



Growing Gaston

EDC All About Strong Relationships

Sowing Seeds For Future Growth

Developing and maintaining relationships with professionals who influence site location decisions is a priority for the Gaston County Economic Development team. Every opportunity to engage with a site selection consultant is a valuable tool for measuring the pulse of the business market as well as a chance to continue promoting the assets of the communities in Gaston County. Participation in trade shows and professional networking associations allow our team to be intentional with business development efforts.

For over 50 years, the North Carolina Economic Development Association (NCEA) and its more than 700 members have led successful

efforts to promote North Carolina as an ideal destination for business investment. The events developed and hosted by NCEA consistently provide opportunities for quality interaction with the economic development consulting community.

In late October, representatives from the Gaston County Economic Development Commission, including our Executive Director, Marketing Director and Project Administrator, attended the NCEA Fall Conference which was held in a virtual format this year. The 2020 NCEA Fall Conference included a three-hour Site Selectors Summit that was well attended by local economic developers and nineteen consultants from a variety of firms across the United States involved in site location activities. Gaston County EDC Executive Director and NCEA Fall Conference Co-Chair, Donny Hicks, joined North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper, Secretary Anthony Copeland – North Carolina Department of Commerce, and Chris Chung - CEO of

the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina, to open this portion of the conference agenda and share information on the state of economic development in North Carolina.

The Site Selectors Summit also provided economic developers from across North Carolina, including representatives from Gaston County, the opportunity to participate in two one-hour “meet the consultant” roundtable sessions to share information on project and prospect expectations. Consultants shared details about the current types of market activity that indicated a vast number of projects continue to develop from the advanced manufacturing business sector. Participating site location consultants emphasized the need for communities to be prepared with development-ready sites and existing buildings as well as continue efforts to develop a skilled workforce to compete for the jobs of tomorrow.

PAGE 2: 'Women Who Rock' Highlights Manufacturing Week



From left, Dixon Quick Coupling Human Resources Manager Crystal McCabe, Kintegra Health Certified Medical Assistant Sam Woods and GSM Services Finance Manager Velencia Carl were all honored at the Women Who Rock event, held this year at Veronet Vineyards in Kings Mountain. Gaston County Manager Dr. Kim Eagle provided the keynote address for the event. Read more about the event and the entirety of Manufacturing Week on Page 2.

A Local Spotlight on Manufacturing Week

‘Women Who Rock’ Awards Highlight Our Female Leaders

Most people know that manufacturing is important to the economy. However, do you know that in Gaston County manufacturing pays a higher wage, on average, than other business sectors, contributes to more technological innovation and advancement, and generates more overall economic impact than any other sector of the local economy? Are you aware that North Carolina and Gaston County are leaders in manufacturing employment in their respective geographies? Those facts are something of which the Gaston County Economic Development Commission is very well aware and that is why a great deal of effort is placed upon celebrating Manufacturing Day and Manufacturing Week each year in Gaston County. A wide ranging program for celebrating the importance of manufacturing, and the people involved in manufacturing, was initiated several years ago in Gaston County and has become an anticipated series of events each year. Of course, this year’s celebration had to be altered to accommodate the challenges of COVID-19, but that didn’t put a damper on the excitement.

The 2020 week-long program of events kicked off on Manufacturing Day, Oct. 2, with a Virtual Job Fair, conducted in collaboration with the Gaston County Workforce Development Board and the NCWorks Career Center-Gaston, spotlighting area companies and

their efforts in offering jobs to the community and region. Manufacturers participating in the Virtual Job Fair included Advanced Drainage Systems (ADS), Farris Group, Hunter Douglas, Mann+Hummel, METYX Composites, R-Anell Homes, and Red Valve. Other employers, such as Advance Auto Parts, GSM Services, and Sam’s Club, participated as well.

Manufacturing Week events also included a Virtual Roundtable discussion involving both industry representatives and local officials sharing real life perspective on how manufacturing is addressing the pandemic and provided tangible recommendations for other employers. In response to visitation limitations, “Virtual Tour Tuesday” included all day broadcasts of promotional and informational videos from area manufacturers and organizations on the Gaston County EDC Facebook page. “Social Media Day” focused on sharing news and updates posted across multiple social media outlets on economic development programs, projects, and happenings in Gaston County.

The Manufacturing Week festivities concluded on Friday, October 9th with “Mount Holly Morning” sponsored by the Gaston Regional Chamber. Gaston County EDC Director, Donny Hicks, provided a virtual update on manufacturing in the Mount Holly area and Gaston County as a whole.

Wednesday’s “Women Who Rock” event has become one of the more popular segments of the week long festivities, and one that the Gaston EDC felt could not be appropriately held in a virtual

format. Veronet Vineyard & Winery, located in the Gaston County portion of Kings Mountain, was the setting for this year’s event with an emphasis placed on all social distancing regulations and rules established by the State of North Carolina, Gaston County, and the vineyard itself. The program was fittingly highlighted by a keynote address from the new Gaston County Manager, Dr. Kim Eagle, who provided a unique and tangible perspective on the role of women in business, government, philanthropy. Additionally, “Women Who Rock” award winners were announced and celebrated during the event. Each of the award recipients have demonstrated an exceptional commitment to their job and career and to the community. Also on hand was Presenting Sponsor, Martha Wegner from Duke Energy, who shared remarks in regard to the awards. “Women Who Rock” was co-underwritten and promoted by the Gaston Regional Chamber, presented by Duke Energy, and sponsored by Atrium Health and GSM Services.

