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ROCKY MOUNT  
Mayor David Combs

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## Mayors Set Advocacy Principles

The N.C. Metropolitan Mayors Coalition held its spring meeting in Rocky Mount. The mayors received policy updates on issues impacting the state and planned for the upcoming legislative session.

The Coalition approved a new mission statement: "Using the Voice of Mayors to Advance North Carolina," which reflects the mayors' commitment to finding solutions that strengthen the economy and future of the entire state.

In preparation for the short session of the



**Rocky Mount Mayor David Combs welcomes the Metro Mayors to the meeting in Rocky Mount.**

General Assembly, the Metro Mayors also set their advocacy principles. These principles will guide the Coalition's efforts to shape policy in the General Assembly and beyond:

- Ensure the State of North Carolina and our local governments have the tools necessary to promote job creation.
- Ensure cities have the revenues and

revenue creation tools needed to provide the level of services and quality of life residents desire.

- Ensure cities have the statutory authority to develop their communities in ways that will attract the talented workforce that brings high quality jobs.

To inform their policy work, the mayors received a presentation on changing demography in the state by University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill professor Dr. Rebecca Tippet and N.C. FreeEnterprise Foundation Executive Director Joe Stewart.

Tippet told the group that two-thirds of North Carolinians live in urban clusters, demonstrating the importance of the state's metro regions. Stewart said that half of the state's voters live in 13 of the state's 100 counties. He predicted that when the state redistricts in 2020, the districts would be larger in rural areas and more compact in urban areas.

The mayors received a presentation from staff of the General Assembly and the Commerce Department on the elimination of the state's economic development tier system.

The meeting was also an opportunity to highlight Rocky Mount – the redevelopment efforts and projects underway. The mayors toured the area, tasting locally brewed beer at Koi Pond Brewing Co. and enjoying dinner at the Booker T. Theater.

"We've just come from a fabulous tour of Rocky Mount," said Asheville Mayor Esther Manheimer. "Who knew how much was going on in Rocky Mount? Well, now we do."

## We're All on Same Team When it Comes to Economic Development

The most important question that should be asked of every office-seeker in North Carolina this election season is, "What is your economic development vision for our state – rural and urban?"

The Metro Mayors Coalition has spent 15 years discussing this topic and others. Mayors know that economic development in our state is not a zero sum game in which urban areas benefit at the expense of rural areas, or vice versa.

Ted Abernathy, an economic development consultant, recently spoke to the state legislature about the urban-rural divide in North Carolina. His chart of the income inequality among the average incomes in our state's 100 counties importantly drew attention to the challenges in our state's rural communities. But such indexes, rankings and maps gloss over the hundreds of thousands of North Carolinians living within the five counties with above-average incomes but who are making far lower wages than the state average.

Metro mayors have spent countless hours over the past two years talking about how to offer a vision of inclusive economic development for our whole state grounded in advancing all parts of our state – rural and urban.

The mayors recognize that economies operate in regions. Businesses don't care about city, county or state borders. If a business locates in the town next door or the county next door, that is a win for everyone in the region.

Our state's Commerce Department should play a key role along with economic development consultants in supporting the development of each regional plan. They can offer research, expertise and guidance as the chambers of commerce, local elected officials, nonprofits and community leaders determine their own future. The plans should identify the economic competition for each region, anywhere on the planet, and a clear



**Message from the Chairman  
Mayor  
Esther Manheimer**

## Economic Development *continued from page 1*

assessment of the region's unique assets. Everyone loves a good football metaphor: If we are going to beat the competition, we need to study the tapes.

The exercise of identifying each region's competition will begin to move the focus off one another and onto a framework where we can support everyone's economic development plans. When compared with your peers, what should your transportation system look like? When compared with your peers, what should your educational attainment level be? When compared with your peers, what should your average income be? From this, each region can lay out goals and specific plans. They can identify where their weaknesses are and develop a list of projects for funding.

Mayors know better than anyone that the role of government in economic development is in infrastructure investment. Government investment moves people and goods, water and sewerage, energy and electronic commerce. These are the keys to a strong economic vision for our state. And the keys to this vision don't come cheap. A bold vision requires a bold investment. And the proper place for such bold investment is with state tax dollars.

