

SUMMER 2023

DEVELOPMENTS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NEWS FROM NC PUBLIC POWER



Employee connects a Thomas Built Buses Saf-T-Liner C2 Jouley to a fast charging station.

North Carolina Is Fast Becoming an EV Hub

Headquartered in the public power city of High Point, North Carolina, Thomas Built Buses delivered its first electric bus, the Saf-T-Liner® C2 Jouley®, in April 2020. Since then, the company has delivered 400 Jouleys, with sales more than doubling from 2022 to 2023.

“We’re committed to furthering this trend,” said Mark Childers, Powertrain and Technology Sales Manager of Thomas Built Buses.

Fueling the electrification efforts are carbon-reduction mandates in various states and funding opportunities created through the EPA Clean School Bus Program, Childers said. The program supports replacing diesel buses with cleaner, zero- and low-emission alternatives.

In North Carolina, part of the state’s share of the Volkswagen Settlement is funding electric school buses, transit buses, and heavy-duty vehicles, as well as zero-emission vehicle infrastructure.

Mandates and incentives are only part of the story. “Automotive electrification is being driven by climate change and environmental concerns, government policies and incentives, technological advancements, economic factors, consumer attitudes, and corporate commitments,” said Sean Gouda, Senior Manager of Transmission & Distribution Services with Burns & McDonnell. “These factors, combined with a wider shift toward renewable energy, are expected to continue driving the electrification of the automotive sector in the U.S.”

Whatever is driving the electric vehicle (EV) industry forward, North Carolina has the keys to support its growth.

Along with [consistently being ranked a top state for business](#), “North Carolina happens to sit on a pretty rich seam of the material that’s processed into lithium,” said Christopher Chung, CEO of the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina. *(Continued on Page 2)*

A NOTE from Carl

“Roads? Where we’re going, we don’t need roads,” says the affable mad scientist Doc Brown as he climbs into his electric car in the classic movie “Back to The Future.” Decades after the movie’s 1985 release, we still need roads, though they are navigated more and more by motorists in electric vehicles. Home to NASCAR and many of the largest OEM auto parts manufacturers, North Carolina has always been an automotive state. Today, we’re leading the way in the transition to electric vehicles through innovative research, private investment, and public policy. North Carolina’s public power communities are also focused on an electrified future as we ready for both the challenges and opportunities the transition will bring.



Carl Rees, CECD
Manager, Economic and Community Development

❖ **ELECTRICITIES of NC**

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To see a list of
OUR MEMBERS



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“That’s a good thing for North Carolina and a good thing for national security.”

Toyota [chose North Carolina](#) to locate its first-ever North American battery manufacturing plant. And Vietnamese auto manufacturer VinFast [selected North Carolina](#) for its first North American automotive assembly and battery manufacturing plant.

“We see continued opportunity to attract parts of the value chain that makes up vehicle electrification,” Chung said. “In the near term, we expect to continue seeing a lot of what we’ve seen in the past few years, which is companies that are involved in everything from processing the materials that go into the batteries and the battery components, to the battery production, to the vehicle assembly, to the charging infrastructure.”

North Carolina—public power communities in particular—also can deliver on another requirement many companies supporting the EV value chain have: large industrial sites that have requisite infrastructure, access to ready workforce, and highly competitive electric rates.

[ElectriCities’ Smart Sites](#) program provides shovel-ready property for economic development growth in North Carolina public power communities. The program includes valuable due diligence that shortens development time and minimizes risk.

“It’s a fascinating time to be in economic development, because we happen to be doing this work amidst probably one of the biggest economic transformations of a major industry sector,” Chung said.

And North Carolina is well positioned to be a driving force in the transformation. ♦

Top: Gov. Roy Cooper announcing Toyota locating its battery manufacturing plant at the Greensboro-Randolph Megasite in North Carolina. Photo courtesy of N.C. Dept of Commerce.

Bottom: Students are all smiles about Thomas Built Buses’ Saf-T-Liner C2 Jouley electric bus.



SOCIAL MEDIA

Highlights

Follow our social media channels to keep up with all the ways ElectriCities’ economic development team promotes our member communities and the value of public power across the state and the country and around the world.

STAY CONNECTED

- @ElectriCitiesNC
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- company/electricitiesnc
- @ElectriCitiesNC



ElectriCities’ Casey Verburg achieves CEcD designation!



