ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP of NORTH CAROLINA

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

HOW NORTH CAROLINA'S INFRASTRUCTURE POWERS BUSINESS GROWTH

Across the United States, businesses are navigating a period of heightening economic uncertainty. Global supply chain realignments, shifting trade dynamics, and a rapidly evolving labor market are reshaping corporate investment strategies. While incentives, workforce, and quality of life remain important to companies making location decisions, speed-to-market and risk reduction have become decisive factors. In this environment, infrastructure – including transportation networks, utilities, logistics connectivity, and shovel-ready sites – has emerged as one of the most powerful tools for mitigating risk and supporting business growth.

North Carolina's infrastructure ecosystem is helping companies move products faster, reduce operational risk, and scale efficiently. In 2025, CNBC named North Carolina America's Top State for Business, marking the third time the state has earned the honor in the last four years.[1] Companies like JetZero, Johnson & Johnson, Toyota, and Siemens are choosing North Carolina because it offers what few states can: a connected, resilient, and future-ready foundation for success.

1 CNBC, 2025

STRATEGICALLY LOCATED AT THE CENTER OF COMMERCE

North Carolina is the geographic center of the East Coast and home to the second-largest state-maintained highway system in the country. With more than 80,000 miles (129,000 km) of highway, it's easy to reach US customers from North Carolina's main interstates:

- I-95, running the length of the East Coast
- I-40, linking North Carolina to California
- I-85, stretching through the manufacturing heart of the Southeast
- I-77, spanning from Ohio to South Carolina

North Carolina's intermodal transportation network is unmatched when it comes to quickly connecting companies to domestic and international markets. The state's well-integrated highway and rail systems provide easy access to domestic suppliers and customers. North Carolina also offers four international airports and two deep-water seaports for reaching global markets. According to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics, North Carolina ranks among the top twelve states for total freight value, reflecting the scale of goods moving into, out of, and within the state.[2]

150M+

CUSTOMERS WITHIN A DAY'S DRIVE (ACS, 2022) [3]

NORTH CAROLINA'S TRANSPORTATION ADVANTAGE

PERCENTAGE OF ROADS IN GOOD OR FAIR CONDITION

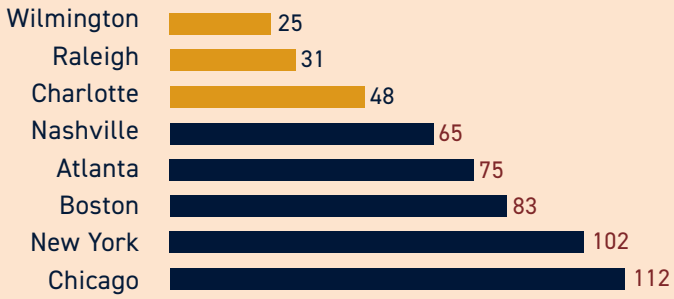
Bureau of Transportation Statistics, 2024

TOP 12 STATE

FOR TOTAL FREIGHT VALUE

(Bureau of Transportation Statistics, 2023)

ANNUAL HOURS LOST IN TRAFFIC CONGESTION



INRIX, 2025

2 Bureau of Transportation Statistics, 2023

3 EDPNC, Why North Carolina - Infrastructure

EFFICIENT SHIPPING CAPABILITIES

North Carolina's ports – anchored by the Port of Wilmington, the Port of Morehead City, and the Charlotte Inland Port – offer a combination of operational efficiency, geographic positioning, and supply chain resilience that differentiates the state from competing coastal markets. North Carolina's seaports benefit from the fastest turn times compared to other North American ports.[4] The Charlotte Inland Port sits at the heart of the Southeast's manufacturing and distribution sites.

TWO DEEPWATER SEAPORTS IN STATE WITH ON-DOCK RAIL

North Carolina's ports offer fast turn times with capacity to support 600,000+ TEUs and 4 million+ tons of general cargo annually. The ports are well-integrated with the state's highway and rail networks, accelerating speed-to-market. North Carolina companies also enjoy easy access to the Ports of Charleston, Norfolk, and Savannah.

