

FALL 2024

# DEVELOPMENTS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NEWS FROM NC PUBLIC POWER



North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper announces Boviet Solar's manufacturing facility in Greenville, North Carolina, on April 26, 2024. The project required 10 MW of electricity in its first phase and 50 MW in its second. (City of Greenville/Aaron Hines)

## Meeting Big Power Demands in North Carolina

Back in 2009, Didi Caldwell was helping select a site for a paper manufacturing company that required 25 MW of electricity. At the time, that requirement was huge.

Today, recent projects that Caldwell and her team of site selectors at Global Location Strategies (GLS) have sited required between 30 MW and 1 GW.

Caldwell has been analyzing and selecting sites for large manufacturing and heavy industrial projects for more than 25 years—16 of those as founder and CEO of GLS.

She says factors driving that increased electricity demand include bigger projects and more energy-intensive processes, like clean-technology manufacturing and data centers that power cloud computing and artificial intelligence.

"There's still a similar number of projects being announced every year, but they're much larger in terms of CapEx and number of jobs," Caldwell said. "Typically, more CapEx means more equipment, which means you're going to require more electricity."

So, what's Caldwell's advice to her clients with electric-intensive projects?

"Start early," she said. "Right now, we have a scarcity of sites with the energy infrastructure capacity that can be provided by the time clients are ready to start up. It's not uncommon for us to hear things like 48 to 60 months to get the energy levels clients require."

To utilities looking to meet companies' high-energy demands, Caldwell advises, "Know your community's existing site portfolio and how much energy you can get to those places." She recommends determining how long it would take to get 10, 20, 50, or 100 MW to those sites. And then promote those sites that have large energy capacity.

Caldwell also advises energy providers to be proactive in helping their communities identify new sites and to participate in site readiness programs.

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## A NOTE from Carl

This has been a year full of economic growth in North Carolina public power, including for many of our smaller member communities. In Hertford, a waterfront town on the Perquimans River, phase one of the long-awaited Perquimans Marine Industrial Park opened this year, paving the way for new investments in marine manufacturing. In La Grange, East Energy Renewables opened a biomass facility, bringing substantial investment and jobs to this eastern Carolina town. The Town of Cherryville, located west of Charlotte, completed an ElectriCities Smart Sites certification, bringing a new industrial site online. ElectriCities is grateful to the many local staff members and elected officials who worked with us to bring these projects to fruition. We look forward to many more great collaborations in 2025!



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

❖ **ELECTRICITIES of NC**

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When Boviet Solar was looking for a location for its first North American solar panel manufacturing facility, Greenville, North Carolina, had an available building with room for expansion in Indigreen Corporate Park, an ElectriCities-certified Smart Site. The City's public power provider, Greenville Utilities Commission (GUC), was in the process of extending transmission and adding a substation to the area—part of GUC's efforts to systematically reinforce its transmission system, said Tony Cannon, GUC General Manager and CEO.

"We knew we had available property in that industrial area, so we wanted to make sure we had capacity available there," he said.

For its facility, Boviet Solar required 10 MW of electricity in its first phase and 50 MW in the second. GUC is delivering.

"We were ready on Day 1 with all of their power needs," Cannon said. "Price and availability, along with our reliability records, helped push us to the top of the list when it came to that load."

Providing reliable electricity is a hallmark of public power communities.



**Didi Caldwell**

Global Location Strategies



**Tony Cannon**

Greenville Utilities Commission



**Roy Jones**

ElectriCities of North Carolina

"Public power cities and towns in North Carolina provide safe, affordable, and sustainable electricity with a reliability rating of 99.98%—more reliable than other power providers," said Roy Jones, CEO of ElectriCities of North Carolina. ElectriCities is the membership organization that provides power supply and related critical services to over 70 community-owned electric systems in North Carolina.

"We've been closely tracking the changes in manufacturing and big data that are requiring more electricity to facilitate growth," Jones said. "While these increasing power demands are certainly a challenge, we're working with our public power communities across North Carolina to ensure that they can continue to compete for new industrial growth while providing the same levels of reliability and affordability."

Back in Greenville, factoring in the economic impact of the jobs and investment Boviet Solar is bringing to the area, GUC's Cannon said, "Making appropriate investments in your electric system ahead of time pays dividends in the long run." ♦

# SOCIAL MEDIA

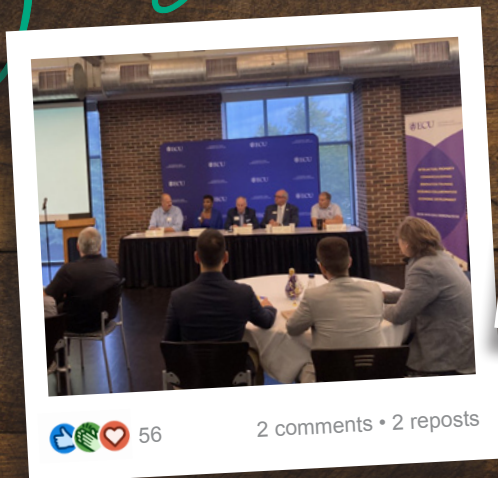
## Highlights



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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.



