

Car manufacturer may be eyeing region

BY JON HAWLEY
The Daily Advance

North Carolina providing economic incentives could be "make or break" for landing a major company — possibly a car manufacturing facility — in eastern North Carolina, local lawmakers said following Gov. Pat McCrory's State of the State speech.

In his 80-minute speech to the General Assembly and state judiciary, McCrory proposed a slew of goals for the coming legislative session.

But he called for economic incentives with special urgency, saying he needed the General Assembly to provide him a "clear and concise job creation toolbox" that needs to be passed "in a matter of weeks, not months."

The governor didn't specify what "tools" he needs, how much they'd cost or to what companies they'd appeal. But his speech proclaimed "manufacturing is part of our (state's) DNA" and his administration has spent recent weeks playing coy about Volvo's

reported interest in North Carolina and nearby states.

In separate interviews, Reps. Bob Steinburg, R-Chowan, and Howard Hunter III, D-Hertford, offered their support for economic incentives, including those that appeal to many potential investors like currently expired historic tax credits.

While declining to offer specifics over confidential economic development discussions, both said "something big" could be in the works for eastern North Carolina.

Steinburg specified the prospective company is looking to locate east of Interstate 95, and its facility would be within a reasonable commuting distance of his constituents in District 1. Hunter also said his "gut feeling" is the state's focus is on an automotive company.

Supporting that theory, the board of directors of the Golden LEAF Foundation said Thursday it's reserved \$50 million to provide support for the location of an automobile manufacturing facility in North Carolina, the

Associated Press reported.

Board chairman Johnathan Rhyne said the panel took the action to show its commitment to the opportunity. Rhyne said an automaker and its suppliers can create thousands of jobs and serve as a catalyst for long-term economic advancement.

Golden LEAF President Dan Gerlach said the money isn't earmarked for any specific company or location, the AP reported. Gerlach said the foundation generally does not make a single grant such as this one, but said the board recognizes the potential for change that such an industry would bring.

Meanwhile, Steinburg said he also intends to be a primary sponsor for legislation providing for incentives as the governor called for under his "NC Competes" proposal.

It's too soon to say how comprehensive that legislation will



HUNTER



STEINBURG

be, Steinburg said, noting NC Competes includes some broad initiatives. McCrory called for promoting "long-term sustainable job growth and capital investment" as well as "leveraging" university research to attract venture capital and entrepreneurs.

Hunter said he supported economic incentives — including several the governor may not. He noted he joined House Democrats in a press conference this week to advocate for not only increased funds for Job Development Investment Grants and restoring historic tax credits, two proposals McCrory supports, but also renewing or extending film credits, renewable energy credits, aviation tax credits and research and development credits.

Those incentives bring a lot of money to the state, he said, singling out film credits as a major

boon to the state economy. According to reports he's seen, a single film company pumped more than \$250,000 in airfare into North Carolina over several months of production.

Though incentives can represent a significant expense, Hunter still supported them and said the state needs to be competitive with neighboring states. McCrory similarly argued Wednesday that North Carolina must have the tools needed in a fierce and global competition for jobs.

Steinburg, on the other hand, said he shares other GOP lawmakers' general opposition to economic incentives. Republicans have spent the last two years making North Carolina attractive to employers through tax reform, he said.

But he said economic incentives could provide an "injection" needed to get a "transformational" employer in the region. Such incentives would be a worthwhile investment, he argued, if it brings a company that spins off numerous supply-chain and other supporting businesses.

36 years straight: Edenton a Tree City

From staff reports

Edenton has been named a 2014 Tree City USA by the Arbor Day Foundation in honor of its commitment to effective urban forest management.

Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton said in an email to members of the town's Tree Committee that Mayor Roland Vaughan received notification of the honor on Friday.

"This marks the 36th year in a row Edenton has received this honor," Knighton said. "It takes a serious commitment from the Tree Committee with support from the Town Council to maintain this designation. Great job!"

According to a news release announcing the honor, Edenton achieved Tree City USA recognition by fulfilling the program's four requirements — a tree board or department, a tree care ordinance, an annual community forestry budget of at least \$2 per capita and an Arbor Day observance and proclamation.

The Tree City USA program is sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation, in partnership with

the United States Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters, the release said.

"Everyone benefits when elected officials, volunteers and committed citizens in communities like Edenton make smart investments in urban forests," said Matt Harris, chief executive of the Arbor Day Foundation. "Trees bring shade to our homes and beauty to our neighborhoods, along with numerous economic, social and environmental benefits."

