

MOORE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP

Building More Than The Economy



Quarterly Progress Report
September 30, 2024



From Our President

With the start of our new fiscal year in July, MCEDP is focused on working toward achieving the goals outlined in our **Fiscal Year 2025 Strategic Operating Plan** approved by our Board of Directors. Supporting Moore County’s existing businesses, attracting new jobs and capital investment to our communities, and supporting new business creation remain priorities for MCEDP.

This quarter, MCEDP was pleased to support the expansion of **Reliance Packaging LLC**, an existing manufacturer in Aberdeen who will invest **\$7.4 million** and create **32 new jobs** to better serve new & existing customers. MCEDP assisted the Town of Aberdeen and Reliance with securing two substantial building renovation grants, and we will continue to assist the project by providing administrative support for both grants.

To support new business creation in Moore County, MCEDP is hosting our **2nd annual Moore Entrepreneurial Summit** that will be held on November 19th at The Fair Barn in Pinehurst. We encourage entrepreneurs and small business owners to [register](#) for the Summit where they can learn expert strategies and access valuable resources for marketing and growing their businesses.

MCEDP continues to focus on product development to increase the inventory of industrial buildings and business park sites available throughout Moore County for business recruitment and expansion. This quarter, MCEDP made an offer to secure a 5-year option on a **42-acre site in Robbins** and applied for more grant funding for additional development activities at the **Iron Horse Industrial Park**. We also completed a comprehensive **Shell Building Report** that indicates establishing a shell building development program in Moore County is a viable way to increase building inventory, help meet market demand for industrial space, and increase the County’s competitiveness in attracting new jobs and capital investment.

MCEDP’s collaboration with state, regional, and local partner organizations remains critically important for achieving **workforce & community development initiatives** that support our citizens & businesses and improve our quality of life. This quarter, MCEDP’s cooperative efforts included leveraging partnerships with the local Realtors Association, Moore County Chamber of Commerce, Moore County Airport, and others to focus on addressing affordable housing challenges, promoting family-friendly policies in the workplace, reestablishing commercial air service at Moore County Airport, and updating Moore County’s Land Use Plan.

MCEDP looks forward to a productive fiscal year. I hope you enjoy reading this Quarterly Report and learning more about our exciting initiatives that advance our mission “to create 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.”

Natalie D. Hawkins

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

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Business Recruitment, Retention, & Expansion

With the start of fiscal year (FY) 2025, MCEDP is focused on working toward the goals outlined in our FY 2025 Strategic Operating Plan. Supporting Moore County's existing businesses by continuing to expand our Business Retention & Expansion (BRE) Program remains a priority for this fiscal year.

Business Retention & Expansion

In August, Reliance Packaging LLC, a manufacturer of high quality flexible packaging products in Aberdeen, announced a **\$7.4 million expansion** that will create **32 jobs** over 3 years. The Town of Aberdeen was awarded a \$160,000 Building Reuse state grant and a \$50,000 One North Carolina Fund state grant to support Reliance's expansion. MCEDP assisted Aberdeen and Reliance in applying for the grants. This project will be Reliance's third major expansion since relocating to Aberdeen in 2014.

Also this quarter, Sierra Nevada Corporation, a global company that develops aerospace and national security technology, announced their expansion by hosting a ribbon cutting for their **new 30,000 square foot office** in Southern Pines. The facility will support SNC's military radio communications programs.

MCEDP is also working with a local ranch to identify funding sources to support an expansion that would enable the business to increase its production by **400%**, as well as take advantage of agritourism opportunities.

A goal for MCEDP's BRE Program in FY 2025 is to achieve **20 visits** to local businesses to continue building relationships and providing support. MCEDP visited **9** manufacturers this quarter.

2024 Moore Entrepreneurial Summit

MCEDP staff and a Task Force of 13 members continued organizing the **2nd annual Moore Entrepreneurial Summit** that will be held on November 19th from 6:00-7:45pm at The Fair Barn in Pinehurst.



The 2024 Moore Entrepreneurial Summit will celebrate, support, and elevate small business growth in Moore County. The event will include 2 panel discussions: "Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Technology to Market Your Small Business" and "How to Scale Your Small Business". A Resource

Expo will feature more than a dozen entrepreneurial support organizations, and there will ample networking opportunities and a chance to win door prizes.

Pre-registration is required by November 15th. The registration link and more information are available at www.moorecountyedp.org/ent-summit.

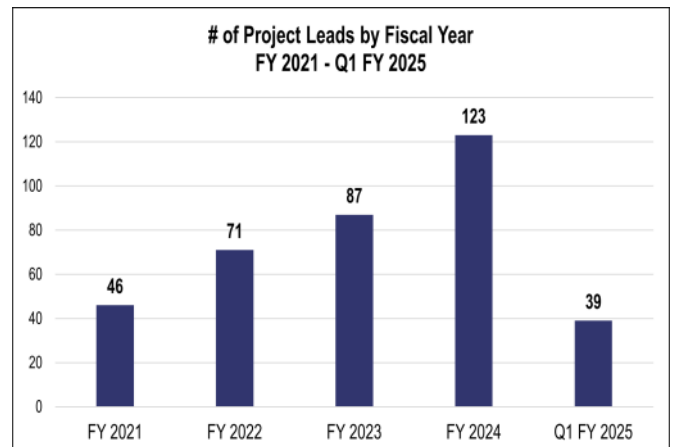
"Attendees will leave equipped with real-world tools, valuable information and essential resources to help their businesses thrive in today's competitive business market." - Natalie Hawkins

Project Activity July – September 2024

MCEDP received **39** business leads this quarter, slightly fewer than the same period last fiscal year. Despite this small decrease, MCEDP anticipates lead volume in FY 2025 will likely exceed last fiscal year, consistent with the trend since FY 2020.

