

MOORE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP

Building More Than The Economy



Quarterly Progress Report
June 30, 2025



From Our President

Just as we predicted earlier in the year, we hit a new record with the number of business leads received in Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 with **147 new leads**. This is an increase of 19.5% over last fiscal year and almost 374% over FY 2020 pre-COVID levels. With CNBC ranking North Carolina as the **#1 State for Business** again in 2025, it's not surprising that we see business recruitment and expansion leads continue to be at record volumes.

This quarter, we were excited to report OA Defense announced their relocation to the former War Sports Industries facility in Robbins. With plans to open in August, the handgun manufacturer expects to hire **25 employees**.

In this quarter's report, you'll also learn:

- MCEDP helped three (3) Moore County manufacturers secure five (5) engineering interns this summer through NC State University's **Rural Works! Internship Program**. These students joined fellow interns in Lee & Chatham Counties to participate in Rural Works! Intern Day in June.
- We continue our efforts to create business parks in Moore County to accommodate the large demand of businesses wanting to locate here, including the **Iron Horse Industrial Park** in Aberdeen and the **42-acre site in Robbins**.
- We are working with the Moore County Chamber of Commerce and the Mid Carolina Regional Association of Realtors to establish the **Moore County Housing Coalition** to bring stakeholders together to help increase the availability of workforce housing.
- We continue to support the Moore County Airport in its effort to reestablish **commercial air service** and helped facilitate meetings with business leaders to provide updates on an offer received from a regional carrier to establish daily service to Washington Dulles.
- MCEDP, FirstHealth of the Carolinas, and other partners attended the **NC Career Launch Healthcare Accelerator** and discussed expanding the healthcare talent pipeline by developing secondary pre-apprenticeship programs and post-secondary apprenticeships.
- We held our 13th annual **Progress Cup** golf tournament fundraiser in May and hosted the **Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina** and a **Moore 100 Members Meeting** in June.

I hope you enjoy reading about a few of the significant activities, initiatives, collaborations, and achievements MCEDP was involved in this quarter.

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

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Business Recruitment & Existing Business Support

Existing Business Support

This quarter, MCEDP visited **seven (7)** Moore County manufacturing companies, bringing the total number of industry visits this fiscal year (FY) 2025 to **30**. Through these industry visits, MCEDP recently helped three (3) manufacturers secure **five (5)** engineering interns through NC State University's (NCSU) **Rural Works! Internship Program**.

The Rural Works! Program places NCSU engineering students in paid summer internships with employers in rural communities. In Moore County this summer, **Carolina Crate & Pallet** in Vass and **Hamilton Beach Brands** in Southern Pines are each employing one (1) intern, and **Reliance Packaging** in Aberdeen is employing three (3).

An employer must agree to pay the intern \$15 per hour to work 40 hours per week for 10 to 12 weeks. NCSU pays an additional \$10 per hour. Companies benefit by having access to talented students who can assist with a variety of technical projects and provide cost savings. By showcasing their workplace and the local community, an employer may even potentially gain a permanent employee in the future. Students, in turn, develop career readiness skills, gain professional work experience at a competitive pay rate, and experience living and working in rural communities. In just 5 years (2019-2024), NCSU has placed 560 Rural Works! interns with organizations in 48 North Carolina counties.

On June 26th, MCEDP partnered with NCSU Industrial Expansion Solutions and Lee & Chatham Counties to host **Rural Works! Intern Day**. Twenty (20) interns, including the 5 from Moore County, toured and learned about the respective communities they'll be working in this summer.



Interns visiting Lee County

New Business Recruitment - Project Win



In May, MCEDP was pleased to share **OA Defense's** announcement that the company is moving its headquarters and manufacturing from Nevada to a **30,000** square-foot facility in Robbins with plans to hire **25** employees and begin operations in August. The company manufactures the OA 2311 line of premium handguns, and the new facility will provide expanded machining and assembly departments, enhanced quality control facilities, a larger warehouse, and an onsite test range for increased R&D capabilities. An official ribbon-cutting is planned for this Fall.

