



Welcome to Southeastern North Carolina, your connection to the global economy. You will see that we truly are the land of plenty for businesses and families alike.

Why? Our unique infrastructure serves as a powerhouse to businesses, featuring port facilities, international and regional airports, cross-country highways and rail, with proximity to the raw materials and natural resources found here in Southeastern North Carolina.

From 2010 onward, Brunswick County continues to be the fastest growing county in North Carolina – with no signs of slowing down. Whether entrepreneurialism or enterprise, we're creating new opportunities for people and businesses. Strong skilled labor force with access to talent and specialized training at nearby universities and community colleges enables continuous improvement and forward-thinking ideas.

Brunswick County boasts two Mega Sites – impressive land parcels available for turnkey development – for companies looking to expand or relocate here. Both have been North Carolina-certified with site assessments completed. Not only does the county have the land to support advanced manufacturing, alternative energy, logistics, agribusiness, and cold-storage facilities, it also offers the required infrastructure to underpin critical commerce and foreign trade. Both sites are primed with ample access to electricity, gas, water and waste-water for ease of development – and the Mid-Atlantic Industrial Rail Park is one of 23 CSX Select sites.

Equally important, coastal North Carolina offers countless recreational activities and a mild climate to be enjoyed year-round by residents. Our taxes are lower than the national average. This quality of life coupled with affordability makes our part of the state the perfect place to meet new people, raise a family, as well as run a business.

Assuredly, Brunswick County will continue to power North Carolina's bottom line with vitality and vigor leaving burgeoning businesses and thriving communities in its wake.

If you would like to learn more, please reach out to me for more information. I encourage you to take a closer look at all that Brunswick County has to offer.

Sincerest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William S. Early". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

William S. (Bill) Early  
**Executive Director**  
**Brunswick Business &  
Industry Development**  
bill.early@brunswickbid.com  
(910) 408-1603

Powered for growth at  
[brunswickbid.com](http://brunswickbid.com)





*Eight agencies doing oceanic research in Carteret County along the coast leverage about \$29 million in economic activity each year.*

## REGIONAL REPORT: COASTAL NC .....

# MARITIME MONEY

The Crystal Coast has one of the highest concentrations in the U.S. of marine-science agencies doing oceanic research.

Carteret County's focus on marine biology started in 1860, when Army surgeons at Fort Macon established a field station to catalog animal and marine life in the area.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration established its Beaufort lab a few decades later in 1899, and the industry has continued to grow ever since.

There are now eight major marine-science research and education agen-

cies in Carteret County, also known as the Crystal Coast. An economic-impact study done by the county in 2018 confirmed what many already knew: The scientific-research communities have a significantly positive economic impact on the coastal community of about 70,000 people.

This includes private-sector research facility Geodynamics LLC, a company that specializes in coastal and nearshore mapping through the use of various forms of sonar technology. Husband and wife duo Christopher and Sloan Freeman launched the company in 2003 and now work with 14 employees on contracts for government agencies

including NOAA and the Navy.

Geodynamics uses hydrographic charting to monitor changes along the shoreline that could affect shipping and commerce into coastal cities. This includes subcontract work for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in cities along the eastern shoreline such as Baltimore and Savannah, some of which will contribute to port-deepening efforts. The small team recently won a bid to become a prime contractor for NOAA to provide chart updates that will "identify areas that are seeing a lot of change or are a hazard to commercial and recreational boaters," Sloan says.

When starting the business, Sloan

# Major marine research agencies

## *in Carteret County:*



- Carteret Community College Aquaculture & Marine Trades
- Duke University Marine Lab
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- N.C. Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores
- N.C. Division of Coastal Management
- N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries
- N.C. State University Center for Marine Sciences and Technology
- UNC Chapel Hill Institute of Marine Sciences



**\$29**  
MILLION

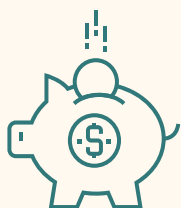
in economic activity leveraged  
from spending

Economic contributions  
add approximately

**\$1.8**  
MILLION



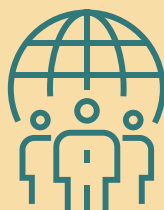
in local sales tax revenue.



**\$68,000**

average salary of employees

employ



**1,063**  
people



**\$54**  
MILLION

combined budget in  
fiscal year 2017





*The Duke University Marine Laboratory rests on Piver's Island near Beaufort.*



*NOAA's Beaufort Laboratory was one of the first marine research organizations to establish in the area, opening in 1899.*

says they considered Wilmington as a possible location but decided that Carteret County met all of their needs and offered a great "quality of life with a small-town feel" that they couldn't pass up.