PORT OF WILMINGTON

Port of Wilmington expansion plans include a new on-dock intermodal facility that will introduce 5,000 more feet of working track, harbor deepening to better accommodate deep-draft container vessels, and a container yard expansion that will double annual throughput capacity to more than one million TEUs.

- Serves container, bulk, breakbulk, and ro/ro operations
- Channel depth of 42 feet, with plans to increase depth to 47 feet
- On-terminal cold storage warehouse facility and 1M sf of covered storage
- Seven container cranes
- Next-day rail service to Charlotte Inland Port
- On-dock cold storage and cross-docking station
- Designated as Foreign Trade Zone 214
- Near-port cold storage supporting produce, protein, and life sciences
- Near-port USDA APHIS certified cold treatment facility

PORT OF MOREHEAD CITY

- General cargo and bulk handling facility
- Channel depth of 45 feet
- 1M+ sf of covered and sprinklered storage
- Designated as Foreign Trade Zone 214

REVOLUTIONIZING TEMPERATURE-CONTROLLED LOGISTICS

North Carolina provides best-in-class cold storage facilities and is actively preparing for future cold storage logistics. Frontier Scientific Solutions, an innovative supply chain provider, is building a new temperature-controlled logistics hub in Wilmington, North Carolina (and a companion facility in Shannon, Ireland) to facilitate the safe, timely, and cost-effective delivery of pharmaceutical and biopharmaceutical products between the United States and Europe.[6] The facility will offer strategic value for life sciences supply chains with direct runway access at Wilmington International Airport (ILM), flights exclusively dedicated to life sciences products, a designation within a Foreign-Trade Zone (FTZ), proximity to major interstate highways and the Port of Wilmington, and will be located only two hours from Research Triangle Park, one of North America's leading life sciences hubs.[7]

PORT OF WILMINGTON

#1

MOST EFFICIENT PORT IN NORTH AMERICA

World Bank and S&P Global Market Intelligence, 2022

INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIVITY

NORTH/SOUTH US EAST COAST TRADE ROUTES

CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA ROUTES

EUROPE ROUTES

1,500

REEFER PLUGS FOR REFRIGERATED CONTAINERS, POSITIONING THE PORT AS A SPECIALIZED HUB FOR PERISHABLE IMPORTS AND EXPORTS.[5]

INTEGRATED RAIL NETWORK

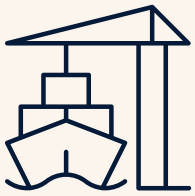
Few states combine their maritime gateways with an inland logistics network as effectively as North Carolina. The Port of Wilmington offers express rail service to major distribution corridors in the Southeastern and Midwest US, reducing transit costs and reliance on long-haul trucking. Companies also enjoy access to discretionary grant programs for site development needs along active rail lines.

4 World Bank and S&P Global Market Intelligence, 2022 **5** NC Ports
6 NC Biotech Center, Wilmington to Serve as Hub for New Life Sciences Air Corridor, 2025
7 Frontier Scientific Solutions, 2025

QUEEN CITY EXPRESS

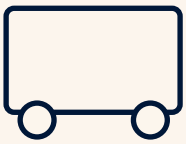
The Queen City Express offers 1-day rail transit from the Port of Wilmington to Charlotte Inland Port.
It reduces transit costs and has no dwell times at either port, ensuring smooth and efficient cargo movement.

OFF THE SHIP



Immediate discharge to
intermodal On-dock Rail

IN TRANSIT



1 Day Transit

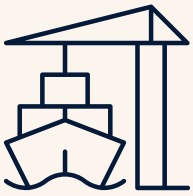
AVAILABLE NEXT DAY

Available for Pick up at CSX
Ramp or Charlotte Inland Port

WILMINGTON MIDWEST EXPRESS

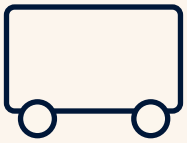
The Wilmington Midwest Express is your gateway to the heartland, offering 5-day transit to Chicago and northwest Ohio, and 7-day transit to St. Louis with no rail dwell times.