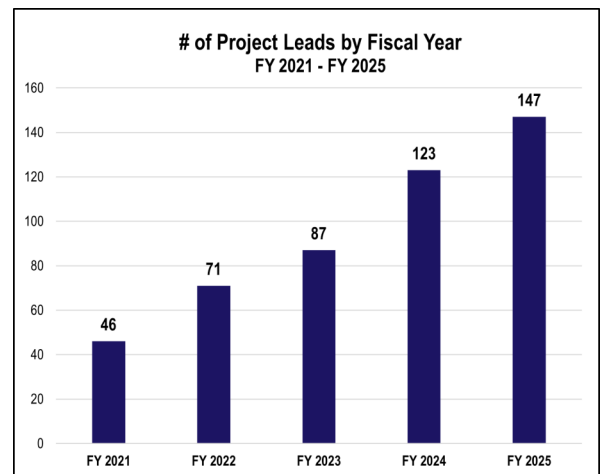
Project Activity July 2024 – June 2025

As we predicted, MCEDP finished the fiscal year setting another record for the number of leads received - **147** leads in FY 2025, an increase of **19.5%** over last fiscal year.

An analysis of the 147 leads received in FY 2025 indicates:

- **90%** (132) were manufacturing industries
- **57%** (84) were looking for an existing building with 300,000 square feet or less
- **37%** (55) were looking for a site of 200 acres or less
- MCEDP was able to submit a property for only **16** (11%) of the leads due to the lack of available buildings & sites

"We can easily expect another record-breaking year for business leads in FY 2026!" - Natalie Hawkins, President



13 Active Projects at June 30, 2025



>610 Jobs



>169,000 square feet



>\$59.5million investment

Site & Building Development

Iron Horse Update

After receiving an estimated timeline from the NC Department of Transportation (NCDOT) last quarter indicating the Iron Horse access road could possibly be completed by October 2026, MCEDP learned this quarter that the estimated cost to construct the road has more than tripled. As a result, MCEDP is evaluating options to determine the best way to move forward.

In an effort to possibly reduce the road's overall construction cost, MCEDP is reviewing alternative access options with more favorable terrain and limited wetlands impacts which are driving the cost of the road upwards.

This quarter, staff also met with NC Department of Environmental Quality and learned that a portion of the site may be eligible to participate in the NC Brownfields Program.

MCEDP is also working with a client who is interested in purchasing the site for a project representing a **\$15 million** investment and **+/- 20** new jobs with an average salary of **\$55,000**.

*"MCEDP is working closely with leadership at the Town of Aberdeen to determine the most practical and cost effective way to move Iron Horse's development forward and generate the highest return in terms of creating new jobs, generating capital investment, and increasing tax base for the Town and Moore County."
- Natalie Hawkins, President*

Robbins Site Update

This quarter, two (2) remaining due diligence analyses were completed on a possible business **42-acre business park site** in Robbins that were funded with a grant from the NC's Southeast: a geotechnical study and a water & sewer capacity study. A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, wetlands delineation, threatened & endangered species survey, and an archaeological & historic/cultural resources review were previously completed. None of the analyses revealed any obstacles that would prevent future development on the site.

The **geotechnical study** shows the site's existing natural soils can support lightly loaded one to two story structures without requiring additional testing or ground improvements.

A **water & sewer capacity study** indicates the site can be served by municipal water & sewer from the Town of Robbins. Water service can be provided to the site by extending an existing 12-inch water main along NC Highway 24/27 to connect to a new public six-inch or eight-inch water line to serve the site. Sewer service can be provided by extending an existing eight-inch public gravity sewer line to the site and installing a pump station on-site with new six-inch or eight-inch sewer lines.

*"The results of all due diligence analyses indicate the Robbins site is viable for development as a business park site."
- Darryn Burich, Business Development Director*

Workforce & Community Development

EDPNC Board Visits Moore County

In June, the **Economic Development Partnership of NC (EDPNC)** held their quarterly Board meeting in Moore County.

MCEDP assisted EDPNC staff with coordinating various activities for the Board members and guests that showcased the quality of life and exceptional amenities Moore County offers. The group enjoyed a private lunch at Brad Halling American Whiskey Ko. (**BHAWK**) in Southern Pines; a reception at the **USGA Experience & World Golf Hall of Fame** at Golf House Pinehurst; and a behind-the-scenes tour of **Golf Pride's** Global Innovation Center in Pinehurst.



Workforce Housing Update

Last quarter's public presentation of the **Moore County Housing Needs Assessment** report drew attention to Moore County's increasing population and housing shortage. Recognizing the urgent need to expand access to attainable workforce housing, MCEDP is partnering with the Moore County Chamber of Commerce and the Mid Carolina Regional Association of Realtors to establish the **Moore County Housing Coalition**.



The Coalition will bring together business leaders, property owners, developers, real estate professionals, and housing advocates to help accelerate the development of workforce housing in Moore County.