"It's really a special place to have such a concentration of marine science in one place," Sloan says. "We find that the people that want to do our kind of work love it here, because we have great access to the natural environment and they tend to be 'water people.'"

"There is research being undertaken at all of these labs that have an impact on our lives indirectly," says Don Kirkman, Carteret County's economic development director. "Everything from work being done to test water quality to determine the health of shellfish we might eat, to modeling for hurricanes to see what impacts they could have on the coastal communities in the event of a storm ... does have an indirect benefit to those of us who live here." ■

**MAPLE** AVAILABLE NOW!  
**COMMERCE PARK**  
 Your best option for new business development and expansion in Currituck County, North Carolina!

**OPPORTUNITY IS KNOCKING!**  
 Maple Commerce Park is located within census tract #37053110302, a certified North Carolina Opportunity Zone!

**TAX INCENTIVES for QUALIFIED INVESTORS!**

**AIRPORT? YES PLEASE!** 5500 FEET OF RUNWAY!  
 The Currituck County Regional Airport (KONX) is next door! Ideal for corporate travel!

**FULL-SERVICE FUEL!**

**76+ TOTAL ACRES!** **11 SHOVEL-READY LOTS AVAILABLE NOW!**  
 Lot sizes from 2 to 25 acres that meet the standards of NC's Certified Sites program. Ready for development today. Full-service utilities!

**EXCELLENT TRANSPORTATION LOCATION!**  
 Roadway access to US 158 / NC 168 / I-64. Less than 50 miles to the Port of Virginia!

**WANT A BIRD'S EYE VIEW?**  
 Go ahead and scan this fancy QR code for HD aerial video of Maple Commerce Park!

**NEED MORE INFO? CALL LARRY**  
 Currituck County Economic Development Director **Larry Lombardi** is ready to answer your questions!  
**(252) 232-6015**  
 or send an "electronic letter" to [larry@ThinkCurrituck.com](mailto:larry@ThinkCurrituck.com)

(\*artist's depiction)

**CURRITUCK**  
 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
 Currituck County, North Carolina

READ MORE ONLINE:  
[www.ThinkCurrituck.com](http://www.ThinkCurrituck.com)

## REGIONAL REPORT: COASTAL NC

## SMALL BUSINESS PROFILE

# SHORELINES AND SNAKES

An Outer Banks reptile business proves to be a unique way to have fun on the coast in North Carolina.

In a 200-year-old farmhouse in Currituck County, husband and wife Paul and Andreana DiDario found the perfect place to keep 132 of their closest friends, which just happen to be reptiles.

OBX Lizard Land LLC opened in 2017 and has been drawing curious visitors ever since. The museum is home to more than 100 different species of reptiles, including monitor lizards, poisonous dart frogs and a 33-year-old albino rat snake.

Lizard Land saw approximately 2,000 visitors over the summer of 2019, an increase in demand that

allowed the DiDarios to operate at full-time hours, seven days a week for the first time. Paul, who was working a second job until November 2018, now dedicates all of his attention to the growing business. "I thought the first year was going to be a struggle, but it ended up being a good year and we saw a small profit," he says.

Adults can visit the farmhouse and view as many as 33 different reptiles on display for only \$5. Children 12 and under gain entry for \$3.50, and children 2 and under get in for free.

The husband and wife team acknowledge high operating costs in this niche market make it difficult to see large returns. To keep ticket prices low, the pair take their reptiles on the road for birthday parties and class activities at local schools. "It's become a functioning part of the business," he says. "We have two birthday parties this

weekend and another lined up for next [weekend]."

