



## 2026 EMERGING EXECUTIVES FORUM

February 4-5 • Kinston

*Sponsors*

### PRESENTING SPONSORS



## LENOIR COUNTY DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE NORTH CAROLINA

### GOLD SPONSORS



### PROGRAM SPONSORS

ENBRIDGE ENERGY OF NORTH CAROLINA

LENOIR COMMUNITY COLLEGE

NORTH CAROLINA BIOTECHNOLOGY CENTER

NORTH CAROLINA PORTS

SMITH ANDERSON

WITHERS RAVENEL

# 2026 EMERGING EXECUTIVES FORUM

February 4-5 • Kinston

## Meeting Locations

<b>BASE HOTEL:</b>	<b>Mother Earth Motor Lodge</b> 501 North Heritage Street – Kinston, NC 28501
<b>RECEPTION:</b>	<b>Mother Earth Brewing Tap Room</b> 311 North Heritage Street – Kinston, NC 28501
<b>FORUM:</b>	<b>Community Council for the Arts</b> 400 North Queen Street – Kinston, NC 28501

## Agenda

### Wednesday, February 4

Afternoon	<b>ARRIVAL / HOTEL CHECK-IN</b>
Noon – 4:30 pm	<b>OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES</b>
Noon – 1:30 pm	<b>Lunch at Farmer and the Dail (Snow Hill)</b> Lunch Sponsor: <b>Greene County Economic Development Partnership</b>
2 – 3 pm	<b>Simply Natural Creamery Tour (Snow Hill)</b> Tour Sponsor: <b>Greene County Economic Development Partnership</b>
3:30 – 4:30 pm	<b>NC Global TransPark Tour (Kinston)</b>
5:30 – 7 pm	<b>WELCOMING RECEPTION</b> Reception Sponsor: <b>North Carolina's Electric Cooperatives</b>
7 pm – Until	<b>DINNER / DRINKS ON YOUR OWN</b>

### Thursday, February 5

8:30 – 9 am	<b>CONFERENCE REGISTRATION / BREAKFAST</b>
9 am – 12:45 pm	<b>GENERAL SESSION</b>
9 – 9:10 am	<b>Welcoming Remarks</b> <b>ANNA WALKER</b> Economic Development Manager – North Carolina's Electric Cooperatives <i>NCEDA Board of Directors / Emerging Executives Committee Chair</i>
	<b>JAMES CARTER</b> Talent Development Program Manager – City of Charlotte <i>Emerging Executives Committee Vice Chair</i>

# 2026 EMERGING EXECUTIVES FORUM

February 4-5 • Kinston

9:10 – 9:20 am	<b>Lenoir County / Eastern North Carolina Welcome</b> <b>TREY CASH</b> COO – NC Global TransPark Economic Development Region
	<b>LINDA ROUSE-SUTTON</b> Chair – Lenoir County Board of Commissioners
9:20 – 9:40 am	<b>Amazon Project Spotlight</b> <b>MARTIE BUTLER</b> Economic Development Director – Richmond County
9:40 – 10:10 am	<b>Leadership Profile</b> <b>ANNA WALKER</b> , <i>interviewer</i> <b>JENNIFER LANTZ</b> Executive Director – Wilson Economic Development Council
10:10 – 10:50 am	<b>Regional Collaboration and Innovative Partnerships in Economic Development</b> <b>TREY CASH</b> , <i>moderator</i> Chief Operating Officer North Carolina Global TransPark Economic Development Region
	<b>SHAYLA DOUGLAS</b> Assistant Director – Pitt County Economic Development
	<b>DAVID LAMBERT</b> Director of Strategic Projects – NC Department of Commerce
	<b>KEVIN SZOSTAK</b> Director, Economic Development Projects Alamance County Area Chamber of Commerce
10:50 – 11:10 am	<b>Networking Break</b>
11:10 – 11:25 am	<b>International Etiquette</b> <b>ROBERT VAN GEONS</b> President & CEO – Fayetteville Cumberland County Economic Development Corp.
11:25 am – Noon	<b>Successful Site Visits: Strategy, Execution, and Leadership</b> <b>KATHLEEN HENRY</b> , <i>moderator</i> Owner – KH Consulting
	<b>JOE MELVIN</b> Vice President – North Carolina’s Southeast
	<b>STEVEN PEARCE</b> Vice President, Infrastructure & Economic Development – McGuireWoods Consulting
	<b>MARVIN PRICE</b> Executive Vice President, Economic Development – Greensboro Chamber of Commerce

# 2026 EMERGING EXECUTIVES FORUM

February 4-5 • Kinston

Noon – 12:45 pm

## **Roundtables Session: Incentives, Compliance & Site Development 201**

### **BUILDING REUSE**

- **Bethany Davenport**  
Fiscal and Compliance Manager – NC Department of Commerce
- **Nichole Gross**  
Senior Program Manager/Lead Staff Liaison, Rural Infrastructure Authority  
NC Department of Commerce

### **ONE NC**

- **Kenny Stagg**  
One NC Program Manager – NC Department of Commerce

### **JDIG**

- **Mark Poole**  
Director, Commerce Finance Center – NC Department of Commerce

### **GOLDEN LEAF**

- **Katie Fisher**  
Program Officer – Golden LEAF Foundation

### **RURAL GRANTS**

- **Hazel Edmond**  
Director, Rural Engagement & Investment Programs – NC Department of Commerce

### **UTILITIES SITE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS**

- **Courtney Bird**  
Senior Economic Development Manager – Duke Energy
- **TBD**  
ElectriCities of North Carolina Representative
- **Ann Fitts**  
Community Development Specialist – North Carolina's Electric Cooperatives
- **Patrick Pierce**  
Director, Economic and Business Development – North Carolina Railroad Company

### **DOWNTOWN MAIN STREET**

- **Liz Parham**  
Director, NC Main Street Program – NC Department of Commerce

12:45 pm

## **Transition to Lunch**

12:45 – 2 pm

### **LUNCHEON**

12:45 – 1:15 pm

## **Luncheon / Networking**

1:15 – 1:55 pm

## **Keynote Presentation**

### **ALANNA HOWARD**

CEO & Owner – Garrison Consulting Group

1:55 – 2 pm

## **Closing Remarks**

### **ANNA WALKER & JAMES CARTER**

*Emerging Executives Committee Chair / Vice Chair*

2 pm

### **FORUM ADJOURSNS**

# 2026 EMERGING EXECUTIVES FORUM

February 4-5 • Kinston

## THANK YOU TO NCEDA'S ANNUAL SPONSORS!



*Cardinal Sponsors*



North Carolina  
Railroad Company



*Long Leaf Pine Sponsors*



*Dogwood Sponsors*



North Carolina  
Biotechnology Center



*Patron Sponsors*

AHA! ADVISORS

DMJPS CPAS + ADVISORS

DOMINION ENERGY

ECU NC CERTIFIED

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACADEMY

ENERGY UNITED

HARNETT COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

IREDELL COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

LABELLA ASSOCIATES

MARLBORO DEVELOPMENT TEAM

MAYNARD NEXSEN

MY FUTURE NC

PENNONI

ROCKINGHAM COUNTY  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SAMET CORPORATION

TIMMONS GROUP

VIRGINIA PORT AUTHORITY

THE WOOTEN COMPANY

*Media Partner*

BUSINESS NORTH CAROLINA

*Annual Partners*

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP OF NORTH CAROLINA  
NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE