

Q1 2021

DEVELOPMENTS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NEWS FROM NC PUBLIC POWER



SMART STRATEGY with SiteAssist

Innovative program prepares shovel-ready sites for development

Ask corporate executives or industrial site selection consultants what their top priorities are in choosing a place for their company and the list always includes availability of the right land. “There are a wide range of factors that drive the location of projects, but always within the top 10 factors is availability of land that does not have environmental or other issues to prevent it from being permitted for the project they want to build or develop there,” says Carl Rees, Senior Economic Developer at ElectriCities, adding, “another factor is land that is proximate to quality transportation and utility infrastructures.”

Last year we launched the SiteAssist program to help power agency members identify the best opportunities to attract industrial and large commercial development. “Our primary goal with this program is to help public power communities grow new electric load,” Rees says. *(continued p.3)*

PICTURED ABOVE: SiteAssist meeting in Clayton. LEFT TO RIGHT: Brenda Daniels - Manager, Economic & Community Development, ElectriCities; Crystal Morphis - CEO, Creative Economic Development; Patrick Pierce - Economic Development Manager, Town of Clayton; Ethan Poppe - Electric Energy Technician, Town of Clayton; Andy Fusco, Vice President Member Services, ElectriCities

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Great NEWS

APEX

The Apex Downtown Master Plan and Parking Study adopted in 2019 won the Marvin Collins Small Area Planning Award from the N.C. Chapter of the American Planning Association, and came in second place for Citizen Participation in “Downtown Master Plan Citizen Engagement” from N.C. and County Communicators. The plan, developed by Stantec Urban Places, established a transformational vision for Downtown Apex. Implementation of several top identified projects is currently underway.

CONCORD

General Motors is expanding its operations in the Charlotte region. GM Defense LLC, a subsidiary of General Motors, will renovate an existing 75,000-square-foot GM facility in Concord to support the production of Infantry Squad Vehicles (ISV), which GM has a contract to manufacture for the U.S. Army. Construction at the facility is expected to last until spring 2021. The final product, a new production line for the stationary build of ISVs, will create 20 technician jobs.

The improved facility comes on the tails of a recent announcement that GM will open a research and development facility in Concord, as well. The facility will expand GM’s racing and performance capabilities due to its proximity to Charlotte Motor Speedway and several racing teams.

FAYETTEVILLE

Dansons, a global manufacturer of consumer goods, will invest \$27.7 million to locate a distribution center in Fayetteville and create 118 jobs. The company’s product line includes wood pellet fuel, grilling accessories, smokers, and pellet grills.

GREENVILLE

World Cat, a manufacturer of outboard power catamarans for recreational boaters worldwide, will expand its North Carolina operations with a new production facility in Pitt County. The company plans to add 60 jobs and invest \$8.8

DOWNTOWN APEX CONCEPTUAL PLANS AND PARKING STUDY.



million at a site in Greenville. World Cat, a brand of HC Composites LLC, has been headquartered in Tarboro since 2002. The company won the 2019 Governor’s Export Award as a Top Global Reach Exporter for its strong international dealer network. World Cat will maintain the 180-person workforce at its facility in Tarboro.

GREENVILLE

East Carolina University received a nearly \$1.9 million grant from the Golden LEAF Foundation to create the Eastern Region Pharma Center, a manufacturing trading center. The center will address the need for pharmaceutical workers by teaching advanced manufacturing techniques to students and pharmaceutical employees. Pitt, Johnston, Wilson, Nash, and Edgecombe community colleges are also part of the five-year project.

KINSTON

Crown Equipment is investing \$13 million in a manufacturing expansion of its operations in Kinston, bolstered by a \$400,000 performance-based grant from One North Carolina Fund. The expansion is expected to create 130 new jobs, including assemblers,

engineers, machine operators, and support staff, all totaling a \$6.1 million payroll impact.

MORGANTON

J.E. Ekornes USA is planning to expand its furniture manufacturing plant in Morganton. The project scope includes design and construction of a 100,000-square-foot building and purchase and installation of racking; conveyors; and woodworking, assembly, finishing, and handling equipment and systems.