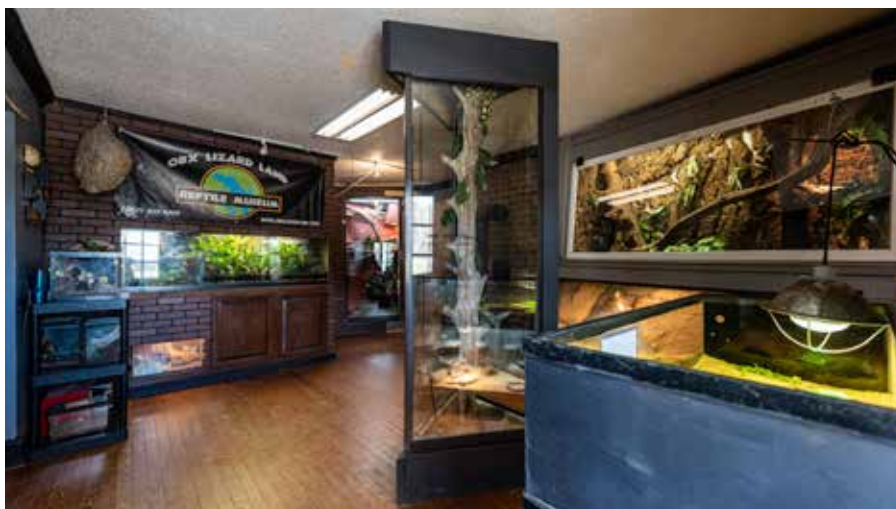
According to the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, the state is home to 37 species of snakes, 12 species of lizards, one species of alligator and 21 species of turtles. Many residents are choosing to keep native and exotic species of reptiles as pets. According to the Insurance Information Institute, about 4.7 million households in the U.S. own a reptile. This trend bodes well for another aspect of the DiDarios' business model: reptile breeding.

While there is a demand for unique reptilian pets, most of that demand is not local to Currituck, Paul says. The couple attends reptile shows across the country to network and sell animals they have bred at their facility. This is a lot of work because they have to know the market demand as well as the reptiles that can be easily transported to shows.

"A lot of these rare animals are ones that people would love to have, but they are few and far between. We figure by breeding the ones that are easy to keep, we will make a decent profit each year," he explains. They also breed to supply exotic-pet stores in the region.

With business steadily growing, the couple has their eyes set on an expansion for OBX Lizard Land. They hope to begin construction on an updated facility on the current property within the next year, which will allow for even more reptiles and hopefully more visitors.

"We're still growing, but so far it's been a big hit," Paul says. "We're thrilled with where it's going." ■



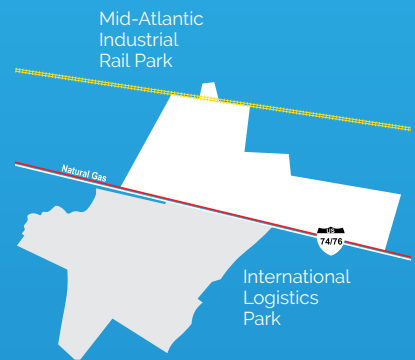
*Husband and wife Paul and Andreana DiDario have found unique ways to build their reptile-focused business in the Outer Banks.*



# Mega Sites. Mega Opportunities. **POWERFUL POSSIBILITIES.**

Expand or relocate to coastal Brunswick County, where you'll find the building blocks your business needs to prosper: superior infrastructure, a skilled workforce and specialized training opportunities.

Named the fastest growing county in North Carolina in 2018, Brunswick County boasts low corporate income and property taxes. If you're interested in moving to the region, we can help you hit the ground running with our business-friendly, customer-focused approach and unique understanding of the needs of businesses experiencing rapid growth.



## Take Advantage of Two Unique Land Parcels Available for Turnkey Development:

- 12 miles to the nearest international airport
- 18 miles from the Port of Wilmington
- Electricity, gas, water and waste-water available on site
- Phase I Environmental Site Assessment already performed on property

### Mid-Atlantic Industrial Rail Park (1,100 acres)

1 of just 23 CSX Select Site, offering land deemed prime for rapid manufacturing progress

### International Logistics Park (1,040 acres)

Powered for growth at  
**[brunswickbid.com](http://brunswickbid.com)**

Tel: (910) 408-1603

**Brunswick  
BID** BUSINESS &  
INDUSTRY  
DEVELOPMENT

## NORTH CAROLINA PORTS REPORT

# PORTS OF POSSIBILITY

North Carolina State Ports Authority announces an expansion and discusses advances in global shipping.



*Port of Wilmington is home to one of the few on-port cold storage facilities in the country. The site has the fastest gate truck turn times on the East Coast.*

As international trade continues to flourish, future-focused businesses are relying on competitively priced access to global markets to help their operations thrive. That's why they choose the modernized facilities and abundant capacity of North Carolina Ports.

The North Carolina State Ports Authority is constantly seeking new ways to expedite shipping, expand services and tailor its growth to customer needs. An aggressive \$200 million improvement plan is underway at the

Port of Wilmington, which recently completed a Section 203 study to determine the feasibility of necessary harbor improvements.

