



2026 SPRING CONFERENCE PROGRAM

March 9-10 • Grandover Resort • Greensboro

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Conference Exhibitors

365 DEGREE TOTAL MARKETING	JDS CONSULTING
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BL COMPANIES	NORTH CAROLINA RAILROAD COMPANY
BRANCH CIVIL	RDG, A CONVERGENT COMPANY
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GRAHAM PERSONNEL SERVICES	THE WHITING-TURNER
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Conference Agenda

Monday, March 9

11 am – 5 pm

OPTIONAL NETWORKING ACTIVITIES (*separate registration required*)

Noon – 3:30 pm:

NC Zoo Outing

Activity Sponsor: **TERRACON CONSULTANTS**

Noon – 4 pm:

Golf Outing at Grandover

Activity Sponsor: **NEW ATLANTIC**

1:30 – 3:30 pm:

Top Golf Greensboro

Activity Sponsor: **ARCO DESIGN/BUILD**

1:30 – 3:30 pm:

Historical Trolley Tour of Greensboro

Activity Sponsor: **TA LOVING COMPANY**

1:30 – 4 pm:

High Point University Tour

5 pm

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION DESK OPENS

Grandville Ballroom Foyer

Refreshments Sponsor: **WESTERN GOVERNORS UNIVERSITY**

5:30 – 6:15 pm

CONNECTOR'S NETWORK RECEPTION

Nottingham, 2nd Floor

For Board of Directors, Past Presidents, Emerging Executives, New Members, and Mentorship Program Participants

Reception Sponsor: **DUKE ENERGY**

6:15 – 9:30 pm

NCEDA 60TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Grandville Ballroom

6:15 – 6:45 pm

Cocktails and Hors d'oeuvres

Reception Sponsors: **NORTH CAROLINA RAILROAD COMPANY • NORTH CAROLINA'S SOUTHEAST**

6:45 – 7:15 pm

A Legacy of Connection: NCEDA Through the Years

Anniversary Video Sponsors: **MCGOUGH CONSTRUCTION • SMALL BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT CENTER**

JENN BOSSER CEcD

President & CEO – Iredell County Economic Development Corporation
NCEDA Board of Directors / Spring Conference Committee Co-Chair

LEIGH COCKRAM

Director – Rockingham County Economic Development
NCEDA Board of Directors / Spring Conference Committee Co-Chair

BRITTANY BRADY

President – Henderson County Partnership for Economic Development
NCEDA President

7:15 – 9:30 pm

Dinner, Desserts and Dancing!

Dinner Sponsors: **BL COMPANIES • GRAHAM PERSONNEL SERVICES • INSIGHT CONSULTING GROUP • NC CAROLINA CORE**

Entertainment Sponsor: **EDIFICE CONSTRUCTION**

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Tuesday, March 10

6 – 7 am

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY: GROUP RUN/WALK

7 am

Grandville Ballroom Foyer

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION DESK OPENS

7 – 8:15 am

Nottingham, 2nd Floor

PAST PRESIDENTS / BOARD OF DIRECTORS BREAKFAST

Breakfast Sponsor: **THOMAS & HUTTON**

7:30 – 8:30 am

Grandville Ballroom

NETWORKING BREAKFAST

Breakfast Sponsors: **365 DEGREE TOTAL MARKETING • DAVIE CONSTRUCTION COMPANY**

8 am – 2 pm

Grandville Ballroom Foyer

EXHIBITOR HALL OPEN

8:30 am – 12:30 pm

Grandville Ballroom

GENERAL SESSION

Candy Basket Sponsor: **NORTH CAROLINA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES**

Productivity Bell Sponsor: **MOUNTAIN VALLEY PIPELINE**

WiFi Sponsor: **BRANCH CIVIL**

8:30 – 8:40 am

Welcoming Remarks

JENN BOSSER CEcD

President & CEO – Iredell County Economic Development Corporation
NCEDA Board of Directors / Spring Conference Committee Co-Chair

LEIGH COCKRAM

Director – Rockingham County Economic Development
NCEDA Board of Directors / Spring Conference Committee Co-Chair

8:40 – 8:55 am

NCEDA Business Session

Board of Directors Update

BRITTANY BRADY

President – Henderson County Partnership for Economic Development
NCEDA President

Board Application Process Update

JOANNA HELMS

Director – Apex Economic Development
NCEDA Past President

8:55 – 9:10 am

NCEDA Foundation Report and Scholarship Recognition

RANDALL JOHNSON

Executive Director, Southeastern Office – North Carolina Biotechnology Center
NCEDA Foundation Chair / NCEDA Past President

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9:10 – 9:50 am

Honoring Our Past, Celebrating Our Future: Sixty Years of Progress

This session will explore NCEDA's history and the evolution of economic development in North Carolina, highlighting key moments that shaped the state's trajectory.

