

SPRING 2023

# DEVELOPMENTS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NEWS FROM NC PUBLIC POWER



North Carolina Pharmaceutical Services Network instructor Mike Renn guides Pharma K12 Workforce Development Training Initiative participants at Pitt Community College. (NC Biotechnology Center)

## Innovative Workforce Programs Ensure Bio-Manufacturing Success

Back in 2018, walking away from a conversation with North Pitt High School sophomore Diana De Leon, Mark Phillips knew he wanted to help her. He just needed to figure out how.

Mark is North Carolina Biotechnology Center's Vice President of Statewide Operations and Executive Director of its Eastern Regional Office in the public power city of Greenville, North Carolina.

Diana's interest in both the medical and engineering fields—and the fact that she was rebuilding a Mustang with her brother—inspired Mark. On the way to his next meeting, the idea for the [Pharma K12 Workforce Development Training Initiative](#) came together.

He partnered with Greenville-based Thermo Fisher Scientific to make it happen, launching a pilot program in 2019.

The program enables high school graduates to participate in two and a half days of pharmaceutical manufacturing training at the North Carolina Pharmaceutical Services Network at Pitt Community College. They can do it as soon as the week following graduation. Along with learning good manufacturing practices and working in a

regulated environment, students gain hands-on experience with equipment.

"Four years into the program, we've had 24 of these young high school students hired, and of those 24, 21 are still working at Thermo Fisher Scientific," Mark says. Diana is one of them.

A recent grant from the U.S. Economic Development Association is enabling Mark and team to expand the program to up to 96 students over the next three years. It's also enabling them to get the word out across the state about what a career in life sciences means.

"It does not mean you've got to have a four-year degree or a two-year degree," he says. "It means that these career opportunities are there, and wherever you are along your career pathway, there's an opportunity for you."

Tommy Schornak, Thermo Fisher Scientific's Vice President and General Manager in Greenville, told NC Biotech, "We see the Pharma K12 program providing the longer-term pipeline of local talent into our organization to support our growth and expansion in the coming years."

In Johnston County, educational biopharma public-private partnerships are targeting even younger students. (Continued on Page 2)

## A NOTE from Carl

In your medicine cabinet, you likely have a product developed or manufactured by a company such as Merck, Pfizer, Novo Nordisk, or Thermo Fisher Scientific. There's a good chance it originated in the BioPharma Crescent region of North Carolina, where some 10,000 people go to work every day to manufacture these beneficial, often life-saving products. A big part of the success of the biopharma industry in this region is a well-oiled workforce engine that continuously refills the labor pipeline with highly trained and talented workers. To us at ElectricCities, these are our neighbors in public power communities like Clayton, Greenville, and Wilson. To the rest of the world, they're unknown heroes who help make our lives better.



**Carl Rees, CECD**  
Manager, Economic and  
Community Development

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(Continued from Page 1)

[Discover the Plasma](#) is a collaboration between Grifols, Johnston County Schools, and Johnston Community College that brings real-world science curriculum to every eighth grader in Johnston County Schools. Using virtual labs, videos, and other engaging tools, students learn about plasma and the life-saving plasma-derived medications being made at the Grifols plant in the public power town of Clayton—the largest in the world producing plasma medications.

Along with that education, Chris Johnson, Director of Johnston County Economic Development, says students can connect the dots between what they're doing in the program and a career making \$70,000-\$80,000 a year.

[JOCO WORKS](#), a program of the Triangle East Chamber of Commerce and sponsored by Novo Nordisk, is a two-day career fair that introduces Johnston County eighth graders to the county's top employers across a range of industries. The program is supported by education, business, civic, and government partners and provides in-depth industry insight.

"When you think of life sciences or pharmaceutical, you think of somebody sitting there making pills," Johnson says. We may not think of the machines involved, the robotics, or the facilities management. The fair shows students that there's "so much beyond the chemistry part of it," he says.

For bio-manufacturing companies looking to locate or expand in North Carolina, these and other innovative training programs provide assurance that a skilled and ready workforce can continue to drive success well into the future. ♦



More than 3,000 eighth graders from Johnston County Public Schools attend JOCO WORKS 2022 at Johnston Community College, connecting with more than 40 local industries. (Triangle East Chamber of Commerce)

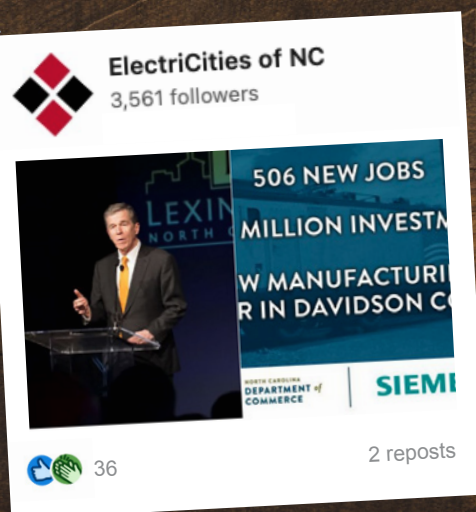
# SOCIAL MEDIA Highlights



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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.



