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Cape Fear Valley Health System was once just a single-tower, 200-bed hospital. Today, it's a truly regional health care system with patients from across southeastern North Carolina. The tremendous growth is a direct result of our mission to provide quality health care to neighboring communities, far and wide.

A big part of that mission is making health care more readily accessible by providing services closer to where people live and work. We're committed to ensuring that communities have a primary care office within a short drive. In the past year, our health system has added physician offices throughout Cumberland County as well as in Lumberton, Clinton, Dunn, Clarkton, Laurinburg, and White Lake.

In 2017, Cape Fear Valley launched five new medical residency programs, making a significant investment



Cape Fear Valley Health System has made big investments to provide health care throughout the communities it serves.

in the health of our community. The residency programs were created through a partnership with Campbell University's Jerry M. Wallace School of Osteopathic Medicine. The program started with 32 physician residents in internal medicine, general surgery, emergency medicine, obstetrics and gynecology as well as a transitional year program. This year we added a psychiatry residency program, bringing the number of residents to 68.

The residency programs will eventually train up to 300 residents a year and help generate \$30 million toward the local economy annually. The financial benefits will certainly prove worthwhile to Fayetteville/

Cumberland County, but improving our community's health is our main concern.

Like many other parts of the country, our state is feeling the pinch from a national doctor shortage. North Carolina will need nearly 2,000 more primary care physicians by 2030, according to some estimates. The shortage is especially severe in some medical specialties. A quarter of N.C. counties don't have a pediatrician, OB/GYN physician, psychiatrist or general surgeon. Having medical residency programs can help change that.

Studies show that residents often practice within 50 miles of where they train. For evidence of this, just look to the family practice residency program at Southern Regional Area Health Education Center (SR-AHEC). For decades these residents have trained at Cape Fear Valley Health and in the family medicine clinic at SR-AHEC. Many graduates are now practicing medicine in clinics large and small throughout the region.

Increasing the number of practicing physicians in our region will help Cape Fear Valley continue to grow and provide quality care close to home. With eight hospitals and 950 patient beds, its 850 physicians on staff, encompassing 53 specialties and sub-specialties, offer everything from cancer care and trauma services to pediatric intensive care and geriatric care.

All the growth is good news for area residents, because we don't believe you should have to travel long

Michael Nagowski
Chief Executive Officer
Cape Fear Valley Health System



A new 4,800-seat stadium is planned in Fayetteville for the relocation of the Houston Astros minor-league affiliate.

REGIONAL REPORT: CUMBERLAND COUNTY

A WHOLE NEW BALLGAME

A new baseball stadium and revitalization in Fayetteville aren't the only things driving growth in Cumberland County.

Starting April 2019, a Houston Astros minor-league franchise will play in a new \$37.8 million, 4,800-seat baseball stadium on Hay Street in Fayetteville, a deal inked in 2016 when team president Reid Ryan, son of Hall of Famer Nolan Ryan, announced the team's switch from the California League.

Ryan predicted the new agreement "will be part of a dynamic revitalization of downtown Fayetteville." He was right.

Fayetteville's first taste of pro baseball since the old Class A Cape Fear Crocs organization left in 2000 for

REGIONAL REPORT: CUMBERLAND COUNTY

Lakewood, N.J., has prompted more than \$100 million in public and private investment toward downtown development. But that's not the only thing Cumberland County has going for it, as public and private-sector leaders work to strengthen the community and economy.

Officials throughout the city and county, from government, higher education, workforce development, health care, tourism and the military, have joined in a team effort to rebrand Fayetteville and the 652 square miles of Cumberland County. A committee has been formed to develop a unified platform to promote the next chapters of the county and Fayetteville, whose average citizen age of 29.9 is the youngest of any metro in the Carolinas, according to Robert Van Geons, president and CEO of the Fayetteville Cumberland County Economic Development Corp.

"Like baseball, economic development is a team sport. It takes everyone. It takes all the pieces to be in place with the right project, and to move aggressively as a community," Van Geons says. "There's never been a time when all those parties have been around the same table. We started recognizing that the EDC, the city and the convention and visitors bureau all had their individual brands, so we thought, 'Why are we spending money to do this separately when we can all put ideas into one pot and see what we have in common?' We want to be great together and tell the story of our community."

