

Randolph County Developments

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Renfro Announces Retirement from EDC

In December, long-time EDC president **Bonnie Renfro** announced that she will retire at the end of June. Renfro joined the EDC in 1995 and took the helm as president in 1999. In her early years she created the EDC's existing business and industry program in an effort to effectively address the needs of established industry. Although commonplace now in economic development organizations, ours was one of the early such programs established in the state. Renfro's leadership has had a significant impact on Randolph County, crafting the current program of work and overseeing a wide variety of projects and initiatives. She helped many companies locate across Randolph County during her tenure, including companies as varied as Americhem, Sealy, Malt-o-Meal (now Post), and Rheem just to name a few. Most recently, she has had a profound impact on the development of the Greensboro-Randolph Megasite. She has provided leadership as a board member of a variety of organizations in the community and currently sits on the Board of Trustees for Randolph Community College.

In addition to the community engagement, Renfro has garnered respect statewide as an economic developer. She has served as Director and President of the NC Economic Developers Association and was appointed by Governor Perdue to serve as a member of the NC Economic Development Board. Regionally, she currently serves on the Piedmont Triad Economic Development Council where she chairs the workforce development committee.

Renfro's last day with the EDC will be June 30.

Business News & Announcements

Acme-McCrary Corporation will soon be acquired by global textile giant MAS Capital. Headquartered in Asheboro, Acme-McCrary has been a fixture in the community since its founding in 1909. The company currently has 277 fulltime employees in Asheboro and operates facilities in Chatham County and Honduras. All 277 local jobs will be retained as a part of the purchase agreement, and MAS plans to add 133 new jobs and invest \$20 million in equipment and facility renovation. Acme's plant locations will become Sri Lanka-based MAS Capital's first production facilities in the western hemisphere, a move designed to better meet customer demands on this side of the globe. MAS produces sportswear, intimate wear, and swimwear and has strong relationships with brands such as Nike, lululemon, Victoria's Secret, Columbia, and others. The new company, which will remain headquartered in Asheboro, will be called MAS ACME USA. The City of Asheboro and Randolph County held a joint public hearing on March 20, at which performance-based local incentives totaling \$300,000 were approved. The pending acquisition is expected to close in April, and multiple news outlets have reported more details on the story which can be accessed [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#). www.acme-mccrary.com www.masholdings.com

Asheboro-based **AEC Narrow Fabrics** is celebrating 30 years in business. Founded in 1986 as Asheboro Elastics Corporation, the company now has manufacturing facilities in North Carolina, Virginia, El Salvador, and Honduras. A February [article](#) in Bed Times Magazine provides an outstanding overview and history of the company. The company produces woven and knitted narrow fabrics – both elasticized and non-elasticized – for multiple markets including bedding, apparel, automotive, and medical. www.aecnarrowfabrics.com

Americhem is [celebrating](#) 75 years of business after turning 75 on November 29, 2016. In recognition of the anniversary, a large banner has been placed on the front of the Americhem facility in Liberty. The company manufactures color concentrates and additives for the plastics industry. www.americhem.com

Amor Furniture announced in February that it is relocating from Staley to a 50,000 square foot facility in the Ramseur community. An [article](#) in the Courier-Tribune states that company manager Spiro Laousis anticipates that the move will ultimately lead to creation of 30 new jobs for the company which manufactures promotional upholstered furniture and bedding. www.amorfurniture.com

Atlantic Torque Converter has outgrown its shop in Sophia and relocated to a larger facility at 476 US Hwy 311 Ext. in Randleman. The company builds torque converters for all makes and models of vehicles. www.atlantictorqueconverters.com

According to a February 16 [article](#) in Furniture Today, **Baker Furniture** has been acquired by Samson International Holdings. Formerly owned by Kohler Company, Baker has two production facilities in North Carolina – an upholstered furniture plant in the Randolph County portion of High Point, and a case goods plant in Hildebran. Baker Furniture is known for its high end furniture which is prized for its quality and craftsmanship. www.bakerfurniture.com

Industrial supply business **Core Supply** has relocated from a 4,000 square foot space in north Asheboro to a 40,000 square foot downtown textile mill most recently occupied by Specialty Garment Company. According to a February 18 [article](#) in the Courier-Tribune, the owners plan to grow into the facility over time as their services and customer base expands.