The Gaston County Economic Development Commission, along with our Manufacturing Week partners, relishes this annual opportunity to promote the valuable role manufacturing plays in our county.



More from 'Women Who Rock' Event



Gaston County Manager Dr. Kim Eagle provided the keynote address for this year's 'Women Who Rock' event, held at Veronet Vineyards in Kings Mountain. Also on hand to deliver remarks was Duke Energy District Manager Martha Wegner. Duke Energy was the presenting sponsor for the event, which saw awards handed out to three individuals.



Getting to Know the Economic Development Board: Julie Roper



Julie Roper serves as the vice chair of the Gaston County Economic Development Commission.

Julie Roper currently serves as Co-Vice Chair of the Gaston County Economic Development Commission. Julie is employed by Dominion Energy North Carolina as the Economic Development and Government Relations Manager overseeing communication with city and county officials and managing the company's community engagement. More than 7 million customers in 16 states energize their homes and businesses with electricity or natural gas from Dominion Energy (NYSE: D), headquartered in Richmond,

Virginia. The company is committed to sustainable, reliable, affordable and safe energy and to achieving net zero carbon dioxide and methane emissions from its power generation and gas infrastructure operations by 2050.

Additionally, Julie currently serves on the boards of the Schiele Museum, Montcross Chamber, NC Heroes Fund and NCEDA. Julie holds a BS in business administration from Belmont Abbey College and earned her MPA from Appalachian State University. Julie and her husband, Don, reside in Mount Holly.

GNT Makes Apple Creek Plan

On Aug. 5, the Gaston County Economic Development Commission announced that GNT USA, Inc. will become the first tenant of the new Apple Creek Corporate Center. GNT USA, Inc. has purchased approximately 49 acres with plans for an initial investment of \$30 million to construct a food processing operation in the Apple Creek Corporate Center. The company intends to create approximately 40 jobs at this location over several phases. GNT USA, Inc. will utilize interstate and regional sources of specific vegetable varieties for their production. GNT USA, Inc. is an international company with over 20 years of successful business in the United States.

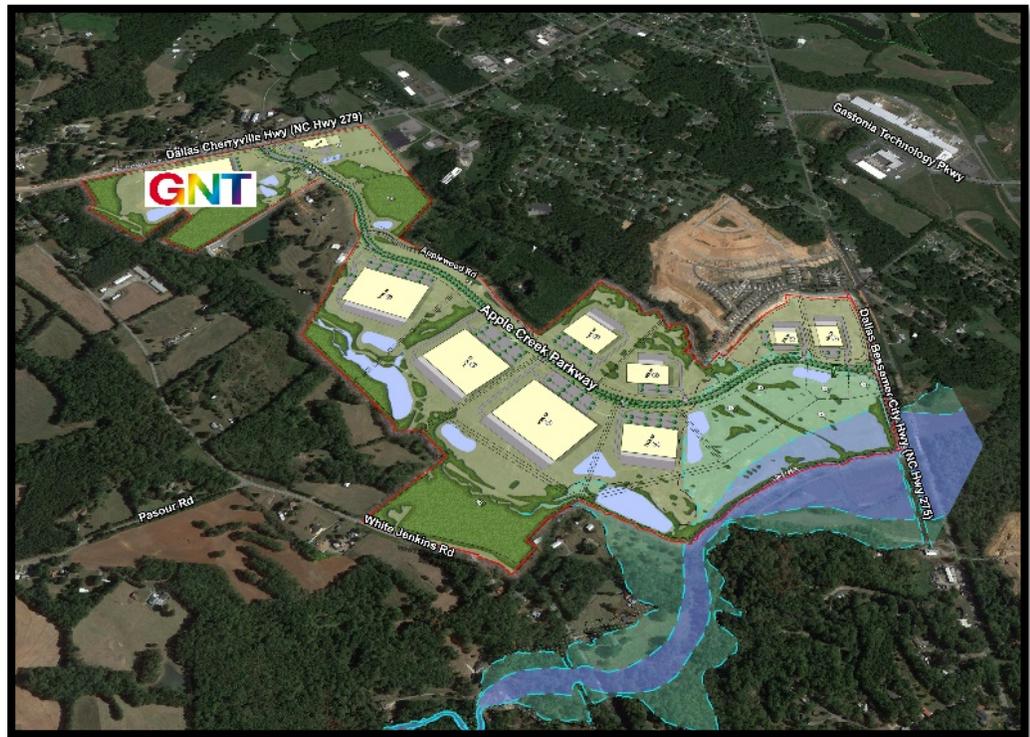
“We are excited to welcome GNT to Gaston County and to the Apple Creek Corporate Center. This firm is a great addition to Gaston County’s business community,” said Tracy Philbeck, Chairman of the Gaston County Board of Commissioners. “The successful recruitment of global companies was a key reason for the County’s development of the Apple Creek Corporate Center. If we are to compete for quality economic development projects, Gaston County has to provide the proper physical setting for industry. With the Apple Creek Corporate Center development we are ready for the future,” Chairman Philbeck added.

The Gaston County Economic Development Commission would like to thank our partners in this successful location of GNT in the

Apple Creek Corporate Center: Gaston County Board of Commissioners, Gastonia City Council, Two Rivers Utilities, Gaston College, Rutherford Electric Membership Corporation, Alfred Benesch & Company, North Carolina Department of Agriculture, North

Carolina Biotechnology Center and the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina.

For the original local Press Release: https://www.gaston.org/clientupload/s/2020_Local_Press_Release_for_RA_VEN.pdf



For more information on available buildings or sites, please visit Gaston.org, or call the Gaston County EDC at (704) 825-4046.