



Benson, North Carolina

Implementation Report of
Objectives #14 & #17 in
2017 Benson Economic Development Strategic Plan



April 2019



**NC Department of Commerce
Rural Economic Development Division
NC Main Street and Rural Planning Center**

*Implementation Report on
2017 Benson Economic Development Strategic Plan
Objectives #14 & #17*

Introduction

The Town of Benson invited the NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center to assist in the implementation of parts of two sections of the *2017 Benson Economic Development Strategic Plan*. There was a change of NC Commerce staff during this project which led to a delay in the development and delivery of this report.

Section 1

Objective #14 of the *2017 Benson Economic Development Strategic Plan* recommended the Town “*Improve the availability of job training programs.*” The Town asked us to provide information on providing outreach to transitioning military veterans and retirees at Fort Bragg in Fayetteville and Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in Goldsboro.

Section 2

Objective #17 of the *2017 Benson Economic Development Strategic Plan* recommended the Town “*Conduct a branding study to establish what Benson’s brand and image is in the external market.*” With the following actions:

- A. Interview resident business owners who are new to Benson to understand the factors that influenced their decision to start or relocate their businesses in the area.*
- B. Interview non-resident employees of local businesses to understand why they have chosen to not live in Benson.*

The Town asked us to provide survey questions for both interviews.

Main Street & Rural Planning Center
North Central Prosperity Zone
Clayton, NC
984-365-0279

Section 1 Objective #14

Within the scope of Objective #14, the Town asked us to focus specifically on ***Identifying appropriate venues for Town of Benson to promote itself to transitioning service members, veterans and recent military retirees.***

There are several opportunities for the Town of Benson to provide employment and hiring information to retiring and retired members of the Armed Forces in Eastern North Carolina. We are focusing on Fort Bragg Army Base in Fayetteville and Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in Goldsboro.

Some things to consider as the Town begins to recruit transitioning and retired veterans:

- 1) *Other than for a job, why would someone want to live or move to Benson NC?*
- 2) *Why would out of state companies want to locate or have a presence in Benson?*
- 3) *What is the availability of ready-buildings in Benson?*

Channels for Veterans Transition Programs and Career Orientation Offices at NC Military Installations



FORT BRAGG ARMY BASE, FAYETTEVILLE, NC

- **Fort Bragg Career Resource Center**
2801 Old Stable Lane, Bldg. 3
Fort Bragg, NC 28310

Lillie S. Cannon, Ph.D., AFC
AVP, Business Development & Military Initiatives
Columbia Southern University
800-977-8449 ext. 1632 251-923-8440
Lillie.cannon@columbiasouthern.edu
- Columbia Southern Education Group (Columbia Southern University) manages the Resource Center
- 400 visitors per month are received in the Resource Center
- Works with Career Skills Program (CSP) and Soldiers for Life programs
 - *Training Service member – no cost to company for up to 6 months*
- There is a need to connect separating service members to white collar employment
 - Supervisors/managers at municipal and corporate levels
 - They are mostly drug-free
- Vets are looking for companies that offer more than tele-marketing
- AVERAGE ACTIVE DUTY Salary is \$40,000 year

Promotion Opportunity

- Resource Center is working with Pike and Duke Energy for permanent offices on site
 - **Town of Benson can host an event at Resource Center for Town and business/companies**
 - Additional hiring events are scheduled throughout the year
 - Companies are ready with job requirements 90 days from the events
 - 87% of hiring is done onsite
 - **Onward to Opportunity**
Career Resource Center
2801 Old Stable Lane
Bldg 3-1318
Fort Bragg, NC 28310
910-725-8790
www.Onward2opportunity-vctp.org/FortBragg
Contact: Kenneth Mayes, Program Manager kmayes@syr.edu
 - **U.S. Army Career Skills Program**
Soldier for Life – Transition Assistance
Soldier Support Center
Building 4-2843, Normandy Drive
Fort Bragg, NC 28307
910-643-2984
Contact: Salmon Ponapart, Administrator salmon.ponapart.ctr@mail.mil
 - Fort Bragg Transition Services Manager
William McMillian
william.b.mcmillian.civ@mail.mil
 - Department of Commerce Workforce Solutions
Building 4-2846 Normandy Drive
Fort Bragg, NC 28307
910-436-1304 910-436-0301
Contact: Raymond L Godsave, Career Advisor – Veterans
Raymond.godsave@ncommerce.com
- Workforce Investment Funds
- Transitional Job Training
 - OTJ Training
 - Training Service Member-no cost to company up to 6 months
 - Can pay up to 80% of the training
- **Farm/Agricultural Training for Veterans**
NCSU (Fort Bragg)
Contact: Robert Elliott rlellio2@ncsu.edu
 - Hands-on classes onsite (Fort Bragg)
 - Affiliated with NC State University
 - Possible connections for Benson:
 - Food hub in next five years?
 - Hemp Extraction?
 - Biofuels



SEYMOUR JOHNSON AIR FORCE BASE, GOLDSBORO NC

- **Seymour Johnson AFB Airman & Family Readiness Center**

919-722-1123

The *Seymour Johnson AFB Airman and Family Readiness Center* assists individuals with researching and reaching for their career goals beyond the military. They provide employment skills training to prepare retirees for a job search – resume writing, interview skills, local job market information, and more.

