

NC SYNCSM

HIGHLIGHTS FROM COMMERCE



Doug Lebda (left), founder and CEO of LendingTree with N.C. Commerce Secretary John Skvarla.

LendingTree in Mecklenburg County Doubling in Size with 314-Job Expansion

LendingTree LLC, the consumer finance information technology company, will launch a major expansion at its Mecklenburg County headquarters, creating 314 jobs over five years to double in size. LendingTree will invest nearly \$47 million in Charlotte's South Park community.

"North Carolina is the intersection of finance and technology, and LendingTree's expanded headquarters campus just made that intersection even busier," said **N.C. Commerce Secretary John E. Skvarla, III**. "This innovative company provides valuable financial tools for U.S. consumers, and the Charlotte region will continue to be an integral part of their success."

Since Governor Pat McCrory took office in January of 2013, the state's economy has generated more than 300,000 net new jobs.

"LendingTree, a company who twenty years ago pioneered online financial technology, continues to bring innovative solutions to the lending process for both consumers and lenders," said **Doug Lebda, founder and CEO of LendingTree**. "We now have over 360 employees, split primarily between our North Carolina headquarters and our office in California, have been named as one of Fortune



North Carolina's Business Climate Again Ranks High

In another positive sign for North Carolina's economy, **Governor Pat McCrory** announced November 2 that the state's business climate ranked second in the nation according to Site Selection magazine's annual awards.

"When I entered office nearly four years ago, we had the fifth highest unemployment in the nation and governors from neighboring states told me that they no longer considered North Carolina competition for jobs," said **Governor McCrory**. "Since then, we have added more than 300,000 new jobs, cut taxes by \$4.7 billion and paid off a \$2.5 billion unemployment insurance debt to the federal government. This ranking is further affirmation that our pro-growth economic policies have once again made North Carolina a top destination for jobs."

Site Selection's annual "Top Business Climate" rankings are based on quantitative and qualitative factors. Fifty percent of the ranking comes from a survey of corporate real estate executives and the remaining fifty percent of the ranking is based on seven criteria - four which require states to demonstrate performance in attracting capital investment and the other two criteria derived

Magazine's top ten fastest-growing companies in the world, and the best-run public company in North Carolina by the Charlotte Business Journal. Our growth trajectory further emphasizes our ever-expanding need for top technology, design and analytics talent. And after a very thorough process, we are absolutely certain that Charlotte and the state of North Carolina remain the indisputable location to expand our footprint and advance our leadership position within the FinTech industry."

LendingTree's expansion in Mecklenburg County is facilitated, in part, by a Job Development Investment Grant (JDIG) approved by the state's Economic Investment Committee. Under the terms of the JDIG, the company is eligible to receive up to nearly \$4.9 million in total reimbursements. Payments will occur in annual installments over 12 years pending verification by N.C. Commerce and N.C. Revenue that the company has met incremental job creation and investment targets.

Partnering with [N.C. Commerce](#) and the [Economic Development Partnership of N.C.](#) on this project were the [North Carolina General Assembly](#), the [North Carolina Community College System](#), [Mecklenburg County](#), the [City of Charlotte](#), and the [Charlotte Chamber of Commerce](#).

[Read more.](#)



Gov. McCrory (center) and N.C. Commerce Secretary John Skvarla (far right) celebrate K-FLEX's expansion in Franklin County.

100-Job Expansion at K-FLEX USA in Franklin County

Governor Pat McCrory visited the manufacturing facilities of K-FLEX in Franklin County November 2 to announce the company's plan to nearly double the size its operations there. The company will create 100 new jobs and invest \$45 million over the next four years.

"This announcement by K-FLEX builds on North Carolina's legacy of leading the Southeast with the most manufacturing jobs," said **Governor Pat McCrory**. "This is further evidence that global companies like K-FLEX can find the talent and business climate in North Carolina to expand and thrive."

K-FLEX USA is a unit of Italy's IK Insulation Group, which makes and distributes a diversified portfolio of insulation products around the world. IK's global operations employ 2,000 people. K-FLEX's North Carolina workforce currently totals 195 full-time employees and contractors.

