

Randolph County Developments

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Fibertex Personal Care Breaks Ground in Asheboro



Photo by Trevor Nuttall

Representatives from the company, state, city, county, and EDC break ground for the new Fibertex facility.

On March 22 the community celebrated a groundbreaking for Fibertex Personal Care's first North American production facility. Although the facility will be located in Asheboro, more than fifty citizens and officials from across the county were on hand to welcome Fibertex Personal Care to Randolph County. The ceremony was the culmination of a months-long site selection process by the company and hard work behind the scenes by many partners including the NC Department of Commerce, EDPNC, the City of Asheboro, Randolph County, property owners Sally and Bryan Thomas, and the EDC. The company made its

location announcement in August of last year, committing to investment of \$115 million and creation of 145 new jobs in Asheboro over a seven-year period.

Six company officials from Denmark, Germany, and the U.S. converged in Asheboro to participate in the celebration and turn the first shovels of dirt on the site. Speakers at the event included Elbert Lassiter, Chair of the EDC Board of Directors, Deputy NC Commerce Secretary Will Miller, Asheboro Mayor David Smith, Randolph County Board of Commissioners Chairman David Allen, and Fibertex Personal Care CEO Mikael Axelsen. On behalf of the City of Asheboro, Mayor Smith presented Mr. Axelsen with an engraved golden shovel which will be displayed in the facility when complete.

The first phase of construction, which began just days after the ceremonial groundbreaking, will house a print line. Additional print lines and nonwoven production lines are slated for future phases of the project.



Photo by Trevor Nuttall

Fibertex Personal Care executive team



Photo by Trevor Nuttall

City officials present a ceremonial golden shovel to Fibertex Personal Care CEO Mikael Axelsen.

County School System Promotes New Workforce Initiative

A new workforce initiative called RandolphWorks will soon be a reality for employers across the county and students in the Randolph County School System. The brainchild of Nancy Cross, CTE director for the school system, RandolphWorks is a work-based learning program designed to answer our local business and industry needs for an engaged workforce in entry-level positions which are often difficult to fill. In addition to filling positions, RandolphWorks also provides businesses the chance to make a life-long difference in students in our low-wealth school district by offering above-minimum-wage employment and support needed for these students to stay in school and earn a high school diploma. Modeled after 12 for Life, a successful program in Carroll County, Georgia, RandolphWorks is a promising program for Randolph County. Employers are already signing on and more are welcome. For more information about the program, visit the RandolphWorks [website](#) or contact Nancy Cross at either 336-318-6062 or ncross@randolph.k12.nc.us.



Public Roll-Out of Triad Talent Alignment Strategy

On May 3, a large crowd convened in Greensboro to receive the results of a year-long effort to develop a talent alignment strategy for the region. The stated purpose of the strategy is “to ensure education and workforce development efforts are aligned with the needs of employers and to coordinate existing education and workforce initiatives currently underway throughout the region.” Simply stated, the goal is to seek to identify job skills of the future and be sure students in the Triad are prepared to fill those jobs.

The study was conducted in three phases. Phase 1 was an analysis of the current workforce, along with an assessment of which industries and occupations were projected to create the most jobs of the next decade. Phase 2 was a supply-demand gap analysis, determining whether educational programs are available to meet the job needs of the future. Phase 3 identifies strategies to ensure that today’s students are prepared for tomorrow’s jobs. Although the strategy identifies five overarching goals, three were emphasized at the May 3 meeting. The first is to ensure that employer engagement in the Triad is coordinated, consistent, and results-oriented. The second is to ensure that disengaged populations are engaged in the workforce and supported in upskilling opportunities. The third is to ensure that the Piedmont Triad is recognized as an attractive destination to live, work, and learn. An article in the Triad Business Journal provides [additional coverage](#) of the event, and all of the project reports and data are available on the alignment strategy [website](#).