An analysis of the 39 leads indicates:

- **90%** were manufacturing industries (35)
- **36%** were looking for an existing building (14)
- **49%** were looking for **100,000 square feet** or less (19)
- **44%** were looking for sites of **50 acres** or less (17)
- **48%** required access to natural gas (19)
- MCEDP was unable to submit a property for **92%** of the leads due to a lack of available buildings & sites (36)



22 Active Projects at September 30, 2024



>680 Jobs



>576,000 square feet



>\$139 million investment

Site Development

Continuing to facilitate development of Iron Horse Industrial Park in Aberdeen and securing public control of potential business park sites in Moore County for future development also remain priority action plans in MCEDP's FY 2025 Strategic Operating Plan.

Iron Horse Industrial Park

MCEDP coordinated the following work at **Iron Horse** this quarter:

- MCEDP applied for a **\$200,000 grant** through NC's Southeast's (NCSE) Industrial Site Enhancement Program to be used for site planning, additional due diligence, and gap funding needed to construct the access road to the site.
- NCDOT indicated their environmental assessment work on the site is 80% complete, and the design for the access road is 75% complete. NCDOT anticipates putting the road construction out for bid in March 2025.
- MCEDP is working with an environmental attorney to evaluate whether Iron Horse should enter the state's Brownfields Program to improve the marketability of the site by limiting risks and providing tax credits to the ultimate owner(s).
- NCSE is finalizing an updated drone video of Iron Horse that MCEDP will use to market the site.



Screenshot from the drone video

New Site Identification

This quarter, MCEDP staff continued conversations with the respective owners of properties identified as having potential for development as business park sites:

+/-42-acre site in Robbins: MCEDP is negotiating with property owners to secure a 5-year option to purchase.

+/-14-acre site in Vass: The owner ordered a property appraisal that MCEDP can use, once it is received, to determine a starting price for negotiating a 5-year option to purchase.

+/-130-acre site in Carthage: MCEDP was unsuccessful at negoti-

ating with the owners to secure a 5-year option to purchase; consequently, MCEDP is no longer considering the site for acquisition. MCEDP is working with Carthage staff to evaluate alternative sites for potential acquisition and development as business parks.

Shell Building Program Evaluation

This quarter, MCEDP staff, with assistance from NCEDA Foundation Fellow Cameron Brown, completed a comprehensive report evaluating the potential to establish a shell building development program in Moore County. Cameron completed his fellowship with MCEDP in August.

Establishing a shell building program can benefit a community in several key ways including increasing the local inventory of buildings available for business creation, recruitment, and expansion; and allowing businesses to move in and establish operations more quickly to increase speed to market—all of which increases a community's competitiveness in attracting new jobs and capital investment.



Example of shell building

After correlating the data and information gathered through a thorough market analysis, MCEDP concluded the implementation of a shell building development program is a feasible way to address market demand for readily available industrial space in Moore County. The report provided **three (3) recommendations**:

1. Local governments can adopt performance-based incentive policies to encourage **private sector** construction of industrial shell buildings. Incentives help lower overall development costs, making shell building construction more financially viable for private developers.
2. Local governments or MCEDP can secure public control of business park sites to accommodate shell building projects initiated by **either the private or public sector**. Sites under public control may be eligible for more grant programs that provide funding for site development.
3. Once one or more new business park sites are under public control, the **public sector** can construct shell buildings at these locations. An optimal building size would be +/-25,000 square feet of expandable space that can be leased or sold to one or more tenants.

"Implementing these recommendations could have a public economic benefit of increasing & diversifying the tax base, creating new jobs for citizens, and supporting the retention & expansion of existing businesses." - Natalie Hawkins

Workforce & Community Development

MCEDP engaged with partner organizations this quarter to advance several workforce & community development initiatives in Moore County.

Carolina Core Housing Summit



Access to affordable housing, particularly workforce housing, is a national issue. To begin addressing the challenge in central North Carolina, NC REALTORS® and other partner organizations engaged Bowen National Research (BNR) to conduct a **housing needs assessment study** for the 21-county Carolina Core region that includes Moore County. MCEDP contributed \$5,000 to help fund the study. The comprehensive results were presented in September at a regional Summit in High Point.

The report revealed a lack of housing across all income levels throughout the region and provided an analysis of available housing stock, planned units, and unit costs. It also presented recommendations for a collective action plan to begin addressing housing needs in the region.

A separate detailed report was also prepared for each of the 21 counties to provide findings at the county level. Moore County's report will be presented by BNR's president at MCEDP's Moore 100 Members Meeting on March 4, 2025 in collaboration with the Mid Carolina Regional Association of Realtors and the Moore County Chamber of Commerce.

Family Forward NC



This quarter, MCEDP provided a letter of support for the Family Forward NC® Employer Certification Program, a statewide initiative to encourage employers to prioritize family-friendly policies and practices and to implement strategies in the workplace that support work-life balance.

Employers can apply to become **Family Forward NC Certified Employers** which signifies to potential and current employees, customers, and stakeholders that the company is a family-friendly workplace and is supportive of working families and children.

There is also an opportunity for a community to become a Family Forward NC Certified Community if a significant percentage of its employers have achieved certification. The Moore County Chamber of Commerce is spearheading the initiative locally.

Commercial Air Service at SOP

Volaire Aviation Consulting recently completed a Catchment Area Study commissioned by the Moore County Airport Authority Board to assess the viability of reestablishing commercial air service at

Moore County Airport (SOP). The study revealed the number of potential passengers in the area could support up to eight commercial flights daily and recommended the Airport evaluate the opportunity to contract with low-cost carriers, such as Allegiant, Avelo, or Breeze, to establish less-than-daily nonstop commercial flights to 6 key markets along the East Coast.



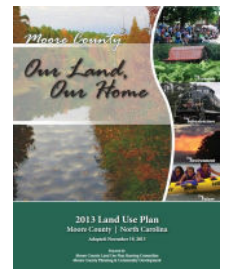
To that end, Moore County Airport applied for a **\$950,000 Small Community Air Service Development (SCASD) Grant** that

would be used toward establishing a minimum revenue guarantee (MRG). An MRG agreement will incentivize an air carrier(s) to establish service at SOP by guaranteeing the airline will receive a minimum amount of revenue from tickets sales over a set period of time. MCEDP prepared a letter in support of the Airport's SCASD grant application and also provided feedback on the application.

In October, MCEDP President Natalie Hawkins, Airport Director Rick Cloutier, and Convention & Visitors Bureau President Phil Werz will attend the TakeOff North America Conference in Green Bay, WI to meet with several commercial carriers to discuss opportunities and gauge their interest in potentially establishing service at SOP.

County Land Use Plan Update

MCEDP President Natalie Hawkins is one of more than 30 members on Moore County's Land Use Plan Steering Committee appointed to review the County's **2013 Land Use Plan** and make recommendations for updating and improving the Plan so that it more closely aligns with the current needs and priorities of the community.



The Committee members include local government representatives and business & community leaders from across the County who represent a broad, diverse cross section of industry sectors and expertise. The Committee is charged with creating a more effective and comprehensive plan that will guide future land use decisions and promote responsible public & private development while at the same time striving to preserve the County's character and natural resources.

The Committee first convened in July and will meet monthly through March 2025. This quarter, the Committee reviewed the County's natural environment, existing infrastructure, regulatory environment, planning jurisdictions, and current land uses. They also began providing their opinions on the strengths and weaknesses of the current plan and identifying the major factors and issues, such as population growth and economic development, that directly impact a land use plan.

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

2024 Moore Entrepreneurial Summit

November 19, 2024 (6:00pm)
The Fair Barn, Pinehurst




Moore 100 Members Meeting

March 4, 2025 (4:00pm)
SCC BPAC Owens Auditorium

Quarterly Performance Indicators

For the three months ended September 30, 2024, MCEDP is on track to meet the annual performance goals established for FY 2025.

Category	FY 2025 Staff Performance Goals	FY 2025 Goal	Q1 FY 2025
	# of in-person business visits	20	8
Moore 100	# of Moore 100 members	60	48
	Moore 100 retention rate	75%	100%
Financial	Actual revenues as a % of budget	>100%	110%
	Actual expenditures as a % of budget	<100%	75%
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		Met Annual Goal		Did Not Meet Annual Goal

Moore 100

In September, MCEDP hosted a **Member Meetup** at Red's Corner in Southern Pines with more than 20 members attending.

"The informal Member Meetups are a great opportunity for members to socialize and get to know each other better."

– Natalie Hawkins

At the next Moore 100 **Members Meeting** on March 4, 2025, guest speaker Patrick Bowen, president of Bowen National Research, will present the Moore County-specific results of the housing needs assessment survey his firm completed for the 21-county Carolina Core region.

Becoming a Moore 100 Member

Joining Moore 100 is a great way for individuals and businesses to be more informed about topics of community importance, be more engaged in economic & community development, and build relationships with other business & community leaders in Moore County.

Membership benefits include:

- 2 tickets (member & guest) to three (3) exclusive member meetings per year featuring prominent guest speakers and a networking reception;
- Access to three (3) Meetup social events per year; and
- Access to the members-only quarterly e-newsletter with important announcements and updates.

The annual membership fee is \$2,000, billed each January, and may be tax-deductible as MCEDP is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

More information about Moore 100, including a list of current members, is available at www.moorecountyedp.org/moore-100.



MOORE