Member mixer in Raleigh spotlights development projects in public power communities.

GOOD TO KNOW

Lindsey Almond

**Economic Development Director
for the City of Albemarle, North Carolina**



My favorite movies are:
Anything with Chris Farley

The three things I can't live without are: Traveling with my family (work hard, play hard!), laughter, and National Public Radio

When I welcome a visitor to Albemarle, I always take them: Outside. We have a beautiful historic downtown that is great for sightseeing with its diverse architecture and colorful murals. Albemarle is my hometown, and I love that there's something here for everyone's tastes, whether that's a craft beer from our new brewery or a treat from the bakery that's been

in business for more than 100 years. Finally, since we're the gateway to the Uwharries, a visit to the mountains and lakes is a must!

The most memorable place I've visited is: Hawaii.

We were stationed there for five years during my husband's naval career. The spirit of aloha is tangible, and there is nothing like it in the world!

Finish the sentence: North Carolina is:

The best of both worlds—mountains and oceans, small towns and urban cities. Everyone can find the place they belong. ♦

FEATURED SITE AND BUILDING

To see a full list of sites, visit: <https://www.electricities.com/econdev/>



SHELBY SHELL BUILDING

Job-Ready Shell Building in Shelby, N.C.
108,500 sq. ft. expandable to 256,500 sq. ft.
One mile from U.S. 74;
Half mile from future U.S. 74 Bypass
Sale Price: Available on request



WASHINGTON SMART SITE

Washington-Beaufort County Industrial Park
705 Page Road, Washington, N.C.
Available Acreage: 81 subdivided shovel-ready acres
Sale Price: \$15,000/acre

10 Ideas to Help Your Downtown Thrive

For North Carolina public power communities large and small, downtown revitalization remains a top priority. With this in mind, we asked three North Carolina-based experts to share some simple tips for success.

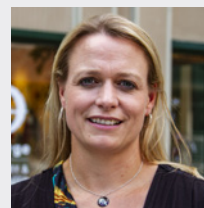


Children enjoy a street festival in downtown Wilson, North Carolina—a perfect example of Allison Platt's tip #3!

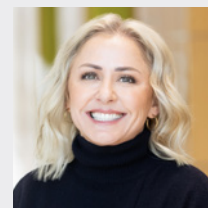
MEET THE EXPERTS!



Allison Platt
Regeneration by Design



Holly Garriott
Pitt County Arts Council



Carrie Wilkerson
CommunitySmith

Allison Platt is a landscape architect who has worked in numerous public power communities, including Hertford, New Bern, and Washington.

Tip 1: Get organized for grant applications. Preplanning for grants enables a city to have “shovel-ready” grant applications when new funding becomes available.

Tip 2: Reimagine a public space as something new. During COVID, many towns blocked off street space and turned it into outdoor dining space.

Tip 3: Bring people downtown. Fancy venues are nice, but fun events are what bring people together.

Holly Garriott is a public arts council director and downtown advocate based in Greenville, North Carolina.

Tip 1: Find the eyesores and make them pretty! It's not hard to do. A little creativity can create vitality where there is ugliness.

Tip 2: Ask local artists and businesses to volunteer. Your neighbors in your own backyard need to be appreciated and uplifted.

Tip 3: Work with partners who have the same goals. Find municipal departments and other organizations that can work with you to achieve similar goals—and bring in the arts component.

Carrie Wilkerson leads her real estate development firm, CommunitySmith, and is currently managing large downtown redevelopment projects in Wilson, North Carolina.

Tip 1: Know your downtown. Keep an up-to-date list of available buildings, including specifications, ownership, and sales price.

Tip 2: Develop a vision for your downtown and be ready to share it. A great elevator pitch can go a long way!

Tip 3: Complete a demonstration project. Whether the project is big or small, completing it will show that your town has what it takes to grow and thrive.

Tip 10: Take advantage of ElectriCities' growing list of programs to help support your downtown revitalization efforts.

Contact us today at econdev@electricities.org.

Developments is a publication of ElectriCities' Corporate Communications team in coordination with ElectriCities' Economic Development team.

For information on ElectriCities and economic development, contact Carl Rees at 800-768-7697 ext. 6315 or crees@electricities.org. Was this forwarded to you? [Sign up to receive your own copy of Developments.](#)