

Dividends for Cities – And the Entire State

We have just completed another busy session of the General Assembly. Legislators had a lot on their plates, and we appreciate that so many took the time to meet with our members and to listen to the needs of our cities. I also want to extend a special thank you to all our mayors, their staffs and other local leaders who came to Raleigh to meet with legislators. Your hard work paid off in legislative successes and helped to build understanding and support.

In spite of all the talk about rural issues and urban issues, we realize that we are all one North Carolina, working hard to grow our economy and improve the quality of life for all of our citizens. Cities are at the heart of our state's future, and we continued to work this session to promote forward-thinking policies to strengthen that future.

As we embarked on this session, a major concern was protecting and expanding local revenue sources. While the General Assembly spent significant time debating tax reform, our members' advocacy paid dividends. The final legislation is estimated by the State to leave our cities whole if not slightly better.

Creating Economic Growth

Greetings from the North Carolina Department of Commerce. My service thus far to our great state has been more rewarding than I could have imagined. It is an honor to be featured in your newsletter, and I would like to take this time to discuss Governor McCrory's and my vision for North Carolina's economic future, and brief you on the exciting progress we're making at Commerce.

The more than three million citizens who dwell in North Carolina's metro regions are there because of opportunity -- the opportunity to live in an area that's safe, prosperous, educated, and growing. It's because of leaders like you that North Carolina's metro regions continue to thrive.

Governor McCrory often reflects on his time serving as Charlotte's mayor. He cites the tough decisions made during his tenure there, and how that leadership opportunity now assists him as chief executive of North Carolina. As a founding member of the North Carolina Metro Mayors Coalition, Governor McCrory knows first-hand the countless challenges a mayor and city council may face.

For a time, I served as chair of the Charlotte Chamber while Gov. McCrory was mayor. We both knew what a great place Charlotte was, and we did everything in our power to solidify Charlotte's leadership role in the region and in the state. We worked closely together then, and I'm proud to be on his team again as we work tirelessly to cultivate and maintain strong relationships with mayors across North Carolina.



Message from the Chairman

**Mayor
 Nancy McFarlane**

We will monitor and update the Coalition as we each continue to work with our city staffs to understand the full impacts of tax reform and this session's legislation on our cities.

Another focus area for our Coalition this session was supporting the expansion of the data-driven prioritization process to determine transportation project funding. House Bill 817 represented a major change in how the State spends transportation dollars in North Carolina. It was one of the Governor's key initiatives of the session and bill sponsors Representatives B. Brawley, Torbett, Shepard and Iler and Senators Rabon and Harrington did a masterful job of moving it through the body. The legislation gives local governments and officials a voice in more Department of Transportation decisions, something that is critical to strengthening planning and coordination.

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Message from
 NC Department of Commerce

**Secretary
 Sharon Decker**

I look across North Carolina's communities and see unlimited opportunity. The Department of Commerce is focused on a forward-thinking vision for economic prosperity. We want to be remembered as an administration that not only grew the net number of jobs in North Carolina, but also improved the quality of life for all of our citizens. I know in my heart that this is the same thing that all of you want for your regions and cities.

In many ways, the expansion of North Carolina's cities led us to become a global leader in several industries. The 1990s led to a boom in education, research, banking, healthcare, pharmaceuticals, tourism and information technology, to name a few.

Our state continues to boast a young, highly educated workforce. Expanding and cultivating this is critical to bringing business to our state. The investment in quality of life that mayors and local governments across North Carolina are making are a vital part of attracting and retaining that workforce.

If North Carolina's local governments are focused on these investments, then I believe the leadership at the state level should be, too. That brings me to my plan for

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New Mayor Profile —

Name: Mayor Patsy Kinsey

Occupation: Consultant

Family: Children Charles Kinsey, David Kinsey, and Betsy Muse; grandchildren Cooper Kinsey, Katie Muse, and Emily Muse

Education: Attended the Woman's College of the University of North Carolina (now UNC-Greensboro)



Patsy Kinsey, a Democrat, was sworn in as Mayor of Charlotte on July 1, 2013, after being appointed to the office by her colleagues on City Council. Kinsey will complete the term of former Mayor Anthony Foxx, who resigned to serve as U.S. Secretary of Transportation. The term ends in December 2013.