The port is expanding to simultaneously accommodate multiple ultra-large container vessels and to increase the speed and efficiency of loading and unloading vessels. The container yard expansion will increase the Port of Wilmington's annual throughput capacity to roughly 1.2 million TEU (20-foot equivalent unit).

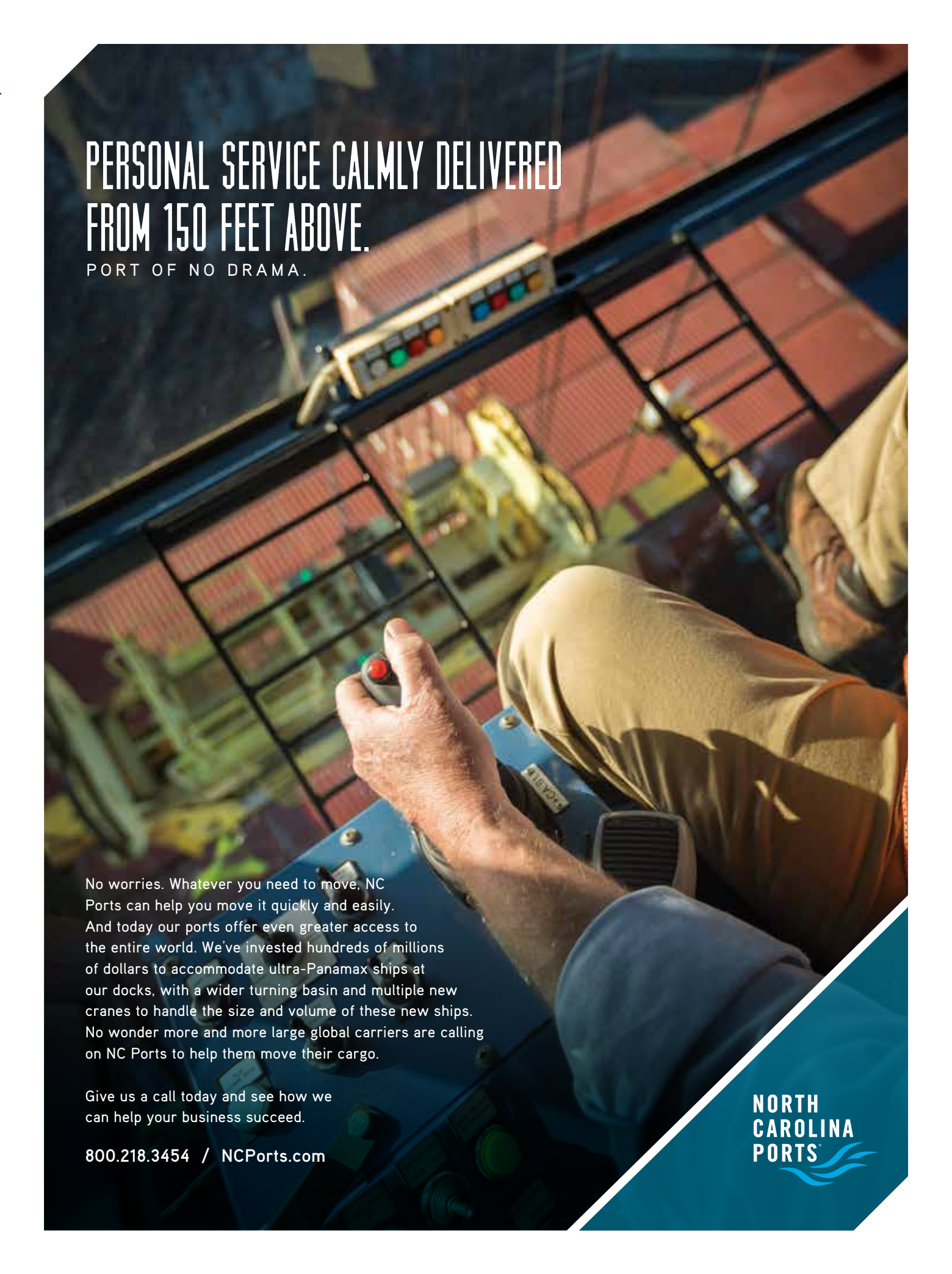
The Port of Wilmington is also home to one of the few on-port cold storage facilities in the country, offering more than 300 refrigerated container plugs on terminal and some of the fastest gate truck turn

times on the East Coast.