"We are excited to add to our manufacturing campus in Youngsville and look forward to continuing to be an active member in our community," said **Giuseppe Guarino, President of K-FLEX USA**. "This new facility will ensure that

from the Tax Foundation and KPMG's Location Matters analysis of state tax burdens on mature firms and new firms.

In the overall national ranking, North Carolina trailed only Georgia. Ohio, Texas and Tennessee round out the top five places.



German Nonwoven Textile Maker Selects Henderson County for First U.S. Manufacturing Facility

Governor Pat McCrory, N.C. Commerce Secretary John E. Skvarla, III, and the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina announced November 7 that Norafin Americas, Inc. will establish a manufacturing plant in Henderson County, which will create 46 new jobs during the next three years. The German nonwoven textile maker will invest \$16 million at a location in Mills River for its first production facility outside of Germany.

"The arrival of Norafin Americas builds on North Carolina's global leadership in manufacturing," said **Governor McCrory**. "Our state's exceptional workforce, convenient access to major markets and outstanding business climate will support this growing company as it expands production into North America."

Norafin Americas is a unit of the Norafin Group, headquartered in the German state of Saxony. The company develops, produces and sells high-performance, specialty, nonwoven fabrics to buyers across the protective barrier, industrial, filtration, medical, automotive, apparel, and other technical markets. Norafin currently runs a sales office in Asheville.

"The world is bullish on North Carolina, especially when it comes to manufacturing," said **Secretary Skvarla**. "Last year, 80 percent of the nearly 5,300 announced new jobs through foreign direct investment projects were in manufacturing."

"We investigated many possible locations," said **Stuart Smith, General Manager for Norafin Americas**. "The area, community and infrastructure resources, along with on-going support from North Carolina, Henderson County, and Mills River, made it the best location to call home."

Norafin Americas' arrival in North Carolina was facilitated in part by a performance-based grant of up to \$100,000 from the One North Carolina Fund.

K-FLEX USA can continue to meet the growing demand for our products in North America and around the world. We are grateful to Franklin County and the state of North Carolina for their support as we invest in our shared future."

K-FLEX USA's expansion adds 100 jobs at its Youngsville plant. The company's expansion will be facilitated, in part, by a Job Development Investment Grant (JDIG). Under the terms of the company's JDIG, the company is eligible to receive up to \$1.1 million in total reimbursements. Payments will occur in annual installments over 12 years pending verification by N.C. Commerce and N.C. Revenue that the company has met incremental job creation and investment targets.

"North Carolina's manufacturing economy is diversified, and globally competitive," said **N.C. Commerce Secretary John Skvarla**. "Our appealing cost-structure and high-quality workforce align neatly with the long-range growth strategies of companies like K-FLEX, which is what makes North Carolina's economy one of the fastest growing in the nation."

Numerous partners joined with [N.C. Commerce](#) and the [EDPNC](#) in supporting K-FLEX's expansion. They include the [North Carolina General Assembly](#), the [North Carolina Community College System](#), [N.C. Transportation](#), [Franklin County](#), and the [Franklin County Economic Development Commission](#).

[Read more.](#)

Governor McCrory Announces Mafic USA to Create 113 Jobs in Cleveland County

A global producer of advanced materials will launch a 113-job manufacturing operation in Cleveland County. Mafic USA plans to invest more than \$15 million in a production facility in Shelby.

"Mafic USA brings an impressive track record of innovation and industry leadership to Cleveland County," said **Governor Pat McCrory**. "Nothing speaks more powerfully to the quality of our workforce, market access and business climate than when a global company like Mafic chooses to invest and hire in North Carolina."

Mafic USA is the U.S. unit of privately-held Mafic Inc. The parent company, founded in 2012 and based in Ontario, ships products to customers in the automotive, aerospace, and alternative energy industries among others.

"We make things in North Carolina, so Mafic is a great fit," said **N.C. Commerce Secretary John Skvarla**. "Manufacturing is among our largest industry sectors, accounting for nearly 20 percent of our gross domestic product, and it extends into every corner of our state."

The company's new operations in Shelby will employ skilled operators, engineers, sales staff and other personnel. The company's presence will add nearly \$3.6 million in annual payroll impact to the local economy.

