



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Wilmington Shows Strong Improvement in Best-Performing Cities Rankings

Wilmington, N.C. — Wilmington has been ranked one of the most economically productive regions in North Carolina and 54th best in the United States, according to a report from The Milken Institute. Only two other North Carolina regions ranked higher than Wilmington in the 2016 Best-Performing Cities Report in the large cities category. Raleigh was rated as #6 in the report and Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia was #12. Asheville and Durham-Chapel Hill ranked behind Wilmington at #77 and #85, respectively. Wilmington's rating increased substantially from last year's ranking, moving 16 spots from number 70 to 54.

The economic report analyzed new jobs, wage and salary growth, and technology industry growth (including high-tech gross domestic product growth and concentration) in Metropolitan Statistical areas as defined by the 2010 census. Two of our area's strongest performing categories were job growth and high-tech GDP growth. Wilmington's job growth in 2014-15 ranked as #37 among large cities, while high-tech GDP growth between 2010-15 was 27th best.

"We are very pleased that Wilmington has shown such robust improvement and is one of the top three best-performing regions in North Carolina," said Wilmington Chamber Chairman Mitch Lamm. "This report shows that we have a strong and growing business community being led by high-tech jobs, which are being bolstered by the advocacy efforts of the Chamber and other economic development organizations, UNCW and CFCC, as well as the renewed focus by the City and County—at the Chamber's urging—on economic development and making it easier to conduct business. Reports like the Best-Performing Cities and the Chamber's 2nd Annual Regional Economic Development Scorecard that was released in November are providing real insights into where we stand competitively, and giving our leaders with the tangible data they need to focus efforts and address challenges."

One of those challenges, although it showed some improvement, is wage growth. Wilmington's wage growth from 2009-2015 ranked a lackluster 129th. Between 2013-2014, wage growth was much stronger, coming in at 43rd in the country.

The overall best-performing metro in the U.S. was San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA, and was unchanged from last year's rankings. The Milken Institute that produced the Best-Performing Cities Report is a nonprofit, nonpartisan California-based economic think tank that tracks economic productivity and trends across the U.S.

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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