The role for the state in this vision is as a partner both in technical

expertise but also in funding. The state should establish two funds, one for projects that any region can compete for, urban and rural, and another limited to only rural regions. Key to this vision is the competition for resources that will ensure only those plans with the best chance of succeeding secure funding. There should be a technical panel of experts who develop the scoring criteria and rank the projects to ensure that the funds don't end up going just to the politically powerful. It is imperative that the public trusts that we are not building any roads to nowhere or advancing pork projects.

This vision offers a path for all toward prosperity. It moves beyond the idea that economic development is a zero sum game and recognizes our current economic realities. We are all in a competition every day with other cities, counties, states and countries for job creation, but we are also all on the same team. Through this vision, we can support one another as we move forward together. We can be one North Carolina only when the vision for our future is all-inclusive and represents the best for all of us.

*This article first appeared in the News and Observer, and was coauthored by Coalition Vice Chair Cornelius Mayor Chuck Travis.*

## New Mayor Profiles



**Chuck Allen**  
*Mayor of Goldsboro*

Chuck Allen is a business owner, developer and committed Goldsboro leader. He has served on Goldsboro's City Council since 1999.

Chuck also serves as the Chairman of the Wayne County Development Alliance and Chairman of the Goldsboro Metropolitan Organization. He graduated in 1979 from Goldsboro High School and 1985 from N.C. State University. He owns Allen Grading Company and the Lantern Inn Restaurant.



**Ian Baltutis**  
*Mayor of Burlington*

Mayor Ian Baltutis is a 2008 Business Entrepreneurship graduate of Elon University. He owns and manages Vibration Solution LLC, an American product design and manufacturing company that he founded during his studies at Elon.

Baltutis is an Eagle Scout who tutors math and science for 4th and 5th graders at Alexander Wilson Elementary, volunteers with Elon University students and alumni, and mentors youth through the local Boy Scout Venture program.

In 2009, he founded the East of Elon Home Brewing Cooperative and has since helped hundreds of people learn how to brew at home.



**Jennifer Roberts**  
*Mayor of Charlotte*

Jennifer Roberts was raised in Charlotte and now she and her husband, Manley, are raising their two children in Charlotte as well. Roberts attended UNC-Chapel Hill and has Master's degrees from the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies and the University of Toronto.

She has worked as a diplomat for the State Department, as an international businesswoman and as a high school math teacher. She served four terms as an At-Large Mecklenburg County Commissioner, including five years as Chairman.

Roberts is a proud recipient of the Maya Angelou Women Who Lead Award and has served as a volunteer on numerous local boards and commissions. She is an outdoor enthusiast, having climbed Mount

Kilimanjaro, and enjoys hiking North Carolina trails with her family and riding her bike on the Charlotte greenway.



**Karen Kirks Alexander**  
*Mayor of Salisbury*

Karen Kirks Alexander first joined the Town Council in January 2011, when she was selected to fill a vacancy. In December, the Council unanimously selected Alexander to serve as Mayor.

Mayor Alexander is an award-winning architect and owner of her own firm, KKA Architecture. She is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte with a Master's of Science in Architecture.

In 2014 Mayor Alexander received the Woman in Business Award from the National Association of Professional Women and was honored as a Citizen Architect from the American Institute of Architects - Charlotte.



**John Aneralla**  
*Mayor of Huntersville*

John Aneralla is an 18-year resident of Huntersville. He is a graduate of the University of Georgia and earned his MBA in management from Hofstra University.

Aneralla established Buttonwood Advisory Group, Inc., an investor relations consulting firm and Bulldog Asset Management, Inc., an investment advisory firm. He is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Local Government Employees' Retirement System and the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System.

Aneralla is a past Lieutenant Governor in the Carolinas Region of Kiwanis International and is a past president of the Lake Norman Kiwanis Club. As a lifelong competitive swimmer, Aneralla has been active in coaching at all levels of competition. John and his wife Nancy have two children.



**Lance Olive**  
*Mayor of Apex*

Lance Olive is the new mayor of Apex, having served previously on the Planning Board and Town Council. Olive, an Apex native, attended Apex schools and graduated from Apex High School in 1981. He received his BS degree from NC State University and his MBA from Gardner-Webb University.

