



# MONDAY MEMO

This report from CRP President and CEO Ronnie L. Bryant to board members and other key stakeholders is published weekly by the Charlotte Regional Partnership.

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*"Leaders must encourage their organizations to dance to forms of music yet to be heard."*

– Warren G. Bennis

## Charlotte remains strong financial center

Last week ended with a bang, as Gov. **Beverly Perdue** announced that GMAC Financial Services will expand its Mecklenburg County operations, adding more than 200 high-paying jobs and investing more than \$16.4 million.

The company already has 265 employees in Charlotte. The new positions in marketing, IT, compliance, project management and related services will be created over the next two years. For each of the next nine years that the bank holding company maintains both its current jobs and the new ones, GMAC will receive a portion of \$4.5 million in state incentives and \$240,000 in incentives from the city of Charlotte. To be eligible, the company also must invest the \$16.4 million. Although GMAC's headquarters will remain in Michigan, many senior executives, including CEO **Al de Molina**, a former Bank of America executive, are based in Charlotte.

But Mecklenburg will not be the only county benefiting from GMAC's expansion. With the type of incentive the company received, a Job Development Investment Grant, 25 percent – or up to nearly \$1.5 million – could go to the Industrial Development Fund for infrastructure improvements in economically distressed counties. This type of grant only is awarded to expanding or new businesses and industrial projects, which would not have come to North Carolina without it, and where the benefits to the state are greater than the costs. It is an effort to equalize benefits to less prosperous counties when one that is better off takes advantage of state incentives to land a project.

### Activity & Events

**Charlotte Regional Partnership business development trip to California**

*March 23-27*

**U.S. and Canada: Partners in a Changing World Presented by Ambassador Michael Wilson, ambassador of Canada to the U.S.**

*April 9, noon*

Westin Charlotte  
\$45 World Affairs Council of Charlotte members, \$60 non-members  
Registration by April 7 via PayPal at

[www.worldaffairscharlotte.org](http://www.worldaffairscharlotte.org)

for check or credit car payment, call 704-687-7762

**2nd Annual Charlotte Business Journal Green Awards**

*April 15, 10 a.m.-1:30 p.m.*

Charlotte Convention Center  
Cost \$65/tkt, \$570/tbl

[Details](#)

**Charlotte Regional Partnership Investors**

Employee recruitment already has begun. The company began posting openings last Friday, and GMAC plans on hiring at least 130 people this year and the remaining 200 by the end of 2010.

The announcement underscored two important points.

First, Charlotte's national reputation as a leading financial center was highly instrumental in GMAC's decision to expand in Charlotte. Al de Molina said that factor, along with the city's strong business climate and deep talent pool gave the region a competitive edge against other cities the company considered. GMAC's decision to expand in Charlotte serves as a testament to the quality of our workforce and business climate. It's the most recent vote of confidence in our region that our business development team can cite as it markets our region throughout the world.

Secondly, our governor is committed to supporting our regional economic development efforts. On Friday, Gov. Perdue opened her Charlotte office and made the GMAC job announcement from Charlotte – the city where the jobs will be created. When she and Lt. Gov. **Walter Dalton**, Commerce Secretary **Keith Crisco** and **Dale Carroll**, DOC deputy secretary, came to our offices last week to meet with a company considering expanding into Charlotte, she was engaged and supportive – a fact that was not lost on either our client or the region.

In addition to making the GMAC announcement and fulfilling her campaign promise last week to open an office in Charlotte, the governor emphasized her determination to complete the final part of I-485 this year and replace the Yadkin River Bridge in Rowan County. We appreciate her commitment to our region – and to economic development throughout the state – and I look forward to working with her administration over the next four years.