The port isn't stopping there. In August 2019, it broke ground on a project to triple refrigerated container yard capacity to more than 1,000 on-terminal plugs, while handling refrigerated cargo more efficiently. This will help better serve the North Carolina agriculture and grocery sectors.

With infrastructure and expansion advances over the next few years, customers and carriers will find even greater resources available at North Carolina Ports. Officials view the expansion as a vital investment — not simply in the success of valued customers, but also in the future of North Carolina. ■





# PERSONAL SERVICE CALMLY DELIVERED FROM 150 FEET ABOVE.

PORT OF NO DRAMA.

No worries. Whatever you need to move, NC Ports can help you move it quickly and easily. And today our ports offer even greater access to the entire world. We've invested hundreds of millions of dollars to accommodate ultra-Panamax ships at our docks, with a wider turning basin and multiple new cranes to handle the size and volume of these new ships. No wonder more and more large global carriers are calling on NC Ports to help them move their cargo.

Give us a call today and see how we can help your business succeed.

800.218.3454 / [NCPorts.com](http://NCPorts.com)

**NORTH  
CAROLINA  
PORTS**





# MANUFACTURING MOVES

A rural coastal county town draws a New Jersey manufacturer pledging to deliver 299 new jobs.

Pacon Manufacturing Corp. is moving south to warmer weather and an ideal distribution location. Based in Somerset, N.J., Pacon manufactures towels, wipes and liquid products for national corporations

including The Clorox Co. and Burt's Bees Inc. Founded in 1949, the family-owned company has outgrown an existing building.

It was a former U.S. Marine boat manufacturing facility in Navassa that met all Pacon's needs when it sought a new location. Lawrence Shannon, vice president of Pacon, says there were three main requirements in the search: a larger building with room to grow, a region with a diversified and skilled workforce, and a location in a state that would further the company's goals.

During the search, Pacon partnered with North Carolina's Southeast, a regional economic development organization that serves 18 counties. The group helps member counties get the word out about business development opportunities, says Joe Melvin, director

of business development.

"We market industrial buildings, sites and regional assets both domestically and internationally to get people interested in southeastern North Carolina as a place for manufacturing, distribution and back-office operations," Melvin says.

Though Pacon has not started construction for the \$37.6 million project, it hopes to be finished by early 2020, with an initial production line operational by the end of the first quarter. A small part of the operation may remain in Somerset, "but the large majority of our manufacturing and day-to-day functions will transition to the Brunswick County facility," Shannon says. "That will take place over the course of 2020, and some of it will probably roll into 2021 just as we move pieces down."

The property that Pacon purchased in Navassa had been on the market for more than a decade. Bill Early, execu-

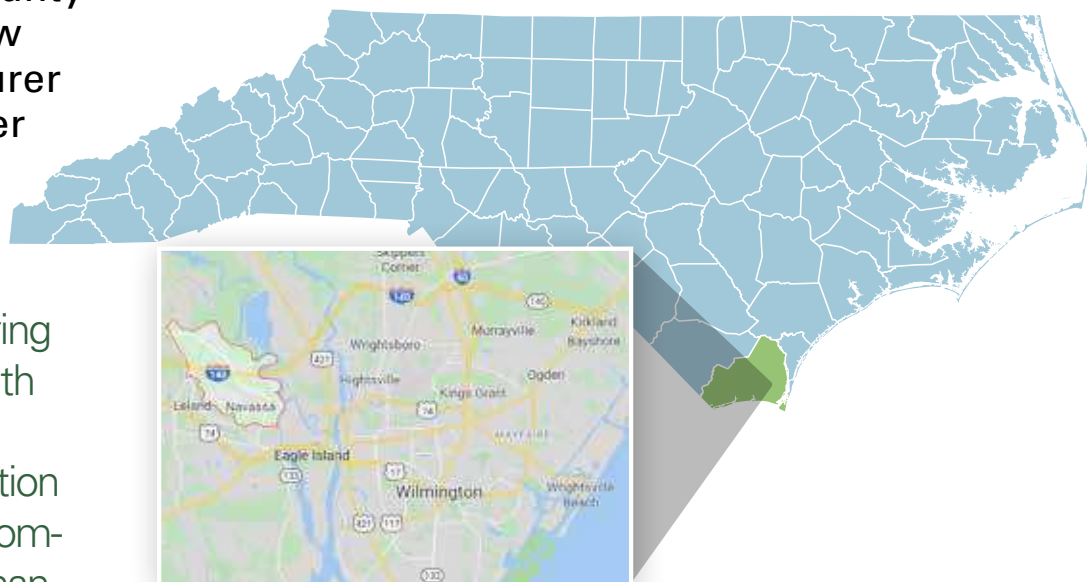
tive director of Brunswick Business and Industry Development, says Navassa was once a town rich in manufacturing, but most companies have left.