The Fayetteville Area Convention & Visitors Bureau notes that tourism already has an economic impact of \$504 million and is connected to 4,400 jobs with a payroll exceeding \$93 million. Those numbers could grow through a concerted effort.

"The city and county governments do want to see a new, inclusive brand-



Fayetteville's downtown is undergoing a renaissance, top, while the community's long military partnership is showcased in its war memorial, bottom.

ing for the area," says John Meroski, president and CEO of the CVB. "The desired outcome is for the consistent use of messaging, imagery and sharing of resources."

Scott Dorney, executive director of the North Carolina Military Business Center, says a spirit of collaboration — military and civilian, local, state and federal, government and private sector — is a catalyst for growing the economy. The NCMBC

is based at Fayetteville Technical Community College.

"The NCMBC leverages ever-stronger bonds with the chamber, economic development, Fayetteville Tech, Fayetteville State and other colleges, numerous contracting offices and public-private ventures at Fort Bragg to help more North Carolina businesses compete, win and grow jobs," he says. The NCMBC generated \$958 mil-

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CAMPBELL SOUP, DHL INVEST BIG IN CEDAR CREEK

Nearly 20 years have passed since Cumberland County began developing the 474 acres that became Cedar Creek Business Center.

The former forestry and farming site at N.C. 53 and 210 in Fayetteville is about a mile from Interstate 95, 64 miles from Raleigh-Durham International Airport and 93 miles from the Port of Wilmington. "I think it's an ideal location for high-end manufacturing operations and technology companies," says Robert Van Geons, president and CEO of the Fayetteville Cumberland County Economic Development Corp.

The land remained vacant for a long time. In 2013, the Greater Fayetteville Chamber devised an incentive package: The city would annex tracts as they were sold to install water and sewer. The county would reimburse incoming businesses 50% of their property taxes for 10 years.

Last October, Campbell Soup Supply Co. and DHL Supply Chain decided to become the first tenant. The deal for a \$40 million investment and 627,000-square-foot distribution site at Cedar Creek was announced in December. Construction is underway and should be completed by March 2019, Van Geons says. The companies expect to hire about 140 managers, clerical workers and warehouse staffers, with salaries ranging from \$28,000 to \$62,000.

So, what lured them?

"I think that there are different levels of readiness a site in a park can have, and it comes down to

having a community leadership team that can move quickly and aggressively when a company like Campbell comes to the table," says Van Geons, who has been with the EDC since January 2017.

"We spent a good bit of time and energy to have the site in full due diligence, so when Campbell came calling, 22 hours later we had the people in the room, met with the company and answered their questions. By the end of the day, we had a map and layout of the site ready to give them."

That group effort of city and county leaders working congruently sold Fayetteville when Campbell and DHL, a contract-logistics provider, went shopping.

"We actually were Plan B. I think removing risk for a company is one of the most important things you can do as a community," Van Geons says. "We're working with NCDOT to complete the roads and with Duke Energy to get a gas line in. The building is under construction now. In time, we'll connect them with local vendors and with [Fayetteville Technical Community College] and the workforce development board, but that's toward the end of the year."

He says other businesses have since taken interest in the site.

"We're pushing hard, and we've got some things on the fire. ... We're showing three other tracts. We're seeing an uptick in activity across the county for our existing buildings and industrial sites. We're generating a lot of positive interest," he says. ■

lion in defense contracts in Cumberland County in 2017.

The downtown development project associated with the Astros stadium between the Prince Charles Hotel and Amtrak station includes renovating the landmark hotel into residential apartments, adding another major-chain hotel and 81,000 square feet of office space. The upgrade, including incoming retail, is expected to add at least 580 downtown jobs with estimated total annual wages of \$26 million. Projected 150 to 200 part-time game-day and event jobs could mean wages of more than \$500,000. The Astros affiliate will play 70 home games a season, and Fayetteville will host the NCAA Big South Conference tournament 2019 through 2021.

Baseball and the accompanying redevelopment is just one ticket in Cumberland County's resurgence.