"We considered a number of locations across the U.S. for our first American manufacturing facility, said **Mafic CEO Mike Levine**. "North Carolina and Cleveland County had been under consideration from the start, due to its network of specialized suppliers and wide-range of potential B2B customers and strategic partners. What sealed the deal for us was the multifaceted support from all levels of government; the state, county and city. In particular, the Cleveland County Economic

In addition to [N.C. Commerce](#) and [EDPNC](#) other key partners in the project include the [North Carolina General Assembly](#), the [North Carolina Community College System](#), [N.C. Revenue](#), [Henderson County](#), [Henderson County Partnership for Economic Development](#), and the [Town of Mills River](#).

[Read more.](#)

Governor McCrory Announces King Charles Industries to Bring 100 Jobs to Anson County

Governor Pat McCrory, **North Carolina Commerce Secretary John E. Skvarla, III**, and the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina (EDPNC) announced October 25 the arrival of King Charles Industries, LLC to Anson County. The textile company intends to hire 100 people over the next three years at its new \$12.5 million manufacturing site.

"North Carolina remains the Southeast's leading state for manufacturing employment with more than 461,000 jobs," said **Governor McCrory**. "Our manufacturing economy is highly innovative, diversified and competitive at the global level and we are delighted to welcome King Charles Industries to Anson County."

King Charles Industries is a joint venture between Taiwan's Kingwhale Corp. and Hornwood Inc, a 70-year-old North Carolina textile company. Lilesville-based Hornwood makes an extensive line of products, employing 350 people in North Carolina.

"This announcement shows the broad-base of North Carolina's manufacturing leadership," said **Secretary Skvarla**. "With its innovation and global nature, King Charles Industries is a 21st century take on one of our state's traditional manufacturing industries."

King Charles Industries will employ 100 workers at its new operations in Anson County. The project was made possible in part by a performance-based grant of up to \$300,000 from the One North Carolina Fund.

EDPNC and N.C. Commerce in supporting King Charles Industries' new location are the North Carolina General Assembly, the North Carolina Community College System, Anson County, the Anson Economic Development Partnership and North Carolina's Southeast Regional Partnership.

Joining [EDPNC](#) and [N.C. Commerce](#) in supporting King Charles Industries' new location are the [North Carolina General Assembly](#), the [North Carolina Community College System](#), [Anson County](#), the [Anson](#)

Development Partnership went way beyond what was expected."

Mafic USA's arrival in North Carolina was made possible in part by a performance-based grant of up to \$225,000 from the One North Carolina Fund. A \$500,000 grant from the state's Building Reuse Program, which provides grants to local governments for building renovations that lead to job growth, will also assist the company.

In addition to [N.C. Commerce](#) and the [EDPNC](#), other key partners in the project include the [North Carolina General Assembly](#), the [North Carolina Community College System](#), the [Rural Infrastructure Authority](#), [Cleveland County](#), the [City of Shelby](#), [Duke Energy](#), and the [Cleveland County Economic Development Partnership](#).

[Read more.](#)



Governor McCrory Announces JELD-WEN to Expand in Charlotte, Creating 200 New Jobs

JELD-WEN, the global manufacturer of windows and doors anticipates it will add 200 jobs at its headquarters operations in Mecklenburg County. The company is planning a new multi-million dollar corporate campus and training center in Charlotte.

"North Carolina's outstanding business climate continues to attract new jobs and investment from global companies looking to sharpen their competitive edge," said **Governor Pat McCrory**. "This expansion by JELD-WEN speaks highly of our state's great workforce and to the company's confidence that it can recruit top executive-level talent here from around the world."

Founded in 1960, JELD-WEN operates in 25 countries with 111 manufacturing facilities located primarily in North America, Europe, and Australia. JELD-WEN's worldwide workforce totals more than 20,000 people. It currently employs more than 400 in North Carolina.

"Global companies need global connectivity, and North Carolina offers convenient access to both domestic and international markets," said **N.C. Commerce Secretary John Skvarla**. "Charlotte's excellent air service, for example, puts JELD-WEN's leadership team within easy reach of its operations around the world."

