

sync[®] NEWS & OPPORTUNITIES FROM N.C. COMMERCE



Aerospace Company to Invest \$2.3 Million in Murphy

Moog, Inc., a New York-based advanced technology company, will create 12 new jobs in Cherokee County, **Commerce Secretary Anthony M. Copeland** announced Monday (April 27). The company will invest more than \$2.3 million to expand its manufacturing facility in Murphy.

"Nothing speaks more forcefully to the strength of North Carolina's economy than when a leading industry name chooses to grow its presence here," **Secretary Copeland** said. "As a company, Moog shares our respect for innovation, hard work and vision, and today's announcement is a reminder that every region of North Carolina shares in those values."

Established in 1951, Moog Inc. designs and manufactures advanced motion control products for aerospace, defense, industrial and medical applications. Headquartered in East Aurora, New York, Moog acquired the Murphy facility in 2003. Its location there, which currently maintains a 405-person workforce, manufactures brushless and brush-type motors and blowers for numerous aerospace and industrial applications.

"Moog looks forward to expanding its business at the facility in Murphy, North Carolina, and creating an innovative and engaging workplace for our employees," said **Scott Keaton, General Manager of Moog Operations** in Murphy.

Although wages will vary depending on the position, the average for all new positions could reach up to \$34,000. The current average annual wage in Cherokee County is \$31,820.

A performance-based grant of \$40,000 from the One North Carolina Fund will help facilitate Moog's expansion in Cherokee



A Building Reuse project in the Town of Nashville.

State Awards Infrastructure Grants to Rural Communities to Attract 377 New Jobs and More Than \$23 Million in Private Investment

The North Carolina Rural Infrastructure Authority (RIA) approved 17 grant requests to local governments totaling \$6,570,274, **N.C. Commerce Secretary Anthony M. Copeland** announced April 16. The requests include commitments to create a total of 377 jobs. The public investment in these projects will attract more than \$23 million in private investment.

"Communities across our state are going through challenging times right now, and we must continue to help rural North Carolina prepare for future economic growth," **Secretary Copeland** said. "Rural Infrastructure Authority grants provide needed support for job creation in our rural areas, which are appealing places to live, work and grow a business."

The North Carolina Department of Commerce's team of rural economic development professionals supports the RIA's work. RIA members review and approve funding requests from local communities. Funding comes from a variety of specialized grant and loan programs offered and managed by N.C. Commerce's Rural Economic Development Division, led by **Assistant Secretary for Rural Development Kenny Flowers**. Grants can support a variety of activities, including infrastructure development, building renovation, expansion and demolition, and site improvements.

"Through these newly-approved projects, rural areas of North Carolina will have resources to attract jobs, support business

County. The One N.C. Fund provides financial assistance to local governments to help attract economic investment and to create jobs. Companies receive no money upfront and must meet job creation and capital investment targets to qualify for payment. All One N.C. grants require a matching grant from local governments and any award is contingent upon that condition being met.

In addition to the [North Carolina Department of Commerce](#) and the [Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina](#), other key partners in the project include the [North Carolina General Assembly](#), the [North Carolina Community College System](#), [Tri-County Community College](#), [Cherokee County](#), the [Town of Murphy](#), the [Murphy Power Board](#), and the [Tennessee Valley Authority](#).

Customer Contact Solutions Company Selects Edgecombe County for 200-Job Facility

Utah-based Focus Services LLC, a global innovator in customer contact solutions, will create up to 200 jobs at a new operations center in Tarboro, **Commerce Secretary Anthony M. Copeland** announced April 22. The company's plans, which includes a \$1 million capital investment, mark a return of the telecommunications sector to Tarboro, onetime headquarters of Carolina Telephone & Telegraph.

"Today's announcement by Focus fuels new energy and job growth for downtown Tarboro and brings additional diversification to Edgecombe County's economy," **Secretary Copeland** said. "Sustained, heightened demand for telephone and computer-based customer contact solutions in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic is renewing opportunity for one of our state's most storied rural downtowns."

