

MOORE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP

Building More Than The Economy



Quarterly Progress Report
March 31, 2024



From Our President

Last month, the Pinehurst-Southern Pines micropolitan, which includes all of Moore County, was ranked #10 in the nation (out of 543 micropolitans) for our stable and consistently growing economy. This signals that we have a strong local economy, and that is evident given the level of business interest we are currently seeing.

This quarter, MCEDP saw our first ever triple digit number of business leads in a single fiscal year, with **103 business leads** through the first nine months. We project that we will respond to around 120 leads for FY 2024. This represents the highest level of business interest in our 22-year history and is 3 times our historical average pre-COVID. We continue to work +/- 40 active, open projects at any given time, as we diligently try to locate buildings and sites for business expansions.

At the risk of sounding like a broken record, with business interest in Moore County as high as it is, a **high priority continues to be identification and development of business park sites**. After acquiring the Iron Horse property last November, we've timbered 56 acres of the 73-acre site and obtained all necessary permits to begin grubbing and grading approximately 15 acres of the site closest to the rail line. We also continued to work with the NC Department of Transportation (NCDOT) on design of the industrial access road from NC Highway 211, which should go out to bid later this Fall with construction commencing in the Spring of 2025.

This quarter, MCEDP was selected by the North Carolina Economic Development Association (NCEDA) Foundation to be a host agency for the new **NCEDA Foundation Fellows Program**. On May 13th, we'll welcome a UNC-Chapel Hill MPA student to our team, Cameron Brown, who will help us evaluate a shell building program and prepare a comprehensive report during his 12-week fellowship this summer.

This quarter we also continued to leverage our partnerships with the Economic Development Partnership of NC, ApprenticeshipNC, NCSU Industry Expansion Solutions, Moore County Chamber of Commerce, Sandhills Community College, and Moore County Schools to provide programs, resources, and information to help our businesses be more successful.

In February, MCEDP Board Chairman John May indicated he will step down from the board and the board elected Adam Kiker, Principal at LKC Engineering, to be the next MCEDP Chairman. Chairman May has faithfully served MCEDP since its creation in 2002 and has led the organization for the last 12 years as the Chairman. I am going to miss working with Chairman May who has been an invaluable resource to me and I look forward to working with Chairman Kiker as he takes the helm of the Board.

I hope you enjoy reading all about the exciting initiatives we've advanced recently in this Quarterly Progress Report!

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

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Business Recruitment, Retention, & Expansion

This quarter, MCEDP reached another milestone for business leads! For the first time in MCEDP's history, we reached **triple digits** in the number of business leads received year-to-date at **103**. Also, MCEDP completed **22** industry visits to date, well above our annual goal of 16.

Business Retention & Expansion Program

MCEDP staff visited **7 manufacturers** and **2 farms** in Moore County this quarter. These visits enable us to continue connecting local businesses to valuable resources that can assist them with a variety of needs. In March, MCEDP provided both farms with information about the NC Agriculture Manufacturing & Processing Initiative (NCAMPI) that funds and promotes value-adding agricultural manufacturing & food processing facilities across the state.

"This quarter our visits spanned Moore County as we met with businesses in Robbins, Carthage, Vass, Aberdeen, and Pinebluff." - Darryn Burich

2024 U.S. Open® Hospitality



The **2024 U.S. Open® Championship** is rapidly approaching, and MCEDP is partnering with the Economic Development Partnership of NC (EDPNC), the Pinehurst, Southern Pines, and Aberdeen Convention & Visitors Bureau, the NC Core, and the NC's Southeast (NCSE) to share corporate hospitality space in the Padgett Pavilion.

During the championship, EDPNC will host 16 national site selection consultants for their Premier NC event, exposing Moore County and MCEDP staff to business recruiters from across the country. MCEDP will also use its ticket allocation to host prospective clients and others for the 2024 U.S. Open.

Golf Cluster Expansion

In their January 2024 issue, PGA Magazine published a 1-page ad collaboratively designed with MCEDP to attract and recruit new golf businesses to locate in Moore County. The ad highlights the substantial cluster of golf business and associations that already call Moore County home.

MCEDP also met this quarter with USGA management to discuss a recruitment strategy for golf manufacturers. The USGA may also facilitate an opportunity for MCEDP staff to connect with golf equipment manufacturers during a reception at the U.S. Open® Championship in June.