Kinsey is the second woman in Charlotte history to serve as the City's Mayor. Her appointment marks the first time women have served as Mayor, Chair of the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners, and Chair of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education at the same time.

As Mayor, Kinsey has made historic preservation and public art top priorities for her administration. A staunch supporter of Charlotte's LGBT community, Kinsey helped pass same-sex domestic partner benefits for City employees as a member of City Council and became the first Mayor to issue a "Charlotte Pride Weekend" proclamation.

Kinsey was first elected to represent Charlotte's District 1 as a member of City Council in 2003 and was serving in her fifth term when she was appointed Mayor. A longtime neighborhood advocate, she chaired the Council's Housing and Neighborhood Development (HAND) Committee and was a member of the Council-Manager Relations and Transportation and Planning Committees.

As Mayor, Kinsey continues to serve as the Council's representative to the Discovery Place Board of Directors and the Centralina Council of Governments Executive Board, where she serves as Secretary. She is a member of the Charlotte Center City Partners Board of Directors and Vice Chair of the National League of Cities Transportation Infrastructure and Services Committee.

Prior to joining City Council, Kinsey served two terms on the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners from 1990 to 1994. She also served on the boards of the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners and the North Carolina Child Fatality Task Force. She was a member of the Mecklenburg County ABC Board, the Mecklenburg County Alliance of Excellence in Justice, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Landmarks Commission, and the City of Charlotte Historic District Commission.

Kinsey works as the Director of Community Relations at Pease and Associates, an engineering and architectural firm.

Creating Economic Growth

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improving the overall economic health of our state. I am committed to focusing on the following five tenets of overall economic health: access to health care, education, economic development and job creation, arts, culture and tourism, and quality of life and the environment.

Our team has been focused on emphasizing these five tenets since we took office in January. While we know that a lot of heavy lifting remains, I am convinced North Carolina's economy is on the right track. Businesses continue to expand and relocate throughout our state, and the metro regions are leading that effort with impressive job growth for 2013. Since January 1st, companies have announced plans to create more than 15,100 jobs and invest over \$1.5 billion in North Carolina.

The North Carolina Metro Mayors Coalition can rest assured that you have friends and strategic partners in Governor McCrory and me. We know that when cities and metro regions flourish, our entire economy succeeds in the global marketplace. I commend the North Carolina Metropolitan Mayors Coalition for its continued non-partisan, mayor-driven emphasis on the development of cities and metro regions. The North Carolina Department of Commerce stands ready to assist you in any way, and I look forward to visiting all of your cities in the coming months and years. Here's to a prosperous North Carolina!

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The bill also looks to the future by implementing policies that will support the long-term growth and maintenance of our transportation systems. The bill creates additional revenue streams expanding the use of tolling on new capacity, adding an annual fee on electric vehicles, and extending the highway use tax to dealer fees. The bill uses new tools to speed the completion of projects, including encouraging local governments to bring local dollars to the table, expanding the use of public private-partnerships, and utilizing design-build methods.

The Metro Mayors established an ambitious agenda focused on the common needs of the State's largest cities. Through our members' efforts and working with legislators, we achieved major goals that will yield dividends for years to come – for the entire state.



The North Carolina Metropolitan Mayors Coalition, founded in 2001, is comprised of the mayors of the state's larger cities, with more than three million citizens. The Coalition is a non-partisan, mayor-driven organization that focuses on issues of special interest to our large cities in a fast-growing and urbanizing state. The Coalition has worked successfully with federal and state elected officials to promote job creation, protect local revenues, invest in public infrastructure, and keep our cities safe.

Metro Mayors In Action



Members of the Metro Mayors Executive Committee meet with Commerce Secretary Decker. Wilmington Mayor Bill Saffo, Secretary Decker, Raleigh Mayor and Metro Mayors Chair Nancy McFarlane, Huntersville Mayor Jill Swain, Apex Mayor Keith Weatherly and Durham Mayor Bill Bell.



Kannapolis Mayor Robert Misenheimer, Governor Pat McCrory and Kannapolis City Council Member Ryan Dayvault during Kannapolis' Memorial Day celebration.



Hickory Mayor Rudy Wright presents Governor Pat McCrory with the key to the city.



Wilmington Mayor Bill Saffo and NC DOT Secretary Tony Tata ride bikes on the new section of the Cross-City trail.



