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Governor Cooper tours the Vernon Malone College and Career Academy in Raleigh earlier today.

Governor Cooper Announces NC Job Ready, Key Priorities for Workforce Development

Governor Roy Cooper outlined his priorities for workforce development in remarks delivered at Vernon Malone College and Career Academy in Raleigh earlier today (February 13). Governor Cooper made clear that North Carolina's workforce is a primary focus for his administration as he launched the new initiative, *NC Job Ready*.

"I want North Carolinians to be better educated, healthier, and have more money in their pockets so that they can live more abundant, purposeful lives," said Governor Cooper. "The linchpin to achieving that goal is to help people get good-paying jobs to support themselves and their families."

Governor Cooper's initiative is built on three core principles:

- Skills and education attainment so North Carolinians are ready for the jobs of today and tomorrow.
- Employer leadership to remain relevant to evolving industry needs.
- Local innovation to take great ideas and apply them statewide.

"Business leaders tell me time and again that they have job openings but can't find workers with the right skills," said **Governor Cooper**. "A better trained workforce can help businesses grow and give workers new opportunities."



\$12 Million Available Through New Rural ReadySites Program

Pre-applications are now being accepted for Governor Cooper's new Rural ReadySites Development Program.

"North Carolina's rural communities have so much to offer businesses, but sites must be ready when employers are looking to bring new jobs," said **Governor Cooper**. "We know our rural areas are great places to live and work, and this program will help them become more competitive at attracting good jobs."

The ReadySites program, managed by the North Carolina Department of Commerce's Rural Economic Development team under the oversight of the Rural Infrastructure Authority, is designed to help local communities prepare potential industrial sites for development. To participate, a potential ReadySites project must meet the following criteria:

- The applicant must be a governmental entity in a Tier 1 or 2 county.
- The site must be publicly owned or controlled.
- The site must be a minimum of 50 contiguous acres.
- There must be evidence of appropriate and proportionate local financial support for site development.
- There must be evidence of recent private sector interest in developing an industrial project on the site.
- There must be evidence of a well thought-out strategy to identify and market the site to appropriate private sector businesses.

Tomorrow, Cooper will speak to the NCWorks Commission to present his priority agenda items. Successful workforce development is collaborative and the NCWorks Commission convenes the partnership among education, business, government and community leaders.

"Getting North Carolina job ready means helping people get the skills they need for better-paying jobs and then connecting businesses to those workers," added Cooper. "An educated, well-trained workforce will strengthen North Carolina companies, attract new businesses, and ensure we can adapt to a changing economy."

[Read more details about the NC Job Ready initiative.](#)



Secretary Copeland (far right) is joined in Elizabeth City by (Back row, L-R) Larry Donley, NCWorks Regional Operations Director; Cathy Davison, Albemarle Commission Executive Director; Keeny Kee, Dare County NCWorks Career Center Manager; (Front row) David Whitmer, Northeast Workforce Development Board Director; Annette Barnes, Adult/Dislocated Worker Program Manager; and Nannette Turner-Williams, Elizabeth City and Chowan County NCWorks Career Centers.

Secretary Copeland Visits Elizabeth City for Chamber Awards Dinner

North Carolina Commerce Secretary Anthony M. Copeland offered keynote remarks to a large gathering of business and community leaders last Thursday (February 9) at the Elizabeth City Area Chamber of Commerce Annual Awards Dinner.

Secretary Copeland, who grew up in nearby Hertford, reported last year's strong economic development performance, with more than 21,000 jobs and more than \$4 billion in investment announced statewide.

The Secretary also addressed challenges the state faces in the current economic environment, including the fact that while wages have begun to rise, they're not rising at the rate seen in previous periods of recovery. Many rural counties are losing population, despite the state's overall growth in population.

Governor Cooper's recently announced *Hometown Strong* initiative for rural economic development is designed to help local communities grow their economies through better understanding of the resources available from the state.

Pasquotank County's proximity to the Norfolk metro area, the U.S. Coast Guard Base and its growing tourism economy were highlighted by the Secretary as strengths of the region.

Funds will only be used to construct public infrastructure, with priority given to water, sewer and industrial access improvements.

- Additional consideration will be given to sites located in counties with the greatest economic distress ranking.

