



## Mega-site project update

The regional team working together to create a mega-site in northeastern Randolph County has one goal - an economic game changer for the Triad and for Randolph County and Greensboro. A mega-site is a large land tract, 1,000 acres minimum, suitable for a major manufacturer such as an automotive assembly operation. Key elements include highway and rail access, industrial sized utility services, and access to a large workforce. The Greensboro Liberty mega-site has those assets and a unique regional partnership committed to success.

Progress continues on land assembly with 1,350 acres under control. That effort has been led and funded by the private sector for this project. The Randolph County Development Corporation is working on site certification, an in-depth evaluation and planning process that verifies that the site is ready for development by a client on a timely basis. Significant planning and evaluation has been completed but additional properties must be assessed. Having an available, qualified, competitive site is the big first step to be considered for major projects.

North Carolina is the only southeastern state except Florida that does not have an auto plant. The actual economic impact of ten auto plants located in Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Texas is on average: \$3,052 billion investment, 4,860 factory jobs, and 11,129 supplier jobs. That does not count jobs created by new income spent on housing, retail, health care, and recreation. Such a project would help reverse the economic distress caused by the regional loss of 90,000 jobs over the last 15 years. The Piedmont Triad region is ranked No. 1 in the Southern Auto Corridor by *Southern Business & Development* as the spot that can support a new assembly plant based on labor availability and quality, location, and manufacturing history.

## Pathways to Prosperity

Asheboro City Schools, Randolph Community College, and Randolph County Schools are partnering on a "Pathways to Prosperity" program to link work and learning through pathways that align with the regional labor market demand. A strategic planning process is underway that includes industry, community leaders, government and economic advisors. The focus is on Grades 9-14 to insure that many more young people complete high school, attain a postsecondary credential with currency in the labor market, and begin a career while leaving open the prospect of further education. The Randolph County focus is advanced manufacturing.

There are four key areas of work: 1) employer engagement, 2) career pathways that link high school to postsecondary curriculum, 3) robust career information and advising system starting in the middle grades, and 4) intermediaries to connect employers and schools and serve as champions for the program. This is an exciting initiative and direct response to connect students with careers through technical education.

## Business Announcements

**Technimark** has announced a major five-year expansion of its Asheboro operation that will include creation of 224 new jobs and investment of \$46 million in construction of a new plant and expanded capacity in its existing plants. Technimark is a home-grown industry success story. Since their founding in 1983, the company has grown to be one of the county's largest employers and tax payers. They are a global operation, operating in Asheboro, Mexico, Germany, and China, producing a variety of plastic designed and molded products for packaging, consumer and industrial customers.

**Thomas Built Buses** has selected its Fairfield Road operation for expansion and increased production. Thomas Buses is a leading school bus manufacturer and a division of Daimler Trucks North America. The company was founded in High Point in 1916. The plant is located in Archdale and High Point, Randolph and Guilford Counties, straddling the invisible county line. The project will create 226 new jobs in the next two years and invest \$11.8 million in the plant, more than \$4 million of that in Archdale. The project will increase capacity by 25% to meet growing demand for school buses.

**Kennametal** has been approved for local incentives for expansion of its Asheboro operation. The expansion will create 31 new jobs with related investment of \$12 million over five years. Kennametal produces very specialized, high tech carbide cutting tools at the Asheboro operation that employs 127 workers today.

**Talbert Manufacturing** has purchased the Ferree Trailer Company in Liberty. Talbert was founded in 1938 and is based in NW Indiana where they produce heavy capacity custom trailers and specialized transportation equipment. The purchase will provide additional manufacturing production capacity and build on the quality Ferree Trailer brand. Talbert will operate as Liberty Trailers LLC. They plan to relocate some manufacturing to Liberty and will add 53 new jobs over four years, while retaining the existing Ferree employees.

**H&H Furniture Industries** is considering expansion of its upholstered furniture operation to a vacant 51,500 square foot building in Seagrove. H&H is already the largest employer in the Seagrove area and experiencing growing demand that requires additional capacity. The Town of Seagrove is submitting a Building Reuse Grant to the NC Department of Commerce for the project that is expected to create 20 new jobs with new investment of \$500,000.

