



2026 EMERGING EXECUTIVES FORUM

February 4-5 • Kinston

Sponsors

PRESENTING SPONSORS



LENOIR COUNTY
DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE
NORTH CAROLINA

GOLD SPONSORS



NC Electric Cooperatives



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

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

Wednesday, February 4

Afternoon

ARRIVAL / HOTEL CHECK-IN

Noon – 4:30 pm

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Noon – 1:30 pm

Lunch at Farmer and the Dail (Snow Hill)

Lunch Sponsor: **Greene County Economic Development Partnership**

2 – 3 pm

Simply Natural Creamery Tour (Snow Hill)

Tour Sponsor: **Greene County Economic Development Partnership**

3:30 – 4:30 pm

NC Global TransPark Tour (Kinston)

5:30 – 7 pm

WELCOMING RECEPTION

Reception Sponsor: **North Carolina's Electric Cooperatives**

7 pm – Until

DINNER / DRINKS ON YOUR OWN

Thursday, February 5

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

2026 EMERGING EXECUTIVES FORUM

February 4-5 • Kinston

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
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, Economic Development Projects Alamance County Area Chamber of Commerce
10:50 – 11:10 am	Networking Break
11:10 – 11:25 am	International Etiquette ROBERT VAN GEONS President & CEO – Fayetteville Cumberland County Economic Development Corp.
11:25 am – Noon	Successful Site Visits: Strategy, Execution, and Leadership KATHLEEN HENRY , <i>moderator</i> Owner – KH Consulting 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

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: ARC, CDBG, INDUSTRIAL 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 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 ADJOURNS

2026 EMERGING EXECUTIVES FORUM

February 4-5 • Kinston

THANK YOU TO NCEDA'S ANNUAL SPONSORS!



Cardinal Sponsors



Long Leaf Pine Sponsors



Dogwood Sponsors



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