AT THE PORT



Immediate discharge to
intermodal On-dock Rail

IN TRANSIT

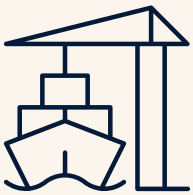


Imports: 5 days to CHI and NW Ohio,
7 days to STL
Exports: 4 days from CHI and NW Ohio,
6 days from STL

WILMINGTON-ROCKY MOUNT EXPRESS

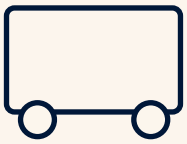
The Wilmington-Rocky Mount Express offers access to the Carolinas and Southeastern markets with a competitive rate and no dwell times.

AT THE PORT



Immediate discharge to
intermodal On-dock Rail

IN TRANSIT



Daily access to and from the new
CSX Terminal in Rocky Mount, NC

TWO CLASS 1 RAIL CARRIERS

North Carolina has more than 3,200 miles (5,100km) of track. Two Class 1 rail carriers, CSX Transportation (CSX) and Norfolk Southern (NS), offer direct service to North American markets and to all major ports along the US East Coast.

- Intermodal service hubs in Charlotte (NS, CSX), Greensboro (NS) and Rocky Mount (CSX)
- Daily, direct intermodal service between Port of Wilmington and Charlotte Inland Port (CSX)
- 19 regional railroads, including six that connect to both NS and CSX railroads

INVESTING SINCE 1849

The North Carolina Railroad Company (NCRR) has been driving economic growth for the state for over 175 years and is still finding ways to prepare the economy of today for the future. In November 2025, NCRR announced it would invest $500,000 to facilitate FIT Precast's new headquarters in Gaston County. FIT Precast, which manufactures precast concrete and piping products, is investing $102 million and creating 125 jobs at the site. NCRR's investment will cover the design and construction of a rail spur to allow FIT Precast to receive and distribute a minimum of 500 rail cars annually.

VIEW THE INTERACTIVE MAP

GLOBAL ACCESSIBILITY

In North Carolina, people and cargo can travel effortlessly from airports that service over 250 destinations, over 50 of which are international. Ten airports offer commercial services, including four international airports that provide easy access to global markets. Ninety-six percent of the state's population lives within a 30-minute drive of a public airport.[8] International airports include:

- Charlotte Douglas International Airport (CLT), the world's seventh-busiest airport
- Raleigh-Durham International Airport (RDU), one of the country's Top 50 fastest-growing airports
- Wilmington International Airport (ILM), home to the ILM Business Park with easy access to highways, rail, and the Port of Wilmington
- Piedmont Triad International Airport (GSO), a premier air cargo center and home to the FedEx Mid-Atlantic Air Hub

GSO SUCCESS BUILT ON LONG-TERM VISION

In June 2025, JetZero announced plans to hire more than 14,000 people to build a fuel-efficient blended-wing passenger aircraft at Piedmont Triad International Airport (GSO) in the Piedmont Triad Region of North Carolina. The facility, designed to be a "factory of the future," will be AI-driven, and the company's planes will be 50% more fuel efficient than today's commercial "tube and wing" jets.

JetZero's decision adds to a growing list of aviation wins for GSO. These announcements were the result of years of imaginative, long-term planning to ensure sites at GSO were shovel-ready for prospective companies. This preparation included land acquisition and speculative grading and preparing the site with water, sewer, power, and broadband infrastructure, all before a business approached the airport with a project. The North Carolina Department of Transportation also worked with local partners to build a $20 million bridge over Highway I-73 to free up an additional 600 acres at GSO. This 250 ft wide "bridge to the future" is capable of holding an Airbus A-380 aircraft and provides direct access to a taxiway and runway. GSO continues to proactively prepare sites for the future of aviation, including emerging technologies such as Electric Vehicle Takeoff and Landing (eVTOL) aircraft.

The $20 million taxiway bridge at GSO spanning over 300 feet across Interstate 73 is critical infrastructure designed to support jumbo jets and connect the main airport and its runways to 600–700 acres of shovel-ready land.

