

SUMMER 2024

# DEVELOPMENTS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NEWS FROM NC PUBLIC POWER



At the North Carolina Global TransPark in Kinston, employees load aircraft components onto an Antonov cargo jet.

## Powering Aviation and Aerospace in North Carolina

When the Wright brothers made their first powered flight in 1903, odds are they didn't realize they were igniting a legacy in North Carolina that would evolve into a booming aviation and aerospace industry. The state is now home to a network of those industry assets, including some 450 suppliers—many in public power communities.

Take the **Elizabeth City Aviation Research & Development Commerce Park (Airpark)**.

Located adjacent to the [U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Elizabeth City](#) and the [Elizabeth City Regional Airport](#), the Elizabeth City Airpark is a 118-acre industrial park strategically positioned to support the aviation industry, especially maintenance, repair, and overhaul companies (MROs).

What's more, the Airpark is an [ElectriCities-certified Smart Site](#), ensuring developers that the site is shovel ready to go, with exhaustive due diligence completed.

Scott Hinton is Airport Director at the Elizabeth City Regional Airport and is

Economic Development Director for Elizabeth City and Pasquotank County.

He said the Airpark's ideal clients include "small to medium-sized businesses or startups that need runway access and are looking to get into an established area with people who have experience to join their company."

And, since Elizabeth City's Coast Guard base is the second largest in the world, "Businesses that complement or support the Coast Guard's air operations are an ideal fit as well."

Airpark businesses benefit from a steady pipeline of skilled professionals, thanks in part to the area's schools and to the thousands of military personnel who call the area home.

[Elizabeth City State University](#) offers the state's only four-year collegiate aviation program, and the [College of The Albemarle](#) boasts an FAA-approved Aviation Systems Technology program. Younger students can start shaping their careers at the [Northeast Academy for Aerospace & Advanced Technologies](#).

*(Continued on Page 2)*

## A NOTE from Carl

I typically fill this space with accolades about how attractive North Carolina is for business and industry. But this summer, two signature events, the [Big Rock fishing tournament](#) and the [124<sup>th</sup> U.S. Open golf tournament](#), underscored why we live in North Carolina—our incredible quality of life. When it comes to livability, our state's public power communities offer much, like lakeside living in Cornelius near Charlotte and true college town culture in Greenville and Boone. If watersports are your passion, you might enjoy New Bern or Southport. Prefer a mountain hike? Head to Morganton or Waynesville. Regardless of what your interests may be, we have it all in North Carolina's public power communities. So give us a visit. You may decide to stay.



**Carl Rees, CECD**  
Manager, Economic and Community Development

❖ **ELECTRICITIES** of NC

[CLICK HERE](#)

To see a list of  
**OUR MEMBERS**



Further inland is Kinston's **North Carolina Global TransPark (NCGTP)**, a 2,500-acre, multimodal industrial and business park that offers an unparalleled infrastructure for aerospace manufacturing, logistics, and research.

At the heart of the NCGTP is the [Kinston Regional Jetport](#), home to one of the East Coast's longest runways.

"This facility represents a significant investment by the state that's already paying dividends, as evidenced by the growth of aviation tenants like flyExclusive and Spirit AeroSystems," said Preston Hunter, Executive Director of the NCGTP.

The NCGTP partners with local community colleges, including [Lenoir Community College's Aerospace and Advanced Manufacturing Center](#), to offer on-site workforce development programs. LCC's state-of-the-art Aviation Center for Excellence is set to open at the NCGTP in fall 2026.

Another aviation and aerospace asset in North Carolina is the state's military presence. North Carolina has the fourth largest military footprint in the country,

with over 138,000 military personnel at six major military bases and other locations.\*

Scott Dorney, Executive Director of the [North Carolina Military Business Center \(NCMBC\)](#), said, "Military aviation units significantly impact the state's aerospace industry."

The NCMBC connects North Carolina aerospace and other businesses with military procurement opportunities and helps them win.

"Hundreds of aerospace-related businesses in North Carolina manufacture jet engines, guidance and navigation systems, and components for manned and unmanned aerospace systems," Dorney said. "Military and commercial MRO operations employ thousands of North Carolinians and keep Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard aircraft flying worldwide."



With assets like the Elizabeth City Airpark and the NCGTP in Kinston, a reliable workforce pipeline, a strong military presence, and NCMBC support, it's no wonder [PwC ranks North Carolina the third most attractive state for aerospace manufacturing](#).

If the Wright brothers returned to North Carolina today, they'd be amazed at how far their first short flight in Kitty Hawk has taken us. ♦

\* [Defense Manpower Data Center](#), June 2024

# SOCIAL MEDIA

## Highlights



### STAY CONNECTED

- @ElectriCitiesNC
- @ElectriCitiesNC
- company/electricitiesnc
- @ElectriCitiesNC

Follow our social media channels to keep up with all the ways ElectriCities' Economic Development team promotes our member communities and the value of public power across the state and the country and around the world.



