

# MOORE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP

Building More Than The Economy



Quarterly Progress Report  
September 30, 2023



# From Our President

July marked the beginning of our fiscal year and in the first three months of Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 we made considerable progress on several of our key initiatives.

This quarter, MCEDP staff conducted **seven industry visits**, almost one-half of our goal for FY 2024. We continue to leverage our partnerships with the Economic Development Partnership of NC and NCSU Industry Expansion Solutions staff who often accompany us on our industry visits. During these visits we share resources, programs, and information that Moore County businesses can utilize to help them be more successful. I am pleased to report that several businesses have chosen to take advantage of the resources we've identify during our visits.

We also saw an *unprecedented* number of new business leads this quarter. In the first three months of the fiscal year, we responded to **45 business leads**, which is more than one-half of the leads we responded to in all of FY 2023. Should we experience this same volume of business leads for the remainder of the year, we will see more than double the level of business interest in Moore County over last year.

A top priority for us continues to be development of the **Iron Horse Industrial Park** in Aberdeen. After identifying an alternative way to access the park, MCEDP went back under contract to acquire the 73-acre parcel this quarter. We also made considerable progress towards meeting the contingencies outlined in our Offer to Purchase. With unwavering support from Town of Aberdeen and NC Department of Transportation officials, we finalized the location of the access road and obtained the NCDOT Board's approval of an agreement for them to construct the public access road. We also finalized two alternative concept plans that we will use to market the site to prospective clients.

This quarter we also continued planning for and announced the **2023 Moore Entrepreneurial Summit** that will be held on November 14th at The Fair Barn in Pinehurst from 5:30pm to 8:30pm. I'd like to thank our many sponsors and the Entrepreneurship Task Force members for their support of this event that will feature a keynote speaker, a panel discussion with successful Moore County entrepreneurs, and a speed networking event with resource providers.

We also continued to work closely with the Moore County Chamber of Commerce, Sandhills Community College, and Moore County Schools to schedule and plan workforce development meetings that will be held later this year.

It remains an exciting time to be in economic development and I hope you enjoy reading about the initiatives we've advanced in the last three months in this Quarterly Progress Report!

Natalie D. Hawkins, PMP  
President  
Moore County Economic Development Partnership

## Inside This Report

- Business Recruitment, Retention & Expansion
- Site Development
- Workforce & Community Development
- Administrative Items



# Business Recruitment, Retention, & Expansion

MCEDP continues to advance several initiatives to achieve our mission of *increasing economic prosperity and improving the quality of life for Moore County's citizens through the creation of quality jobs and capital investment in our communities.*

## Business Retention & Expansion Program

*"Through our Business Retention & Expansion (BRE) program, MCEDP engages with existing Moore County businesses and provides a variety of resources to assist them with any needs they may have." - Darryn Burich*

This quarter, MCEDP staff visited **seven** Moore County businesses, one of which is expanding and will break ground on a new 20,000 square-foot facility in January 2024. We also met with several other existing businesses who requested our assistance with addressing specific needs.

- Industries visited this quarter included Minhas Furniture (Robbins), Ingersoll Rand (Southern Pines), Reeder Pallet Company (NW Moore Co), Fletcher Industries (Southern Pines), Kolcraft Industries (Aberdeen), Thermal Metal Treating (Aberdeen), and The Brief Lab (Southern Pines).
- MCEDP connected one company with ApprenticeshipNC and other workforce development partners to assist them with establishing a multi-year apprenticeship program to cross-train workers in many areas of the company.
- MCEDP met with two companies planning to expand: one is seeking a site to establish a **10-acre** office campus, and the other is looking for **25 acres** to establish a "community hub" campus to include administrative offices and community meeting space.

## 2023 Moore Entrepreneurial Summit



Registration is open for the **2023 Moore Entrepreneurial Summit** that will be held on November 14th at the Fair Barn from 5:30-8:30pm. This premier event will bring together aspiring and seasoned entrepreneurs, small business owners, thought leaders, and resource providers for an evening of inspiration and education.

**Highlights of the Summit include:** Keynote Speaker sharing entrepreneurial strategies and insights; Panel Discussion with five local entrepreneurs engaging in thought-provoking discussion; Pitch Your Business opportunity for small business owners; Resource Expo with 16 support organizations; "Speed Networking" session with resource providers; and invaluable networking opportunities.

