



## **Greater Charlotte Region Partners Talk Strengths and Needs in Manufacturing with White House**

The Greater Charlotte Region is rapidly becoming a world leader in advanced manufacturing and is working with the federal government to accelerate progress and become increasingly competitive in the world market, the Global Charlotte Manufacturing Community Consortium told White House Officials in Washington D.C. Tuesday.

The Consortium of business, public sector and regional leaders, led by Charlotte Mayor Patrick Cannon and Mooresville Mayor Miles Atkins, was invited to the White House for a roundtable discussion on the successes, opportunities and constraints of advancing the internationally prominent manufacturing ecosystem of the Greater Charlotte Region. They met with representatives from the White House, the U.S. Economic Development Administration, the National Economic Council, the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, the Department of Labor, the Department of Transportation, the Environmental Protection Agency, and other key Administration officials.

The White House extended the invitation to the Greater Charlotte group because the region's Centralina Economic Development Commission (CEDC) and Centralina Council of Governments (CCOG) were awarded an Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership (IMCP) strategic planning grant, through the US. Economic Development Administration, in September 2013.

The Centralina IMCP project, Centralina Advanced Manufacturing Ecosystem Strategy Development, will support and extend the Greater Charlotte Region's core competitive competency in Advanced Manufacturing, as identified in the region's 2012-2017 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy "Prosperity for Greater Charlotte Report."

"We're building a manufacturing ecosystem that works for today's changing economy," said Mike Manis, Centralina Economic Development Commission President. The group shared the progress that already exists in manufacturing in the region.

However, the group also highlighted the region's needs. Mayor Cannon said for the region's manufacturing sector to reach its full potential it would need to work hard regionally and in partnership with the federal government to fill a significant gap in skilled workers.

"Governments, non-profits, schools and industry must come together to develop the training programs that our existing and future industries need to recruit, train and employ our region's citizens," said Mayor Cannon. "We must collaborate with the Administration and federal agencies to achieve prosperity and sustainability for the future."

Mayor Atkins concurred. "We know we really have the foundation we need to grow manufacturing in the region. Right now we need our federal partners to provide the accelerators for growth," Atkins said. "The issue is not what we make or how we make things but, having the real-time data to connect the needs of industry with the community colleges to develop in time training demanded by our growing economy."

Other strengths that the region brings to manufacturing are a world-leading supply chain and logistics expertise, the group said. Advantages include the Charlotte Douglas International Airport which connects the Carolinas to the world with more flights daily per capita than any other airport nationwide and the support of the new Charlotte Intermodal Facility.

The Centralina Economic Development Commission is the first of 26 IMCP recipients nationally to take advantage of an invitation first made to the grant recipients at the December 2013 White House Mayors Manufacturing Summit in Washington D.C., attended by Mayor Atkins, a CEDC Board Officer. The Centralina Economic Development Commission is a 501c3 of the region's Centralina Council of Governments which partners with public and private organizations to grow jobs and the economy in the Greater Charlotte Region.

Advanced manufacturing in the region provides cross-industry cluster support to five of the region's six primary leading industry clusters: aerospace/defense, automotive, biomedical, energy and logistics. This implementation strategy is built upon three key regional foundations, 1) Growing the Talent Pipeline and Skills Development capacity 2) Research & Development/ Innovation opportunities, and 3) Logistics & Export assets and advantages.

Immediately following the event, the Consortium members joined 200 other attendees in the East Room at the White House for President Obama's press conference announcing two new Manufacturing Innovation Institutes. President Obama also announced an additional competition that will be funded by the Department of Energy to create four additional manufacturing hubs this year. The idea behind the manufacturing hubs is to create partnerships between research universities and industry to bring innovative methods of manufacturing to the market in order to create sustainable jobs for American workers.

**For more information, contact: Victoria Rittenhouse, Centralina Economic Development Commission, (704) 688-6502, or [vrittenhouse@centralina.org](mailto:vrittenhouse@centralina.org)**

### **Regional partners attending the event included:**

- Mayor Patrick Cannon, City of Charlotte
- Mayor Miles Atkins, Town of Mooresville
- Mary Vickers-Koch, Dean, Business & Industry Learning, Central Piedmont Community College
- Dr. Robert Wilhelm, Vice Chancellor, Research and Economic Development, University of North Carolina at Charlotte
- Bob Morgan, Chief Executive Officer, Charlotte Chamber of Commerce
- Ron Carlee, City Manager, City of Charlotte
- Robert Carney, Executive Director, Mooresville South Iredell Economic Development Corporation
- Dr. Tim Brewer, President, Mitchell Community College
- John Dodson, Vice-President/ Community Relations, NASCAR Technical Institute
- Bill Thunberg, Chairman, Centralina Economic Development Commission
- Michael Johnson, Chairman, Centralina Council of Governments
- Dave Dalton, President/CEO, General Microcircuits, Inc.
- Richard Zulman, CEO, BestCo., Inc.
- Steve Partridge, President/CEO, CharlotteWorks
- Michael Manis, President, Centralina Economic Development Commission
- Victoria Rittenhouse, CED Coordinator, Centralina Economic Development Commission
- Durwood Laughinghouse, Government Relations, Resident Vice President, Norfolk Southern Corporation, Raleigh
- Ronnie Bryant, Executive Director, Charlotte Regional Partnership
- Mitch Johnson, President, JMS Southeast, Inc., Statesville