Mayor Olive is married to Cheryl, who keeps financial books for several small companies and has her own

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## Metro Mayors In Action



**Charlotte Mayor Jennifer Roberts joins area children to give the Carolina Panthers a warm sendoff to the Super Bowl.**



**Statesville Mayor Costi Kutteh shows off the Town's new Wayfinding signs.**



**Asheville Mayor & Metro Mayors Chair Esther Manheimer talks with Elkin Mayor and NCLM President Lestine Hutchens at Metro Mayors meeting.**



**Rep. Bill Brawley receives the Metro Mayors legislative award from former Huntersville Mayor Jill Swain.**



**Asheville Mayor Esther Manheimer presents Rep. Jason Saine with the Metro Mayors legislative award.**



**Former Chapel Hill Mayor Mark Kleinschmidt presents the Metro Mayors legislative award to Rep. Stephen Ross.**



**Concord Mayor Scott Padgett boarding the bus for a tour of Rocky Mount during a Metro Mayors meeting.**



**Wilmington Mayor Bill Saffo and city leaders break ground on the new Wilmington Convention Center Hotel.**



**Rep. Bobbie Richardson, Burlington Mayor Ian Baltitus, Boone Mayor Rennie Brantz and Rocky Mount Councilmember Chris Miller.**



**Members of the Metro Mayors at their recent meeting in Rocky Mount.**



## City News

### Winston-Salem Addresses Poverty

Winston-Salem Mayor Allen Joines has empaneled a “thought force” to suggest a comprehensive community approach to reducing the poverty rate in Winston-Salem.

### Greenville is Booming

Greenville recently began work on a number of projects that will strengthen the city and its economy. Construction has begun on the \$37 million 10th Street Connector, a \$42 million private student housing development was completed in August, and three other projects totaling approximately \$116 million will soon break ground downtown.

### Sanford Sends Delegation to Yixing, China

Members of the Sanford City Council traveled with a five-person delegation to Sanford’s sister-city, Yixing, China in October for the International Ceramics Culture and Arts Festival.

### Chinese Ambassador visits Charlotte

China’s ambassador to the United States visited Charlotte in late January to join a Chinese New Year celebration and to strengthen cultural and business ties between the Charlotte region and China.

### Greensboro Mayor Named to Atlanta Housing Advisory Council

The Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta tapped Greensboro Mayor Nancy Vaughan to serve on its Affordable Housing Advisory Council. Vaughan was nominated for membership to the board by Dr. Maria Hanlin, CEO of Habitat for Humanity of Greater Greensboro.

### Kannapolis Opens City Hall

The City of Kannapolis recently opened its first City Hall Facility, a three-story building with more than 100,000 square feet. More than 160 employees will work in the building.

### Cities Celebrate Water Transmission Line

The Cities of Concord, Kannapolis and Albemarle celebrated the recent completion of the jointly funded water transmission line, which provides

a new water source for Cabarrus County into the future.

### Matthews Works to Be Age-Friendly

The Town of Matthews became the first municipality in North Carolina to apply for the World Health Organization’s status of “age-friendly.” The Town’s Board of Commissioners unanimously approved an application to become an AARP Age-Friendly community.

### Jacksonville Honors Marines

The Second Marine Division celebrated its 75th anniversary with a historic parade, community celebration and reunion events in Jacksonville. City staff assembled a large team to facilitate the march of 5,000 Marines, a lunch for them and their families and a Community Celebration where the Marines & Sailors could mix with the community and their families.

### Durham Recognized for Efforts on Behalf of Veterans

The City of Durham was recognized by the National Community Development Association (NCDA) with a 2016 Audrey Nelson award for its partnership on the Denson Apartments for Veterans, the first permanent supportive housing in Durham for veterans who are homeless and have disabilities.

### Baseball Stays in Burlington

The Kansas City Royals have extended their contract with the Burlington Royals to continue playing Appalachian League baseball at the City-owned Burlington Athletic Stadium for an additional 5-years. Burlington finished a significant renovation of the Athletic Stadium in the previous fiscal year.

### Wilmington Economy Growing

Vertex Rail recently announced plans to hire over 1,300 people in the Wilmington area to produce rail cars. AAIPharma has announced plans to invest \$15.8 million, and two network shows have announced plans to film full seasons in Wilmington.

## Metro Mayors Meet in Chapel Hill, Carrboro



**N.C. Secretary of Natural and Cultural Resources Susan Kluttz speaks to the Metro Mayors.**

In November, the N.C. Metropolitan Mayors Coalition held its annual meeting in Chapel Hill and Carrboro to welcome newly elected mayors, elect a new slate of officers and plan for the year ahead.