For information & to register:  
[www.moorecountypedp.org/ent-summit](http://www.moorecountypedp.org/ent-summit)

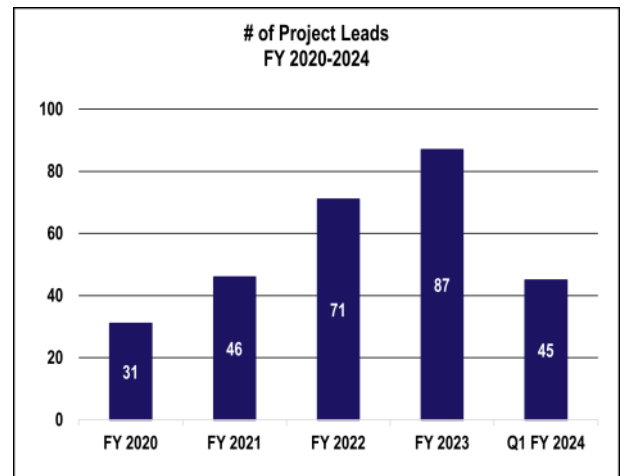


## Project Activity July – September 2023

In just the first three months of FY 2024, MCEDP staff responded to **45** business leads — *more than half* of the total number of leads (87) we responded to during *all* of FY 2023!

An analysis of the 45 leads received this quarter indicates:

- 80%** were manufacturing industries
- 67%** were looking for **500,000 square feet** or less
- 67%** were looking for sites under **50 acres**
- 34%** required access to natural gas
- MCEDP submitted properties for **45%** of leads



## 35 Active Projects at September 30, 2023



>3,260 Jobs



>2.7 million square feet



>\$680 million investment



# Site Development

To increase Moore County's inventory of available sites, a top priority for MCEDP continues to be the countywide search for parcels of 50 acres or more that have a high potential for development as business sites/parks.

## Iron Horse Industrial Park

MCEDP made tremendous progress this quarter in efforts to acquire the 73-acre parcel in the Iron Horse Industrial Park in Aberdeen. With access to natural gas and rail service, Iron Horse is Moore County's most viable industrial site currently available for development.

MCEDP staff executed a new Offer to Purchase contract for the parcel at the same purchase price as previously negotiated with five contingencies that must be met before closing can occur. Four of the contingencies relate to the construction of the industrial access road.

This quarter, MCEDP took several key steps to move the project toward closing later this calendar year, including:

- Finalized the location of the industrial access road with NC Department of Transportation (NCDOT) staff
- Obtained NCDOT Board approval of an agreement with MCEDP for NCDOT to construct the industrial access road
- Worked with Town of Aberdeen officials to obtain a final survey of the 60-foot right of way (ROW) needed for the access road, with the ROW subsequently dedicated to the town in October

Next steps include the Town of Aberdeen executing a 1-acre land swap with the adjacent property owner, NCDOT obtaining a railroad crossing agreement with Aberdeen & Rockfish Railroad, and NCDOT obtaining a gas encroachment permit from Piedmont Natural Gas. These actions should be completed in November with closing on the 73-acre site expected before December 31st.

*"We are cautiously optimistic that after some setbacks over the past year, we are now back on track to finally acquire the Iron Horse parcel." - Natalie Hawkins*

MCEDP continues to submit the Iron Horse parcel for business leads whenever the site meets the client's specified criteria.

This quarter, the Timmons Group finalized 2 conceptual layouts for the Iron Horse Industrial Park that MCEDP staff can provide to prospective clients and use to market the site. Both concept plans show that Iron Horse is versatile, can accommodate different industrial building configurations, and provide access to rail service.

The following conceptual layout shows the option of locating one (1) larger 600,000 square-foot building on the site that can accommodate 1 tenant or be subdivided for multiple tenants.



**Conceptual Layout #1 — (1) large building**

The next conceptual layout shows the option of constructing three (3) smaller buildings on the site of 80,000 square feet (SF), 100,000 SF, and 200,000 SF.



**Conceptual Layout #2 — (3) smaller buildings**

## Infrastructure Improvements

Being competitive and able to successfully recruit new businesses requires buildings and sites have adequate infrastructure, particularly water and sewer utilities.

The North Carolina state biennium budget recently passed by the General Assembly includes \$31.2 million in appropriations for water and sewer projects in Moore County, which is a significant step for supporting new and existing development:

- \$15 million to extend Moore County sewer to Seven Lakes
- \$10 million for Carthage sewer extensions
- \$5.2 million for the Pinebluff water system
- \$1 million for Cameron sewer feasibility study & a new water well

# Workforce & Community Development

## Early College at SCC

The NC State Budget also includes \$25 million to establish an “Early College” high school on the campus of Sandhills Community College (SCC).

The new high school will focus on vocational & technical training for specific career pathways. Students can earn both a diploma and a college associate’s degree, as well as credentials and licenses for specific vocations, to prepare them for post-secondary education and entering the workplace.

Toyota Battery Manufacturing, VinFast, and Wolfspeed will be locating within one hour north of Moore County and have collectively announced nearly **\$23 billion** in capital investment and more than **14,000 new jobs** over the next 7 years. Vocational training through an Early College high school will not only play a critical role in preparing students for those types of employment opportunities, but it will also benefit Moore County’s existing and prospective employ-

ers who will have access to a continuous pipeline of skilled, job-ready workers.