ROBERSONVILLE

The N.C. Rural Infrastructure Authority approved grant requests to local governments that will help create jobs, including a \$130,000 grant to support the reuse of a 64,509-square-foot building in Robersonville. The Jay Group, Ltd., a wholesaler of discount footwear, plans to locate in the renovated building, creating 22 jobs and investing \$334,500 in the project.

ROCKY MOUNT

Fleetwood Homes, a maker of modular homes, is expanding in Rocky Mount. The \$2.1 million investment will create 60 jobs.

STATESVILLE

AirBox Air Purifiers, a producer of portable air purifiers, has moved its manufacturing operations to Statesville. The Austin, Texas-based company moved its manufacturing efforts to the Charlotte region from its previous location in Mount Pleasant, S.C. The new location in Statesville is AirBox's only manufacturing facility.

Smart Strategy with SiteAssist

(continued)

SiteAssist is efficient and designed to serve your needs. ElectriCities consultants collaborate with selected communities to identify potential sites and outline a development strategy, all within a matter of months. "Often, our public power members don't have the capacity to go out and do this on their own," Rees explains, "so we feel that we are helping to fill a void." What's more, SiteAssist complements the SmartSite program; following completion of SiteAssist, your community's site may be a candidate for SmartSites to complete additional due diligence review and certification.



Six public power communities participated in the first round of the program last year, all with great success. Rees says outcomes ranged from finding hundreds to thousands of acres, including potential rail sites in rural settings to compact mixed-use sites in urban areas and everything in-between.

Tapping into extra knowledge resources is what attracted the Town of Clayton to participate in SiteAssist. "The program helped us dig deeper and identify new sites and opportunities here," says Patrick Pierce, Economic Development Director for the Town of Clayton. Pierce says the program has helped Clayton tremendously — and site development is still ongoing. Among

the many benefits, "the program fell in the middle of our comprehensive plan updates," Pierce explains. "SiteAssist has been a really helpful tool, providing important input to make sure we're considering viable sites and planning for future land uses."

**The application
cycle for the 2021
SiteAssist program
is April 12 – May 7.**

"If you're a member of ElectriCities, there's no reason not to take advantage of the opportunity for expertise," says Pierce of Clayton. And the application process is easy: "simply send us a letter of interest," Rees says. To learn more about basic requirements for the letter of interest and the SiteAssist program, contact Carl Rees at 919-760-6315 or crees@electricities.org.

2020 PARTICIPATING COMMUNITIES

- Ayden
- Benson
- Cherryville
- Clayton
- Gastonia
- Rocky Mount

AROUND THE REGION



Greenville was the top place to move to in 2020, according to a recent report by relocation services provider Updater. The company analyzed a random sampling of 1.5 million household moves across the country from January – November 2020 to rank the top 20 locations for relocators. Greenville, N.C. came in No. 1. Raleigh ranked seventh and Wilmington ranked tenth, making North Carolina the most-represented state in the top ten.

Raleigh's Advance Auto Parts plans to open 50 – 100 new stores this year, a contrast from the consolidation of the past three years that resulted in closing 260 stores. The CEO said the company had been optimizing its underperforming stores and is now able to open new ones in high-traffic areas, as well as increase wages to be more competitive.

North Carolina is the 2020 State of the Year, according to *Business Facilities* magazine. It recognized the state for its success in winning projects that create capital investment and new jobs. N.C. also ranked among the top ten states for Best Business Climate, Workforce Development, Manufacturing Employment, and Foreign Direct Investment.



ElectriCities of N.C. has once again been named a Top Utility by *Business Facilities* magazine. The honor highlights the top 12 power players in the national utility sector that are well-positioned to take on the challenges and lead in the year ahead.

The **North Carolina Rural Infrastructure Authority (RIA)** approved 30 grant requests totaling \$12,969,015 to local governments for building improvements. The requests include commitments to create a total of 839 jobs, and the public investment in these projects will attract more than \$528 million in private investment. Public power is well represented by the City of Fayetteville (Cumberland County), City of Rocky Mount (Nash/Edgecombe Counties), City of High Point (Randolph County), Town of Fremont (Wayne County), City of Lexington (Davidson County), and Town of Hertford (Perquimans County).

