



2026 EMERGING EXECUTIVES FORUM

May 11-12 • Kinston

From Collaboration to Leadership:
Growing Your Impact in Economic Development

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2026 NCEDA EMERGING EXECUTIVES FORUM

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Meeting Locations

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

Agenda

Monday, May 11

Afternoon

ARRIVAL / HOTEL CHECK-IN

Noon – 3:30 pm

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

12:30 – 2 pm

Simply Natural Creamery Tour (Snow Hill)

Tour Sponsor: [Greene County Economic Development Partnership](#)

2:30 – 4 pm

NC Global TransPark Tour (Kinston)

4 – 6 pm

Networking at Mother Earth Lodge

6:30 – 8 pm

WELCOMING RECEPTION AND DINNER

Reception Sponsor: [North Carolina's Electric Cooperatives](#)

8 pm – Until

DRINKS ON YOUR OWN

Tuesday, May 12

8:30 – 9 am

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION / BREAKFAST

9 am – 12:45 pm

GENERAL SESSION

9 – 9:10 am

Welcoming Remarks

ANNA WALKER

Economic Development Manager – North Carolina's Electric Cooperatives
NCEDA Board of Directors / Emerging Executives Committee Chair

JAMES CARTER

Talent Development Program Manager – City of Charlotte
Emerging Executives Committee Vice Chair

9:10 – 9:20 am

Lenoir County / Eastern North Carolina Welcome

TREY CASH

COO – NC Global TransPark Economic Development Region

LINDA ROUSE-SUTTON

Chair – Lenoir County Board of Commissioners

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9:20 – 9:40 am	Amazon Project Spotlight MARTIE BUTLER Economic Development Director – Richmond County
9:40 – 10:10 am	Leadership Profile ANNA WALKER , <i>interviewer</i> JENNIFER LANTZ Executive Director – Wilson Economic Development Council
10:10 – 10:50 am	Regional Collaboration and Innovative Partnerships in Economic Development TREY CASH , <i>moderator</i> Chief Operating Officer North Carolina Global TransPark Economic Development Region SHAYLA DOUGLAS Assistant Director – Pitt County Economic Development DAVID LAMBERT Director of Strategic Projects – NC Department of Commerce KEVIN SZOSTAK Director of Economic Development – Alamance Chamber
10:50 – 11:10 am	Networking Break
11:10 – 11:25 am	International Etiquette NATHANIEL DICK Senior Business Development Manager, Asia & Oceania Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina SAVANNAH WALKER Business Development Coordinator – Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina
11:25 am – Noon	Successful Site Visits: Strategy, Execution, and Leadership ASHLEY CAGLE , <i>moderator</i> Executive Director, Economic & Land Development- WithersRavenel JOE MELVIN Vice President – North Carolina’s Southeast STEVEN PEARCE Vice President, Infrastructure & Economic Development – McGuireWoods Consulting MARVIN PRICE Executive Vice President, Economic Development – Greensboro Chamber of Commerce
Noon – 12:45 pm	Roundtables Session: Incentives, Compliance & Site Development 201 BUILDING REUSE <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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

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ONE NC

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

JDIG

- **Katy Parker**
Director of Project Management
Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina

GOLDEN LEAF

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

RURAL GRANTS: ARC, CDBG, INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT FUND & MORE!

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

UTILITIES & SITE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

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

DOWNTOWN MAIN STREET

- **Chuck Halsall**
Program Specialist, 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 ADJOURNS

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- IREDELL COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
- LABELLA ASSOCIATES

- MARLBORO DEVELOPMENT TEAM
- MAYNARD NEXSEN
- MY FUTURE NC
- PENNONI
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