

MOORE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP

Building More Than The Economy



Quarterly Progress Report
March 31, 2025



From Our President

This quarter, MCEDP continued to advance significant economic development initiatives that align with our mission *to create economic prosperity and improve the quality of life for Moore County's citizens*. New business recruitment, existing business support, site & building development, and collaboration with partner organizations to address community issues are the key areas our efforts are concentrated. In this quarter's report, you'll read about:

- The USDA **Rural Business Development Grant** application we submitted to obtain funding to help stimulate the recruitment of woody biobased companies to Moore County.
- The visits we made to local manufacturers and other businesses to build relationships and provide support & resources to help them grow and thrive. This quarter we helped **secure four (4) engineering student interns** from NCSU for two local manufacturers.
- An update on our efforts to prepare the **Iron Horse Industrial Park** in Aberdeen for business recruitment.
- The progress we've made on obtaining due diligence reports for the **42-acre site in Robbins** we have under a one-year option to purchase.
- Highlights from **the Moore County Housing Needs Assessment Study** that Patrick Bowen of Bowen National Research presented at the March Moore 100 Members Meeting that highlights the need to address the critical housing supply shortage in Moore County.
- Updates on the **Moore County Land Use Plan Steering Committee's Goals, Recommendations, and Actions** provided to the Moore County Board of Commissioners that provides suggestions for updating and improving the Moore County 2013 Land Use Plan.

I'm also excited to report MCEDP engaged in a unique opportunity this quarter to collaborate with Lee & Chatham Counties and other partners to help begin organizing a **regional music festival** planned for 2026. **Ray Williams**, a prominent British music & film producer who discovered Elton John and managed his career for several years, is spearheading the event and brought together our economic development counterparts and others from the three counties to form the planning group. I spent a day with Mr. Williams, representatives from the state's new NC Music Office, and others touring potential music venues in Southern Pines. It will be exciting to see how the regional music festival ultimately comes to fruition.

I hope you enjoy reading this Quarterly Report that highlights just a few of the significant activities, initiatives, collaborations, and achievements we were involved in this quarter.

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



Business Recruitment & Existing Business Support

New Business Recruitment



This quarter, MCEDP submitted an application for a **\$75,000 USDA Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG)** to obtain a Bioeconomy Development Opportunity (BDO) Rating to help recruit woody biobased businesses to Moore County. A high BDO rating would signify Moore County is an advantageous location to support biobased project development such as wood-based manufacturing, clean energy production, and environmental & sustainability applications. MCEDP also secured letters of support for our application from U.S. Congressman Richard Hudson, U.S. Senator Thom Tillis, and U.S. Senator Ted Budd.

In March, MCEDP Business Development Director Darryn Burch attended the **Hunter Hotel Investment Conference**, where he met with hotel and investor representatives to discuss opportunities for new hotel investments in Moore County.

Existing Business Support

In partnership with Sandhills Community College and NC State University's (NCSU) Industrial Expansion Solutions, MCEDP visited **five (5)** manufacturers this quarter and provided resources about customized workforce training, English as a Second Language, and internship opportunities. MCEDP helped two manufacturers (Reliance Packaging and Hamilton Beach) secure a total of four (4) engineering interns through NCSU's Rural Works program.

This quarter, MCEDP created a **handout** for industry visits that summarizes the **key services & support** MCEDP can offer to Moore County's businesses. These services include:

- Identifying funding sources
- Identifying buildings & sites for relocation & expansion
- Facilitating workforce development
- Providing data analysis & research



[Click here](#) to access the handout and see how MCEDP can assist your business.

Project Wins

MCEDP was pleased to see two clients we've worked with over several months make public announcements of their projects:

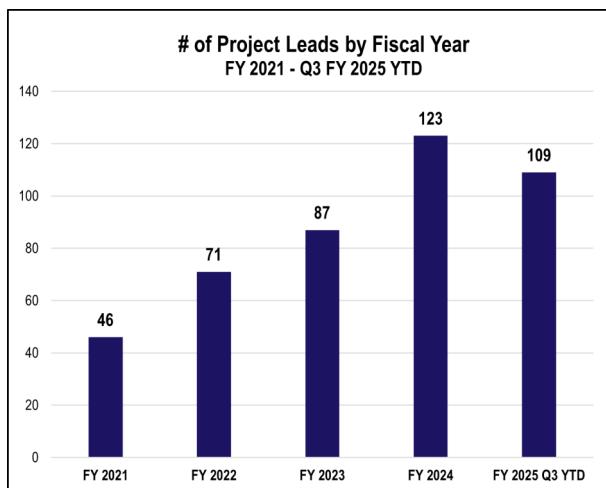
1. In January, **Amazon** announced construction of a 65,000 square foot last mile distribution facility on +/- 16 acres of the Southern Pines Corporate Park.
2. In March, **First Tee of the Sandhills** announced development of their Community Hub on +/- 35 acres in Cameron.