The RIA also approved five requests under the state's **Industrial Development Fund - Utility Account program**. Public power benefited:

- **Town of Hertford, Perquimans County:** A \$1.5 million grant will help the county provide industrial access at the Hertford Perquimans Marine Industrial Park. Enhancements to the infrastructure at the park are intended to take maximum advantage of the county's waterway assets (Perquimans River and Albemarle Sound) and geographic location to attract marine-related companies, such as boat builders and marine supply/service companies.



- **City of Lumberton, Robeson County:** A \$3,745,640 grant will help the city and county provide infrastructure to develop a planned 215-acre co-owned industrial park. Funds will be used to provide water, sewer, and industrial access to this strategically located site at the intersection of I-95 and I-74.

Good TO KNOW

Jenn Bosser, President & CEO
Iredell County Economic Development Corporation

My favorite movies are: Eddie the Eagle, Sherlock Holmes, Princess Bride, The Tourist

The 3 things I can't live without are: family, music, sports

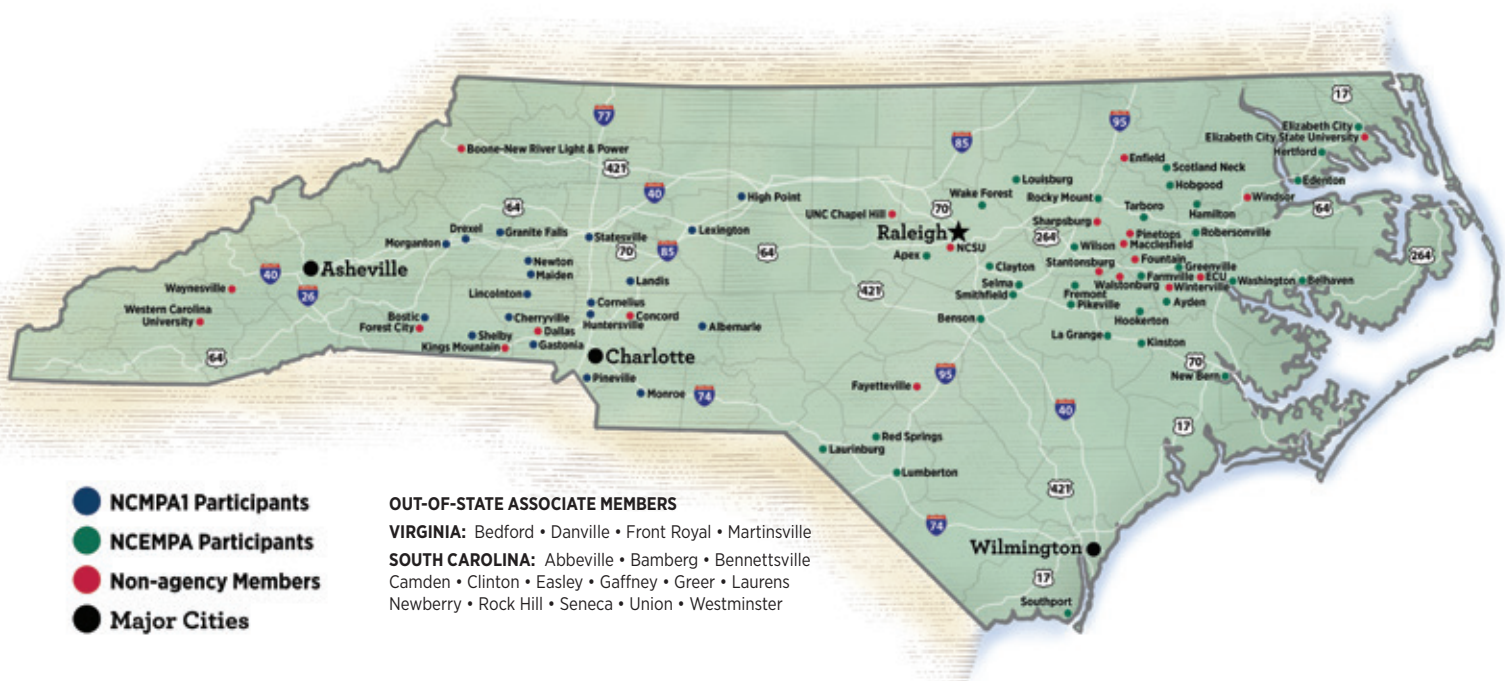
When I welcome a visitor to my town, I always take them to: Our downtowns. I believe our downtowns are the heartbeat of our communities, and here in Iredell we are fortunate to have incredible downtowns full of locally owned small businesses that provide a unique local experience for our visitors.