Governor Pat McCrory and Raleigh Mayor Nancy McFarlane speak at a press conference about the Dorothea Dix property.



Salisbury Mayor Paul Woodson and Governor McCrory meet at the Governor's Mansion.



Rep. John Torbett, Metro Mayors Executive Director Julie White and Rep. Phil Shepard attend Governor McCrory's signing ceremony for House Bill 192.



Huntersville Mayor Jill Swain, Durham Mayor Bill Bell, Mooresville Mayor Miles Atkins, Burlington Mayor Ronnie Wall and Rocky Mount Mayor David Combs meet with NCDOT Secretary Tony Tata to discuss transportation issues.



Members of the Metro Mayors meet with Governor Pat McCrory at the Governor's Mansion.

Our Shared Goals

What is it that drives mayors? Why do they run for office? What is it they want to accomplish? These are the questions I have been reflecting on as I mark my fifth anniversary with the Metro Mayors Coalition. Without a doubt, I have found that what inspires mayors to run for office, what they seek to accomplish and what brings them together in the Metro Mayors Coalition is their desire to improve the economy of their city and their region and to improve the lives of the citizens who live there.

Before working for the Metro Mayors Coalition I spent ten years working for legislators and statewide elected officials. As I have compared and contrasted the different elected officials I have worked for, I have concluded that at their core they all share the same motivations. They all want to improve the economy and the lives of their constituents.

Much of the discussion about mayors and legislators in the past has focused on the differences in approaches to achieving our shared goals rather than on the shared goals themselves. Some argue we can jumpstart the economy and improve the lives of citizens by lowering tax rates. Others argue for further investments in education or infrastructure. I was recently reminded at an NCDOT Board meeting that as mayor, Governor McCrory would say that, if you attract a high quality workforce, business will follow. The truth likely lies in a mixture of all these ideas and more.

The goals and motivations of all our elected officials -- be they locally elected, regionally elected, or elected statewide -- are the same. We all want to restart economies, attract a high quality workforce, attract new businesses and grow our existing businesses. If we focus all our energies on our shared goals, can we build a new partnership?

Big city mayors can be the spark to ignite this new partnership among the business community, legislators, county commissioners and the other mayors in their region. Imagine a monthly meeting of the CEOs of the five largest employers in the area, key legislators, the chair of the county commission and mayors developing a shared vision for their community. They would jointly develop tactics and strategies to accomplish the vision. Through this process everyone at the table would feel a shared ownership of the plan's success or failure. By working together might they find more cooperation, consensus, compromise and success?

At the heart of each of these meetings would be the shared vision, as everyone at the table has the same interest in their community. They desire a city and a region that attracts a high-quality workforce and new businesses, a city and region where existing businesses flourish, and a city and region that has ample job opportunities. I am reminded of a line from one of my favorite movies, "My Big Fat Greek Wedding." Gus Portokalos, speaking at his daughter's wedding, notes that his family's name is rooted in the word orange and his new son-in-law's name is rooted in the word apple. And he says, "We are all different, but in the end, we all fruit."



City News Continued Continued from Page 5

Concord Celebrates "Great Main Street"

Community leaders recently celebrated the selection of Concord's Union Street as the 2013 "People's Choice" for "Great Main Street" in North Carolina. This award is part of the "Great Places in North Carolina" initiative sponsored by the North Carolina Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA-NC).

Boone Honored as "Tree City"

The Town of Boone observed its annual Arbor Day celebration during the Boone Chamber of Commerce's Lunch and Learn event. During the event, the town received its 20th Tree City USA award and its 9th Tree City USA Growth award.

Winston-Salem Celebrates Merger

Winston-Salem celebrated the centennial of the 1913 merger of Salem and Winston with four days of activities May 9 – 12 including a historical marker unveiling, a City Hall reception, a parade, a luncheon for city centenarians, the world premiere of a festive piece for orchestra commissioned for the centennial, the premiere of a documentary that traced the origins of the towns and their path to consolidation, a gallery hop and community birthday toast in Winston-Salem's arts district, a centennial scavenger hunt, and a multi-congregational worship service.