A \$35 million parks and recreation bond has led to three splash pads opening in Fayetteville, plans for a senior center to be built in western Fayetteville near Lake Rim Park and other future projects.

"We are seeing great collaboration with Cumberland County," says City Manager Doug Hewett. "The county has helped fund our new downtown baseball stadium project and is helping fund the state's new Civil War History Center. The county also partnered with us on the Franklin Street parking deck. These partnerships are vital for the present and the future as our community continues to grow and prosper."

Cumberland County is also home to Fort Bragg, one of the world's largest military bases. About 6,500 trained personnel transition to the local workforce each year, a labor pool that has amassed 50,000 veterans and 30,000 military spouses.

In June, the Womack Army Medical Center at Fort Bragg and The Geneva

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Cape Fear Valley Health System isn't just a hospital. It is committed to bringing primary health care to offices around the community.

Foundation, a worldwide nonprofit that supports medical research and the health and well-being of the military, formed the Fort Bragg Research Institute in partnership with the Cape Fear Research Consortium, which includes Fayetteville Tech, Campbell University in nearby Buies Creek, the Fayetteville VA Medical Center, Cape Fear Valley Health System, Fayetteville State University, Methodist University, the Southern Regional Area Health Education Center and NCMBC.

"The institute will employ a full-time staff engaged in research, design, testing and evaluation to enhance the well-being and operational readiness of our armed forces," Van Geons says. "The FBRI also will work with the Cape Fear Research Consortium to seek collaborative grants and develop a research network to improve health disparities and serve the needs of southeastern North Carolina."

Dorney says the NCMBC also reviews traditional economic sectors for opportunities.

"In 2019, the NCMBC will focus on agricultural and food opportunities, advanced textiles and soldier systems, and growing exports and sales to foreign militaries. Watch for the NCMBC to add a military food symposium, a defense textiles symposium, several defense-contractor academies and a military exporting workshop in 2019," he says.

"Partnerships in Cumberland County and across the state with universities, community colleges, chambers, economic developers, military and state agencies, including the N.C. Division of Services for the Blind, will make these new initiatives pay off for businesses and workers across our state."

The NCMBC's impact reverberates far beyond FTCC. More than 800 contractors and government officials participate in its Southeast Region Federal Construction, Infrastructure & Environmental Summit in Wilmington each October. It co-hosts an annual Medical, Biomedical and Biodefense: Support to the Warfighter Symposium

in Chapel Hill and launched a Southeast Region Cyber Security & Technology Symposium, first held in 2017 in Chapel Hill.

"The NCMBC keeps innovating," Dorney says, "and finding new strategies to help local businesses compete for, win and successfully execute federal contracts."

Being a team player is evident in other sectors as well.

The Cumberland County Healthcare Next Generation Partnership, the area's largest-ever industry-specific meeting, was held in June with more than 20 representatives from Cape Fear Valley Health System, WAMC, health care businesses and private providers, as well as representatives from the offices of Gov. Roy Cooper and Sen. Richard Burr and other government leaders. Topics included coordination of care, workforce development, expanded care and transportation for the underprivileged, and steps to prevent and reduce obesity through education, nutrition and exercise options.



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To learn more about the Fayetteville Area Convention & Visitors Bureau

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REGIONAL REPORT: CUMBERLAND COUNTY



Fayetteville Regional Airport serves a 12-county area in southeastern North Carolina.

Cape Fear Valley Health System, based in Fayetteville, serves a seven-county region of southeastern N.C. In its 60-year history, its services have grown to include cardiology, obstetrics and gynecology, diabetes

and endocrinology, pediatric endocrinology, emergency medicine, cancer treatment and neuroscience.

It also is reaching out to the military. "Cape Fear Valley has become a certified Accountable Care Organization

and [has] begun offering free to low-cost behavioral health care for area veterans through its new Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinic partnership," says hospital spokesperson Donnie Byers. The Cohen clinic provides confidential services to veterans and their families without requiring insurance.

In 2015, Cape Fear initiated its Accountable Care Organization so providers could voluntarily coordinate patient care to avoid errors or duplications and focus on Medicare recipients, who work with ACO care navigators free of charge.

