



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 23, 2015

Wilmington Chamber InterCity Visit to Charleston Provides Insights Into Economic Development and Preservation Practices

Wilmington, NC—37 area business leaders and elected officials have returned from a two-day InterCity Leadership Visit to Charleston, SC, organized by the Wilmington Chamber of Commerce, with numerous takeaways on how Charleston has encouraged economic development while retaining quality of place and increasing tourism. The Wilmington Chamber organized the trip to introduce the local delegation to innovative ideas, programs and initiatives which may be adapted and implemented in our community, as well as build relationships among our delegation attendees, resulting in a more cohesive team working on behalf of our community.

The trip took place September 21-22, and focused on four main areas: development, industry, quality of place, and tourism. Panel discussions featuring Charleston business and civic leaders addressed topics such as sustainability, industrial growth, job recruitment, density/sprawl, infrastructure (congestion/traffic), and historic preservation.

“This InterCity Leadership Visit was an excellent opportunity for our area decision makers and stakeholders to learn firsthand from a community that is continually lauded for its innovative development partnerships, historic preservation, ability to attract some of the world’s-best industry employers, and tourism...all while maintaining an amazing quality of place,” said Chamber President & CEO Connie Majure-Rhett. “We are very pleased with the interest shown by our area business and elected leaders in participating in the trip, and with the quality of speakers from Charleston, as well as their insights.”

A few of the broad takeaways from the presentations, panel discussions, and walking tour of downtown Charleston included:

- Importance of a strategic and targeted economic development plan;
- Cooperation among all groups is the key to development and preservation;
- The importance of public/private collaboration;
- Regionalism is a must for metro success and attracting jobs;
- High quality public spaces are worth the investment;
- Urban density is appropriate where there is infrastructure to support it;
- State support for local government in recruiting jobs is a must;

Plan for the next 100 years, not short term; and
The power of local taxing authority being granted by the state of South Carolina.

Guest speakers and panelists from Charleston that made presentations and took part in panel discussions included:

- Perry (Keith) Waring, Mayor Pro-Tem, Charleston City Council
- Lindsay Leonard, Senior Director, National Strategy and Engagement, The Boeing Company
- David Ginn, President & CEO, Charleston Regional Development Alliance
- Brian Derreberry, President & CEO, Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce
- Jacob Lindsey, Planning Director, City of Charleston
- Dana Beach, Executive Director, Coastal Conservation League
- Helen Hill, Executive Director, Charleston Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Kevin Kampwerth, Director of Marketing & Creative, SC Aquarium
- Dave Echols, General Manager, Charleston Riverdogs
- Dan Doyle, VP Development, The Beach Company
- Michael Maher, CEO, Horizon Project Foundation
- Ken Seeger, President of Land and Development, West Rock Land and Development
- Robert Clement, President, CC&T Real Estate Services
- Peter Fennelly, Market President, Colliers International
- John Osborne, Co-Founder, The Harbor Entrepreneur Center
- Sally Ehrenfried, Manager of Philanthropy and Volunteer Engagement, Blackbaud, Inc.

Attendees on the InterCity Leadership Visit from Wilmington included:

Neal Andrew - Andrew Consulting Engineers
Mary Baggett - Blockade Runner Beach Resort
Commissioner Jonathan Barfield - New Hanover County
Chris Boney - LS3P Associates LTD
Sterling Cheatham - City of Wilmington
Kelsey Claiborne – Wilmington Chamber of Commerce
Chris Coudriet - New Hanover County
Scott Czechlewski – Wilmington Chamber of Commerce
Wilma Daniels - Daniels Development
Commissioner Beth Dawson - New Hanover County
Brian Eckel - Cape Fear Commercial LLC
Albert Eckel - Eckel and Vaughan
John Elliot - Duke Energy
John Gizdic - New Hanover Regional Medical Center
Deb Hays - Intracoastal Realty
Councilwoman Margaret Haynes - City of Wilmington
Kim Hufham - Wilmington and Beaches CVB
Livian Jones - Newland Communités LLC
Frank Jones - Suburban Extended Stay
Hal Kitchin - McGuireWoods LLP
Mitch Lamm - First Citizens Bank and Trust
Stephanie Lanier - The Lanier Property Group
Mark Lanier - UNCW
John Lyon - AT&T North Carolina

Connie Majure-Rhett – Wilmington Chamber of Commerce
Tyler Newman - Business Alliance for a Sound Economy
John Perritt - New Hanover County Airport Authority
Grayson Powell - Coldwell Banker Commercial Sun Coast
Will Purvis - Liberty Health Care Management
Margaret Robison – Cape Fear Community College
Mayor Bill Saffo - City of Wilmington
Al Sharp - Pro-Bene LLC
Faison Sutton - Murchison, Taylor, and Gibson, PLLC
Colin Tarrant - Smith Moore Leatherwood, LLP
Ed Wolverton - Wilmington Downtown, Inc.
Commissioner Rob Zapple - New Hanover County

About the Wilmington Chamber of Commerce

The Wilmington Chamber of Commerce is the largest membership-based business association in Southeastern North Carolina. The Chamber’s mission is to ensure economic prosperity throughout our region. This is accomplished by: creating a diverse, inclusive organization that serves as a strong voice for businesses in the Greater Wilmington area; offering unique membership benefits, services and education; and challenging government officials to address long term community and business interests.

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