"JELD-WEN is investing in Charlotte because this vibrant city has so much to offer in the way of talent and amenities," said **Mark A. Beck, president and chief executive officer of JELD-WEN**. "We appreciate the support provided through the state Job Development Investment Grant as well as local Charlotte Mecklenburg support and we look forward to strengthening our connection with this great community."

JELD-WEN's expansion in Charlotte will be facilitated, in part, by a Job Development Investment Grant (JDIG), with the company eligible to receive up to \$2.4 million in total reimbursements.

[Economic Development Partnership](#), and the [Charlotte Chamber of Commerce](#).

[Read more.](#)



Lotus Bakeries to Create 60 New Jobs in Alamance County

Lotus Bakeries, with headquarters in Belgium, will create 60 new jobs by 2020 in Alamance County as it opens its first U.S manufacturing operation . The company plans to invest more than \$48 million at the N.C. Industrial Center in Mebane.

Governor Pat McCrory announced the decision November 4.

"We welcome Lotus Bakeries, which is a strong fit for our state's food manufacturing industry," said **Governor McCrory**. "This company recognizes that North Carolina's convenient location, excellent business climate and well-trained workforce will support its North American growth strategy."

Lotus Bakeries plans to staff its production site in Alamance County with bakers, packagers, quality assurance specialists and other employees. The company's operations will add nearly \$2.1 million in annual payroll impact to the local economy.

"North Carolina is the southeast's number one destination for manufacturing jobs, and that includes consumer foods and beverages," said **N.C. Commerce Secretary John Skvarla**. "The arrival of Lotus Bakeries marks the latest international company that is making a significant investment in our state."

"Having a Lotus Biscoff plant in the USA is a major step for our company," said **Jan Boone, CEO of Lotus Bakeries**. "For the first time since our foundation in 1932 Biscoff will be produced outside of Lembeke, Belgium. Lotus Bakeries and all its employees are extremely proud with this expansion in the world's largest consumer market,"

The project was made possible in part by a performance-based grant of up to \$180,000 from the One North Carolina Fund.

Numerous state and local allies worked with

Numerous organizations joined [North Carolina Commerce](#) and the [Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina](#) in supporting JELD-WEN's expansion. They include the [North Carolina General Assembly](#), the [North Carolina Community College System](#), [Mecklenburg County](#), the [City of Charlotte](#), [Charlotte Chamber of Commerce](#).

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The team from North Carolina staff the state's exhibit at the U.S. Powerboat Show.

N.C. Companies Featured at U.S. Powerboat Show in Maryland

Seven North Carolina companies recently attended the United States Powerboat Show in Annapolis Maryland, thanks to support from the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina (EDPNC) and the North Carolina Manufacturing Extension Partnership (NCMEP). The event provided an opportunity for the companies to meet with potential new customers and partners. The 45th United States Powerboat Show, which was held October 13-16, hosted more than 200 exhibitors from around across the country and showcased a wide range of new products and technologies.

North Carolina companies included those that manufacture boats, marine accessories and snacks within the state. These companies included: Aunt Ruby's Peanuts from Enfield, NC; Armstrong Marine from Swansboro, NC; Blue Gas Marine from Apex, NC; Dry Case from Wilmington, NC; Lee's Tackle from Wilmington, NC; Lexington Marine Group from Leland, NC; World Panel Products from Windsor, NC.

"This was our first time exhibiting at the Powerboat show and we really did not know what to expect," said **Miguel Guerreiro, President and CEO of Blue Gas Marine**. "We were pleasantly surprised at the interest in our product and left with a phenomenal amount of leads. The EDPNC provided us with an incredible opportunity."

EDPNC team members Jennifer Beichner, program manager for the Manufacturing Extension Partnership, business development manager Glenn Jackman and regional industry manager Tim Ivey spearheaded the state's support program that enabled the companies in forge new partnerships in the boating and marine accessories market.



EDPNC and N.C. Commerce in supporting the arrival of Lotus Bakeries. They include the North Carolina General Assembly, the North Carolina Community College System, Alamance County Board of Commissioners, the City of Mebane, the Alamance Chamber and Elon University.