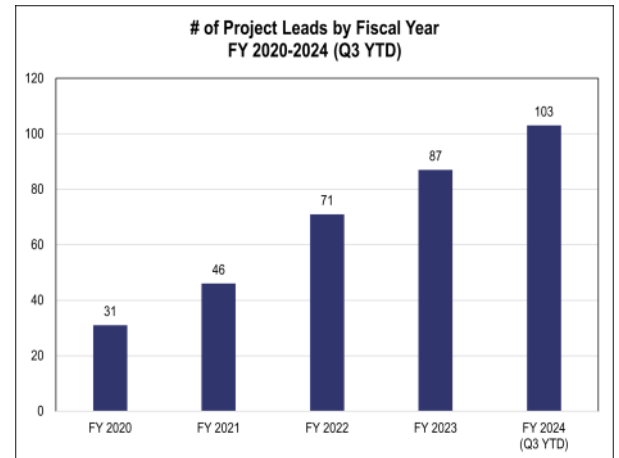


Project Activity July 2023 – March 2024

Year-to-date, MCEDP received a record **103** leads, the first time ever reaching triple digits in lead volume. This is already **18% more** than the 87 leads received during all of fiscal year (FY) 2023.

An analysis of the 103 leads received as of March 31st indicates:

- **83%** were manufacturing industries
- **55%** were looking for **200,000 square feet** or less
- **70%** were looking for sites of **50 acres** or less
- **54%** required access to natural gas
- **28%** of leads were direct inquiries or referrals
- MCEDP submitted properties for **39%** of leads



42 Active Projects at March 31, 2024



>1,600 Jobs



>2.1 million square feet



>\$676 million investment

Site Development

This quarter, MCEDP focused heavily on development activities for our Iron Horse site. In addition, staff identified potential business park sites throughout Moore County and reached out to property owners to gauge their interest in partnering with MCEDP on site acquisition and development.

Iron Horse Industrial Park

Since acquiring the 73-acre site in Iron Horse Industrial Park in Aberdeen last November, MCEDP made substantial progress this quarter preparing the site for a future tenant:

- Cleared **56 acres** of the site that generated \$33,000 in revenue,
- Executed a contract with Sanford Contractors to grub & grade +/- **15 acres** and demolish a dilapidated structure on site,
- Secured all state and local environmental permits required for grubbing & grading, and
- Continued working with NCDOT, Town of Aberdeen staff, and adjacent property owners to complete the design and environmental work needed for constructing the access road to the site.

Sanford Contractors will begin grubbing and grading the 16 acres in April 2024.



Cleared acreage at Iron Horse

MCEDP also submitted the Iron Horse Industrial Park for EDPNC's **Selectsite Readiness Program** established by the NC General Assembly to identify up to 15 sites of less than 1,000 acres across the state that could successfully serve major advanced manufacturing projects. 55 sites were submitted in total and our site did not make list of sites that received a site visit.

"We made a tremendous amount of progress with development activities at the Iron Horse Industrial Park this quarter." - Natalie Hawkins

New Site Identification

MCEDP staff identified **11 potential business park sites** throughout Moore County using various site ID programs and a review of GIS data. Staff evaluated each site using criteria such as availability of public water & sewer service, site topography, and consistency of use with future Land Use Plans. Staff then ranked each site as having **short-term** (3 sites), **mid-term** (4 sites), or **long-term** (4 sites) development potential. In March, MCEDP mailed letters to the respective property owners to gauge their interest in partnering with MCEDP on site acquisition and development opportunities. To date, a few owners have responded and are willing to discuss potential opportunities further.

Also this quarter, MCEDP met with Aberdeen Carolina & Western Railway Company (ACWR) to identify sites in Moore County that ACWR can serve with rail.

Shell Buildings

NCSE Industrial Building Program

NC's Southeast (NCSE) received a \$2.5 million appropriation in the last state budget and has earmarked **\$1.2 million** to create an industrial building program. Through a competitive grant process, NCSE plans to choose 3 to 4 shell building construction projects to fund within its 20 member counties which includes Moore. MCEDP anticipates applying for funding that could be disbursed in late summer, pending the completion of the Shell Building Program Proposal later this year.

NCEDA Fellow

MCEDP was selected by the NC Economic Developers Association (NCEDA) Foundation to be the pilot for their new Fellows Program. MCEDP is the only economic development agency in North Carolina participating in the pilot program. **Cameron Brown** will complete a 12-week paid fellowship between May 13 and August 2. His assigned project will be to produce a comprehensive report, with assistance of MCEDP staff, that evaluates the viability of establishing a shell building program in Moore County. The report will be presented to elected officials and the MCEDP Board of Directors in the Fall.



Cameron Brown

Cameron will graduate from East Carolina University in May with a Bachelor of Science degree in Community & Regional Planning and will attend UNC-Chapel Hill in the Fall to pursue a Master of Public Administration.

