



**Centralina Economic Development Commission
Board Meeting
October 15, 2009**

Commission Members Present

George Arena
Mark Brady
Joe Carpenter
Astrid Chirinos
George Dunlap

Ron Leeper
John McKay
Dan Ramirez
Bill Thunberg
Brian Potocki

Guest

Russ Rogerson, Mooresville-Iredell EDC
Ron Mahle, Assistant Director, Monroe Economic Development

Centralina Staff Present

Laura Mundell, Director, CED
Al Sharp, Executive Director, Centralina COG
Victoria Rittenhouse, Program Assistant, CED
Jason Wager, Planner III, Planning

1. *Call to Order:*

Bill Thunberg calls the meeting to order at 4:13PM.

2. *Action: Approval of the Minutes*

Dan Ramirez: Motion to approve the minutes

Ron Leeper: Seconds the motion
All approve

MOTION APPROVED

3. *Around the region*

Ron Leeper: Recently received the Luminary Award from The Charlotte Post for Lifetime Achievement for Public Service

Mark Brandy: Iredell County economy still slow, first quarter in real estate still down, smaller homes are selling, the larger lake houses are not moving, few individuals looking for property in the area. But smaller target areas are moving okay, interest rates are still really low, the environment is right, there are just not enough people active in the market.

Russ Rogerson: Iredell County, from the industrial side we have had four expansions, not heavy on jobs but heavy on investment. We have a couple of companies looking to expand

in 2010. Many are on hold waiting for the economy to rebound; there are many projects on the side waiting for the upturn of the economy.

Dan Ramirez: Several new companies moving in to Mecklenburg County and creating new jobs. The economy is picking up relative to the finance sector, but the jobless rate is getting worse, hopefully it will bottom out in the next several months. We are starting to see some light at the end of the tunnel in my industry.

Astrid Chirinos: Lots of green; we are beginning the process for the first Eco Industrial Park for Mecklenburg County on the Catawba River, it is part of the vision for the Catawba River District. Forsite Development will be facilitating the initiative. This will be the second largest remediation of Superfund land in the U.S. The project is going to be called Re-Venture Park.

George Arena: We are having industry appreciation this month in Lincoln County. We have had 5-6 companies do small expansions or consolidations. GE Security did a consolidation at their plant in Lincoln County, which created about 20 new jobs about \$500,000; Hof Textiles had another small expansion and a couple new companies tied to the automotive industry have moved into Lincoln County. Lincoln County's unemployment rate did drop half a point in September.

Joe Carpenter: Donny Hicks at the EDC says he has never seen so many businesses that are looking to relocate to the region. Still trying to reestablish the P & N rail line in Gaston County and we are running into issues with the NC DOT Rail Division.

Al Sharp: Connect is doing a regional analysis of region wide industrial zoned land a rank whether it is severed, obsolete, is in any way being reserved for future manufacturing or investment. We received universal support from our local governments. In about two months we should have a report on that and we will see if we have any policy initiation come out of that report.

George Dunlap: The Economic Development Commission of Mecklenburg County has been extremely busy lots of new companies want to locate in the county and we are putting together incentives for them. Just recently the Public Policy committee voted to authorize the commission to purchase bond sales to pay for any number of projects from Central Piedmont to Parks and Recreation, to the school system; we anticipate that at the next meeting we will vote to authorize the actual purchase of bonds. That will help to ease the economic situation in the community by offering additional jobs.

Brian Potocki: Gastonia is moving forward with the adoption of a Unified Development Ordinance.

Ron Leeper: From the construction side, we are seeing some movement in some of the sectors, small retail development, restaurants and hospitals. They seem to have more resources right now to develop. UNC-Charlotte seems to have more construction funds

available than some of the other universities and they are continuing to build. The activity we are seeing is encouraging.

Since the last meeting I have been pulled into the State Economic Development Board by the Governor, the board is currently divided up on subcommittees and we are working on policies to encourage business growth, look for opportunities to stimulate and encourage relocation to all of our counties across the State.

John McKay: Community College enrollment is up 20,000 students this year over last year, last year we received growth money of \$80M from the State, but \$78M was taken back. We are now serving 30,000 more students than we were two years ago with the same budget. In Anson County two expansions announced; Premier Fibers is adding a new product line which will have about 6 jobs, Coffing Hoists is changing their product and consolidating and will add 65 jobs.

Ron Mahle: In Monroe we lost one company, on the positive side, ATI Allvac a supplier for the aerospace industry is wrapping up a \$250M expansion just across the airport terminal. The city is in the midst of a \$20M expansion of the Charlotte-Monroe Executive Airport which is going to include expanding the runway from 5,500 feet to 7,000 feet. Also ongoing is the \$40M natural gas pipeline that we are building from Monroe to Mooresville that we will connect Transcontinental Gas Pipe Line Co., it will help us stabilize our natural gas prices for our larger consumers and should be complete around Spring 2010.

4. *Report and Presentation: The Advanced Manufacturing Project*

Laura Mundell

(See attachment A-Power Point Presentation)

5. *Advanced Manufacturing in the Region: The next phase*

Laura Mundell: One of our next steps is the Advanced Manufacturing Website, as a way to brand the region as a place to do Advanced Manufacturing. We have picked out the logo:



Now do we want to look at another sector to add to this campaign?

Ron Mahle: The aerospace sector of Advanced Manufacturing is in need of identifying the same items that Laura has been working on with the automotive piece of Advanced Manufacturing. In Monroe 25% of our manufacturers are aerospace, but what we do not have a handle the supply chain, specifically we do not know who is buying from whom, supplying what to whom, etc. The three counties that are known to have a concentration of aerospace are Union, Gaston, and Mecklenburg. Since you have already developed the model to identify the Automotive Supply Chain, why not use that model to identify this sector's supply chain in our region.

George Dunlap: Rather than throw out ideas of what should be next we should make some kind of analysis of the industry before we decide to go in any certain direction.

Al Sharp: Then we will have Laura look further into the matter and she will bring back more in-depth information on potential next steps for the Advanced Manufacturing initiative at our next meeting.

6. *Report to the Board*
(See Attachment B)

7. *Report on CEDC Activities: Logistics Alliance of the Carolinas*

Laura Mundell: We partnered as a local sponsor for the Southeast Freight Conference that was held in Charlotte last month for the first time. It brought around a 158 professionals and freight people to Charlotte.

Second item the LAC would like to host an event during Nation Transportation Week, it comes through a Presidential Proclamation, it is held the third week of May. They would like to have a speaker and they will promote it to the Logistics industry, if we could help provide a speaker. Is this something the board would like to support? The Charlotte Regional Partnership is also interested in partnering with us on this event.

Al Sharp: Let's take a moment to see what the win and losses are; one, it takes staff time, but it promotes the Charlotte region as the second largest hub in the southeast other than Atlanta as a point of connectivity. Everyone points out the Banking industry in the region and they do have high paying jobs, but not nearly as many jobs as the Logistics industry. This could be a good way for the board to feature another aspect of enterprise in the area.

8. *Action: CEDC Meeting Dates*
Motion to adopt CEDC meeting dates for 2010

George Dunlap: Motion to adopt

Astrid Chirinos: Second the motion

MOTION APPROVED

9. *Motion to adjourn*

George Dunlap: Motion to adjourn

George Arena: Seconds the motion

MOTION APPROVED

Adjourn: 5:30PM