## By the numbers

The numbers for January showed what everyone already knew. The year got off to a rough start. Employment continued to fall as businesses retrenched to survive in the weak economy. Although announcements regarding job losses continued to sound a weekly drumbeat, we can't lose sight of the job creation notices that, although not quite offsetting the negative news, helped to mitigate it and provide a ray of hope. Remember, not all the job losses or creations are instantaneous. Some are announced months – or even years – before the actual closure or opening occurs. For the rolling 12-month employment information for our region, see our January report, By the Numbers. (I'll link to [http://www.charlotteusa.com/documents/EDAC\\_By\\_the\\_Numbers\\_3-20-2009.pdf](http://www.charlotteusa.com/documents/EDAC_By_the_Numbers_3-20-2009.pdf))

## Forum

### **Focus on Target Industries: Health and Life Sciences**

*April 15, 4:30-6 p.m.*

CPCC Harris Conference  
Center

RSVP to [Kathy Lazarides](#)

### **Charlotte Regional Partnership Midwest business development trip**

*April 20-24*

### **Doing Business in Japan**

Lunch and presentation  
sponsored by the NC DOC

*April 20, noon – 2 p.m.*

Harris Conference Center  
3210 CPCC West Campus  
Drive

Charlotte

[Details](#)

### **Doing Business in Germany**

Lunch and presentation  
sponsored by the NC DOC

*April 21, noon – 2 p.m.*

A-B Tech Enka Campus  
1459 Sand Hill Road Candler,  
NC

[Details](#)

### **Our Region Becoming Green, Great and Global Featuring Neal Peirce and Curtis Johnson, Citistates Report authors**

**Sponsored by UNC**

**Charlotte's Urban Institute**

*April 21*

Gaston County

[Details](#)

### **Our Region Becoming Green, Great and Global Featuring Neal Peirce and Curtis Johnson, Citistates Report authors**

**Sponsored by UNC**

## Locations, expansions, contractions

As I just mentioned, GMAC announced last week that it will expand in Charlotte, adding 200 jobs over two years and moving its Ballantyne operations into a new 70,000-square-foot Uptown facility. The call center will remain in southeast Charlotte. The GMAC expansion, like many economic development projects, was a team effort. In this case, the success was a result of the collaboration among the N.C. Department of Commerce, Mecklenburg County, the city of Charlotte and the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce.

Solar-energy company Sencera will be expanding. The thin-film silicon cell manufacturer has received the final portion of the venture capital it was pledged if the company met its efficiency goal for its plasma-film solar panels. The company exceeded it.

As previously announced, last week was the final one for Parkdale Mills Inc.'s No. 10 Kenneth Pruitt Plant. Most of the employees already were gone before the Gastonia offices closed.

Ava Design, a high-end, custom furniture manufacturer announced that it will move from New Jersey to our region. A former textile mill in Gaston County will house the manufacturing plant, and the showroom will be in Charlotte. The abundance of skilled furniture craftsmen was a major factor in the company's decision to open its manufacturing facility in Belmont.

Another business announcing an expansion into Charlotte last week is ExecuScribe Inc. The transcription company is based in Rochester, N.Y., and the Charlotte office will be its regional office for the Southeast. The company will create 40 new telecommuting jobs this year.

Target's new 1.6-million-square-foot, \$90 million regional distribution center in Catawba County is a good example of the time that often elapses between when a project is announced and when the first employee reports to work. Last week, the company began hiring for about 450 positions that will be needed this year after the center opens in June. (Eventually, there will be up to 580 people employed.) Target began looking for a site to locate the distribution center in 2004. The project was announced in 2006, and the facility is opening in 2009.

Although jobs are not always created as quickly as any of us would like, our region continues to be a strong contender for dozens of projects. Our business development team remains in frequent communication with those that are on hold, works closely with others that are on the fence and constantly markets our region to recruit new projects.

### **Charlotte's Urban Institute**

April 22

York County

[Details](#)

### **Doing Business in China**

Lunch and presentation sponsored by the NC DOC  
April 22, noon – 2 p.m.

