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NEWS & OPPORTUNITIES  
FROM N.C. COMMERCE



## Governor Cooper Announces 61 New Jobs in Rowan County as Continental Structural Plastics Expands

Continental Structural Plastics (CSP), a leading manufacturer of automotive and heavy truck composite components, will expand its operations in North Carolina to create 61 jobs, Governor Roy Cooper announced August 20. The company will make a capital investment of \$45 million to add new capabilities to its Salisbury facility in Rowan County.

"North Carolina's manufacturing base continues to grow and strengthen our economy," said Governor Cooper. "Even in the face of the pandemic, North Carolina is producing jobs and attracting companies who need our resilient, productive workforce."

Continental Structural Plastics, a Teijin Group company, is a Tier One supplier providing advanced, lightweight composite solutions for the automotive, heavy truck, HVAC and construction industries. Headquartered in Auburn Hills, Michigan, CSP provides full-service engineering support and holds multiple patents covering materials formulations and manufacturing processes. CSP maintains operations on three continents and employs more than 4,300 employees worldwide. The company's project in Salisbury will add 50,000 square feet to its current facility and incorporate a new paint/prime line, enabling it to speed up production and accommodate larger products.

"Our expansion at the Salisbury facility will enhance our ability to support programs for our heavy truck customers," said Steve Rooney, CEO, Continental Structural Plastics. "We have a solid, talented workforce in North Carolina, and are thankful for the support from the State of North Carolina to continue our growth here."

"Companies that operate in our state and then choose to expand here provide North Carolina's strongest endorsements," said North Carolina Commerce Secretary Anthony M. Copeland. "Nothing speaks like experience, and CSP's decision speaks volumes when it comes to North Carolina's reputation

### September 1: Milestone Day for Two Commerce COVID Programs

Today is a milestone day for two Department of Commerce grant programs that address the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic.

Businesses and nonprofits only have a few more hours to submit applications for the Job Retention Grant (JRG) program. For organizations that have experienced interruption due to the pandemic, they could qualify for up to \$250,000 to support their operations during this unprecedented time.

"The Job Retention Grant Program offers another way for employers hit hard by COVID-19 to gain some relief," said **Governor Roy Cooper**. "This program aims to help employers keep employees on the payroll."

Due to a provision in the law, the strict deadline to submit a JRG application is 11:59pm tonight, September 1.

Today also marks the first day that applications are being accepted for another grant program designed to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic.

The Community Development Block Grant Coronavirus program (CDBG-CV) is designed to help units of local government respond to and recover from the health and economic impacts of COVID-19. CDBG-CV projects must incorporate at least one of the following as an area of focus:

- Support families and communities through telehealth support and other public services.
- Protect the most vulnerable and high-risk populations.
- Assist small businesses with economic recovery.
- Address testing, tracing, and tracking trends.

Additionally, the State has established additional funding priorities for the CDBG-CV grants, including subsistence payments to prevent evictions and utility disconnections, food distribution, testing and diagnosis, and employment training for health care workers

as a business location."

The North Carolina Department of Commerce led a team of partners in supporting CSP's decision to expand in the state, which will create for the community an annual payroll impact of more than \$2 million.

A performance-based grant of \$100,000 from the One North Carolina Fund will help facilitate Continental Structural Plastics' expansion in Rowan County. The OneNC 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 OneNC grants require a matching grant from local governments and any award is contingent upon that condition being met.

Partnering with the [North Carolina Department of Commerce](#) and the [Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina](#) on this project were the [North Carolina Community College System, Rowan County](#), and the [Rowan EDC](#).

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## State Awards Infrastructure Grants to Rural Communities to Attract 294 New Jobs and More Than \$103 Million in Private Investment

The North Carolina Rural Infrastructure Authority (RIA) approved 18 grant requests to local governments totaling \$4,847,243, **Governor Roy Cooper** announced August 20. The requests include commitments to create a total of 590 jobs, 296 of which were previously announced. The public investment in these projects will attract more than \$103 million in private investment.

"North Carolina's rural communities need support to upgrade their infrastructure to attract good jobs and build a stronger future. Investments like Rural Infrastructure grants signal to businesses and communities that our state is ready for economic development despite the challenges of the pandemic," **Governor Cooper** said.

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.