*Early College Conceptual Rendering*

*“MCEDP, SCC, and other workforce development partners continue to advocate for new and expanded resources and solutions that will address the workforce challenges and help meet the employment needs of Moore County’s employers.” - Natalie Hawkins*

## Vass RC2 Visit



In 2022, the Town of Vass was selected to participate in the NC Department of Commerce’s **Rural Community Capacity (RC2)** program that helps rural communities increase their capacity to plan, implement, and manage economic development programs.

This quarter, MCEDP staff participated in the RC2 Resource Team’s visit to Vass to tour the town and speak with town staff, elected officials, state officials, and local businesses to identify the community’s key needs. Vass identified parks & recreation facilities, sidewalk expansions, and downtown planning/enhancements as key areas the town will focus on.

**Workforce**, based on an evaluation of factors including worker availability, educational attainment, and productivity, and availability and quality of worker training programs.

*“All of North Carolina’s 100 counties, including Moore, benefit from the state’s top business rankings. Like North Carolina, Moore County offers low business costs, a diverse culture, superior infrastructure, and a pace of life that continues to attract talented people and companies.” - Natalie Hawkins*

## NC Named #1 State for Business



For the second year in a row, CNBC named North Carolina as **America’s Top State for Business** in 2023. Since 2017, NC has placed in the Top 5 of state rankings four (4) times.

CNBC’s ranking methodology looks at 86 metrics in 10 categories of competitiveness. NC ranked highly in the categories of Economy, Technology & Innovation, and Access to Capital, and ranked **#1 in**

## Duke Energy Grant Awards

This quarter, small businesses and non-profit organizations in Moore County applied to receive funding from the \$100,000 Duke Energy Foundation Small Business/Non-Profit Grant Program being



administered by the Moore County Chamber of Commerce. Award recipients have been selected and will be recognized by the Chamber at a reception in November.

Recipients can receive between \$500 and \$5,000 each that can be used to enhance service or commerce opportunities, support storefront beautification projects, support workforce needs, and/or for marketing their businesses and organizations.

# Administrative Items

## About Us

Moore County Economic Development Partnership is a not for profit public/private partnership for economic development in Moore County, NC.

Our mission is to increase economic prosperity and improve the quality of life for Moore County's citizens through the creation of quality jobs and capital investment in our communities.

## Our Staff

### Natalie Hawkins

President  
nhawkins@moorecountyedp.org

### Darryn Burich

Business Development Director  
dburich@moorecountyedp.org

### Melanie Thompson

Office Manager  
mthompson@moorecountyedp.org

## Our Contact Info

15 Chinquapin Rd, 2nd Floor  
PO Box 5885  
Pinehurst, NC 28370-5885

moorecountyedp.org  
(910) 246-0311

## Upcoming Events

### Entrepreneurship Summit

November 14, 2023 (5:30pm)  
The Fair Barn, Pinehurst

### Moore 100 Members Meeting

December 12, 2023 (4:00pm)  
Carolina Hotel, Pinehurst

## Quarterly Performance Indicators

For the quarter ended September 30, 2023, MCEDP is on track to meet all annual goals established for FY 2024.

Category	FY 2024 Staff Performance Goals	FY 2024 Goal	FY 2024 (Q1)
Business Visits	# of in-person business visits	16	7
Moore 100	# of Moore 100 members	60	45
	Moore 100 retention rate	75%	100%
Financial	Actual revenues as a % of budget	>100%	114%
	Actual expenditures as a % of budget	<100%	135%
Satisfaction	% of employers who agree MCEDP provides responsive services	90%	98%
	% of employers who agree MCEDP provides a high level of service & support	90%	97%

Goal Status			
On track to meet annual goal	<span style="background-color: yellow; width: 15px; height: 15px; display: inline-block;"></span>	Not on track to meet annual goal	<span style="background-color: red; width: 15px; height: 15px; display: inline-block;"></span>
		Met annual goal	<span style="background-color: green; width: 15px; height: 15px; display: inline-block;"></span>

## New Board Members

Effective July 1st, MCEDP welcomed 2 new members to our Board of Directors.

- **Dr. Sandy Stewart**, President of SCC, took the seat left vacant by former SCC president Dr. John Dempsey upon his retirement
- **Sandee Gronowski**, Vice President & Commercial Banker at First Citizens Bank, Pinehurst

**Tuesday, December 12th** at 4:00pm at the Carolina Hotel in Pinehurst. Mr. Suggs will talk about Toyota's plans for their new \$13.9 billion facility in Liberty, NC.



*Mr. Sean Suggs*

## Moore 100

On September 20th, The Pilot hosted a **Moore 100 Meetup** at their Southern Pines office. With nearly 30 members & guests attending to see The Pilot's newly enhanced newsroom, the gathering had the highest attendance yet for a Meetup.

The next **Moore 100 Members Meeting** featuring Sean Suggs, President of Toyota Battery Manufacturing NC, will be held on

Moore 100 Members Meetings planned for 2024 will feature:

- **March:** Brad Halling Whiskey Ko. (BHAWK) Tour & Tasting
- **May:** World Golf Hall of Fame Tour
- **October:** S-Line Commuter Rail Service