Numerous state and local allies worked with [EDPNC](#) and [N.C. Commerce](#) in supporting the arrival of Lotus Bakeries. They include the [North Carolina General Assembly](#), the [North Carolina Community College System](#), [Alamance County Board of Commissioners](#), the [City of Mebane](#) the [Alamance County Area Chamber of Commerce](#), and [Elon University](#).

[Read more.](#)

Governor McCrory Announces Expansion by Pepsi Bottling Ventures, Creating 50 News Jobs

Pepsi Bottling Ventures LLC will create 50 jobs over the next five years at a new \$16.5 million distribution center in Robeson County. Additionally, another 250 jobs will remain in the area.

"This expansion will continue to strengthen North Carolina's position as one of the fastest growing economies in the nation," said **Governor Pat McCrory**. "The company's choice of Robeson County for this state-of-the-art distribution center continues the strong momentum for the consumer foods and beverage industry in our state."

Pepsi Bottling Ventures is the nation's largest privately-held manufacturer, seller and distributor of Pepsi-Cola and other beverages. Headquartered in Raleigh, the company employs more than 2,000 people across its various North Carolina locations.

"North Carolina's excellent transportation systems, unparalleled workforce and convenient access to large consumer markets make it a prime destination for distribution centers," said **N.C. Commerce Secretary John Skvarla**. "Pepsi Bottling Ventures joins other success-minded companies in taking advantage of the assets that make North Carolina's economy one of the best-performing in the nation."

The project was made possible in part by a performance-based grant of up to \$150,000 from the One North Carolina Fund. Also supporting Pepsi Bottling's expansion will be a \$400,000 grant from the state's Economic Infrastructure Program, which provides grants to local governments to assist with infrastructure projects that lead to job growth.

Numerous state, regional and local allies worked with [EDPNC](#) and [N.C. Commerce](#) in

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.](#)



Disaster Recovery Help Now Available for Businesses Impacted by Hurricane Matthew

Business owners impacted by Hurricane Matthew in North Carolina can easily access a growing number of resources designed to mitigate losses and speed recovery from one of the state's largest natural disasters. A new [website](#) featuring state and federal resources provides guidance for businesses as they navigate the many recovery options available to them.

"When a disaster like Hurricane Matthew strikes, business owners must deal with the immediate damage as well as the complicated task of recovery," said **N.C. Commerce Secretary John Skvarla**. "The new website makes it easy to tap the many sources of assistance."

State and federal partners offering business recovery resources include the North Carolina Department of Commerce, the University of North Carolina - Small Business & Technology Development Center (SBTDC), the North Carolina Community College System's Small Business Center Network (SBCN), the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The North Carolina Rural Center and the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina are also offering information and services.

In addition to the list of available recovery programs and services available to North Carolina businesses, the website lists locations of disaster recovery centers where people may seek personal assistance from trained staff members. Businesses that are seeking federal, state or local contracts in disaster recovery such as debris removal or furnishing necessary supplies can also obtain guidance at the website.

For further information on business recovery resources available in North Carolina, visit sbtcd.org/hurricanemattthew

supporting Pepsi Bottling Ventures' expansion plans. They include the [North Carolina General Assembly](#), the [Rural Infrastructure Authority](#), the [North Carolina Community College System, N.C. Transportation](#), [Robeson County](#), the [Town of St. Pauls](#) and [North Carolina's Southeast Regional Partnership](#).

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N.C. in the News

- [\[Video\] Secretary Skvarla joins host Chris William to discuss House Bill 2, the Carolina economy and, what he calls, the number one issue for every business.](#) (*Carolina Business Review* - November 4)
- [Environment, education, economics must be right to lure advance manufacturers](#) (*WRAL TechWire* - November 4)
- [State Scores More High Marks For Economy](#) (*WilmingtonBiz.com* - November 3)
- [North Carolina's "marketer-in-chief" weighs in on incentives, deals, HB2 impact](#) (*Charlotte Business Journal* - October 28)
- [Sealed Air's investment in its Charlotte campus could reach \\$125M](#) (*Charlotte Business Journal* - October 28)

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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