"NORTH CAROLINA OFFERS THE IDEAL COMBINATION OF TALENT, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND FORWARD-THINKING LEADERSHIP TO SUPPORT OUR MISSION TO RESHAPE AVIATION. THIS FACILITY IS A CRITICAL MILESTONE IN BRINGING OUR ALL-WING Z4 TO MARKET."

TOM O'LEARY,
CEO AND CO-FOUNDER OF JETZERO

8 North Carolina Department of Transportation, North Carolina State of Aviation Report, 2025

SHOVEL-READY SITES

Beyond an integrated transportation network, the availability of shovel-ready sites often determines where corporate investment occurs. Even the most connected location can lose a project if site development timelines produce uncertainty. North Carolina has enjoyed considerable success recruiting large economic development projects and is heavily invested in preparing more competitive site options for advanced manufacturing projects.
In North Carolina's 2022-23 budget legislation, the General Assembly established the Megasite Readiness Program, a competitive grant program to help local governments identify, acquire, construct and market megasites.[9]

In the 2023-24 budget legislation, the General Assembly enacted the Selectsite Readiness Program to prepare sites less than 1,000 acres that are capable of handling major advanced manufacturing projects.[10] As of 2025, over $115 million has been allocated to the Megasite and Selectsite readiness programs in order to identify and prepare sites to give businesses a faster, lower-risk path from an investment decision to a scaled operation.

North Carolina is currently home to multiple strategically located megasites, each of which are situated on at least 1,000 acres of land. For smaller sites, the state's Certified Sites program helps companies reduce the risks associated with development by providing detailed information about a site's price and availability, utilities, access, environmental concerns, and potential development costs. Sites are periodically re-certified to ensure accurate and reliable data.

9 NC Megasite Readiness Program, 2025
10 NC Selectsite Readiness Program, 2025

SITE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN NORTH CAROLINA

In addition to these programs, North Carolina has several in-state entities that offer site development services.

SMART SITES PROGRAM

Created by ElectriCities, this program assists member communities in preparing shovel-ready sites.

SITE READINESS PROGRAM

This program is intended to identify and improve industrial sites in the Duke Energy service territory.

COOPERATIVE READY SITES PROGRAM

NC Electric Cooperatives offers completed due diligence studies for sites, increasing speed of development.

SITE PROGRAM

This program provides support to communities to identify potential industrial sites, conduct due diligence, or extend public utilities or conduct grading of sites.

BUILD READY SITES

This grant program provides funding for land preparation and water/sewer extensions to help communities prep rail-served sites for future industrial use.

UTILITY ACCOUNT

This fund provides grants to local governments of Tier 1 and Tier 2 counties for infrastructure upgrades.

SHOVEL-READY SITES

North Carolina has prioritized the development of shovel-ready sites across the state and offers a multitude of certification programs to ensure sites are ready for immediate investment, reducing delays for companies. A shovel-ready site is one where:

- **Environmental, engineering and title risks are known or resolved,**
- **Infrastructure capacity has been verified or designed,**
- **Development timelines are predictable,**
- **Costs can be reasonably estimated, and**
- **Legal and regulatory barriers are minimized.**

SUCCESS STORY

TOYOTA

TOYOTA INVESTS $13.9B AT NORTH CAROLINA MEGASITE

REGIONAL COLLABORATION HELPS LAND TOYOTA BATTERY MANUFACTURING

One of North Carolina's largest economic development wins was the result of a decades-long, regional collaboration to develop the Greensboro-Randolph Megasite in Randolph County, North Carolina. In 2021, Toyota announced it had chosen the site for a new $1.29 billion automotive battery manufacturing plant, its first in North America. Since then, Toyota has gradually increased its total investment at this location to $13.9 billion, announcing more than 5,100 jobs in Randolph County.

Collaboration to develop the megasite began as early as 2011. A few years later, in 2015, the North Carolina Railroad Company (NCRR), Randolph County and the Bryan Foundation formed the non-profit Greensboro-Randolph Megasite Foundation. The foundation collaborated with Duke Energy, the City of Greensboro, the North Carolina General Assembly, and NCDOT to invest, assemble, and prepare what would become one of the premier large-scale industrial sites in the Eastern United States. Over nearly a decade, these partners worked together closely to solve complex infrastructure, permitting, transportation, and utility challenges to eliminate development risks and position the megasite to attract a transformational manufacturer like Toyota.

