

sync[®] NEWS & OPPORTUNITIES FROM N.C. COMMERCE



(L-R) Jay Wagner, Mayor of High Point; Jim Bostian, Aetna Market President for N.C.; Governor Cooper; and Louis Finkel, CVS Health.

High Point to See 300 New Jobs as Gov. Cooper Announces Aetna Expansion

Aetna, a CVS Health business, is growing its presence in North Carolina and will add more than 300 new employees in High Point by the end of 2020, **Governor Roy Cooper** announced February 21. The business will invest approximately \$2.5 million to upgrade its facilities and equipment in conjunction with this expansion.

"North Carolina attracts flagship operations from the nation's leading business and financial service firms for good reason," said Governor Cooper. "In addition to our state's favorable business climate, organizations like Aetna know that North Carolina's commitment to education and workforce development will provide the hard-working professionals they'll need to support their business for years to come."

Aetna offers a broad range of traditional, voluntary and consumer-directed health insurance products and related services. Aetna's customers include employer groups, individuals, college students, and part-time and hourly workers, as well as health plans, health care providers, and governmental units, among others. The expansion in High Point will grow the business' presence in North Carolina and add clinical care management and customer service positions, including roles for bswift, Aetna's benefits administration technology and services business, and Aetna One Advocate, an integrated clinical and service model.

"Our growing investment in the community and economy of



(L-R) Russ Rogerson, President & CEO, Iredell County Economic Development Corporation; Commerce Chief Deputy Secretary Liz Crabill; and Tim Condron, President & COO, BestCo.

Manufacturer BestCo to Expand in Iredell County Creating 141 Jobs

Consumer healthcare products company BestCo will create 141 jobs as it expands its manufacturing center in Iredell County, **Governor Roy Cooper** announced February 20. The company will invest an additional \$47.5 million in the facility, located in Mooresville.

"Companies choose to invest in communities where they'll be able to succeed, and BestCo decided to expand in Mooresville because it knows this community," **Governor Cooper** said. "Employers that know North Carolina know we have the talent, infrastructure and businesses climate they need to thrive."

N.C. Commerce Chief Deputy Secretary Liz Crabill headlined an event in Mooresville to mark the expansion.

BestCo began as a confectioner and is now a leading developer of consumer healthcare products, including over-the-counter drug products and dietary supplements. The company creates new medication and supplement delivery formats with flavor appeal, such as chewable supplements. The company offers product development and testing, manufacturing, packaging and marketing services to private label and contract manufacturing clients in the consumer healthcare and retail industries, including companies in the Fortune 100. BestCo was founded in 1976 as Beacon Sweets in Newark, New Jersey.

"BestCo is honored to be considered for this

High Point reflects the strength of its talent pool as well as the business' commitment to improving the health care experience for individuals and families across North Carolina," said **Jim Bostian, Aetna Market President for North Carolina**, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Arkansas. "Our job growth in High Point is the result of strong customer interest in innovative benefits administration and value-driven, patient-centered care."

"Companies with an existing presence in our state who choose to expand here provide the best proof of North Carolina's strength as a business location," said **North Carolina Commerce Secretary Anthony M. Copeland**. "I'm pleased to see Aetna's first-hand experience gives them confidence to move forward with this expansion in High Point."

The North Carolina Department of Commerce and the Economic Development Partnership of N.C. (EDPNC) led the state's support for the business' expansion. No grants from the state's discretionary incentive programs were used for this recruitment.

Partnering with the [North Carolina Department of Commerce](#) and the [Economic Development Partnership of N.C.](#) on this project were the [North Carolina Community College System](#), the [City of High Point](#), the [High Point Economic Development Corporation](#), and the [Guilford County Economic Development Alliance](#).

[Read more.](#)

Rural Communities Receive \$4.1 Million in Grants, Attracting 153 New Jobs

The North Carolina Rural Infrastructure Authority (RIA) approved eleven requests totaling \$4,127,500 at its February 21 board meeting. The requests include commitments to create a total of 460 jobs, 307 of which were previously announced. The public investment in these projects will attract more than \$69 million in private investment.

"Smart investments in infrastructure are essential to strengthening rural North Carolina communities," **Commerce Secretary Anthony M. Copeland** said. "By awarding these new grants, the Rural Infrastructure Authority continues to help these communities prepare for economic development that creates good jobs."