Asheville Wins Climate Protection Award

Asheville Mayor Terry Bellamy was selected as the nation's top winner in the 2013 Mayors' Climate Protection Awards, an initiative sponsored by The U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM) and Walmart. The City of Asheville established a goal to cut carbon emissions in its municipal activities by 80 percent by 2030. In the five years following

the adoption of this target, the city has achieved a 17.67% reduction in emissions, and it has also established a self-sustaining funding source that recycles energy savings to invest in additional sustainability programs

City of Wilson to Offer Gigabit Internet Service

Greenlight, the broadband provider owned and operated by the City of Wilson, recently began offering gigabit Internet connectivity services to its customers. In January, the Federal Communications Commission Chairman issued the "Gigabit City Challenge" which challenged providers to offer gigabit service in at least one community in each state by 2015. Gigabit services are approximately 100 times faster than average high-speed Internet connections.

Goldsboro's Finance Department Recognized

The Government Finance Officers Association awarded Goldsboro's Finance Department the "Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting." It is presented to government units and public employee retirement systems whose comprehensive annual financial reports (CAFRs) achieve the highest standards in governmental accounting and financial reporting.

Mooresville Mayor Honored for Improving Health

NC Prevention Partners presented Mooresville Mayor Miles Atkins with the Jim Long Award for Individual Prevention Excellence. The organization, which is a national leader in guiding schools, hospitals and workplaces to improve their culture of wellness, presents its Prevention Excellence awards each year to outstanding individuals and organizations for their contributions to making North Carolina a healthier place to live, work and learn.

City News

Carrboro Named Healthy City

Carrboro was named one of *Outside Magazine's* "Best Towns" in 2013. The magazine sought the best cities to live a healthy life and praised the town's running trails, numerous local farmers' markets and Weaver Street Market.

Raleigh One of Best-Run Cities

Online investor newsletter *24/7 Wall St.* placed Raleigh seventh on its list of the 10 best-run cities in America. The ranking looked at the cities' credit rating, violent crime per 1,000 people and unemployment rate.

Huntersville to Host Conference with Asian Companies

Huntersville Mayor Jill Swain recently announced that the Town of Huntersville, in partnership with SoZo Group, the Asian Manufacturers Association (AMA), the Lake Norman Regional Economic Development Corporation and the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce, will host a technology and innovation summit with Asian manufacturers and businesses February 19-21, 2014.

Thousands Celebrate Opening of Kannapolis Veterans Memorial

Over 2,500 people attended the Memorial Day dedication of the Veterans Park Memorial in downtown Kannapolis. Community partners, the City of Kannapolis, The Cannon Foundation, Castle & Cooke and First Baptist Church joined Governor McCrory and other elected officials from across the state to recognize the more than 1,700 Cabarrus and Rowan County veterans who have died in service.

Hickory Celebrates Playground Dedication

After 15 months of preparation and planning, the Zahra Baker All Children's Playground was officially dedicated on May 19, 2012. The playground includes accommodations for special needs and handicapped children, including a 50-foot slide, a play web of interactive features, a sand area, climbers, swings, aero glider and poured-in-place safety surfacing. The project was spearheaded by the Kiwanis Clubs of Hickory and memorializes a young Hickory girl.

Greensboro Focuses on Youth Initiatives

This summer, the Greensboro Parks and Recreation Department teamed up with the Greensboro Police Department, Public Library, City Arts and local community agencies to sponsor "Summer Night Lights" (SNL) for more than 5,000 teens. The goal of the program was to provide more than 60 free, structured events and activities in safe environments throughout the community to help deter juvenile crime during the summer months.

New Facility to Boost Environmental Education in Jacksonville

After 15 years of successful environmental education and youth empowerment programs, the new Sturgeon City Civic and Environmental Education Center will be built on the site of a former wastewater plant for the City of Jacksonville. The Center will house education programs and showcase the City's efforts to restore habitat and water quality in the New River, where the Wilson Bay Wastewater Treatment Plant had discharged for 40 years.

Wilmington Completes Infrastructure Improvement Project

Downtown Wilmington's North 3rd Street Improvement Project was recently completed, affecting tens of thousands of citizens and visitors. The \$9.4 million, 18-month project was a cooperative effort with the Cape Fear Public Utility Authority replacing aging sewer lines, Progress Energy installing power lines underground and the City paving this major gateway.

