Australia

Visitors to the NCWorks Mobile Career Center gain access to the workforce services available at 'brick-and-mortar' career centers, including free Internet access and resume preparation, as well as career counseling and assistance using the state's jobs portal, NCWorks Online. The unit is deployed at a variety of locations and events, including job fairs, veterans' 'stand-down' events and business sites receiving Rapid Response services during company closures or staff reductions.

### UPCOMING EVENTS FOR THE NCWORKS MOBILE CAREER CENTER INCLUDE:

- October 14: Career Fair at College of Albemarle in Edenton from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.
- October 27: Veterans Stand Down in Franklin from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm.
- November 4: Hire a Vet Job Fair in Barco from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.
- November 15: Veterans Job Fair in Jacksonville from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm.
- November 18: Job Fair/Expo in Wilmington from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm.



WSOC's Jim Bradley reports on Hurricane Matthew from the I-77 Welcome Center.

## N.C. Welcome Centers Offer a Helpful Port in the Storm

North Carolina's nine Welcome Centers are almost always busy, helping travelers find the attractions, accommodations, or events they're seeking when visiting the state. But the teams staffing the centers have been working in overdrive recently, responding to the impact of Hurricane Matthew on travelers far from home and under stress.

"Our Welcome Center teams have been greeted with full parking lots each morning," said **Bryan Gupton, N.C. Commerce's Director of Visitor Services**. Gupton oversees operations at the state's welcome centers. "Working with our colleagues at VisitNC and N.C. Transportation, we've made sure our visitors have the most up-to-date

Land Forces, Australia's leading security and defense event, was held in Adelaide September 6-8. Trade shows like this one are a key strategy in the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina's (EDPNC) program to market North Carolina goods in international markets.

This year, the trade show had more than 450 exhibitors from 22 countries and 32 official delegations hailing from 18 countries.

John Berry, the United States Ambassador to Australia, provided the opening remarks for the U.S. pavilion ribbon-cutting. Later, the ambassador visited the North Carolina booth to learn more about the state's defense exhibitors and how their capabilities could be utilized by Australian forces. The show covered a wide range of goods and services including those related to military and defense operations, tactical equipment, communications, emergency management, and homeland security. The Australian Army and Department of Defense used this event as a platform for engagement and partnerships with industry and allies.

The International Trade team at EDPNC led the state's presence at the show and showcased a number of outstanding N.C. companies including Tactical Support Equipment (Fayetteville), G & A America (Raleigh), Wave Computation Technologies (Chapel Hill), and Global Communications Technology (Raleigh).

Participating companies generated a number of trade leads and now better understand the market opportunities in the Asia-Pacific region. EDPNC's Global Operations Director Kuldip Wasson participated in the event to facilitate N.C. exports and help the companies form alliances and partnerships with buyers.

The U.S. Small Business Administration contributed funds to offset some exhibitor costs, through the State Trade and Export Promotion Program (STEP).



To assist companies in your market with exporting and growing sales internationally, contact the [International Trade team at the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina.](#)



*N.C. Commerce Assistant Secretary Dr. Pat Mitchell (right) at the*

information on conditions across the state."

Gupton reports that the I-95 South, I-77 South, and I-26 East centers have in particular seen increased traffic due to the storm. The centers have been assisting people evacuating from Florida, Georgia and South Carolina. The center's professionals are well-versed in the travel industry and have been helping travelers book hotel accommodations all across the state.

N.C. Commerce's Visitor Services unit also maintains the state's call center for visitors. Operators there have been taking calls all week about road and weather conditions. Operations at the call center were expanded to provide 24-hour, round-the-clock service during the emergency.

For more information on North Carolina's Welcome Centers, visit [nccommerce.com](http://nccommerce.com).



## Registration Still Open for Manufacturing Conference

The North Carolina Manufacturing Extension Partnership (NCMEP) is making final plans for mfgCON 2016, North Carolina's premier conference for manufacturing innovation. The event will take place in Greensboro October 18 and 19.

**Commerce Secretary John E. Skvarla, III** will be the keynote lunch speaker on the second day of the conference.

The event includes two full days of presentations and breakout sessions designed for maximum exposure to the newest ideas, and best tools and resources in manufacturing. Professionals from best-in-class companies - like large Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs), small suppliers, and emerging makers will weigh in on technology, sustainability, workforce development, market building, innovation and continuous improvement. The speakers will also share practical advice and takeaway tips that promise to capture immediate results, according to conference organizers. A video featuring testimonials from last year's event is [available online](#).

[Register online here.](#)

[Review the agenda here.](#)

## N.C. in the News



## Prevention Partners Releases 2016 NC Power of 10 Report Card

Prevention Partners hosted its third annual Healthy Together NC Summit in Research Triangle Park October 4. Business, government, health, and community leaders gathered to discuss making transformational healthy workplace changes and how new leadership can expand to reach 25% of North Carolina's workforce. The summit featured the release of the 2016 NC Power of 10 Report Card.

The Report Card outlines progress in meeting the goal to bring healthy changes to at least 10 major employers in all 100 counties by 2026. Prevention Partners' report shows that the partnership is reaching 9.6% of North Carolina's workforce, with 12 counties currently at the "Power of 10" level and 67 on their way.

"We congratulate these leaders who are bringing the strongest prevention policies and environments to their organization to support healthy behaviors among employees and students," said **Prevention Partners President & CEO Meg Molloy**. "As community, business, and school leaders recognize the power they have to improve health, and as healthy places spread to employers and schools in all 100 counties, we will reach a tipping point that prevents half of cancers, diabetes, and heart disease."

"If you look at Prevention Partners' annual report, the picture shown is a nice, long straight road," said **Dr. Patricia Mitchell, N.C. Commerce's Assistant Secretary for Rural Development**, commenting on the topic of how new leadership can expand the program's reach to 25% of North Carolina's workforce. "In reality, the road isn't always flat and straight. When it is curvy, you must find new or adjusted ways to reach the road ahead. The Department of Commerce was given planner/economic developer dollars in this year's budget and will place some of those in each of the state's eight prosperity zones. Interacting in conversations about healthy lifestyles and a healthy workforce seems an appropriate conversation."

The summit concluded with the presentation of the 2016 North Carolina Prevention Excellence Award. Prevention Partners awarded The Duke Endowment and the North Carolina Hospital Association for the decade-long Healthy Hospital Initiative which resulted in North Carolina being the only state where all hospitals are 100% tobacco-free, offer access to affordable healthy food, and have a work environment that supports being physically active and embodies a culture of wellness.

For more information regarding Healthy Together NC and to learn how to get involved, please visit [ForPrevention.org/HealthyTogetherNC](http://ForPrevention.org/HealthyTogetherNC).

- [Theme at economic growth conference: Zebulon is next](#) (*News & Observer* - October 10)
- [Report: Manufacturing remains critical to N.C. economy](#) (*Charlotte Business Journal* - October 10)
- [Vaccination, celebration: Remembering \\$1B Holly Springs vaccine complex](#) (*WRAL TechWire* - October 5)
- [New NC community college chief tours Gaston College](#) (*Smoky Mountain News* - Waynesville - October 5)
- [New NC community college chief tours Gaston College](#) (*Gaston Gazette* - September 30)
- [McCrory policy seeks to boost NC exports and jobs](#) (*Daily Tar Heel* - Chapel Hill - September 28)
- [New initiative hopes to grow new Farmville businesses](#) (*WNCT-TV* - September 27)
- [Tourism economic impact growing in WNC counties](#) (*Smoky Mountain News* - September 7)

### 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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