The A&FRC holds Quarterly Job Fairs

Seymour Johnson AFB also works with the State of North Carolina (NCWorks Career Centers) to provide an easier avenue for retirees seeking employment. www.ncworks.gov

www.usajobs.gov

ALL MILITARY BRANCHES, NORTH CAROLINA



- **NC4ME North Carolina for Military Employment**

514 Daniels Street

Raleigh, NC 27605

Kimberly Williams, Executive Director

Rebecca Sortkys, Program Manager

Info@nc4me.org

www.nc4me.org

North Carolina for Military Employment (NC4ME) is a comprehensive public-private partnership designed to make NC the number one state for military employment. Established by the Governor in 2015, NC4ME leverages existing workforce development resources and technology to implement an employer-centric strategy that:

- Educates NC's business leaders on the value of hiring a military workforce
- Shows small businesses and human resource professionals how to hire military personnel
- Connects military talent to open jobs, education, and training opportunities in NC

Upcoming NC4ME Hiring Events

Fort Bragg May 14-15, 2019

Jacksonville June 4-5, 2019

Havelock August 13-14, 2019

Charlotte September 2019

Fort Bragg October 16-17, 2019



- **NC Military Business Center – Transitioning Military Database**

The North Carolina Military Business Center (NCMBC) is a business development entity of the North Carolina Community College System, headquartered at Fayetteville Technical Community College (FTCC). The **mission** of the NCMBC is to leverage military and other federal business opportunities to expand the economy, grow jobs and improve quality of life in North Carolina.

The NCMBC connects North Carolina firms to current government contracting opportunities in two ways – with a team of business development specialists across the state who also provide technical services, and electronically with www.MatchForce.org.

The NCMBC also conducts employment programs to support the integration of highly skilled, transitioning military personnel, family members and veterans into the state workforce, and supports economic developers in recruiting defense-related businesses to North Carolina. The NCMBC maintains a searchable, historical database of transitioning military personnel to help economic developers quantify this potential workforce for businesses locating in North Carolina.

Benson Economic Development Strategic Plan Objective #14 Implementation Plan 2019

Identify appropriate venues for Town of Benson to promote itself to transitioning service members, veterans and recent military retirees

LEADERSHIP	MARKETING STRATEGY	RECRUITMENT STRATEGY
GOAL 1: Make military retiree recruitment part of the ethos of Town of Benson	GOAL 2: Develop Benson’s brand as a military-friendly businesses and community	GOAL 3: Create and nurture relationships with military venues, veteran transition programs and career orientation offices
<p>Objective 1.1: Create a long-lasting, responsive organizational structure to survive staff and board changes</p> <p>Action: Develop purpose or mission statement and operational guidelines for the committee</p> <p>Action: If there is no existing Economic Development Committee, Town Council should appoint a 3-5 person standing committee to lead recruitment efforts, request necessary funding and report to the Council in a timely manner</p> <p>Action: If there is no existing Economic Development Committee, the appointed Committee could include an executive from the Chamber of Commerce, Johnston Community College, HR or hiring manager from a local company.</p> <p>Action: Attend one or two hiring events, Fort Bragg Career Resource Center and the Seymour Johnson Job Fair to get a sense of space, materials and competitive messaging and budgeting.</p> <p>Action: Seek others as necessary to assist in implementing the goals and actions in this plan</p>	<p>Objective 2.1: Develop messaging materials and images to attract military retirees to work and live in Benson</p> <p>Action: Identify companies interested in recruiting military retirees for employees and make them partners in this effort</p> <p>Action: Base messaging on these questions: 1) Why would someone want to live or move to Benson, NC? 2) Why would out of state companies want to locate or have a presence in Benson, NC? 3) What is the availability of ready commercial buildings in Benson, NC?</p> <p>Action: Highlight veterans who work for the Town or local companies and promote all the good that they do on the job and in the community.</p> <p>Action: Develop appropriate materials for hiring events such as military-specific brochures, hats, buttons for the Town or local companies</p> <p>Action: Recruit appropriate individuals to attend and speak for Town of Benson</p>	<p>Objective 3.1: Participate in at least 5 job fairs and hiring events in FY20</p> <p>Action: Develop a 1-year schedule of job fairs, hiring events and postings on military job boards</p> <p>Action: Leverage networks and existing team members. Ask your workforce, especially those who are former military, if they can refer other veterans for open positions.</p> <p>Action: Market the organization as an employer of choice. Build the Town’s brand in the military community.</p> <p>Action: Post job openings on websites such as www.Military.com; www.hirevetsfirst.gov; www.turpotap.org; www.helmetstohardhats.org and www.USAJobs.gov.</p> <p>Action: Translate military jargon into civilian skills. Use veterans already within the Town or company to help translate military skills into skills that civilian employers will understand. A <i>Skills Translator</i> can be found online at www.military.com/veteran-jobs/skills-translator</p>