Project Activity January – March 2025

MCEDP received **38** business leads this quarter, bringing the year-to-date total to **109**. If lead activity continues at the current high volume, we can expect total leads received in FY 2025 to be **+/- 150** leads, surpassing last year's highest ever recorded # of leads at **123**.

An analysis of the 38 leads received in Q3 indicates:

- **82%** (31) were manufacturing industries. MCEDP received 3 new leads for recreation-related projects.
- **55%** (21) were looking for an existing building with 200,000 square feet or less
- **32%** (12) were looking for a site of 100 acres or less
- MCEDP was able to submit a property for only **six (16%)** of the leads



17 Active Projects at March 31, 2024



>520 Jobs



>278,000 square feet



>\$52.8 million investment

Site & Building Development

Iron Horse Update

This quarter, MCEDP met with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the NC Department of Transportation (NCDOT) to discuss the design and construction of the **.3-mile two-lane access road** that will extend from NC Highway 211 East to Iron Horse Industrial Park and permits needed due to the impact road construction will have on wetlands.

Following these meetings, MCEDP submitted the required Purpose & Need Statement and Alternatives Statement for the USACE Nationwide Permit. This permit is needed before any road construction can commence. NCDOT staff are currently preparing the USACE Nationwide Permit application on behalf of MCEDP.

NCDOT staff also provided the following updated **estimated timeline for completion** of the Iron Horse Industrial Park access road:

- **May/June 2025** – Complete design & submit permit application to USACE; Obtain NCDOT engineers' cost estimate
- **Oct/Nov 2025** – NCDOT bids out the project
- **Feb/Mar 2026** – Road construction begins
- **Sept/Oct 2026** – Road construction complete

"Construction of the access road is a critical component of preparing Iron Horse for business recruitment and development. While there are hurdles to clear before road construction can begin, MCEDP is making steady progress toward the targeted completion date." - Darryn Burich, Business Development Director

New Site Identification

After securing a one-year Option to Purchase a **42-acre site** off NC Highway 24/27 in Robbins last quarter, MCEDP used funding from a **\$35,000** NC's Southeast product development grant to obtain several due diligence reports this quarter, including:

1. Phase I Environmental Site Assessment,
2. Wetlands delineation,
3. Endangered species survey, and
4. Archaeological, historical & cultural resources review.

None of the reports received identified obstacles to the future development of the property as a business park site. In addition, MCEDP engaged an engineering firm to conduct a water & sewer capacity study that is currently underway.



42-acre Robbins site off NC Hwy 24/27

Workforce & Community Development

Regional Music Festival



Ray Williams

This quarter, MCEDP and representatives from Moore County's Convention & Visitors Bureau joined a newly organized group that is planning a regional music festival for 2026.

The festival is being organized and spearheaded by **Ray Williams**. Mr. Williams resides in Sanford and is a prominent name in the music & film industry as he discovered Elton John and was his personal manager for his first 5 albums.

Working alongside economic development and tourism staff in Lee and Chatham Counties, the regional music festival is envisioned to be held in the towns of Southern Pines, Sanford, and Pittsboro.

In March, the planning group hosted representatives from the state's new NC Music Office at all three towns, with state officials touring four (4) music venues in Southern Pines that could hold events during the 2026 regional music festival.

"Helping organize a music festival is not in MCEDP's usual wheelhouse, but it's exciting to be involved in planning an event that will have a regional economic impact and be an opportunity to showcase our Moore County community." - Natalie Hawkins, President

Workforce & Community Development (continued)

WDCP E-Newsletter

MCEDP is active member of the **Moore County Workforce Development Collaborative Partnership (WDCP)** composed of several partner organizations who work with employers to address workforce issues that impact Moore County's businesses. The WDCP distributes a **quarterly workforce development e-newsletter** full of valuable workforce-related insights, updates, and other pertinent information & resources to benefit local businesses. To subscribe to the e-newsletter, [click here](#).

Workforce Housing

At the March 4th Moore 100 Members Meeting, Patrick Bowen, President of Bowen National Research, presented the findings from the [Moore County Housing Needs Assessment](#) report that was part of a larger housing assessment study his firm conducted for the 21-county Carolina Core region of central NC.