Tree City USA communities enjoy a number of benefits including cleaner air, improved storm water management, energy savings and increased property values and commercial activity, the release said.

Additional information about the Tree City USA program is available at arborday.org/TreeCityUSA.

According to its website, the Arbor Day Foundation is a million-member, nonprofit conservation and education organization whose mission is to inspire people to plant, nurture and celebrate trees. Additional information is available at arborday.org.

COAST Players present West Side Story

From staff reports

The College of The Albemarle COAST Players are bringing the timeless classic West Side Story to the Performing Arts Center in Elizabeth City, Feb. 26 - March 8.

The cast is made up of over 30 actors, singers, and dancers. The show is being directed by Jeffrey Emmerich, drama director, and associate professor at College of The Albemarle. Choreographer and costume designer for the production is Mariah Schierer. Gloria Emmerich is the musical director.

"West Side Story" is loosely based on Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet and tells the story of star-crossed lovers Tony and Maria. Tony is a former gang leader of the "Jets" and falls in love with Maria, sister of the



leader of the Puerto Rican street gang the "Sharks." Set in New York, the lovers struggle to rise above the hatred and intolerance that surrounds them. West Side Story is considered by many to be Broadway's greatest triumph and remains as powerful and timely today as it was when first written in 1957.

The Bernstein and Sondheim score features such classics of the American musical theatre as "Something's Coming," "Tonight," "America," "I Feel Pretty" and "Somewhere."

A live orchestra made up of 13 players will accompany the ten performances of "West Side Story." Spectacular costumes, sets, lighting effects, and energetic dancing are trademarks of this COAST Players production. The schedule includes morning, afternoon, and evening performances.

Advanced Ticket prices: Adults \$16.50; senior/military \$13; students \$9.50. All tickets are \$2 more at the door.

Performances: Thurs., Feb. 26 at 10 a.m.; Fri., Feb. 27 at 7 p.m.; Sat., Feb. 28 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.; Sunday, March 1 at 2 p.m.; Thurs., March 5 at 10 a.m.; Fri., March 6 at 7 p.m.; Sat., March 7 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.; Sunday, March 8 at 2 p.m.

The box office phone is (252) 335-9050 or (800) 335-9050. The website is www.albemarle.edu/pac.

Davidson named to Dean's list at JMU

From staff reports

Edenton resident Samantha Renee Davidson has been named to the dean's list at James Madison University for the spring 2014 semester. Students who earn dean's list honors must carry at least 12 graded credit hours and earn a GPA of between 3.5 and 3.899. Davidson is a senior whose major is Math - BS.

See more school news on page 6A.

Counties receive clearing, snagging funds

From staff reports

The Albemarle Resource Conservation and Development Council worked with soil and water conservation districts, county governments and state legislators to obtain a \$250,000 grant from the N.C. Division of Water Resources to clear storm debris from rivers, streams

and canals in 19 eastern NC counties including the council's ten counties around the Albemarle and Pamlico Sounds. Tornadoes last year and storms since then have caused significant damage to drainage systems, which has increased flooding in many areas. The N.C. Division of Soil and Water Conservation is manag-

ing the allocation of the \$250,000 grant from Water Resources.

In Chowan, Perquimans and Pasquotank Counties, sections of Burnt Mill Creek, Upper Perquimans River and Little River are being cleared of debris.

For more information contact the Albemarle RC&D Council (252-482-7437 x4) or www.albemarle.org

or the county SWCD office.

The Albemarle RC&D Council works with partners in 10 counties around the Albemarle & Pamlico Sounds to wisely conserve natural resources and to create opportunities for positive economic and community development. The Albemarle RC&D office is located in Edenton.

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CRIMEWATCH

Edenton Police

ARRESTS
• Feb. 18 — Sean John Williams, 47, West Church Street, was charged with violation of a court order.
• Feb. 16 — Cliff W. LaLonde, 44, of Dicks Street, was charged with trespassing and injury to real property.

INCIDENTS
• Feb. 17 — Hit and run on North Broad Street.
• Feb. 13 — Breaking and entering on Paradise Road.
• Feb. 8 — Breaking and entering and larceny from a motor vehicle on Virginia Road.

• Feb. 8 — Breaking and entering and larceny from a motor vehicle on Morris Circle.

Chowan Sheriff

ARRESTS
• Feb. 13 — James Douglas Allen III, 25, of Sandy Ridge Road, was arrested for failure to appear.
• Feb. 9 — Wade Clifton Britt, 42, of Wingfield Road, was arrested based on an outstanding order for arrest from Cabarrus County.

INCIDENTS
• Feb. 10 — Larceny at Cowpen Neck Road.

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