Section 2 Objective #17

Objective #17 of the 2017 Benson Economic Development Strategic Plan recommended the Town “Conduct a branding study to establish what Benson’s brand and image is in the external market.” With the following actions:

A. Interview resident business owners who are new to Benson to understand the factors that influenced their decision to start or relocate their businesses in the area.

B. Interview non-resident employees of local businesses to understand why they have chosen to not live in Benson.

The Town of Benson has asked us to provide the survey questions for both interviews.

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### Survey A - Questions for business owners who are new to Benson:

#### Introduction

As part of an effort to establish Benson’s brand and image in town and out of town, Town leaders want to understand the factors that influenced business owners’ decisions to start or relocate their business in the area. The results of this survey will be used in the development of a branding study.

#### Instructions

Complete this short survey based on your individual thoughts and experiences and be as candid as possible. Please read question carefully and answer to the best of your ability. Thank you for your time and insight.

[add specific instructions on how to complete an electronic version of the survey, if applicable]

Complete a printed survey and return to Town of Benson [Planning] Department, [address], zip code

The survey should take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Deadline for submission is [day], [date] [year]

How long has your company been operating in Benson?

Years \_\_\_\_

Months \_\_\_\_

Is your business in Benson a:

Start-up

Re-location

Second location

Is your company physically located within the town limits of Benson?

Yes

No (if no, please specify location)

Location \_\_\_\_\_

Do you own or lease your current building?

Own

Lease

What are the reasons you choose Benson in which to start, relocate or expand your business?

How many part-time and full-time employees are currently employed by your business?

Part-time \_\_\_\_\_

Full-time \_\_\_\_\_

Do you plan to expand your business in the next *five* years?

Yes

No

If you expand your business in the next five years, will you expand it here in the Town of Benson?

Yes

No

Please describe how Benson is ***positively*** perceived by its business owners.

Please describe how Benson is ***negatively*** perceived by its business owners.

**Finally, some general demographic questions about you.**

Where do you live?

- Inside Benson's town limits
- Outside Benson's town limits

How long have lived in or near Benson?

- Under 5 years
- 5 to 10 years
- 10 to 15 years
- 15 or more years

In what age group do you fall?

- Under 18 years
- 19 to 29 years
- 30 to 39 years
- 40 to 49 years
- 50 to 64 years
- 65 years or older

Please describe your race:

- White
- Black/African-American
- Asian
- Hispanic/Latino
- American Indian/Alaska Native

What is the gender of the business owner?

- Male
- Female

Please share any additional comments or observations you'd like to make in the space below:

Thank you very much for completing this survey. We appreciate your time and your business in Benson!

## Survey B - Questions for employees in Benson who live outside of Town

### Introduction

As part of an effort to establish Benson's brand and image in town and out of town, Town leaders want to understand the factors that influence the decision of *non-resident employees of local businesses to not live in Benson*. The results of this survey will be used in the development of a branding study.

### Instructions

Complete this short survey based on your individual thoughts and experiences and be as candid as possible. Please read question carefully and answer to the best of your ability. Thank you for your time and insight.

[add specific instructions on how to complete an electronic version of the survey, if applicable]

Complete a printed survey and return to Town of Benson [Planning] Department, [address], zip code

The survey should take approximately 5 minutes to complete.

Deadline for submission is [day], [date] [year]

How long have you worked in Benson?

Years \_\_\_\_

Months \_\_\_\_

Do you work:

Full-time

Part-time

Do you live in town limits of Benson?

Yes

No

If you do not live in the town limits of Benson, where do you live?

Name of town/county \_\_\_\_\_

What are the reasons you choose to work in Benson but live elsewhere?

What would it take for you to move inside the town limits of Benson?

Please describe how Benson is **positively** perceived by you and your colleagues.

Please describe how Benson is **negatively** perceived by you and your colleagues.

**Finally, some general demographic questions about you.**

In what age group do you fall?

- Under 18 years
- 19 to 29 years
- 30 to 39 years
- 40 to 49 years
- 50 to 64 years
- 65 years or older

Please describe your race:

- White
- Black/African-American
- Asian
- Hispanic/Latino
- American Indian/Alaska Native

What is the gender of the business owner?

- Male
- Female

Please share any additional comments or observations you'd like to make in the space below:

Thank you very much for completing this survey. We appreciate your time and working in Benson!