The most memorable places I've visited are: Glacier National Park, Mont. (one of the most incredible places on earth, definitely go in August during Huckleberry season); The Grand Canyon, Ariz. (you have to see it to appreciate it); Buffalo, N.Y. (from an economic development perspective, this city has an interesting history and is doing some creative things including the revitalization of their downtown waterfront and collaborating with partners to rebuild manufacturing).

Finish the sentence. North Carolina is... amazing! North Carolina is a mini version of the United States. From the mountains to the ocean, lakes, farmland, and urban centers, you can drive a few hours and feel like you are in a totally different place. The people are nice, the pace is a little slower, and the tea is sweet.



Membership



Retail NEWS

Dollar General plans to open 1,050 new stores in 2021. Changing shopper behavior and demand driven by the pandemic have prompted Dollar General to speed up new store openings and renovations of existing stores. The company, which now has 17,000 stores nationwide, said it will also renovate 1,750 stores and relocate 100 more in 2021.

The Buff City Soap franchise is aggressively expanding to new regions outside of its core presence in the South, anticipating opening 150 to 200 new stores per year over the next five years. The brand will push into the Carolinas, Virginia, and Michigan over the next three years. Buff City Soap ideally seeks 2,000 – 3,200 square feet of outparcel retail space located in regional power centers with co-tenants such as Whole Foods Market, Walmart, Target, ULTA Beauty, Starbucks, and Ross. The average household income within a three-mile radius should be at least \$70,000. The soap franchise has proven itself to be successful in both rural small-town communities and larger metropolitan areas.

Mattress brand Casper expects to open 30 to 40 stores per year over the next four years. The digitally native brand, which went public in February 2020 and then stopped new expansion plans because of COVID-19 concerns, is now primed and ready to increase its retail footprint. Markets ripe for growth include affluent suburban areas within North Carolina, Ohio, Connecticut, Georgia, Colorado, Virginia and Texas. Casper seeks approximately 2,000 square feet of space in top-tier malls and retail street-front districts in suburban neighborhoods.



LOCATE SITES

FARMVILLE COMMERCIAL LOTS
4 commercial lots in close proximity to grocery, fast food, Family Dollar
US Highway 258, Farmville, NC 27828
Available Acreage: 1.3-2.4 each
Sale Price: \$228,000-475,000

SCOTLAND NECK BUSINESS PARK SITE
Located in agri-industrial area
Highway 258, Scotland Neck, NC 27874
Available Acreage: 11.8
Sale Price: negotiable

STATESVILLE GOFORTH SITE
Direct access and substantial frontage on I-77
E. Garner Bagnal Blvd and Wall Street, Statesville, NC 28677
Available Acreage: 57.4
Sale Price: \$28,500/acre

LOCATE BUILDINGS

PINEVILLE INDUSTRIAL BUILDING
Office showroom and warehouse space
10150 Pineville Distribution St., Pineville NC 28134
Total Available (sq. ft.): 67,156
Price: negotiable

GREENVILLE SHELL BUILDING
Unfinished shell space zoned for commercial use
4200 Bayswater Rd., Winterville NC 28590
Total Available (sq. ft.): +/- 6,000
Price: \$12-18/sq. ft.

ROCKY MOUNT WAREHOUSE BUILDING
Industrial building with flex space
500 Barnum Rd., Rocky Mount NC 27804
Total Available (sq. ft.): 55,000
Price: negotiable

While we constantly monitor the status of events due to COVID-19, we are always conducting virtual meetings. To see what services we have to offer right now, contact Brenda Daniels to schedule a virtual meeting. To see a full list of upcoming events: <https://www.electricities.com/services/economic-development/>.

East Coast Wings & Grill will open at least seven new restaurants this year.

While cautious with its growth, the brand hopes to open 35-40 new units per year from mid-2022 – 2026. The restaurant chain has sold more franchise deals throughout the Southeast and expects to have growth in suburban markets and college campus towns in states including North Carolina. The chain is focused on opening smaller prototypes, with its average restaurant space in the 2,300 – 3,000-square-foot range.