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Weekly highlights from the
North Carolina Department of Commerce



Commerce Sec. Keith Crisco speaks during a visit to CEM Corp. in Stallings on Dec. 18.

Crisco praises tech and economic innovations

Commerce Sec. Keith Crisco on Dec. 18 praised innovations in economic development and technical manufacturing in Union County, as he visited CEM Corporation in Stallings in connection with the [Union County Partnership for Progress](#).

Crisco had high praise for CEM Corporation, a global leader in microwave-based scientific technology, where he held a press conference.

"Here's a company that started from zero right here in a garage, has doubled in size in the past five years to \$70 million in annual sales, and expects to double again in less than five years," Crisco said. "They are achieving this through innovation, and 75 percent of their sales are outside of North America, including millions to China. All the manufacturing jobs are staying here. This is very impressive."

Crisco also promised increased support for Legacy Business Park, a planned 5,000-acre development in eastern Union County, being coordinated by the Union County Partnership for Progress, the county's economic development organization.

"More and more people in North Carolina are trying to promote innovation, and Gov. Bev Perdue recently announced the creation of a N.C. Innovation Council," Crisco said. "Bev Perdue is also very focused on economic development. In the past year I have asked her to make 46 appearances for economic development purposes, and she hasn't turned me down once."

Zenta to create 1,002 jobs in Charlotte

Gov. Bev Perdue announced Dec. 22 that Zenta Mortgage Services will expand its Charlotte presence significantly, creating 1,002 jobs over the next five years and investing \$2.19 million. The announcement was made possible in part by a state Job Development Investment Grant.

"Zenta's CEO, Henry Hortenstine, knows North Carolina – and he also knows that the Charlotte region is home to great financial services talent," said Perdue. "Our state's outstanding workforce and top business climate once again provide a winning combination."

New York-based Zenta Mortgage Services is a global financial services outsourcing company that provides mortgage services, real estate analysis, credit card servicing, and accounts receivable services for real estate, financial services, healthcare and insurance markets. The company currently employs 263 workers in Charlotte, its only location in North Carolina.

While salaries will vary by job type, the average annual wage for the new jobs will be \$47,900. The company plans to begin hiring in January 2010. Commerce's Uconda Dunn was the developer on this project. [Read more.](#)



(Left-right) Commerce Deputy Sec. Dale Carroll, James Schill, plant manager of Industrial Timber & Lumber (ITL) Company, and N.C. Rep. Mitch Gillespie complete a tour of the ITL manufacturing complex in Marion. Hardwood products ready for export are shown in the background.

Regional commercial laundry adds 68 jobs in Burke County

Gov. Bev Perdue on Dec. 29 announced that Maple Springs Laundry Inc., a regional commercial laundry serving the health-care industry, will expand into Burke County. The company will create 68 jobs and invest \$5.9 million during the next three years at a new facility in Long View. The announcement was made possible in part by a \$136,000 grant from the One North Carolina Fund.

"North Carolina offers a top-notch business climate for home-grown companies that are working hard to achieve success in a competitive market," Perdue said. "Our skilled workforce and exceptional quality of life continue to attract and encourage commercial growth and investment."

Maple Springs Laundry Inc., headquartered in Hickory, provides full laundry services for patient linens, pillows, operating room scrub wear and other hospital and doctor's office linens. The company currently has one facility in Hickory, where it employs nearly 200 people and plans to expand into a larger, vacant textile plant in Long View. Commerce's Bill Payne was the developer on this project.

[Read more.](#)

National tourism policy issues to be discussed at Governor's Conference

Geoff Freeman, senior vice president of public affairs for the [U.S. Travel Association](#), will discuss national tourism policy issues and how they impact communities across North Carolina at the [N.C. Governor's Conference on Hospitality & Tourism](#) in New Bern. With issues like H1N1 and new taxes facing the travel industry as the country recovers from the current economic crisis, Freeman offers his front-row perspective as leaders shape national policies that affect the industry everywhere – from the largest visitor destinations to small towns.

Freeman leads all public affairs activities for the U.S. Travel Association, including lobbying, strategic communications, research and grassroots mobilization. He drives the organization's activities on near-term challenges, such as the recent assault on corporate meetings and events, and develops strategies to position the industry more favorably in the years to come.

Online registration for the March 21-23 conference opens Jan. 5, with a special reduced rate for early registration. Go to the Governor's Conference [Web site](#) for early registration and information about the conference.

Crews begin 24-hour work to clear rockslide

With their holiday break over, crews working to clear a rockslide on Interstate 40 in western North Carolina have started working around the clock to clear boulders from the road. The N.C. Dept. of Transportation says crews will be drilling holes for about 600 rock bolts, used to stabilize the mountainside boulders. A helicopter is also being used to clear trees from the rockslide area, in addition to airlifting equipment to the work crews.

[Interstate 40 rock slide gets an airlift from helicopter](#) (The Asheville Citizen-Times, Dec. 29)

Gillespie, Carroll meet with forest products companies in WNC

On Dec. 23, N.C. Rep. Mitch Gillespie and Commerce Deputy Sec. Dale Carroll met with forest products companies in western North Carolina and toured plants in Burke and McDowell counties. At Industrial Timber & Lumber Company (ITL) in Marion, they congratulated plant manager James Schill on the company's selection as winner of the 2009 Forest Stewardship Award by the National Hardwood Lumber Association. ITL and other companies in the region also gave a briefing on their growing participation in export markets to Europe and Asia.

Join the North Carolina Pavilion at BIO 2010

Only eight Silver Sponsorship opportunities remain available for companies and other organizations interested in participating in the North Carolina Pavilion at the annual BIO International Convention in Chicago May 3-6. Commerce is sponsoring the Pavilion in partnership with the North Carolina Biotechnology Center, which is coordinating the state's participation this year. The deadline to sign up for sponsorship has been extended until Jan. 15.

In addition to providing the state critical marketing visibility in the biotech sector, the Pavilion program offers sponsors the ability to reach an international audience of 20,000 life science professionals at a fraction of the cost of exhibiting alone. Qualifying organizations can exhibit at BIO for as little as \$1,000. The N.C. Pavilion has secured a prominent location on the exhibit hall floor and will feature a 2,000-square-foot design with video screens and a conference room. Sponsors can also attend and invite VIPs to the exclusive Friends of North Carolina Reception, being held in the tallest building in Chicago, the Willis Tower. Companies that exhibit in the Pavilion will also benefit from a feature article in Impact Magazine's special BIO edition.

Participating sponsors this year include Bayer, BASF, Quintiles and Talecris. Pinehurst Resort has also signed on to sponsor a putting green in the exhibit, a new feature designed to draw traffic. With over 50 percent of the Pavilion sold, interested groups should act fast to reserve their place.

To learn more or to sign up, visit the N.C. Biotech Center's [Web site](#).

N.C. in the News

This Week's Highlights

- [Clawbacks from incentive deals grow in popularity in tough times](#) (The Associated press, Jan. 4)
- [Grant could cut energy costs](#) (The News & Record - Greensboro, Jan. 4)
- [Jobless claims in Rowan behind national trend](#) (The Salisbury Post, Jan. 4)
- [Relief coming to some of N.C.'s unemployed](#) (WRAL - Raleigh, Dec. 31)

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