



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Wilmington Ranks Low on List of Best Cities for Manufacturing Jobs**

Wilmington, N.C. — Although manufacturing is seeing a resurgence nationwide, having added 647,000 jobs since 2010, Wilmington has not been a part of that trend. On the Best Cities for Manufacturing Jobs 2014 List published by *Forbes* magazine, Wilmington ranks 292<sup>nd</sup> out of 357 cities. In the Small Cities category, Wilmington's ranking is a paltry 157 out of 199. Several small North Carolina cities had higher rankings, including Greenville at 84, Rocky Mount at 128, and Hickory-Lenoir-Morganton at 135. Fayetteville came in just below Wilmington at 158.

Wilmington has slipped 12 spots on the Small Cities list since 2013, and 29 spots on the list of all cities. Over the past year, Wilmington has lost 2.7% of its manufacturing jobs. Manufacturing now accounts for only 7.3 percent of employment locally.

"From 2002 to 2012, New Hanover County lost nearly 2,000 manufacturing jobs, which accounted for 26% of our manufacturing base," said Chamber President & CEO Connie Majure-Rhett. "This is a troublesome trend because it's important that we have a diverse economy and jobs for everyone, whether you have a GED or a PhD."

The Pathways to Prosperity report from Garner Economics, commissioned by the New Hanover County commissioners, suggests business sectors that our region should target for recruitment. These include life/marine sciences research and development, high value office operations, and manufacturing industries such as aircraft assembly modification/maintenance, and precision manufacturing. The report was also critical of the New Hanover County Special Use Permit process, which doesn't specify the information that will need to be submitted to get a permit or the timeline to obtain one.

"Both of these reports make it clear that there are issues with attracting manufacturing jobs to our region, from lack of infrastructure on US421 where available industrial land is most plentiful to revising the SUP process so it doesn't scare away environmentally friendly businesses," said Majure-Rhett. "The current SUP process was put in place in 2011, so it did not cause these manufacturing job losses. But without revisions, the current SUP process will make it more difficult to replace the jobs that were lost."

Majure-Rhett added, "Most importantly, our community needs to better recognize the value of a diverse local economy and take affirmative action to adopt strategies that will allow us to be more competitive with our peer cities."

For more information, contact Connie Majure-Rhett at 910.762.2611 ext. 214 or [majure@wilmingtonchamber.org](mailto:majure@wilmingtonchamber.org).

***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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