Transportation issues also are at the forefront in Cumberland County. The FCEDC sites logistics and distribution companies among its top industry targets because of its proximity to Interstate 95, the ports of Wilmington and Norfolk, Va., rail service and airports.

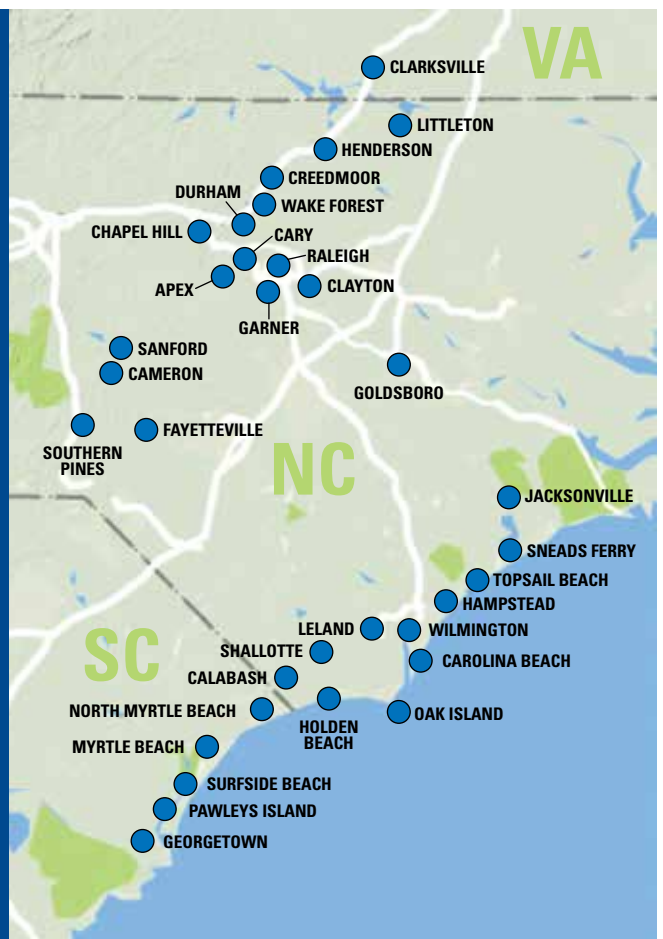
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The 39-mile I-295 outer loop is expected to be completed by 2022 and will provide Fort Bragg direct access to I-95. Fayetteville Regional Airport is in the first phase of a \$17.6 million terminal improvement project that began last November and is targeted to be complete by July 2019. Concourse A, built in 1969, is being replaced. The new building will have an elevator and connector to a second-level terminal with a restaurant and walkways to the planes.

Transportation upgrades will benefit the more than 850 Department of Defense contractors that operate in the Fort Bragg vicinity.

Overall, according to the FCEDC, the majority of vacant industrial sites have seen interest in the last 12 months, with the agency responding to 74 requests for information from



The transformation of the Prince Charles Hotel is a major feature of Fayetteville downtown revitalization.



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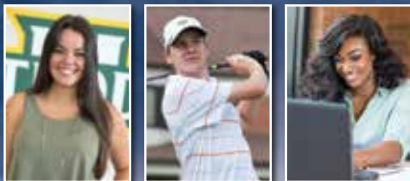


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potential businesses interested in locating or expanding. Unemployment was down to 4.7% in May from 5.4% last year, and the Cumberland County labor force has increased by 1,755 since May 2017.

In April, *Governing* magazine, which covers politics and policy management, named Fayetteville “The Most Innovative City in the Country” and cited the city’s use of data and analytics in city management, as well as long-term planning.

The CVB, Meroski says, blends the county’s roots with its future.

“The tourism brand is built around what we are,” he says. “It’s the place where North Carolina ratified the Constitution and from where it is defended. We have a deep-rooted history in America, and patriotism runs through our blood. As we like to say, you will find ‘America at every turn.’”

The CVB website guides visitors through military history, museums, recreation, restaurants and, of course, ballgames.

