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From a 200-bed community hospital to a regional academic center, Cape Fear Valley Health's transformation over the years has been truly remarkable. Our health system serves southeastern North Carolina residents stretched across seven counties with the help of eight hospitals, more than 60 primary and specialty clinics, and numerous outpatient facilities.

In 2017, Cape Fear Valley Health made a significant reinvestment into the community by launching five new medical residency programs. They were created through a partnership with Campbell University's Jerry M. Wallace School of Osteopathic Medicine. The programs started with 32 physician residents training in internal medicine, general surgery, emergency medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, as well as a transitional year program. In 2018, we added a psychiatry residency program.

More than 4,200 fourth-year medical students applied for 47 slots this year. This shows just how competitive entry is. The overwhelming interest allows Cape Fear Valley's medical residency program to choose top candidates.

Overall, the program has a total of 105 residents. As a result, Cape Fear Valley Medical Center has become a major teaching facility like its counterparts at Vidant, Duke University, University of North Carolina and Wake Forest University. The residency program will grow exponentially, eventually training up to 300 residents annually.



By 2030, North Carolina will need an additional 2,000 primary care physicians to meet the aging population's needs. Specialty physicians will be in even greater demand. Since new doctors often go into practice within 50 miles of where they do their residency training, our growing residency program will help meet the region's burgeoning needs.

Residency programs are also economic engines for their communities. Cape Fear Valley's residency program is projected to create 923 new jobs and generate \$574 million for the region over 10 years, according to Michael Walden, Chief Economist at North Carolina State University. That's equal to bringing a large company to town.

Our health system also helps train nearly 90 Campbell University medical students a year and will begin offering fellowships to dozens of young new doctors training to become cardiologists, pulmonologists and other sub-specialists.

Only a select few health systems are capable of training the next generation of physicians. We are proud to say Cape Fear Valley Health is among them.

Michael Nagowski  
Chief Executive Officer  
Cape Fear Valley Health System





*A fixture in downtown Fayetteville since 1925, the historic Prince Charles Hotel received a face-lift, new name and new purpose this year as a part of the city's massive rebranding effort.*

## REGIONAL REPORT: CUMBERLAND COUNTY

# A FRESH FACE

Fayetteville's rebranding effort seeks to create a cohesive narrative for the diverse area.

Jordan Jones' great-great-grandfather built the seven-story Prince Charles Hotel in Fayetteville in 1925, a year before the Cumberland County Courthouse was constructed and years before the town

saw its first high school. The inn made the National Register of Historic Places in 1983, before it fell into disrepair and was closed in 2011. Jones, a 34-year-old Durham resident and real estate developer with PCH Holdings, is orchestrating the rebirth of the hotel as part of a branding effort that is redefin-

ing downtown Fayetteville. Dubbed "The Gathering at the Prince Charles," the building reopened in May as luxury apartments with 55% occupancy.

This is just one step in a massive effort to showcase Fayetteville as a residential and commercial destination with a melting pot of businesses, arts, sports, education, multiple nationalities and the world's largest military base.

The diversity of the city and its 658-square-mile county have prompted local officials to commission Nashville, Tenn.-based North Star Place Branding + Marketing to develop an all-inclusive county identity. The business was hired in March for a rebranding process that is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

"It's a very far-reaching and inclusive process," says North Star President and CEO Will Ketchum, who is based in Jacksonville, Fla. "We also seek

perspectives from those outside of Fayetteville, so we do an awareness and perceptions study, because it's important to weigh how others from afar view your city."

The goal is to define Fayetteville and Cumberland County with a cohesiveness that will draw new businesses and residents. North Star's staff has spent time talking with government officials and various business leaders and walking the streets to talk with residents.

According to the Fayetteville Cumberland County Economic Development Corp., 82 languages and 86 nationalities are represented in Cumberland County. The second-most spoken language is Arabic in an area that includes Eastover, Falcon, Fayetteville, Fort Bragg, Godwin, Hope Mills, Linden, Spring Lake, Stedman and Wade.

"Of course, diversity is at the top of the list," says Kevin Arata, Fayetteville's



## REGIONAL REPORT: CUMBERLAND COUNTY



*Nashville, Tenn.-based North Star Place Branding + Marketing is leading Fayetteville's rebranding by seeking input from businesses, community leaders, residents and visitors in an effort to represent the diverse community.*

corporate communications director. "We have people from the military, and we have other nationalities. We host an International Folk Festival every year, and it's basically a parade of nations. And there's a history here — a home-

town feeling. It's really a regional approach to this. You can't just sell a city."