"These new grants will help rural counties, cities and towns facilitate business expansion, job creation and future economic growth," **N.C. Commerce Secretary Anthony Copeland** said. "The Rural Economic Development Division at Commerce and the Rural Infrastructure Authority are proud to continue working with local leaders to make strategic investments in their resilient communities."

The RIA approved 15 grant requests under the state's Building Reuse program and one request from the federally-funded Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. Two requests to the Industrial Development Fund - Utility Account were also approved.

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

on the front lines.

Application instructions and complete information about the purpose and requirements of the [CDBG-CV program are available on the Commerce website](#).

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## Governor Cooper Announces More Than \$12 million to Expand Internet Access

People living and working in 11 rural counties will get expanded high-speed internet service thanks to more than \$12 million in grants. **Governor Roy Cooper**, along with the N.C. Department of Information Technology (NCDIT) and its Broadband Infrastructure Office (BIO), announced the 2019-2020 Growing Rural Economies with Access to Technology (GREAT) grant on August 19.

The winning projects are expected to connect 8,017 families and 254 businesses, farms and community institutions to high-speed internet.

"With this pandemic, high-speed internet access is even more important for remote education, telemedicine and small businesses," **Governor Cooper** said. "These projects will help bridge the digital divide in 11 rural counties, so these communities can access important services and participate in our increasingly digital society and economy."

Building on the success of its inaugural round of grants last year, the GREAT grant program provides matching grants to internet service providers and electric membership cooperatives that compete for funding to expand high-speed internet service in Tier 1 counties.

A list of the [communities winning these awards is available online](#).

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## On Our Radar

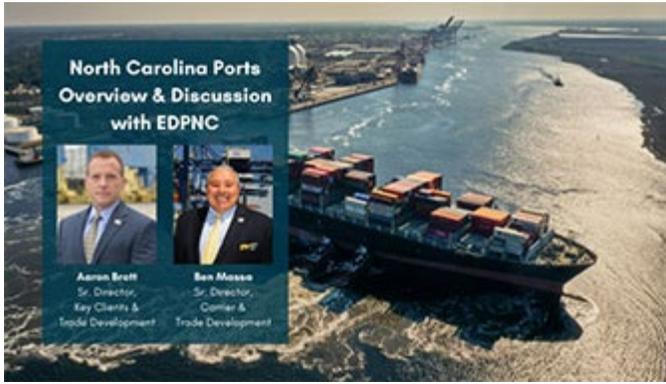
- [Duke Energy Site Readiness Program a win for economic development, jobs in North Carolina](#) ( *Duke Energy Press Release* - August 27)
- [Rural cities and town struggle to pay for water systems during the pandemic](#) ( *Hickory Daily Record* - August 7)

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## N.C. in the News

- [State to provide coronavirus grants for local communities](#) ( *The Mountaineer* - Waynesville - September 1)
- [John Harris honored with tourism award](#) ( *The Outer Banks Voice* - August 31)
- [Rowan-Cabarrus Community College, N.C Manufacturing Institute partner to offer training for sustainable careers](#)

online.



## Access to Export Education Expands as EDPNC Ramps Up Webinars

The Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina expects to triple the number of free exporting workshops it typically offers in a year as the state's marketing organization emphasizes online education during the time of coronavirus.

Businesses in your community interested in international markets can gain valuable insights from these educational opportunities.

"We usually host eight in-person workshops for exporters in different communities across the state in a year," said **John Loyack, vice president of EDPNC global business services**. "But when Covid made face-to-face gatherings risky, we pivoted to webinars. We expect to have hosted 25 to 30 exporting webinars by the end of this year. Many of them have drawn 50 to 100 participants."

Loyack offered several reasons for the strong attendance. "Newly launched international trade agreements and the pandemic itself are having a big impact on international trade, so North Carolina manufacturers need the latest information," he said. "Webinars are also one way to help businesses make global sales a part of their recovery."

The webinars have covered timely topics such as getting the best out of virtual international trade shows when the pandemic has shut down travel, borders, and in-person trade conferences. Several webinars have focused on the new US-Mexico-Canada and US-China Phase 1 trade agreements.

Webinars also cover nuts-and-bolts topics for exporters including export documentation, regulation, tariffs, and financing; country- and industry-specific export opportunities; and preparation for U.S. Customs audits. They also educate North Carolina exporters about resources that can help them meet their exporting goals, including the North Carolina State Ports Authority and the U.S. foreign trade zone program.

[Access recordings of the exporting webinars online.](#)

(WBTV - Charlotte - August 28)

### 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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