The Coalition elected Asheville Mayor Esther Manheimer as its new chair, Cornelius Mayor Chuck Travis as vice chair and Greenville Mayor Allen Thomas as treasurer. Raleigh Mayor Nancy McFarlane, the past chair, rounds out the officers.

“The Metro Mayors Coalition enjoyed much success in the long session by working in partnership with members of the legislature and a multitude of other associations to renew the State’s historic tax credit and reshape legislation harmful to our State’s metropolitan regions,” said Mayor Manheimer. “We intend to continue building on our successes and advance policies that benefit the whole State.”

Members of the executive committee elected include Concord Mayor Scott Padgett, Greensboro Mayor Nancy Vaughan, Rocky Mount Mayor David Combs, Kannapolis Mayor Darrell Hinnant, and Charlotte Mayor Jennifer Roberts.

The newly elected officers and executive committee will lead the Coalition in its work with the General Assembly, advocating for policies that create economic development, strengthen transportation networks and promote public safety.

The Metro Mayors also presented legislative awards to Rep. Stephen Ross of Burlington, Rep. Jason Saine of Lincolnton, Rep. Bill Brawley of Matthews and Rep. Charles Jeter of Huntersville. These legislators have been instrumental in promoting policies and legislation that support the needs of cities and prepare for the future.

The Coalition recognized former mayors Paul Woodson, Alonzo King, and Bill Sutton and presented outstanding leadership awards to Jill Swain and Mark Kleinschmidt.

The mayors also enjoyed networking and seeing the sights of Chapel Hill and Carrboro including a special bike tour through Carrboro led by Mayor Lavelle and Town Planner Bergen Watterson.



**Reps. Stephen Ross, Bill Brawley and Jason Saine talk to the mayors about issues before the General Assembly.**

## New Mayor Profiles *continued from page 2*

education-oriented travel company. They have two grown children, son, Kerby, and daughter, Shelby, both recently married, who still live in North Carolina. After working for 20 years in the software industry, Lance runs a local services-oriented business that designs electronics and printed circuit boards.



**Pam Hemminger**  
*Mayor of Chapel Hill*

Pam Hemminger was elected Mayor in November 2015 after 30 years of service to the Chapel Hill community. She previously served as an Orange County Commissioner and as chair and vice chair of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City School Board.

Hemminger recently served on the boards

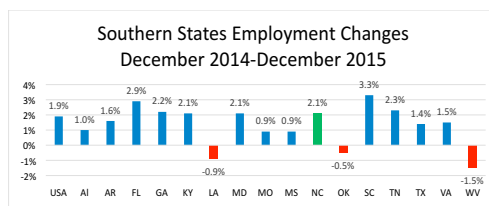
of several area nonprofits, including Orange County Habitat for Humanity, the Triangle Land Conservancy, Rainbow Soccer and Historic Moorefields, and is past chairwoman of the Orange-Chatham Sierra Club. Professionally, she has worked as a business manager in the computer and real estate industries and today owns a small commercial property firm, Windaco Properties LLC.

Hemminger received her BA from Vanderbilt University. She and her husband, Brad, raised Adam, Brian, Carly and Duncan, all educated in the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools and three of them receiving their undergraduate degrees from UNC Chapel Hill.

## The Policy Struggles of Place Inequality *Guest Column, Ted Abernathy*

I love to work in cities. Over the last twelve months our company, Economic Leadership, has had the opportunity to develop new economic competitiveness strategies for two of the top four places to live in America. According to a U.S. News and World Report ranking that came out recently, Fayetteville Arkansas, and Raleigh-Durham, were ranked #3 and #4 respectively. These two regions, typically referred to as Northwest Arkansas and the Research Triangle, have been consistently attracting educated millennials, experiencing strong job growth and enjoying a great quality of life.

But I was born in rural North Carolina and love rural places. This year our firm also assisted the Delta Regional Authority develop a strategy to help the mostly rural, high poverty counties across eight states that make up the Delta region. We are also working with the North Carolina Chamber of Commerce to develop recommendations to extend opportunities to more of our state and in Southside Virginia on improving the economy of micropolitan regions.