NCRR played an integral role in the project's success through long-term investment, land acquisition, and strategic site development efforts. NCRR invested nearly $35 million to purchase more than 60 percent of the land required for the future automotive battery production facility. Altogether, foundation partners assembled 1,825 acres for development.

The Greensboro-Randolph Megasite also participated in Duke Energy's Site Readiness Program, which helps communities prepare land for economic development. Duke Energy worked with Toyota to design the optimal way to bring power to the site, including relocating transmission lines and providing the option to offset its operations with 100% renewable energy to help with Toyota's goal of carbon-neutral operations and vehicles by 2050.[11]

In determining the location for its first battery plant in the US, Toyota was interested in renewable energy availability and support from local government and utilities stakeholders. Potential sites were narrowed down and the Greensboro-Randolph Megasite met and exceeded these needs with[12]:

- An extensive and well-maintained highway system for overland logistics
- Four international airports and two seaports
- Onsite rail
- An outstanding, diverse workforce
- Renewable energy availability
- World-renowned education system
- Strong government partnership at both the state and local levels

The success of the Greensboro-Randolph Megasite demonstrates how long-term collaboration among public entities and private industry partners has helped position North Carolina to compete for transformational economic development opportunities and advanced manufacturing investment.

11 Duke Energy, Toyota's EV Battery Plant Will Bring Jobs, Boost North Carolina's Economy, 2022

12 Toyota Motor North America, Toyota Selects North Carolina Greensboro-Randolph Site for New U.S. Automotive Battery Plant, 2021

RELIABLE UTILITIES

Reliable utility systems are essential to economic growth. According to economic development leaders in North Carolina, power availability, water and wastewater capacity, and upgrade timelines are critical factors. North Carolina's utility ecosystem – spanning electricity, water, and wastewater – stands out as a strategic advantage for companies across sectors, from advanced manufacturing to life sciences.

DEPENDABLE ENERGY

A company's long-term success often depends on predictable, affordable, and reliable energy that will not just be available on day one, but throughout the life of the investment. North Carolina boasts a robust electric generation and delivery network capable of supporting heavy industrial loads and future growth.

North Carolina's regulated utility model has historically given the state reliable, competitively priced power. This model also provides the state with the ability to conduct long-term integrated resource planning to keep costs as low as possible while supporting economic growth. Duke Energy delivers approximately 96% of utility-supplied electricity in the state.[13] Dominion Energy North Carolina provides another 4%, primarily in the northeastern part of the state.[14] These Investor-Owned Utilities (IOUs) are regulated by the North Carolina Utilities Commission (NCUC), keeping the utility accountable to state regulators and customers, unlike the state's 31 electric cooperatives and over 70 municipal power systems, whose retail rates fall outside NCUC.[15]

North Carolina's competitive and predictable utility costs allow companies to keep operating costs down and forecast expenses with confidence. Data from the Energy Information Administration (EIA) shows that as of December 2025, North Carolina's industrial electricity rates were 7% below the national average.[16] These below-average and predictable rates help manufacturers keep operating costs down and strengthen the state's competitiveness.

Duke Energy's long-term energy forecasting also ensures that manufacturers can be accommodated now and into the future with minimal service constraints. Over the past 15 years, customer energy needs in the Carolinas grew by approximately 10 terawatt-hours (TWh) – looking ahead, growth over the next 15 years is forecasted to surge eightfold, with energy needs increasing by nearly 80 TWh.[17] To meet this demand, Duke Energy's 2025 Carolinas Resource Plan includes leveraging existing resources, building new capacity, and exploring new energy technologies.