“This county is really a remarkable place, and it’s been my experience since I got here [in 2017] that every time we show people what’s happening here and they meet our citizens, they walk away impressed and believe we have nothing but a bright future in front of us,” Van Geons says. “And with Fort Bragg, one of the most exciting things it brings to a city our size is the diversity of cultural experiences in food, religion and an extremely capable demographic that very few places have access to. We have more passport stamps per capita than any place in the Southeast. You’re surrounded by everyday heroes, and that isn’t lost on those of us who happen to live here.” ■

— Kathy Blake is a freelance writer based in eastern North Carolina.

A COLLISION COURSE WITH SUCCESS

An automobile collision and repair curriculum at Fayetteville Technical Community College known as Collision U started three years ago with seven students. The program now has an enrollment of 159, a dozen faculty members, several hands-on learning locations and industry connections that reach beyond Cumberland County into the Southeast and nationwide.

The curriculum propels graduates into welding, technician and collision-repair careers that can reap salaries of high double-digits to nearly six figures. The program has blossomed so much since its first graduating class in 2016 that businesses in the automotive industry depend on it.

"It has grown into something significant, where we've had a number of



Fayetteville Technical Community College's auto-repair curriculum is partnering with businesses to produce uniquely qualified workers.



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REGIONAL REPORT: CUMBERLAND COUNTY



Collision U's building includes a lab, body shop and modern equipment.

months when people from other places in the county come to us for corporate training. It's a joint effort where the local businesses as well as national businesses can come and say this is their baby," says FTCC President Larry Keen. "It used to be a hobbyist-type program where we'd see the same cars out there semester after semester, and I'd ask, 'What are we doing to supply the industry needs of the area?' So we had to modify the program."

Keen worked with local companies to gauge their needs. FTCC also reached out to Fort Bragg to design courses for transitioning military personnel.

In August 2017, a new department chairman set up

shop: Doug Irish, a former Queensbury, N.Y., town councilman who is president and CEO of AccuracyDriven4 moved south to take the job. AccuracyDriven4 assists the auto industry with business-improvement and quality-assurance consulting.

"The opportunities were phenomenal. We visited local shops and dealerships and found a significant need that no one was really filling," Keen says. "We wanted a philosophy that we could do

this to serve the workforce need, and we needed to align perfectly with what they required."

Companies such as Caliber Collision, MileOne Autogroup, Penske, Hendrick Automotive Group, Bryan Honda, ABRA Auto Body & Glass and Gerber Collision & Glass, as well as shops outside the local market, have placed FTCC students.

"We are putting together as many partnerships as possible," Irish says, "to offer a diverse menu of training to be able to lead the education industry in turning out technicians with the ability to advance quickly to become an A-Level technician. The collaboration I see between the county and FTCC is refreshing. I get calls every week from folks in the industry looking for new technicians that can grow with their company. It's great to have so many opportunities for our students and a market that understands they are entry-



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level technicians that have a great attitude, have solid foundational skills and knowledge, and are ready to be part of the industry."

Irish says FTCC has expanded its curriculum to include PPG (auto refinishing) and Honda PACT (professional automotive career training) courses. This year, the school launched three welding programs available to the general public and technicians from local shops and a restoration program for do-it-yourself types. "There also is a repair planning and estimating class for anyone interested in learning to write estimates and/or becoming a body shop estimator or insurance appraiser," he says.

The school also offers a program for middle school and high school students who may want to pursue the automotive industry.

Collision U classes are taught at several locations, including a classroom on the main FTCC campus and a building about 4 miles away with a lab, body shop and, Irish says, "the best equipment in the industry." In the nearby town of Spring Lake, the former Mae Rudd Williams Elementary School has been transformed to accommodate four classrooms and four labs for welding. Through Collision U's partnership with Ingalls Shipbuilding, students can segue to jobs in Pascagoula, Miss., or Newport News, Va., some with starting salaries above \$40,000. The program is offered free of charge to transitioning military and their spouses.

"When we designed the program, we wanted to be multifaceted in terms of being able to serve the needs of our students but also work with the local sector, the businesses who are national and, in some cases, international," Keen says. "The feedback we have received locally and across the U.S. has been extraordinarily positive. The overall value, in my perspective, is it's a tremendous entry point to an industry that doesn't appear to be slowing down." ■



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