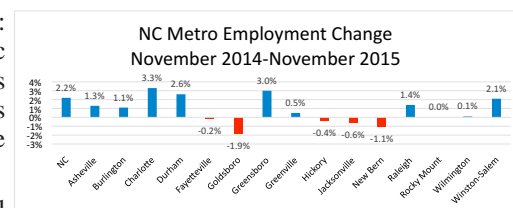
Source: BLS, February, 2016

Everywhere we work local leadership is challenged to compete for jobs, investment and talent. In cities you see new plans to attract educated millennials. In rural communities new programs are developed to combat brain drain and retain their best and brightest. New infrastructure and amenities are being built, and the place-based “ante” to be successful continues to rise. It is resulting in winner and losers, and place inequality has become a hot topic of discussion across the country.

While the fundamental of attracting new jobs and investment are similar for most places: skilled workers, strong infrastructure and a competitive business climate; the needs of specific places are often very different. In policy circles we often shortcut our thinking to rural areas need this and urban areas need this other set of things, but the economic success of urban areas is not uniform. At a recent presentation to a North Carolina legislative committee, I used some of the following charts to begin to dispel some four widely discussed myths.

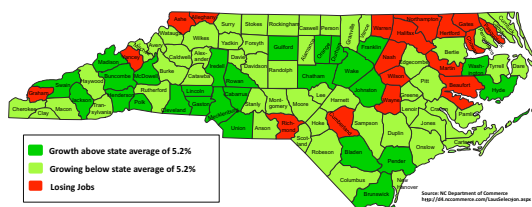
First myth, our state economy is terrible. North Carolina’s economy is doing pretty well when compared to our neighboring states in the south. While our employment growth rate over the past year still lags behind South Carolina and Florida, North Carolina is in the next group of states adding employment at 2.1%.

Second myth, all the urban areas are doing great and all the rural areas are doing dreadful. While it true that since 2000, the 20 urban counties in North Carolina have added over 250,000 jobs and the rural counties have lost almost 100,000 jobs, all urban areas are not doing well. Over the past 12 months many of North Carolina’s metropolitan regions have either lost employment or grew well below the state average. In fact, only Charlotte, Greensboro and Durham grew faster than the state average.



Source: BLS, February, 2016

CHANGE IN AVERAGE NUMBER OF EMPLOYED PEOPLE  
November 2012 to November 2015  
North Carolina state average 5.2%



Source: NC Department of Commerce  
<http://dcr.nccommerce.com/CareerDevelopment.aspx>

Third, while many rural areas are experiencing employment losses, others are growing at or above the state average. The chart below, for 2012-2015, shows that many rural counties are doing well and some urban counties are growing slower than the state average.

The final myth is that differences related to place and geography are something new. Place inequalities are not a surprise and not a new issue. Throughout American history, wealth has concentrated around logistics centers and places with new business products. Brain-drain is a relatively recent term, but it was one motivation for the development of Research Triangle Park almost 60 years ago. In 1983, a book by the Southern Growth Policies Board, *After the Factories-Changing Employment Patterns in the South* stated, “What we begin to notice in 1983 was an alarming economic decline in the nonmetropolitan South.”

Our country has been experiencing an accelerating economic transformation of the past 30 years. The loss of manufacturing jobs to automation and global outsourcing plays a role. Advances in technology impact us all. The question we face today is how do we create more opportunity for more places to successfully compete. The answers have to benefit all areas of our state.

*Ted is the managing partner of Economic Leadership LLC, the economic development policy advisor to the Southern Governors Association and was born and raised in Dallas, North Carolina.*

## Accolades

**Greenville** was ranked in Top 10% (#18 out of 200) on Forbes magazine's "Best Small Places for Business and Careers."

The **Rocky Mount** Senior Center has completed the process to be national accredited, making it part of approximately 1 percent of the 12,000 senior centers in the country to achieve that status.

The City of **Kannapolis** and the Cabarrus Health Alliance are partnering together to use \$45,000 in grant funds from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to create plans for improving walking and biking connectivity in downtown Kannapolis.

**Concord** recently celebrated the opening of Fire Station 11, Cabarrus EMS Station 9, and Weddington Road Bark Park, as well as the City's 76,000 square-foot City Hall.

The City of **Durham** Bungalows at Southside and the Denson Apartments for Veterans both received 2015 Housing North Carolina Awards from the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency.

**Burlington** Mayor Ronnie Wall stepped down on December 1, 2015. He was awarded the Order of the Long Leaf Pine and received a key to the city and flags that were flown over the NC Capitol in his honor.

**Carrboro** maintained its Silver Level Bicycle City Status from the League of American Bicyclists, remaining the most bicycle friendly Town in North Carolina.

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