The City of Trinity and Randolph County have approved matching funds for a \$367,500 state infrastructure grant to ensure that Trinity-based **Gary J. Younts Machine Co.** expands in Trinity. The grant will cover 75% of the cost of extending sewer to the expansion site. The 29 year old business has outgrown its building and plans to construct four new 15,000 square foot buildings on a nearby parcel, investing an estimated \$4 million. Younts will create at least 15 new jobs over a two year period, more than doubling the current workforce of 14. Younts Machine is a job shop which manufactures screw machine parts for a wide variety of customers.

In January, **GFM Industries** purchased the former Roush Racing facility in Liberty. GFM relocated to the facility last year under a lease agreement and subsequently negotiated for the purchase of the property. GFM Industries maintains two businesses in the facility: ParkLiner manufactures lightweight fiberglass travel trailers, and Bexley Furniture supplies ParkLiner and other external customers. www.parkliner.com

Trinity start-up **GhostStrike™ Fishing**, a division of AIMED Corp., launched a successful national product debut in February at the Central Carolina Boat & Fishing Expo in Greensboro. The product will be manufactured and distributed in Trinity beginning in April. GhostStrike™ is a new chemical photo-luminescent technology packaged into a dispensing syringe which allows the fast-setting, light-emitting glow material to easily be applied to any type of fishing lure or bait. The glowing bait/ lure attracts fish even in the darkest water. The product is the brain child of business partners and avid fishermen Rob Vance, president of Scientific Chemical, Inc. in Greensboro, and Keith Fraley, owner of Pallet Plus, Inc. in Trinity. “It’s all about the excitement of catching the big one!” say the partners, whose customers already run the gamut from fresh water professional tournament fishermen to deep sea sport fishing. They anticipate that the start-up will create 17 local jobs and are making plans for expansion to four other U.S. locations to meet anticipated regional demand. www.ghoststrikefishing.com

On February 15 Asheboro-based **Klaussner Home Furnishings** [announced](#) that it had been acquired by Monomoy Capital Partners, a private equity firm based in New York. The press release states that the company’s management team will remain intact and will retain a minority ownership stake. According to CEO Bill Wittenberg, “This transaction will provide further operational capabilities and instant capital for major growth

which is what we have been positioning the company for over the past six years. Klaussner is ready for the next chapter. ” Over the company’s 50+ year history in Asheboro, Klaussner has grown to become one of the largest employers in Randolph County with a fulltime workforce of approximately 1,000. Klaussner manufactures and distributes residential upholstered and outdoor living furniture. www.klaussner.com

Momentum Group was named a 2016 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award winner by U.S. Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker. According to the company [press release](#), the award is “the nation’s highest Presidential honor for performance excellence.” The award recognizes performance excellence in the areas of leadership; strategy; customers; measurement, analysis and knowledge management; workforce; operations; and results. Momentum Group owns and operates the Momentum Textiles facility in Archdale which serves as a fabric warehouse and distribution center. www.memosamples.com/momentum_textiles.shtml

Pilgrim’s Pride Corporation is investing \$13 million to renovate and equip a shuttered feed mill adjacent to the hatchery at its Staley property. Once the renovation is complete, the mill will process organic feed. The project will result in creation of up to 17 new direct jobs in Staley. Pilgrim’s also anticipates growing operations in the region to be positively impacted by the re-opened feed mill. The investment and job creation has leveraged a total of \$475,000 in state grants, including \$75,000 for a Building Reuse Grant, and \$400,000 for a Community Development Block Grant to assist with the extension of a Liberty water line to the site. Pilgrim’s Pride is one of the largest poultry producers in the U.S., producing over 34 million birds a week. www.pilgrims.com