56

2 comments • 2 reposts

*ElectriCities hosts Galicia delegation visiting North Carolina's BioPharma Crescent region.*



38

1 comment • 1 repost

*NCEast Alliance, N.C. Global TransPark, and N.C.'s Southeast staff join ElectriCities at NBAA*



# GOOD KNOW

*Bob Pike*

President & CEO, Carolinas Gateway Partnership

**My favorite movies are:** “Top Gun” and “Reagan.”

**The three things I can’t live without are:**  
The 3 Fs: Faith, Family, and Friends.

**When I welcome a visitor to Rocky Mount or Tarboro, I always take them to:** Rocky Mount Mills in Downtown Rocky Mount and On the Square in Downtown Tarboro.

**The most memorable place I’ve visited is:**  
Disney World as a kid and a parent, and now as a grandparent.

**Finish the sentence:** North Carolina is ...  
the place to be, especially Rocky Mount and Edgecombe County. ♦



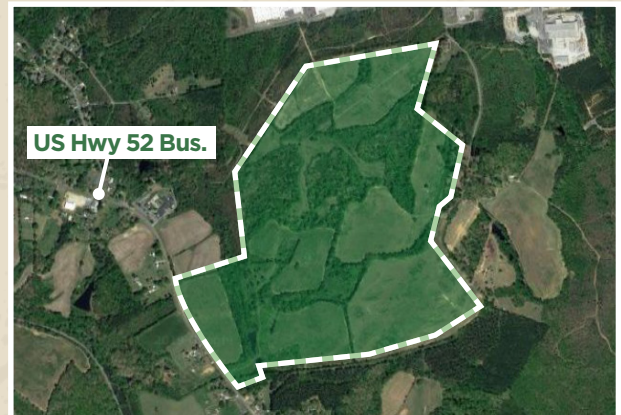
## FEATURED SITE AND BUILDING

To learn more, visit: <https://www.electricities.com/services/economic-development/smart-sites/>



### WILSON SHELL BUILDING

Industrial Shell Building in Wilson Corporate Park  
105,000 sq. ft. expandable; 26-foot clear height  
0.01 mile to U.S. 264 (future I-587); 0.34 mile to I-95  
Sale Price: Available on request



### ALBEMARLE SMART SITE

Albemarle Corporate Center  
U.S. Highway 52 Business  
Available Acreage: 175 shovel-ready acres  
Sale Price: \$44,000/acre



Hobby Lobby in Laurinburg, North Carolina, (left) under construction in July 2024 and (right) open for business in August 2024.

## Using a Public-Private Partnership to Catalyze Commercial Development

In August 2024, when Hobby Lobby opened in Laurinburg, North Carolina, people celebrated not only because of the store's selection of arts and crafts supplies, but also because of the years-long group effort that went into making it happen.

First steps in the process began around 2013. That's when the City of Laurinburg decided to step up retail recruitment, said Charles Nichols, Laurinburg's City Manager. One of the City's first focuses was a piece of property beside a large shopping center. The City secured the property from its out-of-state owner, and while interest in the property grew, nothing developed.

"For years, we had no revenue from it—no utilities, no property taxes, no sales taxes, nothing," Nichols said.

When Hobby Lobby began looking to locate in the area, several commercial real estate developers approached the City about presenting the site.

Ultimately, the City of Laurinburg teamed up with developer Carolina Commercial, creating a public-private partnership arrangement that was new to both parties and critical in getting to Hobby Lobby's opening day in Laurinburg.

"From beginning of discussions to Hobby Lobby actually opening, it took us about three years of diligent work," said Lash Hairston, Principal at Carolina Commercial. That diligent work was alongside Nichols and ElectriCities' Lead Commercial Economic Developer Jennings Gray.

"It was truly a collaborative effort where we'd say, 'OK, we've gotten over this hurdle. Here's the next hurdle. Could we solve it this way?'" Hairston said.

The team ran the numbers and created several scenarios to land on a deal that would work for everyone.

To help relieve the burden of extraordinarily high site development costs, Gray said, "The City approved an incentive package that included conveying the site to Carolina Commercial at no charge and a \$500,000 economic development grant payable in \$100,000 annual installments."

The incentive package was a gamechanger. Without it, the numbers weren't adding up for Carolina Commercial.

"Kudos to Charles, Jennings, the City of Laurinburg, and its City Council for being forward thinking enough to do it," Hairston said. "A lot of other towns in North

Carolina could benefit from that type of forward thinking."

This isn't the first public-private partnership for Laurinburg, but it's the first time the City has tried retail grants or incentives.

"If you look at a property that was just sitting there, not generating any revenue, it's a no-brainer to be able to extend that incentive," Nichols said.

Other developers have since begun working with the City on projects using similar arrangements.

They're not alone, Gray said.

"We're seeing more public-private partnerships at varying degrees of complexity for all kinds of projects, including gas stations, retailers, entertainment venues, hotels, and revitalization projects," he said. "These types of partnerships can work for every community, no matter its size."

"For us, it didn't make sense without the City being involved, and for the City, if they didn't get the Hobby Lobby, it didn't make sense," Hairston said. "It was good for everybody." ♦

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