Key insights from the Moore County study included:

- Demand for housing will continue to increase as Moore County is projected to grow by 4.2% between 2023 and 2028. This is the 3rd fastest growth rate in the Carolina Core region.
- Between 2024 & 2029, Moore County will have a housing gap of over 7,700 units
- Multifamily rental housing has wait lists up to 36 months long and/or contains up to 22 households.
- The availability of for-sale housing is limited. In May 2024, the availability rate was .9%, significantly below the 2% to 3% range of a balanced for-sale market.
- Moore County has the 2nd highest median list price in the Carolina Core region at \$495,000.



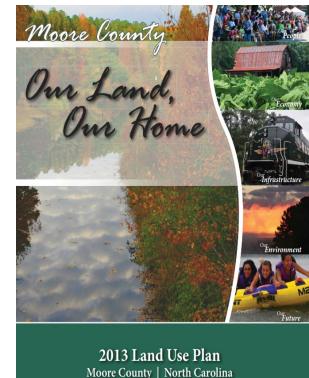
The Town of Southern Pines has formed the **Town of Southern Pines Housing Supply Focus Group**. As part of the Town's Comprehensive Plan implementation, the Town Council will evaluate policies to help close gaps in housing supply & demand in their jurisdiction. The Council recently approved moving forward with three (3) pathways: 1) increasing density for duplexes, townhomes and stacked complexes, 2) creating more land-use flexibility for non-conventional housing, and 3) creating pre-reviewed or approved and streamlined options or incentives for subdivisions. MCEDP President Natalie Hawkins is participating in the focus group.

County Land Use Plan Update

This quarter, the 30+ member Moore County Land Use Plan Steering Committee concluded its nine-month review of the County's 2013 Land Use Plan and provided their report of suggested Plan Goals, Recommendations, and Actions to the Moore County Board of Commissioners and Planning Board. MCEDP President Natalie Hawkins participated on the Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee's suggested Plan Goals, Recommendations, and Actions prioritize preserving rural agricultural areas and implementing a "small town model" to prevent urban sprawl. Recommendations and Actions are grouped under **five (5) suggested countywide land use goals**:

1. Preserve and protect the ambience and heritage of Moore County
2. Conserve open space and protect vital natural resources to enhance the health and wellness of the community
3. Optimize the uses of land within the County of Moore and assure adequate infrastructure is available to support desired growth of the county
4. Provide information and seek citizen participation
5. Accommodate for a variety of housing types



Steering Committee co-leaders Robert Hayter and Larry Best will present the Moore County Land Use Plan Steering Committee's report at the June 9th meeting of the MCEDP Board of Directors.

An up-to-date land use plan that specifies the types of development allowed and where each type of development can be located within a jurisdiction is critical for MCEDP as we try to foster economic development in Moore County. As businesses look to grow and expand, MCEDP staff rely heavily on land use plans when helping clients identify potential sites and buildings.

"A community needs clearly defined areas in land use plans that designate where commercial and industrial development are best suited to accommodate growth while preserving those desirable qualities that make Moore County so special." - Natalie Hawkins, President

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

13th Annual Progress Cup

May 28, 2025 (9:00am Shotgun)
Mid Pines Golf Club

Moore 100 Members Meeting

June 16, 2025 (4:00pm)
Carolina Hotel, Pinehurst

Quarterly Performance Indicators

For the nine months ended March 31, 2025, MCEDP is on track to meet 6 out of 7 annual performance goals established for FY 2025.

Category	FY 2025 Staff Performance Goals	FY 2025 Goal	Q3 FY 2025
Business Visits	# of in-person business visits	20	21
Moore 100	# of Moore 100 members	65	47
	Moore 100 retention rate	75%	100%
Financial	Actual revenues as a % of budget	>100%	89%
	Actual expenditures as a % of budget	<100%	95%
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	Not on Track to Meet Annual Goal	

Moore 100

At the next **Moore 100 Members Meeting** on **June 16th** at the Carolina Hotel, representatives from NCDOT will speak about in-progress and planned transportation improvements that impact our community.

For more information about joining Moore 100, visit www.moorecountyedp.org/moore-100.



3/4/25 Members Meeting at BPAC



Progress Cup

This year's 13th annual **Progress Cup golf tournament** will be a Best Ball format played at Mid Pines Golf Club on May 28th at 9:00am (shotgun start). The annual tournament is an important fundraiser for MCEDP with proceeds supporting our economic development activities & initiatives in Moore County.

The \$2,000 team entry fee includes 18 holes of golf for four (4) players, tee gifts, lunch, awards, and company sponsorship recognition. Hole sponsorships are available for \$250 that include sponsorship signage.

To register a team or sponsor a hole, contact rsvp@moorecountyedp.org.