Asheboro-based **Sapona Plastics** has purchased the former Luck’s Beans property in Seagrove and plans to invest over \$500,000 to renovate the 91,000 square foot former Luck’s warehouse, allowing Sapona to grow its business. Grill brush manufacturing will be relocated from the Asheboro facility to Seagrove, freeing space for investment of over \$1.4 million in new equipment over a two-year period, during which time the company is also committed to creating and retaining at least 25 new jobs. The Town of Seagrove has approved submission of a \$250,000 Building Reuse Grant to NC Commerce to help with renovation costs, and Randolph County will consider participating in the grant match at its April meeting. Grant awards will be announced on April 20. Sapona Plastics is an injection molding facility which manufactures a wide variety of products including grill brushes, lip balm tubes, fiber optics products, and many more items. www.saponaplastics.com

SouthCorr Packaging is considering an expansion of nearly 50,000 square feet at its Asheboro production facility. The proposed investment would exceed \$8 million and the company would create 22 new fulltime jobs. The company has been approved for local performance-based grants of \$190,000 and applications are pending for state grants totaling \$275,000. The expansion would allow for installation of another production line which would serve a different market segment. The expansion project is competitive with other corporate facilities, and a location decision is anticipated in April. SouthCorr is a corrugated sheeting facility. www.southcorrpackaging.com

A January [press release](#) announced the acquisition of Randleman-based **United Brass Works** by Bradford Equities Management LLC, “a private equity firm founded in 1974 that focuses on acquiring high-quality middle market companies in the United States in partnership with management.” According to the release, the transaction closed in the summer of 2016. Founded in 1910, United Brass Works manufactures high-quality industrial valves for a variety of applications. www.ubw.com

On March 13, Ethisphere [announced](#) its [2017 list](#) of the World’s Most Ethical Companies. Among the 124 honorees were two companies with Randolph County ties – **The Timken Company** was listed for the seventh consecutive year, and **Kennametal** for the sixth consecutive year. Timken has a bearing plant in Randleman and Kennametal manufactures industrial end mills in Asheboro.

Photographer Tim Coffey is shining a light on manufacturers across the state, and he’s now at work in Randolph County. Coffey’s online project is called Carolina Works, and it’s a celebration of North Carolina manufacturers. His goal is to photograph manufacturers in all 100 counties of the state. In his words, “I want this project to lift

people up and feel good about manufacturing in North Carolina. From what I've seen so far, there are some phenomenal manufacturers in Randolph County." Coffey has completed a photo shoot at **Elastic Therapy, Inc.** in Asheboro and plans to visit **Trinity Furniture** in Trinity, **D&D Enterprises** in Level Cross, and **EG Industries** in the Seagrove area, businesses that offer a great representative sample of the county's core industries of textiles, furnishings, machining, and plastics. Photos of Randolph companies are being uploaded as Coffey completes his shoots. The project can be viewed online via his [blog](#) as well as on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).



Megasite Project Update

Development of the Greensboro-Randolph Megasite project remains a top priority for Randolph County and our regional partners, and significant strides continue to be made. Recent updates since our last newsletter include:

- The City of Greensboro has been [awarded](#) a total of \$8.418 million in grants by Golden LEAF and NC Commerce to help with the cost of extending infrastructure.
- Duke Energy has completed an exhaustive study to determine the route for the power lines which will serve the megasite. Duke has published an [online interactive map](#) with detailed route information.
- A [marketing video](#) has been released featuring Randolph County native and NASCAR legend, Richard Petty.

Randolph Workforce Initiatives

Apprenticeship Randolph is now a reality with 13 companies participating in collaboration with RCC, Asheboro City Schools, Randolph County Schools, and Uwharrie Charter Academy. High school students have been introduced to the opportunity and rising seniors must apply for positions. Students who successfully complete the four-year program will have a career opportunity, marketable job skills, a journeyman certification, and a two-year college degree with no out of pocket expenses. For more info, visit www.apprenticeshiprandolph.com.