"With the projects approved today, rural areas of North Carolina have new resources to help attract jobs, support business expansion and prepare sites for future development," said **Commerce Assistant Secretary for Rural Economic Development Kenny Flowers**. "The Rural Economic Development Division at Commerce and the Rural Infrastructure Authority work closely with leaders in rural communities to facilitate opportunities for economic growth."

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

First NCWorks Local Innovation Fund Grants Awarded

Six local partnerships across North Carolina have won grants totaling almost \$1.5 million to support efforts to connect people with the skills they need to get good-paying jobs, **Governor Roy Cooper** announced February 26. Governor Cooper made the announcement at the North Carolina Research Campus location of Rowan-Cabarrus Community College, lead partner

grant to support our growth initiatives and investments," said **Tim Condron, President and Chief Operating Officer of BestCo LLC**. "We are blessed to be part of a community and a state that values and invests in fast growing businesses. We have been in the community and creating jobs for over 30 years and this is the beginning of a new and exciting chapter for BestCo."

"BestCo began as a candy company and used that knowledge of customer tastes to make medicines and supplements more appealing," said **Secretary of Commerce Anthony M. Copeland**. "This kind of innovation - taking a passion and applying it to other industries - thrives in North Carolina, and I am proud to welcome BestCo's expansion in Mooresville."

Salaries for the new jobs will vary by position but will average \$48,308, higher than the Iredell County average wage of \$47,345.

A performance-based grant of \$150,000 from the One North Carolina Fund will help facilitate BestCo LLC's expansion of its existing facility in North Carolina.

In addition to [North Carolina Commerce](#) and the [Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina](#), other key partners in the project include the [North Carolina General Assembly](#), the [North Carolina Community College System](#), [Centralina Workforce Development Board](#), [NCWorks](#), the [City of Mooresville](#), and [Iredell County](#).

[Read more.](#)



Podcast Spotlights Asset-based Economic Development Effort in Graham County

An initiative in Graham County grounded in the principles of asset-based economic development and highlighting the outdoor industry is the focus of the latest edition of the *First in Future* podcast from N.C. State's Institute for Emerging Issues.

Sophie Paulos, Graham County's economic development director and Noah Wilson, Project Manager, Growing Outdoors, Mountain BizWorks speak in the podcast about the Growing Outdoor Partnership,

for one of the innovative programs awarded a grant.

"Building a job ready North Carolina requires creativity and collaboration among employers, educators, and communities across our state," Governor Cooper said. "These grants will enable innovative partnerships to help workers improve their job skills through opportunities like customized training, apprenticeships and work-based learning so they can be ready for the jobs of today and tomorrow."

Three programs received two-year implementation grants, which are designed to assist communities that already have a collaborative team in place, an innovative idea ready to go, and the local support needed to be successful.

- Pathways to Purpose (Brunswick County): A \$400,000 grant will support a program to train construction and repair workers to fix damage from Hurricane Florence.
- RE-Build your Future (Rowan and Cabarrus counties): A \$400,000 grant will support a project to provide post-secondary training to formerly incarcerated individuals to work in the light construction industry.
- WNC Early Childhood Workforce Development Program (Buncombe, Madison, Henderson and Transylvania counties): A \$400,000 grant will expand a program started in Buncombe County to train more early childhood educators. The program will address the shortage of early childhood teachers by recruiting candidates in under-resourced communities and providing them with training, substitute placement and coaching.

Three programs received one-year capacity grants to help build additional ability to strengthen partnerships, identify community needs and resources, and build local support.

- Rural Transportation (Wilkes County): A \$98,013 grant will support the development of an action plan for workforce transportation in the area.
- Region Q Unified Communications Plan (Beaufort, Bertie, Hertford, Martin and Pitt counties): A \$100,000 grant will support their efforts to work with both the business community and job seekers.
- Comprehensive Workforce and Education Data Project (Mecklenburg County): A \$100,000 grant will better use data from multiple sources to understand the region's workforce needs, education and training resources, and challenges.

The six grants will be funded by Commerce's Division of Workforce Solutions. Applications submitted were reviewed by teams of workforce and innovation experts with six out of 34 applications selected to receive funds.