High Point Chamber of Commerce

1634 N. Main St.

High Point, NC

[Details](#)

### **Doing Business in Mexico**

Presentation only sponsored by the NC DOC

April 23, noon – 2 p.m.

Fayetteville Technical Community College – Center for Business & Industry  
2723 Fort Bragg Road  
Fayetteville, NC

[Details](#)

**Our Region: Becoming Green, Great and Global**  
**Featuring Neal Peirce and Curtis Johnson, Citistates Report authors**

**Sponsored by UNC**  
**Charlotte's Urban Institute**

April 23

Cabarrus County

[Details](#)

### **Doing Business in Korea**

Presentation only sponsored by the NC DOC

April 23, noon-2 p.m.

Lenoir Community College - Kinston Enterprise Center  
327 N. Queen St. Kinston, NC

[Details](#)

### **Doing Business in Canada**

Lunch and presentation sponsored by the NC DOC

April 24, noon-2 p.m.

## Economic stimulus, take 3

The Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization (MUMPO) has decided to use \$20-million in federal stimulus money on six projects within its geographic area. They are: widening NC 73 in Huntersville; improving the intersections at Faith Church and Unionville-Indian Trail roads, and at NC 16 and NC 75; installing "intelligent transportation systems" to upgrade traffic signals; repaving N. Trade Street at Matthews-Mint Hill Road; and building a roundabout at Concord and East Rocky River roads in Davidson.

The NC DOT also has allotted money to widen and move Morehead Road away from Lowe's Motor Speedway. The improvements were part of the agreement between the city of Concord and **Bruton Smith** for retaining the speedway in Cabarrus County.

And three Lancaster County roads will be repaved with stimulus funds. They are segments of Hampton Street in Kershaw, Springdale Road and U.S. 521 Business.

## Kudos

Congratulations to Charlotte Regional Partnership investors PSNC Energy and Piedmont Natural Gas. J.D. Power and Associates has ranked them first and third in the South, respectively, in its most recent gas-utility business customer satisfaction survey. The rankings were based on billing and payment, corporate citizenship, price, communications, customer service and field service.

The state of North Carolina also deserves two thumbs up for its No. 2 ranking in Chief Executive magazine as one of the best states to do business. This is the fourth consecutive year that the state has fared well. The rankings are based on responses by CEOs across the country.

Tune into **Oprah** tomorrow. "The Oprah Winfrey Show" is featuring the North Carolina Research Campus. She's a big fan of the campus in Kannapolis.

Those of you who watched "The Celebrity Apprentice" may have caught another local company on the show yesterday. ACN's videophone was the marketing focus of the episode. ACN employs 500 people at its Concord headquarters.

Peace,

Wake Tech Community  
College – Western Wake  
Campus  
3434 Kildare Farm Rd.  
Cary, NC

[Details](#)

### Entrepreneurial and Small Business Development Strategies

#### ***IEDC training class***

*April 30 - May 1*

Kansas City, MO

\$525 for IEDC members/\$625  
nonmembers until April 16,  
\$464/\$665 after

[Details](#)

### IAMC Spring 2009 Professional Forum

#### ***"Corporate Real Estate's Contribution to Business Sustainability"***

*May 2-6*

Grove Park Inn  
Asheville

[Details](#)

### Federal Laboratory Consortium Industry Day

*May 7, 1 p.m.*

Hilton University Place  
Charlotte

[Details](#)

### Charlotte Regional Partnership Annual Awards Luncheon

***Jerry Award recipients***

***David Murdock and UNC  
Charlotte***

***Keynote speaker Erskine  
Bowles***

*May 28, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.*

Charlotte Convention Center  
For sponsorship opportunities  
or to purchase tables, contact

[Clay Andrews](#)

**2009 IEDC Technology-Led**

Ronnie L. Bryant, CEcD, FM. HLM  
President & CEO

**Economic Development  
Conference and IASP World  
Conference on Science and  
Technology Parks**

*June 1-4*

Raleigh Convention Center  
Raleigh

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