TriadWorks is spearheading a regional Career Pathways certification effort with four regional workforce development boards serving as the lead organizations. The goal of the initiative is to gather data to support an effort to receive certification designations for the four regions. The emphasis for the Regional Partnership Workforce Development Board, representing Randolph, Alamance, Montgomery, Moore, and Orange Counties, is an Advanced Manufacturing career pathway. A March 6 [article](#) in the Courier-Tribune offers additional details.

Additional EDC News & Announcements

The EDC has participated in multiple **marketing trips** over the past two months with the goal of promoting the community and our sites, including the Greensboro-Randolph Megasite. On February 10, EDC staffers Bonnie Renfro and Kevin Franklin visited with site consultants in Greenville, SC. On February 20, Renfro called on potential clients in Washington, D.C. On March 7-8, Franklin participated in a joint marketing trip to New Jersey and New York City. The trip was sponsored by the Economic Development Partnership of NC and included visits with site selection consultants from seven firms. Renfro traveled to Tucson, AZ March 13-15 to participate in the Site Selectors Guild Annual Conference. The Guild is a consortium of more than 40 of the world's foremost site selection consultants, and conference attendance offered Renfro direct access to these professionals who assist companies with site location decisions. Future marketing trips are also on the calendar for this year.

The EDC hosted its **annual planning retreat** on February 28 and community leaders from across the county attended. As the EDC Board and our local government partners seek ways to enhance our services and program of work, planning retreat participants were led in targeted conversations identifying what is working well, what improvements need to be considered, identifying metrics for measuring success, and immediate action items.

On March 1, Lisa Bennett and Kevin Franklin from the EDC met with the business services team at the Economic Development Partnership of NC. Bennett and Franklin shared information about available sites across the County to better familiarize the EDPNC with our quality sites. The EDPNC markets the state to potential end users and regularly fields requests from companies and consultants seeking viable industrial sites for development.

EDC Partnership News

We are pleased to welcome **SouthCorr Packaging** in Asheboro as a new Partnership member, joining at the Bronze level! SouthCorr is a corrugated sheeting facility located in Asheboro. www.southcorrpackaging.com.

We appreciate recent **Partnership renewals** by the companies listed below.

Diamond (\$2,500)

Technimark

Platinum (\$1,500)

Ace/Avant Concrete Construction, Inc.
Dewberry Engineers
Randolph Health

Gold (\$1,000)

First Bank
Samet Corporation

Silver (\$500)

Acme-McCrary Corporation
Bank of North Carolina
Cherry, Bekaert LLP
ECS Carolinas, LLP
Metals USA
Supertex/Liberty Industries, Inc.

Bronze (\$250) & *Bronze Plus (\$350)

AEC Narrow Fabrics
Best Cartage/Best Logistics
Braxton Culler, Inc.
Brookline Furniture*
Elastic Therapy, Inc./DJO Global
Four Seasons Furniture
Gavin & Cox
Heart of North Carolina Visitors Bureau
NC Zoological Society
Oliver Rubber Company, LLC
Ralph's Frame Shop
Randolph Packing Co., Inc.
RE/MAX Central Realty – Ken Leonard
Sentry Fire Protection Co., Inc.
Stan Beck Insurance
Tower Components, Inc.
Triad Heating & Cooling Inc.
Uwharrie Builders
Wells Fargo Bank

The Randolph County Partnership is the member organization of the EDC. Through annual dues, our members invest in economic development in Randolph County by supporting marketing, recruitment, existing business and industry services, and industrial product development. Partner members are listed on the EDC website and included in existing business and industry directories, and they benefit from services and referrals from the EDC. For member information please visit www.rcedc.com and click on the Development Team tab.

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