DUKE ENERGY'S RECOMMENDED ENERGY GENERATION ADDITIONS

MW	SOLAR	STORAGE	COMBUSTION TURBINE	COMBINED CYCLE	NUCLEAR
2035	9,200	6,550	2,825	6,825	0
2040	15,000	9,450	4,100	8,200	3,350

Note: Nameplate capacity additions beginning 2026, including 4,686 MW of solar and 1,040 MW of battery that are under development and included in all portfolios as forecasted resources; does not include uprates to existing resources.

13 North Carolina's Business Driven Energy Vision, NC Chamber, 2025
14 North Carolina's Business Driven Energy Vision, NC Chamber, 2025
15 North Carolina's Business Driven Energy Vision, NC Chamber, 2025
16 EIA, Electric Power Monthly, December 2025
17 Duke Energy, 2025 Carolinas Resource Plan, 2025

DUKE ENERGY NUCLEAR FLEET SETS RELIABILITY RECORD

In 2025, Duke Energy's nuclear fleet set a new reliability record, providing communities across the Carolinas with around-the-clock power customers can count on. Steady, predictable output from nuclear units strengthens grid reliability and helps manage system costs, directly supporting growing energy needs.

Duke Energy's nuclear plants were generating power a combined 96.9% of the time in 2025, a new record for systemwide capacity factor.

The fleet's strong performance resulted in $600 million in federal nuclear production tax credits, which are directly passed on to customers to help reduce costs.

#4

INSTALLED SOLAR POWER

(Business Facilities, 2025)

#6

NUCLEAR POWER GENERATION

(Business Facilities, 2025)

STRENGTHENING WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

Nationwide, communities are facing mounting water and wastewater infrastructure challenges under the combined pressures of residential, commercial, and industrial growth. North Carolina is no stranger to these growing pains and is taking steps to leverage state and local partnerships to modernize water infrastructure for future growth.

One town working proactively to align water infrastructure with economic growth is Holly Springs in Wake County. Over the past few years, Holly Springs has become a biotech powerhouse as companies like Genentech, FUJIFILM Biotechnologies, CSL Seqirus, and Amgen have established and expanded large manufacturing sites there. Most of these companies are biologics manufacturers, producing injectable therapies where water is a primary ingredient, requiring large volumes of high-quality supply. As a result, their operations also generate significant amounts of wastewater, which is typically pre-treated on site to meet discharge standards before being sent to municipal facilities for further treatment.

To keep pace with its residential and commercial growth, the Town of Holly Springs has committed over $200 million to increasing the current treatment capacity at the Utley Creek Wastewater Facility from six million gallons per day to eight million gallons by 2030.[18] The project represents one of the largest infrastructure investments in Holly Springs' history and demonstrates the town's long-term commitment to economic growth.[19]

Statewide, North Carolina is also taking steps to keep water infrastructure a strategic advantage for its long-term economic growth. In 2025, the North Carolina Chamber, the state's largest bi-partisan business advocacy group, released a Water Infrastructure Competitiveness Analysis, outlining a coordinated approach to secure North Carolina's water infrastructure. Key recommendations of the report include conducting water availability assessments, establishing funding mechanisms for water availability studies and infrastructure, and proactively aligning water systems with economic development to reduce delays and uncertainty.[20]

18 Holly Springs Update, Utley Creek Water Reclamation Facility Expansion, 2026
19 Holly Springs Update, Utley Creek Water Reclamation Facility Expansion, 2026
20 NC Chamber, Water Infrastructure Competitive Analysis, 2025