Randolph County TDA Produces New Promo Video

On April 19, the Randolph County TDA unveiled a new promotional video for Randolph County. The video features venues and attractions from across the county, from the NC Zoo – our most well-known tourist destination – to little-known gems such as the Carolina Bronze Sculpture Garden in Seagrove. In addition to attracting more visitors and tourism dollars to Randolph County, tools such as this video can also help when recruiting new companies to the area. Available workforce and suitable land or building may top an industrial prospect’s list when seeking a location, but quality of life and amenities for employees are also critical. Videos such as this help the EDC tell Randolph County’s story more effectively. Follow this [link](#) to view the video. For a full listing of attractions and events across the county, visit the Heart of North Carolina Visitors Bureau [website](#).

3 Randolph Census Tracts Recommended as Opportunity Zones

In December of last year, Congress approved the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. A provision of this tax reform legislation allows for the creation of Opportunity Zones in each state, with the goal of attracting investment into low-income areas. According to the [US Department of the Treasury](#), new investments in these Opportunity Zones will receive preferential tax treatment. Treasury will designate the Opportunity Zones based on recommendations from individual states.

North Carolina solicited input from citizens and stakeholders for low-income census tracts to include in its recommendations to Treasury. Of the 1,000+ low-income tracts, 252 were submitted by the state on April 20. Among the 252 were three from Randolph County, one encompassing a portion of north Asheboro and Randleman (tract 314) and two in the northeastern quadrant of the county encompassing Liberty, Staley, and Ramseur (tracts 310 & 312). A [press release](#) from NC Commerce provides more program detail; a census tract map of the county can be viewed [here](#).

NC Labor Commissioner Presents Safety Awards

On April 9, the NC Department of Labor and the Asheboro/Randolph Chamber of Commerce hosted its annual Safety Awards Luncheon to recognize companies and public agencies in the region. Several Randolph County industrial facilities received awards including Asheboro Recycling Center, Matlab, Norcraft Companies (Ultracraft), Post Consumer Brands, the Timken Company, and United Furniture. The Courier-Tribune published the [full list of awards](#).



Business News & Announcements

Asheboro-based **AEC Narrow Fabrics** was recently recognized by Fruit of the Loom as one of its Top 10 Partners for 2016. According to an [announcement](#) on the AEC website, the company was named for “its extraordinary effort, dedication and commitment to Fruit of the Loom brands’ success.” AEC manufactures narrow fabrics for a variety of markets including apparel, home furnishings, medical, automotive, military, and more. www.aecnarrowfabrics.com

In a May 13 Facebook post, **Asheboro Recycling Center** announced the acquisition of Virginia-based Blue Ridge Recycling, LLC. According to the announcement, the “acquisition expands ARC into Virginia and West Virginia and will allow current customers more opportunities to reduce and better manage their waste footprint. Equipment and processing will be managed through the Asheboro location.” Asheboro Recycling Center is a full-service recycling facility serving the recycling needs of individuals and businesses. www.ashebororecycling.com

According to reports in the [Courier-Tribune](#) and the [Triad Business Journal](#), **Covanta** is preparing to expand its North Fayetteville Street location in Asheboro. The company recently invested \$800,000 to purchase adjacent property with road frontage on Pineview Street. A company official acknowledged that an expansion would include additional warehousing, and that details should be finalized by mid-summer. Covanta gained a presence in the Triad in 2014 when it acquired Asheboro-based GARCO, Inc. Covanta has two locations in Asheboro – the N. Fayetteville St. processing facility and the administrative offices on Carl Drive. Headquartered in New Jersey, Covanta is an environmental services company which provides waste management solutions. www.covanta.com

High Point-based **DARRAN Furniture** is the recipient of the prestigious Red Dot Award for Design 2018 for ThinkingQuietly, its innovative acoustic workstation collection. According to DARRAN's [press release](#), ThinkingQuietly was selected out of a pool of 18,000 entries from 59 different countries. The ThinkingQuietly collection "features a signature acoustic material made from recycled plastic bottles that covers the umbrella, screens, desk pads and cable trough to trap sound and reduce noise" by up to 44% in open floorplans. [Red Dot](#) is an internationally recognized award signifying excellent design in the areas of product design, communication design, and design concepts. As a result of its recognition, ThinkingQuietly will be presented in the Red Dot Design Museum in Singapore. DARRAN Furniture is a woman-owned family-operated manufacturer of quality office furniture. www.darran.com