Fayetteville Celebrates Independence Day

Television channel Destination America and USA WEEKEND magazine awarded Fayetteville a July 4 celebration after Fort Bragg

was forced to subtract its annual fireworks show from the budget. A soldier stationed at Fort Bragg entered the media organizations' Red, White and You contest, which received more than 3,500 entries from Americans sharing moving stories of why their towns deserve an all-American celebration.

Charlotte Website Wins Award

The City of Charlotte Corporate Communications & Marketing department earned an International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) Gold Quill Award of Merit for DNCinfo.CharlotteNC.gov. The website was created to support the City's "In the Loop" public information campaign to keep the local community informed about City services affected by the 2012 Democratic National Convention.

Burlington Fire Department Honored

The Burlington Fire Department received the N.C. Department of Labor Gold Safety Award for the second consecutive year.

Gastonia Recognized for Excellence

The City of Gastonia was recognized by the Centralina Council of Governments with a Region of Excellence Award at its recent Board meeting. Gastonia was presented the award for "Growing the Economy" based on the outstanding growth in the Gastonia Technology Park. Gastonia also proudly supported the Town of Cramerton for receiving the award for "Controlling Costs of Government" for its efforts to reduce costs by consolidating with the Gastonia and forming Two Rivers Utilities.

Cary Home to Public-Private Solar Farm

Cary has commissioned a 7-acre solar energy system at the South Cary Water Reclamation Facility that will provide enough energy to power nearly 200 homes annually. The project is a partnership between the Town and FLS Energy of Asheville.

Chapel Hill Launches Hybrid Buses

Chapel Hill Transit, the second-largest transit system in North Carolina, recently welcomed the arrival of 15 new low-emission, diesel electric hybrid buses. Mayor Mark Kleinschmidt and U.S. Rep. David Price joined local leaders for the ribbon cutting ceremony.

Greenville's Uptown Grows

A growing, prosperous Greenville is taking shape in the form of three, multi-million dollar development projects in the Uptown District. A new, \$4.5 million Federal bankruptcy courthouse is being built only blocks away from a \$42 million multi-use complex featuring luxury apartment suites, restaurants and shops. The City is also building a \$4 million parking deck to help support area businesses.

Durham Recognized for Addressing Childhood Obesity

The National League of Cities (NLC) recently recognized Durham and Mayor Bill Bell for completion of key health and wellness goals for First Lady Michelle Obama's comprehensive Let's Move! Cities, Towns and Counties (LMCTC) initiative. The goal of the initiative is to solve the childhood obesity epidemic within a generation.

Rocky Mount Celebrates Streetscape Project

The City of Rocky Mount recently celebrated the completion of the Downtown Streetscape Project. The \$6.5 million Streetscape resulted in street improvements such as the addition of street trees, benches, bike racks, trash receptacles, widened sidewalks, decorative pedestrian level lighting, the conversion of some streets to two-way operation to improve traffic flow, and changes to the infrastructure like underground utility upgrades and reconstruction of the storm drainage system.

Accolades

- The Raleigh-Cary area tied for second in a Gallup poll asking residents if they “felt comfortable walking alone in their community at night.” The poll was conducted among the 50 largest metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) in the nation.
- Groundbreaking for a new 100,000-square-foot municipal center in downtown Kannapolis is scheduled for February 2014.
- The City of Greensboro has launched a competition that will award \$1 million for a proposal to spur economic growth in Greensboro. The economic catalyst challenge is part of the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration’s Strong Cities Strong Communities (SC2) grant that the City received in 2012.
- A new \$30 million City of Jacksonville Center for Public Safety is under construction to replace an aging 50-year-old Police and Fire Headquarters and Fire Station #1.
- The City of Wilmington implemented an initiative that increased the number of customers recycling by more than 50 percent and saved the City almost \$220,000 annually.
- Fayetteville’s Hay Street was named a “Great Main Street” in the Coastal Plain

as part of the second annual “Great Places in North Carolina” initiative sponsored by the North Carolina Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA-NC).