"We are excited to welcome Cameron to our team and we look forward to working with him this summer." - Natalie Hawkins

Workforce & Community Development

This quarter, MCEDP facilitated and supported several workforce and community development-related initiatives.

FirstHealth FirstFutures

In March, MCEDP facilitated a meeting between FirstHealth of the Carolinas and ApprenticeshipNC to advance their FirstFutures Program created to encourage students to pursue healthcare professions. Representatives from **FirstHealth, ApprenticeshipNC, and MCEDP** discussed opportunities to establish pre-apprentice and apprenticeship programs at First-Health.



Housing Needs Assessment



MCEDP contributed \$5,000 to help fund a 21-county Housing Needs Assessment for the **Carolina Core** region which includes Moore County. The availability of affordable workforce housing is a challenging issue

for many communities, and the study will provide recommendations on how to achieve certain housing goals related to the number of housing units needed for rent and for sale, price point, and market segment (e.g. families, seniors, disabled, young professionals, etc.). The study is scheduled to be completed by June 2024, with a final report delivered in the Fall of 2024.

Moore County Airport

Following a recommendation from MCEDP staff, the Moore County Airport Authority Board approved moving forward with a Catchment Area Study to evaluate the viability of restoring commercial air service to the **Moore County Airport**. The airport engaged Volaire Aviation to conduct the study with results expected to be presented in late May/early June.



Moore County Digital Inclusion

MCEDP staff assisted **Moore County Schools** with preparing the application for a \$400,000 Digital Champion's Grant that targets rural, low-income, and language barriered populations and provides access to the Internet via stipends for service and Chromebook/hotspot checkouts through Sandhills Regional Library System.



Career Opportunities in Golf

Last December, the inaugural class of 18 students graduated from the USGA Greenkeeper Apprenticeship Program at Sandhills Community College (SCC). The graduates completed 200 classroom hours and 2,000 hours working on local golf courses. MCEDP helped facilitate the collaboration between the **USGA, ApprenticeshipNC**, and others to create the program aimed to provide a pipeline of credentialed workers to support golf courses in Moore County and beyond. The 2nd class of students convened in January.



In 2022, the USGA launched their Pathways Internship Program to encourage college students, particularly from underrepresented communities, to consider careers in golf. In June, 20 students will be at Pinehurst Resort to participate in classroom and behind-the-scenes training sessions during the U.S. Open®. They will have direct exposure to key championship departments including player services, merchandising, operations, media & hospitality, and will also have opportunities to network with golf industry leadership. This quarter, MCEDP identified Moore County leaders who could support the program and interact with Pathways interns, at the request of USGA staff.

"MCEDP works closely with many partner organizations whose initiatives complement our mission, and we strive to support these organizations and facilitate their initiatives in any way we can."

– Natalie Hawkins

Propel NC

Created to better align community college programs with employer demands, Propel NC is a new initiative/funding model that incentivizes community colleges to deliver needed workforce talent by providing more funding for courses leading to credentials or degrees to support high-demand jobs that pay higher wages. MCEDP staff assisted **Sandhills Community College** with obtaining letters of support for the initiative and met with NC Community College leadership as a member of the NCEDA Board of Directors.



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

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Upcoming Events

Moore 100 Members Meeting

May 22, 2024 (4:00pm)
USGA Experience/World Golf Hall of Fame
at Golf House Pinehurst




Progress Cup Golf Tournament

May 29, 2024

Quarterly Performance Indicators

For the nine months ended March 31, 2024, MCEDP is on track to meet, or has already met, annual goals established for FY 2024.

Category	FY 2024 Staff Performance Goals	FY 2024 Goal	FY 2024 (Q3)
Business Visits	# of in-person business visits	16	22
Moore 100	# of Moore 100 members	60	52
	Moore 100 retention rate	75%	100%
Financial	Actual revenues as a % of budget	>100%	96%
	Actual expenditures as a % of budget	<100%	110%
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		Not on track to meet annual goal	
		Met annual goal	

Moore 100



On March 18th, MCEDP hosted a **Moore 100 Members Meeting** at Brad Halling American Whiskey Co. (**BHAWK**) in Southern Pines. Over 100 members and guests toured the new venue and tasted several of BHAWK's products including the very popular Madam Colonel Pistachio Bourbon Cream.

The next **Moore 100 Members Meeting** on Wednesday, May 22nd will feature a private tour of the **USGA Experience** and **World Golf Hall of Fame**.



Progress Cup

MCEDP still has a few team spots available for our **12th annual Progress Cup** golf tournament on Wednesday, May 29th at Mid South Club. If entering a team isn't an option, there are also hole sponsorships available. To enter your team or for more information about sponsorship opportunities, please email info@moorecountyedp.org.