87

3 comments • 4 reposts

Representing North Carolina's public power communities at ICSC LAS VEGAS



12

1 repost

Nipro Medical Corporation locates manufacturing facility on Greenville Smart Site

# GOOD TO KNOW

Contact High Point Economic Development at [hpedc@highpointnc.gov](mailto:hpedc@highpointnc.gov) or 336-883-3116.

## Peter Bishop

Director, High Point Economic Development



**My favorite movies are:** “The Shawshank Redemption” and “Inception.”

**The three things I can’t live without are:** Apple Watch, red raspberries, and engaging conversation.

**When I welcome a visitor to High Point, I always take them to:** The block in Downtown High Point with Congdon Yards (a renovated mill complex), Truist Point Stadium (where the Carolina Core FC and the High Point Rockers play), and Stock + Grain Assembly (an 11-vendor food hall).

**The most memorable place I’ve visited is:** Milos, Greece.

**Finish the sentence:** North Carolina is: ... poised to continue its strong run of economic and population growth with very desirable geography, business friendliness, talent, and climate. ♦

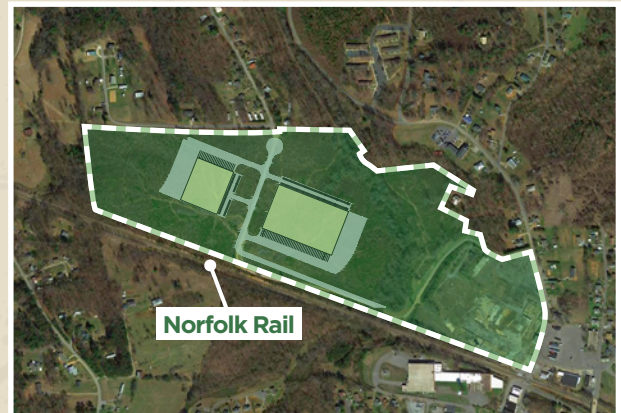
## FEATURED SITE AND BUILDING

To learn more, visit: <https://www.electricities.com/services/economic-development/smart-sites/>



### GREENVILLE SHELL BUILDING

Industrial Shell Building in Greenville, N.C.  
100,440 sq. ft. expandable; 32.5-foot clear height  
7 miles from I-587 in N.C.’s BioPharma Crescent region  
Sale Price: Available on request



### DREXEL SMART SITE

Drexel Business Park  
101 North Main Street, Drexel, N.C.  
Available Acreage: 60 shovel-ready acres  
Sale Price: \$20,000/acre

# HOW GROCERY CHAINS SHOP FOR LOCATIONS

*Most of us have said it: “I sure wish we had a [insert name of your favorite grocery store that’s not in your community] nearby!”*

*So how do grocers decide where to put their stores? And how can cities and towns join the conversation?*



**Doug Munson**  
Head of Advisory Business Development, RetailStat



For insight, we talked to Doug Munson. He’s the Head of Advisory Business Development at [RetailStat](#).

Munson has been providing analysis, data, and expert insight to guide grocery store locations for more than 20 years. Before that, he worked on the tenant side—for chains like Giant Food Stores and Smith’s Food and Drug.

That view as a tenant helped him bridge the disconnect between the information grocers want and what developers and municipalities would often provide.

While demographic information is great, he said, grocers want to know about their competition and their potential sales.

After all, he said, “Grocery is about a redistribution of dollars ... If you open a grocery store, people don’t eat more.” So, grocers need to know where their sales will come from.

That’s where Munson’s expertise, some mathematical modeling, and boots-on-the-ground site visits come in.

He and his team have developed a model that provides the data that grocers can

use to determine locations, and that municipalities and developers can use to attract the right grocers for their area.

“We’re looking at demographics and residential growth and all those components,” he said. “What we’re able to say is, ‘Mr. Grocer, if you go to this location, here’s how much volume you will do, here’s where the volume is coming from, and here’s any cannibalization of your own stores.’”

What are some of those components that impact potential sales?

“Certainly, demographics are important,” Munson said. “If you’re Whole Foods versus Food Lion—those are two different types of customers. Even if you’re talking Walmart and Food Lion, there’s a difference of type of customer that they attract.”

Residential growth factors in as well. After the Great Recession, Munson said grocers shied away from getting too far ahead of residential growth. But now, with solid data, they’re more inclined to seize those opportunities.

Looking at competitors, Munson said

grocers want to know who they are and how much volume they’re doing. They want to be sure the market isn’t saturated.

For certain markets, tourism and daytime traffic factor into the equation.

“When we’re evaluating a market, we’re looking at many prisms,” Munson said. “Whatever we think is viable, we’ll put that into a report and try to attract that grocer.”

That could mean a smaller chain with a smaller footprint. It could also mean a food co-op that uses memberships to keep prices low.

It’s clearly an exciting time in the grocery industry.

After the higher profits most grocers saw during the pandemic, “There’s starting to be a reconciliation where profitability is a little tighter because of inflation and suppliers’ higher prices,” Munson said. Even so, while some exceptions exist, he said grocers like Lowe’s Foods, Walmart, Harris Teeter, Food Lion, and Whole Foods have made it clear they’re in growth mode. ♦

*Developments is a publication of ElectriCities’ Corporate Communications team in coordination with ElectriCities’ Economic Development team.*