North Star's four-part project, including research, insights and strategy, creativity and design, and action, should be complete later this year. In July, the

company was moving into the insights and strategy stage after several months of research.

Data is being considered from city and county officials, the Cumberland County Tourism Development Authority, economic development advocate group Vision 2026, the Arts Council of Fayetteville/Cumberland County, the Fayetteville Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, Cool Spring Downtown District, Greater Fayetteville Chamber, the entertainment and meetings venue Crown Complex, and Cumberland County Schools.


The project is being funded by those partners, says Robert Van Geons, president and CEO of the economic development corporation. "Additional funds will be spent on designing and implementing the brand platform across our community."

The city of Fayetteville has grown from a population of 8,900 — when the Prince Charles was built — to about 210,000 in 2019, according to the U.S.


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\*Statistics based on Healthgrades analysis of MedPar data for 2015-2017



## REGIONAL REPORT: CUMBERLAND COUNTY

Census Bureau. The county's population is about 333,000. A dominant contributor is Fort Bragg, with more than 52,000 active-duty soldiers, 12,600 reserve and temporary-duty personnel, and 8,700 civilian employees. There are about 98,500 retirees and family members in the area, according to base statistics.

Also within Cumberland are four colleges — Fayetteville Technical Community College, Fayetteville State Univer-

sity, Methodist University and Carolina College of Biblical Studies. Fayetteville-based Cape Fear Valley Medical Center runs hospitals, primary-care centers and specialty offices across three counties.

"We hope to create a unified identity; one that showcases the area's strengths, assets, diversity, vision and potential," Van Geons says. "Our goal is to attract new residents, tourists and companies while setting [ourselves] apart from our



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regional and national competitors. In addition, our hope is to create a brand identity that every resident can embrace."

The diversity of business can be a draw for those looking to locate to Cumberland County, in addition to the area's award-winning utility provider, Fayetteville Public Works Commission. The company recently earned its fifth Reliable Public Power Provider Diamond designation for its electrical service from the American Public Power Association. "We're the largest municipal electric system in the state, and having that local leadership and operation is a huge benefit to business and economic development," says Carolyn Justice-Hinson, the commission's communications and community relations officer.

"From the economic development point of view," Van Geons says, "PWC is an important partner and a strength in promoting our community to prospective businesses." He emphasizes the utility company's rapid, community-wide response during Hurricane Florence in 2018.

The Cool Spring Downtown District, a nonprofit formed in 2017, promotes more than 100 businesses, restaurants, museums and other arts and cultural activities within a half-mile area of downtown. It has been a key player in sharing data and opinions on the rebranding project.

"Cumberland County also leads North Carolina with more than \$1.3 billion in prime contracts," Van Geons says. Prime contracts are contracts in which the entirety of the work is done by subcontractors, typically local businesses.

Alongside the rebranding effort, changes are occurring in Fayetteville that



*Segra Stadium, which opened this year, is one of many recent changes that makes Fayetteville more attractive than ever to new businesses and visitors.*

make it even more appealing for new businesses and visitors alike.

Shortly after Jones purchased the Prince Charles, PCH Holdings opened talks with the city about building a baseball stadium adjacent to the hotel. The Fayetteville Woodpeckers, a Houston Astros Class A Advanced team, moved into their new \$38 million Segra Stadium in April. That included \$14 million provided by the Astros, which are owned by Jim Crane, a Texas investor in various energy and logistics companies. The Woodpeckers have averaged more than 3,600 attendees through late July. Some games have filled the stadium, which has about 5,200 seats.

In addition, PCH Holdings is building a four-story parking deck with an office complex on top that is adjacent to the Prince Charles. A Hyatt Place hotel is scheduled to open nearby in 2021.

"We told the city, 'We support your effort, and we're here to invest \$65 million in private investment around this minor league stadium.' We made that commitment in the summer of 2016," Jones says. "Today, we're on track to invest about \$74 million in downtown Fayetteville."

According to John Meroski, president and CEO of the Fayetteville Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, the county averages 150,000 overnight visitors per month. "Imagine if, at the end of the month, 150,000 people had something positive to say," he says. "That would



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## REGIONAL REPORT: CUMBERLAND COUNTY



*PCH Holdings is building a four-story parking deck with an office complex on top that is adjacent to the Prince Charles. A Hyatt Place hotel is scheduled to open nearby in 2021.*

be a home run, wouldn't it? We view tourism as everything begins with a visit."

The rebranding effort is expected to increase those numbers and leave visitors with a positive experience.

"You don't have to be a resident to go to our restaurants or stores and have memories," Jones says. "We want to create spaces that will create more memories."