As our ability to grow, attract, and retain a talented workforce is directly tied to the availability of workforce housing, addressing workforce housing needs is essential to the continued success and growth of businesses across all industry sectors.

Members of the Coalition will aim to inform & engage community leaders to elevate workforce housing as a critical economic development priority.

As the formation of the Coalition is in the beginning stages, more information about the Coalition and how to join the Coalition will follow soon.

This quarter, MCEDP staff also participated in the Town of Southern Pines' Housing Focus Group to provide input on potential regulatory changes aimed to increase attainable housing in the Town of Southern Pines.

"Moore County's ability to grow, attract, and retain a talented workforce is directly tied to the availability of attainable, workforce housing. To maintain competitiveness, foster business growth, and ensure long-term economic prosperity, we need solutions that allow essential workers vital to our local economy to live where they work. This Coalition can help generate, evaluate, and advocate for market-driven housing solutions."

- Natalie Hawkins, President



Commercial Air Service Update

This quarter, MCEDP continued to support the restoration of commercial air service to the Moore County Airport by bringing business leaders together to discuss the opportunity.



With the Catchment Area Study indicating strong market demand for commercial air service, Moore County has attracted an offer from an airline to establish daily service to Washington Dulles.

In June, MCEDP helped convene business leaders to inform them of recent efforts to bring commercial air service to Moore County, including a meeting held on June 30th that was hosted by Senator Tom McInnis and NC Representative Neal Jackson. At this meeting, over **30 business leaders** heard from Jack Penning, Managing Partner of Volaire Aviation, about the demand for commercial air service and the opportunity to establish service. Attendees also heard from airport leadership and NC General Assembly members about the need for the community to secure funding for a minimum revenue guarantee required by the carrier in order to establish air service.



NC Career Launch Healthcare Accelerator

In April, MCEDP and representatives from FirstHealth of the Carolinas, the Moore County Chamber of Commerce, Moore County Schools, and Sandhills Community College attended the **NC Career Launch Healthcare Accelerator** in Sanford. The event brought together secondary and post-secondary educators and industry stakeholders to discuss actionable strategies for expanding the healthcare talent pipeline by developing high school pre-apprenticeship programs that lead to registered apprenticeships after graduation.

According to the National Center for Health Workforce Analysis, North Carolina tops the list of states projected to have the highest shortages of registered nurses in 2037, with an anticipated shortage of **22%**, which equates to 28,850 full-time equivalents (FTEs).¹



NC Career Launch's healthcare pathway helps students jumpstart their healthcare careers as they enter pre-apprenticeships in high school that can transition into post-secondary registered apprenticeships offering on-the-job learning, mentorship, and progressive wages.

¹ *HRSA Health Workforce, Nurse Workforce Projections 2022-2037, November 2024 - [Source Link](#)*

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

Manufacturing Day Breakfast

October 2, 2025 (8:00am)
Sandhills Community College



Sandhills Entrepreneur Summit

November 13, 2025 (9:00am)
The Fair Barn, Pinehurst

Quarterly Performance Indicators

For the fiscal year ended June 30, 2025, MCEDP met 5 of the 7 annual performance goals established for FY 2025.

Category	FY 2025 Staff Performance Goals	FY 2025 Goal	FY 2025 Actual
Business Visits	# of in-person business visits	20	30
Moore 100	# of Moore 100 members	65	46
	Moore 100 retention rate	75%	100%
Financial	Actual revenues as a % of budget	>100%	98%
	Actual expenditures as a % of budget	<100%	93%
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	
	Met Annual Goal
	Did Not Meet Annual Goal

Moore 100

This quarter, MCEDP hosted a **Moore 100 Meetup** on April 1st at Pine Crest Inn and a **Members Meeting** on June 16th at the Carolina Hotel.

At the Members Meeting, representatives from the NC Department of Transportation's Division 8 Office provided an update on numerous highway improvement projects planned and underway in Moore County.



Guest speaker Reuben Blakley
NCDOT Division 8 Engineer

MCEDP will host the next Moore 100 Members Meeting in October.

Progress Cup



MCEDP hosted its 13th annual **Progress Cup golf tournament** on May 28th at Mid Pines Golf Club. The event raised nearly **\$27,000** to support

MCEDP's economic development activities & initiatives.

Thank you to the 24 participating teams and the 16 hole sponsors who supported the event.



2025 Progress Cup Winners
Town of Southern Pines Team