- Burlington’s Police and Recreation & Parks Departments received the N.C. Department of Labor Silver Award for Safety.
- The Town of Cary earned second place in the North Carolina American Water Works Association’s Best Tasting Water competition, which grades the water quality of North Carolina municipal water suppliers.
- The Durham Emergency Communications Center is now one of the few next generation 9-1-1 systems in the country, laying the groundwork to enable it to accept text, images and video once mobile carriers make this an available option to their customers.
- Rocky Mount ranks #8 among U.S. metropolitan areas for the number of technology- oriented jobs as reported recently by Milken Institute’s annual review of U.S. Best Performing Cities. Rocky Mount ranked #1 in the state among the 179 smallest metro areas for technology growth.
- The City of Concord’s fire protection improvements resulted in an ISO rating upgrade that will reduce the fire insurance rates for many retail, commercial and industrial businesses.

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2013 Advocacy Report Card

The Metro Mayors Coalition did a great job mobilizing its members, the business community and citizens in support of the 2013 Advocacy Agenda. Through meetings with the Governor, the Speaker, the President Pro Tempore, legislators, and cabinet secretaries, we accomplished the agenda we set forth and plan to build upon our successes in the future.

Goal	Result
<p>Protect and Expand Municipal Revenue Sources</p> <p>The General Assembly passed tax reform (H998) this session. While the full impact is not yet known, the General Assembly estimates it will leave our cities whole, if not slightly better. Additionally, the leadership of the General Assembly committed to Metro Mayors before session began that they would not balance the state budget (S402) from a revenue standpoint on the backs of cities, and they honored that commitment. Lastly, the Metro Mayors Coalition has continued to advocate against the transfer of state roads to our cities, and that was not a topic of discussion during the long session.</p>	
<p>Ensure Safe Communities</p> <p>The Legislature passed the Pretrial Release bill (S316) with unanimous votes. We thank Durham Mayor William V. "Bill" Bell who brought the suggested legislation to the Metro Mayors for consideration and bill sponsors Rep. Michaux, Rep. Faircloth, Sen. McKissick and Sen. Woodard for their hard work to pass the legislation into law.</p>	
<p>Better Maintain and Expand Our Transportation Infrastructure</p> <p>The Metro Mayors adopted a resolution in December to strongly support the expansion of the State's data-driven prioritization process for determining which transportation projects to construct. The Strategic Transportation Investments bill (H817) was a major rewrite of how projects compete for funding. It was one of Governor McCrory's key initiatives, and bill sponsors Rep. B. Brawley, Rep. Torbett, Rep. Shepard, Rep. Iler, Sen. Rabon and Sen. Harrington did a masterful job moving it through the two chambers. The bill addressed many of the Metro Mayors Coalition's transportation goals including enacting additional revenues by expanding the use of tolling on new capacity, adding an annual fee on electric vehicles, and extending the highway use tax to dealer fees. The bill incentivizes locals to bring dollars to the table and expands the use of public private partnerships and design build construction methods to speed up project delivery. The local voice the Metro Mayors was seeking in NCDOT decisions is a centerpiece of the legislation. Through the Metro Mayors' strong advocacy, the non-highway modes of transportation were given a more favorable status than first conceived, and the Metro Mayors were included in the workgroup which will continue to develop the formulas that underpin the legislation.</p>	
<p>Appropriately Apply the State Ethics Act To MPOs/RPOs</p> <p>The Metro Mayors sought a more appropriate application of the State Ethics Act to MPOs and RPOs. Our membership, along with other associations and members of MPO/RPO boards, had conversations with legislators and wrote letters expressing concerns about the issue. The Legislature passed Senate Bill 411, shepherded by Sen. Harrington, to remove technical staff from the ethics requirements and amended the laws related to the TACs such that they are better matched to the work of the body.</p>	
<p>Improve Economic Development/Revitalize Downtowns</p> <p>The Metro Mayors worked with NCDOT before session to develop H192 to allow sidewalk dining along State roads. The Metro Mayors secured the support of local chambers, downtown development authorities, and trade associations early in the session. Bill sponsor, Rep. Shepard, did an excellent job seeing the bill successfully through the two chambers, and Governor McCrory hosted a signing ceremony with the bill sponsors and the Metro Mayors when he signed it into law.</p>	

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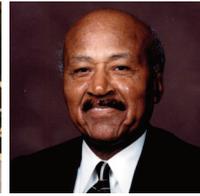
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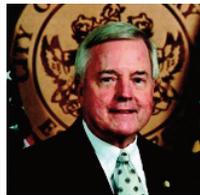
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