Ketchum says one takeaway from his visits to Fayetteville is the need to alter an old reputation. "We heard an old narrative for Fayetteville that suggests misunderstanding, because we don't see that old narrative — we see a vibrant, moving-forward, investing, committing place," he says. "They were somewhat pigeonholed as a military town. The opportunity is to help the world see that yes, what a great asset Fort Bragg is, but

there are amazing things beyond Fort Bragg."

Though there are a few months left in the rebranding project with North Star, work is already being done to further the effort.

"The Fayetteville and Cumberland County community is building on its momentum," Van Geons says. "We're experiencing an increase in project announcements, job creation and companies interested in our community for expansion. Two thousand more people are employed now than were a year ago. The Fayetteville Woodpeckers baseball stadium has exceeded expectations. With more investments being made downtown and throughout our community, larger development projects in our pipeline, and new partnerships being formed, we can only expect continued growth." ■

— Kathy Blake is a freelance writer from eastern North Carolina.



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# COWORKING IN CUMBERLAND COUNTY

Eastern Foundry's first North Carolina coworking space will offer opportunities to businesses that work with the government.



*Fayetteville's proximity to Fort Bragg made it an obvious choice for the new location of Eastern Foundry, a coworking space for companies whose primary customer is the federal government.*

For many, Eastern Foundry's opening in downtown Fayetteville's CORE Innovation Center in September is a testament of Cumberland County's pursuit of greater visibility in local and national markets.

Until June, Eastern Foundry's only presence was two Arlington, Va., centers near the Pentagon and U.S. Department of State, key in its mission of providing coworking space for

companies whose customer is the federal government. For five years, Eastern Foundry has provided office space, resources and federal agency contacts to contractors associated with that industry.

In June, Eastern Foundry announced it will open a coworking location for established companies and newcomers in cybersecurity, digital human services and other technologies this fall in the Fayetteville Cumberland County Economic Development Corp.'s CORE center on Hay Street.

"Fort Bragg initially drew us to Fayetteville, but after meeting with the FCEDC, we knew opening in Fayetteville was an opportunity we could not pass up," says Regina Burke, Eastern

Foundry's chief of staff. "The CORE office location downtown is great for doing business with the many unique cafes, bistros and local breweries. A lot of changes will be happening in Fayetteville over the next few years, and we want to be here from the start to facilitate the changes."

Fort Bragg is the largest U.S. military installation in terms of population, according to its website, housing more than 52,000 troops. It's only a 20-minute drive away from downtown Fayetteville.

"It started, as many of our projects do, with a connection, just a referral from a conversation," says FCEDC President and CEO Robert Van Geons. "One day, they came to

visit with their team. It was a chilly spring morning, and they could sit outside overlooking downtown with a cup of coffee. And when they saw all that was happening, and heard our voices, they said they needed to make it happen. They believe, like us, in the potential of this community."

Eastern Foundry will have two individual offices in the CORE center initially, Burke says, each offering coworking space and access to three conference rooms. "As our clientele grows, so will our space. We will have whiteboards and smart TVs to host meetings, and we will have wireless internet throughout the space," she says.

Eastern Foundry was founded in 2014 by two veterans trying to streamline the way government obtains goods and services. The coworking space is particular about its contractors and sensitivity of information. For example, offices have frosted glass doors and individual locks.

"Our members are educated about the process, ready to work, surrounded by talent and most importantly, all under one umbrella," Burke says. "Government officials and contracting officers feel comfortable coming to our offices. It's a safe space where they feel they can talk about issues and solve problems in an honest way."

Burke says this specialization as a coworking space allows the business to offer more specific help to its members through introductions to important players in the government. Eastern Foundry also hosts events, speakers and clientele that work with the government.

Eastern Foundry's pricing for its Fayetteville tenants will be different, Burke says, than its Virginia offices, which rent from \$250 to \$1,000 per month. At its Fayetteville space, Eastern Foundry members can rent a private office and have 15 hours of conference room time for \$450 a month, can use the coworking space and have 10 hours of conference room time for \$149 a month, or use the location as a business address for \$25 a month.


Even though the site won't open until September, Eastern Foundry already has its first coworking member: LDR Consulting, a company providing general computer and IT support.

The goal is to give startups at the space the resources and backing of an entire group, Burke says.

"The Eastern Foundry name and our vast resources can help legitimize a company in its infancy. Members

can expect to get a first-class office space, a direct connection to all things happening in the Northern Virginia offices, access to teaming partners and the full backing of our community. We can't wait to see the work that comes out of this town, and we couldn't be more excited to take this step in Fayetteville." ■

— Kathy Blake is a freelance writer





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# CADAVER CURRICULUM

After 45 years, Fayetteville Tech remains the only college offering lucrative degrees in funeral service or mortuary science in the state.



