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**Wake County-NC State partnership takes aim at high-tech
R&D jobs through precision marketing initiative**

Research Triangle Region, N.C. - Wake County leaders are transforming high-tech research at North Carolina State University into good-paying jobs for the region through a new "precision marketing" partnership with the university.

"Key faculty and staff at NC State are already working with major corporations around the world on research projects to help them develop new products," says Ken Atkins, executive director of Wake County Economic Development. "They know what new products are being developed. They are the world leader in technologies that help the companies create them. We plan to leverage their contacts and research capabilities to bring jobs and investment from those companies here."

The precision marketing team will work with university faculty and staff to glean high-potential leads on companies that match the region's target markets and R&D capabilities. Economic developers will develop a customized sales and marketing approach that involves top researchers who can speak to the needs of the targeted companies, and work those contacts to attract new investment to the county. **Nonwoven textiles take first shot**

The first pilot of this forward-looking initiative seeks to create 21st-century jobs in a key industry sector from North Carolina's past - textiles. While the state has lost thousands of jobs in traditional woven textile manufacturing operations, non-woven textiles are a \$3 billion industry in North Carolina and growing rapidly. More than \$100 million in textile research and development is being conducted within a 25-mile radius of State's College of Textiles.

"This is not about looms or better weaving techniques," said Blan Godfrey, dean of the College of Textiles. "It's about new science in areas such as advanced medical care, nanoscale technologies and pervasive computing." That science is leading to a new generation of textiles, from artificial skin and aircraft parts to "smart fabrics," such as hospital gowns that continuously monitor patient vital signs.

The College of Textiles already works with companies from all over the world on products like these. Freudenberg, Johnson & Johnson, Kimberly-Clark, Procter & Gamble, Sara Lee, Unilever and dozens of others count on NC State researchers to help them develop new products. In the last 10 years, 11 nonwoven facilities have located in North Carolina. The Wake County-NC State partnership has identified more than 300 additional companies in that sector that are potential investors.

"NC State is the world leader in many areas of cutting-edge research in textiles," says Godfrey. "R&D leads to pilot plants. Pilot plants lead to manufacturing. Wake County's precision marketing initiative is about bringing more of the R&D and pilot plants to the county with companies we already know well."

The Wake County teams plans to follow this approach to leverage R&D and corporate partnerships at other NC State colleges that are world leaders in high-potential emerging technology areas, such as agriculture and life sciences and veterinary medicine.

Local action, regional impact

While Wake County's efforts are aimed at attracting investment within its borders, developers expect a much broader payoff. Attracting R&D and pilot plants in Wake should open the door for new permanent manufacturing opportunities in surrounding counties. The 10 more-rural counties of the 13-county Research Triangle Region are well positioned to capture those opportunities with their lower land and labor costs and close proximity to the R&D at NC State.

This is the vision of the broader regional economic development strategy of which the Wake County initiative is a part. The regional strategy, "Staying on Top: Winning the Job Wars of the Future," is a \$5 million, five-year plan to create 100,000 jobs in the 13-county Research Triangle Region by developing clusters of innovation in areas in which the region is a world leader (learn more at www.researchtriangleregion.org).

"Integrating higher-education resources into all of our economic development efforts is one of five major strategies of the Staying on Top plan," says Ted Abernathy, executive vice president of the Research Triangle Regional Partnership, which coordinates the regional strategy. "This is an excellent first step toward doing that."

"This is a Wake County initiative paid for by Wake county government and private-sector investments," says Atkins. "But we see this as a model that can replicated by other partners in the region in collaboration with other research universities, as well as by others statewide."

For more information on the Wake County's precision marketing initiative, contact Atkins at (919) 664-7041 or KAtkins@the-chamber.org, or Ted Morris, director of economic development partnerships at NC State, (919) 515-9433 or Ted_Morris@ncsu.edu.