



Advancing NC:

EMPOWERING LEADERS,
STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES

APRIL 23, 2026 | 11:30AM-2:30PM

River Landing
Wallace, NC

Presented in Collaboration with



Foundation Contributors



We also extend special thanks to the following individuals for their additional contributions and support:

- Joe Hines**, Timmons Group
- Dr. Patricia Mitchell**, NCEDA Past President
- Ernie Pearson**, NCEDA Past President

Agenda

- 11:30 am – Noon **Registration & Networking**
- Noon – 12:20 pm **Lunch**
- 12:20 – 12:30 pm **Welcome & Opening Remarks**
Dr. Patricia Mitchell, CEcD
MPA Program Director, Assistant Professor of Public Administration
Appalachian State University
NCEDA Foundation Past Chair / NCEDA Past President
- 12:30 – 1:40 pm **Economic Development Presentation & Engagement**
Dr. Jonathan Morgan
Professor of Public Administration and Government
UNC School of Government
- 1:40 – 2:25 pm **Counties in Action: Challenges, Successes, & Strategies**
Dr. Jonathan Morgan, moderator
- Julie Graham**
Existing Industry Director, Wayne County
Vice President, NC Global TransPark Economic Development Region
- Carrie Shields**
Deputy County Manager
Duplin County
- Steve Yost**
President
North Carolina's Southeast
NCEDA Foundation Board / NCEDA Past President
- 2:25 – 2:30 pm **Closing Remarks**
Dr. Patricia Mitchell, CEcD

Speakers



Julie Graham is the Existing Industry Director for Wayne County and Vice President of North Carolina Global TransPark Economic Development Region. She previously served as Business Manager for North Carolina Global TransPark EDR. In her current role, she supports existing industry growth, business retention, and regional economic development initiatives. She earned a Bachelor of Accounting and Business Management degree from the University of Mount Olive.



Dr. Patricia Mitchell, CECD is a Professor in the Department of Government and Justice Studies at Appalachian State University and Past President of NCEdA. She previously served as Assistant Secretary for Rural Development at the NC Department of Commerce, Director of Economic Development and County Manager in Ashe County, and held faculty roles at East Carolina University. She earned DPA and MPA degrees from the University of Georgia.



Dr. Jonathan Morgan is a Professor of Public Administration and Government at the UNC Chapel Hill School of Government. Since joining the faculty in 2003, he has taught, advised public officials, and conducted applied research on economic development, with expertise in industry clusters, business incentives, and development impact analysis. He directs the School's IEDC-accredited Basic Economic Development Course. Morgan holds degrees from the University of Virginia, Clark Atlanta University, and NC State University.



Carrie Shields is the Deputy County Manager for Duplin County, where she oversees strategic initiatives, department leadership, and intergovernmental collaboration. She previously served as Executive Director of the Duplin County Economic Development Commission and as Market Manager for Curtis Media Group. With more than two decades of experience in public service and economic development, her work has focused on business growth, partnerships, and community engagement. She holds a B.A. in Psychology from the University of North Carolina Wilmington and is active in North Carolina's Southeast and the North Carolina Economic Development Association.



Steve Yost is the President of North Carolina's Southeast, a role he has held since 2009, and Past President of NCEDA. He previously served as Executive Director of the Columbus County Economic Development Commission, Senior Developer and Regional Manager for the NC Department of Commerce, and Marketing Manager for North Carolina's Southeast. He earned a B.A. in Political Science from Appalachian State University and a Master of Public Administration from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



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