CHRISTOPHER CHUNG, moderator

CEO – Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina
NCEDA Board of Directors

CHARLES HAYES

Managing Partner– Hayes Group Consulting
NCEDA Past President

DONNY HICKS CEcD

Executive Director – Gaston County Economic Development Commission
NCEDA Past President

ERNIE PEARSON

Senior Counsel – Maynard Nexsen
NCEDA Past President

ANNA WALKER

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

LINDA WEINER

NCEDA Past President

9:50 – 10:10 am

The NC Value Proposition Today and Moving Forward: Inside the EDPNC Pitch Deck

This session will give attendees a firsthand look at EDPNC's new pitch deck so they can better serve as informed ambassadors.

STEPHANIE BLAIR

Business Recruitment Manager
Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina

10:10 – 10:30 am

Family Forward NC – Childcare as a Talent Attraction Strategy

This session will highlight the Future Ready Greensboro campaign and other childcare initiatives supporting workforce and community success.

THERESA STACKER, moderator

Executive Director – North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation

ELIZABETH UNDERWOOD KAZIMIR

Director – Stanly County Economic Development

CECELIA THOMPSON

Executive Director – Action Greensboro

10:30 – 11 am

Networking Break

Networking Break Sponsor: **HALIFAX COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

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11– 11:45 am

Demystifying Data Centers

This discussion will examine the role of data centers in North Carolina communities, including what they are, why they matter, and how to evaluate projects – covering economic impacts, infrastructure and zoning considerations, community engagement, and implications for taxes, jobs, and wages.

LEIGH COCKRAM, moderator

Director – Rockingham County Economic Development
NCEDA Board of Directors

DANIELLE BUCKINS

Director, North Carolina Economic Development – Duke Energy

SCOTT MILLAR

President – Catawba County Economic Development Corporation
NCEDA Past President

BEN ROJAHN

Vice President, Data Center Solutions – CBRE

11:45 am – 12:10 pm

Under the Dome: How to Know, Reach and Work with Your Legislators

What happens under the dome impacts every North Carolina community. This engaging session will share practical strategies for building strong legislative relationships, communicating your community's priorities, and effectively advocating for economic development.

NATALIE HAWKINS

President – Moore County Economic Development Partnership
NCEDA Board of Directors

THE HONORABLE TOM MCINNIS

Senator – NC General Assembly (R-21)

ROBERT VAN GEONS

President & CEO
Fayetteville Cumberland County Economic Development Corporation

12:10 – 12:25 pm

Importance of K-12 Career Exploration and Career Awareness Programs

This session will highlight two initiatives from across the state that showcase how EDCs are partnering with public schools and industry to strengthen workforce pipeline development.

Spark Session: Iredell Ready

Iredell Ready is an initiative designed to help students and residents, K-12 through retirement, identify the opportunities to pursue their individual career pathways and gainful employment with industry.

JENN BOSSER CEcD

President & CEO – Iredell County Economic Development Corporation
NCEDA Board of Directors

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12:10 – 12:25 pm

Importance of K-12 Career Exploration and Career Awareness Programs

Spark Session: Western NC Construction Career Day

WNC Construction Career Day gives high school students hands-on exposure to construction careers, connecting them with industry professionals and pathways while supporting the sector's workforce needs.

JOHN ANGLIN

Business Development Manager – The Branch Group

12:25 – 12:45 pm

Project Green Lantern: How Existing Industries are our Partners in Recruitment

This session will examine how existing industry partners can support business recruitment efforts, with context provided by a preceding legislative update related to General Assembly funding for the project.

KELLY BOWERS NCCED

Economic Development Specialist – Timmons Group

Director – Hertford County Economic Development Commission

BILL VAUGHAN

Environmental, Health, and Safety Manager – Nucor Steel

12:45 pm

Morning Closing Remarks

12:45 – 2 pm

Grandville Ballroom

LUNCHEON

Luncheon Sponsor: **ALLIANCE CONSULTING ENGINEERS • THE WHITING-TURNER CONTRACTING COMPANY**

12:45 – 1:15 pm

Luncheon Buffet and Networking

1:15 – 1:55 pm

Luncheon Keynote – AI: Economic Development Opportunities and Threats

DR. DELL GINES CEcD

Chief Innovation Officer – International Economic Development Council

1:55 – 2 pm

Closing Remarks

JENN BOSSER & LEIGH COCKRAM

Spring Conference Committee Co-Chairs

2 pm

CONFERENCE ADJOURNS

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