The North Carolina Department of Commerce ranks counties on a tier system for economic wellness. Brunswick County is in the strongest tier, but that's skewed by waterfront development. "If you look inland, there are a lot of rural communities, with Navassa being one of those," Early says.

He calls Navassa "one of the most economically distressed communities in Brunswick County."

"This is a very positive thing for Brunswick County and Navassa by creating new jobs in a building that has been vacant for about 10 years," Early says.

Pacon plans to add 299 jobs in Navassa over the course of three years with an average salary of \$31,273. The positions will require both skilled and unskilled workers.





**11 E. Beach Bay Lane**  
**Figure 8 Island • \$2,895,000**



**1012 Deepwood Place**  
**Landfall • \$1,525,000**



**1035 Ocean Ridge Drive**  
**Landfall • \$4,475,000**



**6130 Best Farms**  
**185 acre farm in Leland • \$995,000**



**1207 N. Lumina Avenue**  
**Lot on Wrightsville Beach • \$839,000**



**8055 Masonboro Sound Road**  
**Wilmington • \$2,495,000**



**1403 Quadrant Circle**  
**Landfall • \$1,199,000**



**2009 Scrimshaw**  
**Landfall • \$1,195,000**



**9 Stone Street**  
**Wrightsville Beach • \$965,000**



VanceYoung@IntercoastalRealty.com

**VANCE YOUNG**

*When only the best will do*

**Vance Young, Broker/REALTOR®**

**Direct: 910.232.8850 | www.VanceYoung.com**

**OVER \$1 BILLION IN CAREER SALES**

**LUXURY PORTFOLIO**  
INTERNATIONAL

**Intracoastal**  
REALTY CORPORATION  
*Experience the Exceptional*

**LEADING REAL ESTATE COMPANIES**  
OF THE WORLD

**TOP PRODUCER**  
INTRACOASTAL REALTY

**2 Lindy Lane**  
**Wrightsville Beach • \$1,548,000**



**1605 Landfall Drive**  
**Landfall • \$1,200,000**



**804 Gull Point**  
**Landfall • \$1,269,000**



**314 S. Front Street**  
**Historic District • \$999,000**



**2210 Bel Arbor**  
**Bel Arbor • \$1,179,000**



**807 S. Lumina Avenue**  
**Wrightsville Beach • \$3,200,000**







"In a 40- to 60-mile radius, they'd be touching a minimum of five counties ... with ties directly into the greater Wilmington market. For distribution purposes, [this location] puts them right off U.S. 74 and the I-140 connector."

**Joe Melvin**

Pacon is eligible for a \$300,000 grant through the One North Carolina Fund, a performance-based grant that supports economic investment in the state and was approved by Gov. Roy Cooper in April. The grant requires a match from local government.

"It will give us the room to grow ... and the flexibility to open the doors to a lot more items in terms of packaging and products," Shannon says. ■

— Lindsey Chase is a freelance writer from Charlotte.

## COASTAL N.C. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS

### ***Beaufort County Economic Development***

252-946-3970  
beaufortedc.com

### ***Brunswick Business and Industry Development***

910-408-1603  
Brunswickbid.com

### ***Carteret County Economic Development Department***

252-222-6121  
carteretedc.com

### ***Currituck County Economic Development Department***

252-232-6015  
Thinkcurrituck.com

### ***The Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce***

252-441-8144  
Outerbankschamber.com

### ***Wilmington Business Development***

910-763-8414  
Wilmingtonbusinessdevelopment.com

### ***Jacksonville Onslow Economic Development***

910-939-7023  
Joednc.com



*The Wilmington area boasts access to both major waterway and highway systems.*



# Give the gift of an island experience

GOOD THINGS COME  
IN SMALL PACKAGES.

Who wouldn't like  
a gift card for a trip  
to the beach? Or an  
oceanfront dinner  
out under the stars?

Mind-blowing gift ideas  
include getaway weekends,  
sunset sails, moonlit dinners,  
kayak adventures or even  
a family vacation.

*Over 50 years of hospitality  
at Wrightsville Beach, NC*



blockade runner  
beach resort

866.773.1646

[www.blockade-runner.com](http://www.blockade-runner.com)



*photography courtesy of Josh McClure*