*Fayetteville Tech currently has 192 students pursuing degrees in funeral service or mortuary science who, upon graduation, could make between \$18 and \$30 an hour.*

With more than 280 associate degree programs in the arts, business, engineering, health, math, science and public service, Fayetteville Technical Community College may appear to be an

institution similar to its 57 counterparts in the North Carolina Community College System.

With one exception.

After 45 years, it remains the only college in North Carolina to offer degrees in funeral service or mortuary science.

On June 27, 1974, the North Carolina Board of Funeral Service approved a curriculum for funeral service education for that fall; 11 students signed up.

Fayetteville Tech's Funeral Service Education program includes an accred-

ited associate degree in applied science funeral service education and the N.C. Funeral Director diploma program. Those initial 11 students have grown to 192 in the two programs — a 67% increase since last year.

"This feasibility study [in the early '70s] showed a need for educational opportunities to serve professionals in funeral service organizations across the state," says Ronald Montgomery Jr., department chair of funeral service education. "Several repre-

sentatives from area funeral homes in and around Cumberland County have worked — and are working — with our students.”

Graduates have several options beyond working in funeral homes, Montgomery says. Some consider careers in funeral sales, such as the sale of caskets, urns, burial vaults and embalming chemicals. Others go into mortuary transport services or become autopsy technicians in hospitals that assist medical examiners.

Students come from throughout North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia and Tennessee. Recently, Montgomery says he’s also seen students from Florida, Georgia, Montana and Washington. Some are second-career students, who had an interest but pursued other life paths first. Others are military veterans who work with Veterans Services on campus, which assists with admission.

“The profession has primarily been male-dominated; however, we are seeing a transition of more females taking an interest in this field,” he says. “In regards to our numbers, we have just as many men as we do women enrolled in our program.”

The North Carolina Funeral Director diploma program is available online for licensing within the state. The associate degree in applied science funeral service education, which includes embalming and restorative arts, includes classroom study and work-based learning. Donated human remains are used for clinical instruction.

Average salaries range from about \$18 an hour for embalmers to \$26 for funeral directors and \$30 for funeral-service managers, and local job prospects are good, Montgomery says.

While training is detailed and technical, the program’s aim goes beyond that, Montgomery says. Students are part of the human services profession, and the relationship between their work and the families involved is stressed, as is sensitivity to the welfare and care of the person served. “To emphasize high standards of ethical

conduct” is listed as an objective.

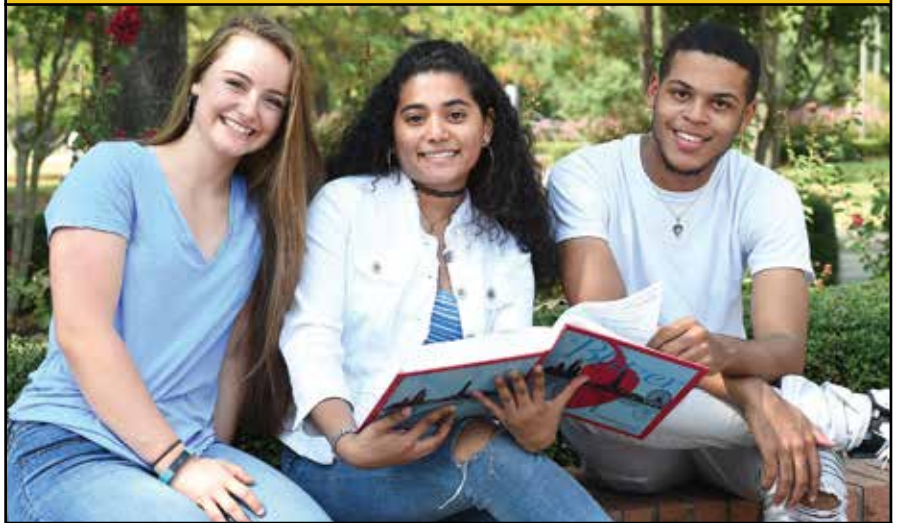
Former students often lead by example.

“Many of these licensed professionals now working in funeral homes were former students of the program,” Montgomery says. “They seem eager to lend a hand to many of our students by serving as mentors and allowing some students to ‘job-shadow’ daily operations.”

Fayetteville Tech statistics show that, in the last three years, an average of 90% of its students found employment. And they take their dedication to the profession seriously; of 558 enrolled in the program from 2016 through 2018, no one has ever dropped out. ■

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

## *Fayetteville Technical Community College* Celebrating 58 years in Cumberland County



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