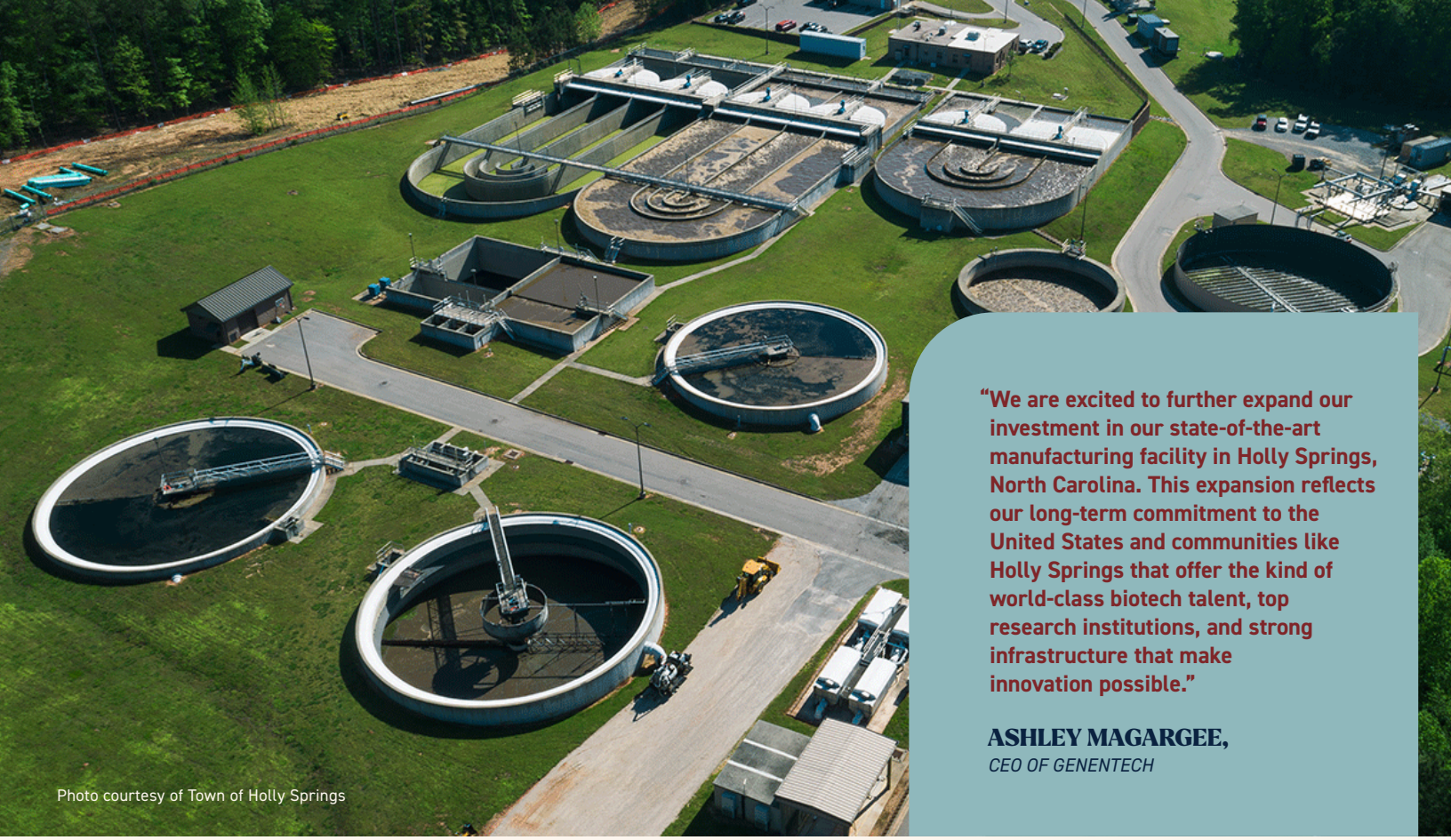


Photo courtesy of Town of Holly Springs

> **"We are excited to further expand our investment in our state-of-the-art manufacturing facility in Holly Springs, North Carolina. This expansion reflects our long-term commitment to the United States and communities like Holly Springs that offer the kind of world-class biotech talent, top research institutions, and strong infrastructure that make innovation possible."**
>
> **ASHLEY MAGARGEE,**
> *CEO OF GENENTECH*

SUMMARY

North Carolina's infrastructure helps companies move faster and reduce risk in an uncertain economy. The state is winning investment because it offers the physical foundation to build, ship, power, and scale with confidence. North Carolina, however, does not just rest on its laurels; it is actively preparing for future growth through forecasting and targeted investments in transportation infrastructure, energy and water capacity, and site readiness as core economic development differentiators. Companies can invest in North Carolina with confidence that it has the infrastructure to power business growth now and into the future.

CONTACT

Ready to build your company's future in North Carolina?

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