Siemens Mobility chooses Lexington Smart Site for its new facility



Representing and supporting ElectriCities members at ICSC @CAROLINAS in Charlotte



# GOOD KNOW

*Machelle Baker Sanders*

NORTH CAROLINA SECRETARY OF COMMERCE



**My favorite movie is:** "The Bodyguard."

**The three things I can't live without are:**  
French fries, Poppi, and hope.

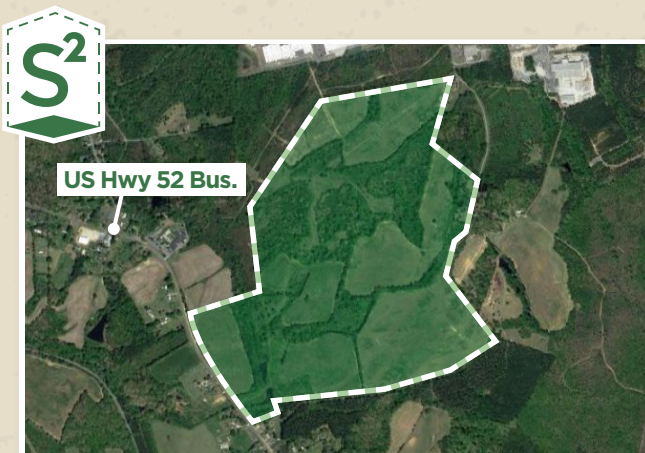
**When I welcome a visitor to my hometown of Belhaven, I always take them to:** Spoon River Restaurant.

**The most memorable place I've visited is:** Turks and Caicos.

**Finish the sentence: North Carolina is:** MAGNIFICENT. ♦

## FEATURED SITE AND BUILDING

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



### ALBEMARLE SMART SITE

Albemarle Corporate Park  
U.S. Highway 52 Business, Albemarle, N.C.  
Available Acreage: 175 shovel-ready acres  
Sale Price: \$19,000/acre



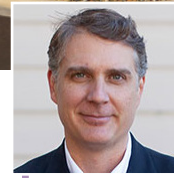
### LAURINBURG SHELL BUILDING

Industrial Shell Building in Laurinburg, N.C.  
50,000 sq. ft. expandable; 26-foot clear height  
20 miles to I-95; 5 miles to I-74  
Sale Price: Available on request





## A Look Inside Retail Location Decisions



Henry Carrison  
Bell Commercial



Lacy Beasley  
Retail Strategies

**What brings an Arby's to Smithfield, a Cook Out to Clayton, or a Biscuitville to Laurinburg? For that matter, what brings any retail location to any place?**

Henry Carrison is principal at commercial real estate firm Bell Commercial and serves as a tenant representative in markets across North Carolina. He worked all three of those projects and many more. He says, when looking to locate, one of the biggest questions retailers want answered is, "How is everybody else doing?"

In fact, he says, that information is more meaningful than most elaborate models designed to predict a retail business's performance.

Henry says how other businesses are doing—and how new businesses will do—mostly depends on three things: access, traffic, and visibility.

To evaluate access, he offers a simple test: Can you easily get to a retail location with a two-year-old in the car in the middle of a downpour? If you can get there when it's difficult, then you can get there, period.

When it comes to traffic count, Henry

says 20,000 vehicles per day is the magic number for getting retailers to consider an area. And ensuring a business's visibility can be as simple as not having trees in front of a building.

Lacy Beasley is president of Retail Strategies, an advisory firm that recruits retail businesses to cities and towns across America. Her list of factors for retail site selection is similar to Henry's. Along with access and visibility, she includes coterminancy, available parking, and signage.

Parking isn't just about having enough spaces for customers—it's about having the spaces where they need to be. Along with ensuring ADA compliance, retailers and landlords are navigating curbside pickup that's here to stay post-pandemic. They're also adding electric vehicle (EV) charging stations, [incentivized by the federal government's plans and funding support for creating a national EV charging network](#).

Lacy says another pandemic-driven

trend is restaurant owners changing their prototypes to support drive-thru. "They're shrinking their in-store dining and expanding their drive-thru model, their curbside pickup, and their delivery," she says.

Lacy advises municipalities that don't allow drive-thrus in certain corridors with the intention of avoiding fast-food restaurants to rethink that decision.

As Henry from Bell Commercial says, "Getting it wrong in the retail business is really expensive."

That's why the game for retailers is eliminating risk. The economic development experts at ElectriCities can help with that. Whether you're an ElectriCities member community rep looking to grow your retail sector or a developer curious about the retail velocity and what's possible in North Carolina's public power communities, contact the ElectriCities Economic Development team at [econdev@electricities.org](mailto:econdev@electricities.org). ♦

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