## EDC News & Announcements

**Randolph Hospital** was recognized by the Joint Commission, the accrediting body for more than 4,000 hospitals. Randolph Hospital achieved top performer status in four quality measures: heart attack, heart failure, pneumonia, and surgical care. This is the second consecutive year they have been recognized for quality patient care in these categories.

**The EDC partnered with Kim Price, owner of Safe-T-Works**, to offer a seminar on November 13 to share information with our Randolph County companies and partners about DOT changing regulations and compliance requirements. Companies are required to train and test employees that drive a commercial or transport vehicle of any kind or who operate heavy machinery. Safe-T-Works provides full service testing, screening and compliance today across NC and other states.

**Congratulations to Jorge Lagueruela, President and founder of Trinity Furniture** for his selection as High Point University Alumnus of the Year. Jorge is a member of the RCC Board of Trustees, past member of the Randolph County EDC Board, active supporter and Board member of the Archdale Trinity YMCA, and four-time member of the Triad Fast 50 recognizing the fastest growing companies in the Piedmont Triad.

The EDC thanks and honors two outstanding leaders and supporters of economic development that are retiring after decades of service. **Harold Holmes, Chairman of the Randolph County Board of Commissioners**, is retiring after 20 years of service on the Board. He was recognized as the 2014 Partner in Progress by the Randolph County EDC for his tireless commitment to economic development and positive growth across our community.

**County Manager Richard Wells** will also retire following decades of service to Randolph County, including the last 8 years as County Manager. Richard brought an entrepreneurial approach to county government, first as the long time director of the Randolph County Library System and then at the helm of County government. He led the innovative project to renovate the historical courthouse using county employees and proceeds from timber sales at the closed landfill. He also led the way to turn an underutilized county asset into a revenue source to meet solid waste needs with the pending regional landfill. He has been an outstanding member of the EDC Board during his service.

**Kevin Franklin, Existing Business & Industry Coordinator**, completed the first year of the Economic Development Institute, a credentialed training program associated with the International Economic Development Council. This is the first year of a three-year program that provides comprehensive training in the various components of economic development, through the University of Oklahoma College of Continuing Education.

**The Strategic Infrastructure Planning Group** will meet on January 14, 2015 at Randolph Community College. The group is composed of local and state government representatives and business leaders with a focus on planning and preparation for future development. The purpose is to improve communication and coordination of strategic infrastructure planning for our county, cities, and towns, and to be informed and prepared for future development. The meeting will include presentations from funding agencies for water and sewer utilities. Presenters include NC DENR Division of Water Infrastructure, NC Dept. of Commerce Rural Division Economic Infrastructure Programs, and USDA Rural Development.

**Congratulations to Hal Johnson**, named new County Manager to succeed Richard Wells. Johnson has more than 35 years of service as the Director of Planning & Zoning for Randolph County. He has received statewide recognition for best practices including the state's first centralized permitting office, introduction of the property development advisory team, and county land use plan.

## Partnership News...

Randolph County Partnership is the member organization of the EDC. Through their dues, our members invest in economic development in Randolph County in marketing, recruitment, existing business and industry services, and industrial product development. Partner members are listed on the EDC website, included in existing business & industry directories, and receive services and referrals from the EDC. **Partnership members are listed below based on their renewal dates.**

Please visit the website, [www.rcedc.com](http://www.rcedc.com) for member information and click on Development Team.

Welcome the new member of the Randolph County Partnership...

➔ **Sentry Fire Protection** –Fire sprinkler contractor specializing in small retail tenant improvements, as well as large commercial and industrial projects.

Thanks to the following companies that recently renewed their membership with the Randolph County EDC Partnership.

## Plantinum

Randolph Electric Membership Corporation

## Gold

Randolph Hospital

## Silver

CenturyLink

## Bronze

Best Cartage/Best Logistics

Datamark Graphics, Inc.

Euliss Propane Co.

Express Employment Professionals

Heart of North Carolina Visitors Bureau

Insurance Associates of the Triad

Randolph County Schools

Shelco, LLC

Stimmel Associates, PA

The John Plant Company

The Wooten Company

UltraCraft

Wayne Industries, Inc.

WeaverCooke Const., Kirkland, Inc.

Committee volunteers are welcome. The Industrial Product Development, Marketing and Membership Committees are forming. Email Lisa Bennett at [lbennett@rcedc.com](mailto:lbennett@rcedc.com) or call the office at 336.626.2233 if you are interested in serving on an EDC Committee this year.

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