Communities interested in applying for the Rural ReadySites program should [download the pre-application form available here.](#)

For more information about the Rural ReadySites program, contact Commerce's Mark Poole mpoole@nccommerce.com.



Governor Cooper presenting the export award to CEO of Tri-Tech Forensics James Seidel (left) and Tri-Tech Forensics Sales Director Bobby Dameron (right).

Governor Honors Five N.C. Companies With Export Awards

Governor Roy Cooper presented five North Carolina companies with Governor's Export Awards on January 31, recognizing the companies dedication to growth through exporting, which helps support thousands of jobs statewide. The ceremony was held at the Executive Mansion in Raleigh.

The Export Awards recognize companies for their commitment to exporting in 2017, and bring attention to exporting as a strategy to support job growth in the state.

"Exporting our goods and services into the global marketplace plays an important role in growing jobs and our economy," said **Governor Cooper**. "This year's Export Awards honor companies whose products and ideas represent North Carolina's strong business reputation around the world."

Five companies - small and large, new to exporting and experienced veterans - were recognized:

- Therafirm in Richmond County.
- Blue Ridge Chair Works in Buncombe County.
- Frontier Spinning Mills in Lee County.
- Tri-Tech Forensics in Brunswick



Danny Giddens, Commerce's Assistant Secretary for Workforce Solutions.

Daniel Giddens Named Assistant Secretary of the Division of Workforce Solutions

Daniel (Danny) Giddens has been tapped by N.C. Commerce Secretary Tony Copeland to serve as the Commerce Department's Assistant Secretary of the Division of Workforce Solutions (DWS). Giddens has served as Acting Assistant Secretary of the division since December of last year.

Giddens will continue guiding the department's efforts to help people in North Carolina find jobs and help businesses find talent. The Workforce Solutions team administers a statewide system of workforce programs that prepares North Carolina's citizens for employment and helps businesses find the talent they need to thrive.

Previously, Giddens served as Director of Field Operations at DWS. In that capacity, he provided policy direction and strategic oversight to Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I, Trade Act, Title III Employment Services, Special Programs, and Management Information System activities within the division.

Before coming to North Carolina in 2001, Giddens had more than 15 years of experience as the director of a local Workforce Development Board in Georgia.

In other news regarding leadership roles in the Workforce team, **Catherine Moga Bryant** will now be fully focused on her role as Executive Director of the NCWorks Commission. Moga Bryant had previously served dual roles with both the commission and as Deputy Assistant Secretary at DWS. Secretary Copeland congratulated both leaders on assuming these new roles in an important area of focus for Commerce.

County.

- New Growth Designs in Pitt County.

Each of the companies have turned for help from the state's international trade team based at the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina (EDPNC). EDPNC export services are available to North Carolina businesses at no charge, which is particularly impactful for small businesses.

"Our international trade team is here to prepare new exporters through export-education workshops, market research and market-entry strategies while also supporting more-advanced exporters looking for new distributors at international trade shows," said **John Loyack, EDPNC Vice President for Global Business Services.**

North Carolina's export of goods and services contributes to more than 370,000 jobs in the state, according to the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C. Once final figures for 2017 are in, the state is expecting the value of its exported goods to exceed \$30 billion, at least a 26 percent increase over the past decade.

On Our Radar

- [NC must do a better job educating workers to land firms like Amazon. Cooper says \(Charlotte Observer - February 13\)](#)
- [New promotional video for the Statesville Regional Airport](#)

N.C. in the News

- [Report: Triangle region to add up to 37,000 jobs through 2020, but finding talent a challenge \(WRAL TechWire - February 13\)](#)
- [N.C. is top life-sciences state in job growth and wages, report says \(Triangle Business Journal - February 12\)](#)
- [First manufacturing class getting good marks \(Shelby Star - February 8\)](#)
- [Novo Nordisk plans \\$65M expansion in Johnston County \(Triangle Business Journal - February 5\)](#)

About Us

SYNC is North Carolina Commerce's electronic newsletter for local government officials, private-sector allies, state policy makers, and other economic development leaders. We offer unfiltered details about new economic development projects and events, useful news about your peers, and opportunities to synchronize with statewide programs and tools in order to advance economic development in your

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