According to a NeoCon [press release](#), **DARRAN** and Trinity-based **Trinity Furniture** are among ten companies which have new permanent showrooms at NeoCon, which is billed as "the premier global platform for commercial interiors." Held each summer in Chicago, NeoCon typically attracts 500 exhibitors and 50,000 attendees, making this show a critical marketing component for companies manufacturing furnishings for the workplace, hospitality, retail, healthcare, education, and government sectors. www.darran.com
www.trinityfurniture.com

In January, **Energizer Holdings** [announced](#) its intent to acquire Spectrum Brands Holdings' global battery and portable lighting business, including Rayovac and Varta, a well-known consumer battery brand in Europe. In late March, the antitrust [waiting period expired](#) without action by the Federal Trade Commission, moving the proposed acquisition one step closer toward a closing which is expected to occur later this year. Energizer's north Asheboro facility is one of the largest cylindrical alkaline battery manufacturing facilities in the world. www.energizer.com

Kennametal's Asheboro plant has recently welcomed two new members to its leadership team. Steve Schrader is the new plant manager, replacing outgoing manager Walter Huckaby, and Erica Schmidt was brought on board as HR manager for the facility. The plant is also in the process of adding a new production line which, when complete, will require some new jobs to be added. Headquartered in Latrobe, PA, Kennametal manufactures a variety of cutting tools and related products to support the metalworking, mining, and construction industries. www.kennametal.com

Asheboro-based **Matlab** is upgrading one of its Asheboro facilities to accommodate additional business. According to the Asheboro building permit report for April, Matlab is investing \$200,000 in the project. Matlab services a variety of customers in multiple industry sectors with quality custom paint and powder finishes. The company has multiple plants in Asheboro in addition to facilities in Ramseur and Greensboro. www.matlabinc.com

According to a [May 10 article](#) in Furniture Today, **Klaussner Home Furnishings** will receive one of the first Manufacturing Excellence Awards from the Home Manufacturing Solutions Expo. The award will be presented on July 18 on the first day of this year's Expo. Klaussner is slated to receive the Domestic Manufacturing Excellence Award for Operational Excellence. Klaussner is one of eight honorees in this inaugural year of the awards.

Klaussner CEO Bill Wittenberg was among several NC furniture industry leaders recently interviewed by PRI's The World for a radio segment titled "North Carolina's Fight to Keep Its Foothold on Furniture." The article touches on some of the past challenges the domestic furniture industry has faced, but also highlights the ways in which North Carolina furniture makers are capitalizing on competitive advantages to keep producing domestically. The audio and a transcript are posted on PRI's [website](#). Headquartered in Asheboro, Klaussner is a manufacturer of upholstered residential furniture and is one of Randolph County's largest private employers. www.klaussner.com

EDC News & Announcements

The City of Archdale has launched an economic development strategic planning process and EDC president Walter Sprouse and vice president Kevin Franklin are serving on the steering committee. The EDC is able to provide input from the industrial perspective. Archdale has hosted two meetings to date and solicited feedback from the community.

Marketing Randolph County remains a top priority for the EDC as evidenced by several recent marketing trips. Since publication of our March newsletter, Walter Sprouse has visited with consultants in New York City, participated in an Industrial Asset Management Council conference in Savannah, and attended a networking function in Greenville, SC. A trip to Chicago to visit with site selection consultants is on the calendar for the end of May.

EDC Partnership News

We greatly appreciate recent **Partnership renewals** by the companies listed below. We currently have 115 private sector members and would welcome new partners. Please direct membership inquiries to Lisa Bennett at 336-626-2233 or lbennett@rcedc.com.

Gold (\$1,000)

First Bank

Silver (\$500)

BB&T
MAS Acme
Metals USA

Bronze (\$250)

Randolph Health Medical Group
Randolph Packing Co., Inc.
Summey Engineering Associates, PLLC

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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