Founded in 1995 and headquartered in Roy, Utah, Focus Services operates 13 contact centers in the U.S., Central America, the United Kingdom and the Philippines. The company provides clients across numerous industries with multilingual customer contact solutions such as marketing and tech support via telephone, email, webchat and text. Its worldwide workforce currently totals 3,000. Among its existing facilities is a 380-seat contact center in Greenville.

"We are excited to expand our domestic operations in Tarboro," said **Paul Liljenquist, president of Focus Services**. "During this unprecedented time, as the world fights COVID-19, our company family continues to provide essential services on behalf of our clients and is keeping our team members employed. We are blessed to be part of a team that is so customer focused in a time of rapid change as we add as many as 200 jobs in this market."

Carolinas Gateway Partnership, the Town of Tarboro and Edgecombe Community College worked to facilitate the arrival of Focus Services, which will assume occupancy of a building in downtown Tarboro that once housed Carolina Telephone & Telegraph. With corporate roots dating to 1895, Carolina Telephone was a staple of the town's economy, providing telephone service to customers throughout much of eastern and central North Carolina.

The arrival of Focus Services is expected to boost Tarboro's downtown district. In 1977, the National Park Service recognized Tarboro's 45-block Historic District with a listing on the National Register of Historic Places. In 1980, the town was among the initial class of designated North Carolina communities to participate in the state's Main Street Program,

expansion, make health care accessible and prepare sites for future development," said **Assistant Secretary Flowers**. "The Rural Economic Development Division at Commerce and the Rural Infrastructure Authority work closely with rural community leaders to facilitate opportunities for economic success."

The RIA approved nine grant requests under the state's Building Reuse program, one request from the Economic Infrastructure program, two requests from the Rural Demolition program, and two requests under the federally-funded Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. Three requests to the Industrial Development Fund - Utility Account were also approved.

A complete [list of the projects awarded funding is available online](#).

Report: North Carolina Ranks 38th in Census Response Rankings

North Carolina currently lags behind eight states in the southeast and the nation as a whole in responding and providing input to the current U.S. Census, according to federal data being compiled and published by Carolina Demography, a unit of the University of North Carolina.

For the week ending April 26th, North Carolina's ranking remained steady from the previous week. Until last week's report, the state's ranking had risen weekly, before falling to 38th as of April 19th. Its current response rate stands at 48.5% – a rise of 1.9 percentage points from last week.

The national response rate stands at 53.2%. This represents a gap of 4.7 percentage points for the state, the largest single-week gap since reporting began. This disparity has steadily risen each week as the nation pulls ahead of North Carolina.

Eight southeastern states currently outrank North Carolina, five of whom now have a response rate exceeding 50% of households. These eight states are Virginia (57.8%), Kentucky (56.2%), Tennessee (52.3%), Alabama (51.5%), Florida (51.1%), Georgia (49.9%), Mississippi (49.6%), and Arkansas (48.9%).

Established by the United States Constitution, the U.S. Census Bureau is required to conduct a count of every person in the nation every ten years. Everyone must be counted no matter their age, residence status or location. This includes deployed military at their current base address. Federal law requires that all information collected be kept confidential. The information compiled cannot be shared with law enforcement, the courts,

which is now administered by the Main Street & Rural Planning Center at the Department of Commerce.

immigration or anyone for 72 years.

The data collected from the Census helps determine political representation and the amount of funding invested in local communities. Census data helps decide how more than \$16 billion in federal funding gets used each year.

More [data is available at Carolina Demography's website](#).

On Our Radar

- [North Carolina Ports Opens New Refrigerated Container Yard](#) - (*N.C. Ports website* - April 16)

N.C. in the News

- [Greensboro's Art-Dotted Greenway a Respite During COVID-19, and an Economic Engine After](#) (*Next City* - April 28)
- [Press Release: U.S. Department of Commerce Invests \\$1.5 Million to Make Critical Infrastructure Improvements Needed to Support Business Growth in Johnston County, North Carolina](#) (*U.S. Economic Development Administration* - April 27)

About Us

SYNC is North Carolina Commerce's electronic newsletter for local government officials, private-sector allies, state policy makers, and other economic development leaders. We offer unfiltered details about new economic development projects and events, useful news about your peers, and opportunities to synchronize with statewide programs and tools in order to advance economic development in your community. [Send your story ideas to the editor.](#)

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