[Read more.](#)

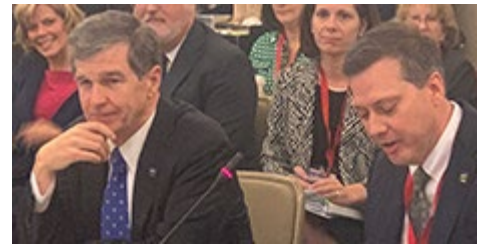


which is an alliance of counties, companies and organizations across western North Carolina that have taken a chance on an economic development approach that focuses less on hunting 'elephants' and instead embraces a local partnership model that works to optimize local assets for growth.

A POWER grant from the North Carolina office of the Appalachian Regional Commission supports the initiative.

[PODCAST: First in Future](#)

Read more: [Outdoor Gear Builders Awarded \\$124,250 to Advance Industry Jobs and Business in the Area](#)



Governor Cooper (left) and ARC Federal Co-Chair Tim Thomas at the ARC February 24 meeting.

Governor Cooper Co-Chairs ARC Meeting in Washington D.C.

New data released last week at a meeting co-chaired by Governor Cooper shows that the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) invested \$125.6 million in 522 economic development projects during FY 2018. These region wide investments will be matched by \$188.7 million, and will attract an additional \$1.5 billion in leveraged private investment into Appalachia. In addition, these investments are projected to create or retain 26,600 jobs, as well as train or educate 34,000 students and workers.

The results were discussed at the ARC's Quorum Meeting, co-hosted by ARC Federal Co-Chair Tim Thomas and North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper, who is serving as ARC's 66th States' Co-Chair throughout 2019.

[Read more.](#)

Applications Being Accepted for ARC Summer Educational Opportunity at Oak Ridge

Two residential, hands-on learning institutes focusing on math, science, and technology for high school students and teachers in Western North Carolina will once again be offered by the Appalachian Regional Commission this summer. The opportunity offers a chance to study at the U.S. Department of Energy's Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) and the Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORISE) in Oak Ridge, Tennessee.

The sessions run July 6-19 for high school students and teachers and July 13-19 for middle school students.

The program offers students a unique opportunity to work with research scientists on relevant math and scientific topics facing the world in the 21st century. Middle school students, in the one week academy, and high school students and teachers, in the two week institute, work in teams on research projects during with each team comprising three to six students in the middle school academy and three to six students and teachers in the high school institute. The team approach provides an opportunity to conduct research activities and solve problems in a group setting. Research topics and activities may include such areas as biofuels and alternative energy.

Applications and more information can be found [online at nccommerce.com](http://nccommerce.com)



Commerce Chief Deputy Secretary Liz Crabill in Asheville yesterday (March 4).

Southeastern Workforce Professionals Convene in Asheville

Chief Deputy Secretary Liz Crabill welcomed more than 700 workforce development professionals from eight states yesterday at an important regional conference held in Asheville.

Crabill addressed the joint conference of the Southeastern Employment and Training Association (SETA) and the North Carolina Employment and Training Association (NCETA), held at the Omni Grove Park Inn. In her remarks, Crabill discussed Governor Cooper's *NC Job Ready* initiative and the importance of a trained, adaptable workforce to economic development. She highlighted North Carolina's innovative workforce programs and projects like Finish Line Grants and Regional Advanced Manufacturing Pipeline (RAMP) East.

Workforce development is a key component in N.C. Commerce's work to prepare communities for economic development success. Deputy Secretary Crabill noted that just over 40 percent of the North Carolina Department of Commerce's employees are in its Workforce Solutions division.

On Our Radar

- [Report: Educational Attainment - the 'leaky pipeline' of students and implications for workforce development - \(UNC-Chapel Hill; Carolina Demography - February 18\)](#)
 - [New Website: ncCarolinaCore.com \(Carolina Core - February 25\)](#)
 - [Plan creates roadmap for 450 new jobs over several years \(N.C. Main St. & Rural Planning Center project\) \(Columbus County Jobs Foundation - February 26\)](#)
 - [Upcoming Event: Southeast Region Federal and Defense Textile Summit \(April 23-24, 2019\) \(North Carolina Military Business Center\)](#)
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N.C. in the News

- [Sec. Copeland likes what he sees in Chatham's megasites, efforts](#) *News & Observer* - February 28)
- [Luxury yacht maker with Fortune 500 clients to expand in eastern NC \(RIA Building Reuse Project\)](#) *Triangle Business Journal* - February 22)

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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