

# Industry Alexander

A publication of the Alexander County Economic Development Corporation



## Welcome

Welcome to the Inaugural issue of Industry Alexander, the newsletter designed to assist industries based in, or with facilities located within Alexander County.

There are numerous resources and programs available to help existing and new industries, yet, often, people don't know, or simply don't have time to find out what is available. Hopefully, this newsletter will serve as a guide to make you aware of the resources available to you. If an article catches your attention, and you would like additional information, please use the contact information found at the bottom of this page. We would be happy to assist you further.

Manufacturing is vital to Alexander County's economy, and we are happy that you are here. Again, please contact us if we can assist you.

## Alexander Designated as a 21st Century Community

Earlier this year, Alexander County was accepted into the N.C. Department of Commerce's 21st Century Communities program. This initiative helps foster economic growth in the state's most distressed communities.

"By participating in the 21st Century Communities program, local leaders gain the resources needed to help their communities move forward in today's global economy," said Gov. Mike Easley. "Helping our struggling counties develop long term, sustainable business plans also makes sure North Carolina's business climate remains number one in

the nation for many years into the future."

Alexander, Camden, Clay, Nash and Scotland join 26 other counties that have received the designation since the program started in September 2001. The 21st Century Communities program examines the strengths and challenges faced by local economies hardest hit by global economic changes, particularly the loss of traditional manufacturing jobs. A task force within the state Commerce Department partners with local officials to develop strategies for economic vitality in each county and then works with counties to implement recommended changes.

Communities are selected on a competitive

basis. Criteria for participation includes relative economic distress, such as rising unemployment, as well as commitment from community leadership.

As a kick-off session for the program, NC Commerce officials interviewed nearly 50 local

employers, government officials, and residents in November. If you are interested in serving on a sub-committee related to the program, please let our office know. Input from the local manufacturing base is essential for the program's success.



## Manufacturing Council

The Alexander County Manufacturing Council will resume meetings in the first quarter of 2009. If you have any suggestions for speakers please let the EDC know. Past presenters have included the President of CVCC Dr. Garrett Hinshaw, NC House District 88 Rep. Ray Warren, and a representative from the NC Military Business Center.

This council consists of the leadership of industries based in, or with facilities located within Alexander County. The council meets four times per year for lunch, a brief presentation, and time allotted for you to network with other industrial leaders in the county. Please plan to attend these beneficial sessions in 2009.

## Three New Industries Locate to Alexander County in 2008

The Alexander County Economic Development Corporation would like to welcome three new industries that opened manufacturing facilities in Alexander County during 2008. Jasper Group, headquartered in Indiana, began operations in the former Kincaid Furniture facility located on 5th Avenue in Taylorsville. Jasper Group's Taylorsville facility will produce library furniture.

Another former Kincaid Furniture facility now is home to Piedmont Fiberglass. As one of the nation's premiere manufacturers of fiberglass products, Piedmont Fiberglass makes products such as church steeples,



Doug Caudle and Rep. Ray Warren at the Piedmont Fiberglass Open House in December

baptismal pools, waterslides, cupolas and various parts for the boating industry. Piedmont Fiberglass relocated to Alexander County from Mooresville, NC.

Westgate Home Furnishings opened their first US manufacturing facility in the former Fashion House Furniture facility located on NC-16 South in Taylorsville. Westgate Home Furnishings is a division of parent company Home Fashions International (HFI). A privately owned business celebrating 20 years in business in 2008, HFI manufactures and markets products to the home fashions trade through the brands: Home Fashions International, American Decorative Fabrics, and Westgate Home Furnishings.

Please join us in welcoming these industries to our community.

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***Need More Space?***

*Industrial and commercial buildings and land options available in Alexander County are posted on our website [www.AlexanderEDC.org](http://www.AlexanderEDC.org)*

**NC Building Reuse Program Overview**

Whether it's an empty storefront on Main Street or a shuttered factory out on the highway, vacant buildings serve as daily reminders of the economic hardships being visited upon small towns throughout North Carolina. They are a source of discouragement to local residents and to anyone considering starting a new business. But these buildings also represent a county's potential. Restored, renovated, and equipped, they can once again become thriving centers of commerce, creating jobs

and adding much-needed tax base for counties.

The Building Reuse and Restoration Program assists communities in transforming the potential these buildings represent into economic reality. Grants help local governments prepare the buildings for reuse by new and expanding businesses. The NC Rural Center oversees the program as part of the NC Economic Infrastructure Fund. Basic requirements to apply include a building being empty for at least six months and one new job being created for each

\$10,000 in grant funds. Companies must furnish a 1 to 1 match of all grant funds received.

Recent Building reuse projects awarded in Alexander County include grants for Jasper Group, Piedmont Fiberglass, and Westgate Home Furnishings. If your plans include renovating an industrial facility that has been vacant for at least six months please let us know and we will assist you with the application process. For more information please visit [www.ncruralcenter.org](http://www.ncruralcenter.org).

**Existing Industries**

In these difficult economic times, existing business and industries are more important than ever to the economic future of Alexander County. Statistics show that approximately 85 percent of new jobs in a community come from existing industries, with only 15 percent coming from new industries entering a community. The Alexander County Economic Development Corporation is dedicated to helping our existing businesses and industries grow, benefiting the industry, and, in turn, the citizens of Alexander County.



Taylor King Furniture

Alexander County is fortunate to have pro-business leadership that is equally concerned with the retention and growth of existing industry as they are in attracting new industry to the county. The combination of your business, our great school system, and our beautiful rural location truly make Alexander County "a great place to live and work."

**Hiddenite Water and Sewer Project Update**

Work continues on the Hiddenite Industrial Water and Sewer project. When completed public sewer services will be provided to Craftmaster Furniture and Paladin Industries in the Hiddenite Community. Fire protection water will also be provided for Craftmaster Furniture. Funding for this \$1.8 million project was provided by grants from the Community Development Block Grant program, Appalachian Regional Commission, the NC Rural Center, Alexander County, and the Town of Taylorsville. The project is expected to be complete in early 2009.



**Industry Spotlight – Schneider Mills**

Earlier this year, Schneider Mills celebrated their 62nd year in operation in Alexander County. In honor of their contributions to the citizens of Alexander County, Albert Schneider was recognized at the June 23rd meeting of the Alexander County Board of Commissioners.

As a part of the recognition program, Andrew Jackson, Board Chairman for the Alexander County Economic Development Corporation presented

Albert Schneider with our inaugural Lifetime Achievement Award. Mr. Jackson noted that Schneider Mills is one of the oldest and most stable employers in the county and is currently one of the largest textile employers in the nation. Mr. Jackson also noted



that their recent purchase of new equipment and the creation of approximately 50 new jobs magnified Schneider Mills' commitment to continue opera-

tion in the county for the foreseeable future.

The Alexander County Board of Commissioners honored Mr. Schneider by presenting him with a Key to the County and an appreciation plaque was presented by the Town of Taylorsville. Congratulations to Schneider Mills and to Mr. Albert Schneider for being honored with these awards. Thank you for your investment in the future of manufacturing in Alexander County.

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