

**For Press Inquiries Contact**

**Andy Hagy**  
**Nash County Economic Development Director**  
**252-462-2737**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Nash County Economic Development recaps first year and looks forward to a prosperous 2021.**

Nash County and the world faced an unprecedented year in 2020 due to the challenges created by the coronavirus pandemic. The emergence of the coronavirus sped up the need to increase cold storage and shipping capabilities, according to national site location consultants, which has well-positioned Nash County to serve these needs thanks to the county's location to the Research Triangle and proximity to all major markets along the I-95 corridor.

Nash County has been identified as an ideal location to accommodate the growth of e-commerce, cold storage and logistics companies, especially ones in the life science and food-beverage industries. This speaks strongly to the strength of the market and the opportunity for Nash County to expand and grow in 2021.

"Many elements are leading the way for continued economic growth and expansion in 2021 for Nash County. The county's prime location and abundance of county-owned industrial property, diverse workforce and partnership with Nash Community College for workforce training, a strong industrial base, accompanied by a low cost of living and doing business – have everything pointing to continued expansion of this strong base in 2021" said Andy Hagy, Director of Economic Development.

While the pandemic dominated the news in 2020, it is important to reflect on Nash County's many accomplishments that helped the department grow in its first year and lay the groundwork for even more accomplishments in the forthcoming year.

Some of the Nash County activities and developments from the past year, which were presented by Nash Economic Development Director Andy Hagy at the Rocky Mount Area Chamber Economic Summit in December, include:

- Developed a full-time, well-funded economic development department, with a staff of three professionals, to focus on business attraction and working with the county's existing businesses.
- Launched a new and professional economic development web site [www.selectnashnc.com](http://www.selectnashnc.com) and social media platform.
- Initiated a 12-month digital marketing outreach campaign featuring articles and videos through WRAL media, highlighting the many reasons why Nash County is where "Business Meets Opportunity". The campaign has already generated 20,000 views and 550,000 media impressions with its first three feature articles. One of the article highlights, "From textiles to manufacturing: the industrial evolution of Nash County", and featured John Judd, Plant Manager for Cummins. Nash County was also featured in three state and national business site selection magazines. The department also launched a new commercial real estate marketing site which received 49,700 media impressions on county-owned properties.
- Developed a Nash County Strategic Economic Development Plan with the help of Ted Abernathy, Managing Partner with Economic Leadership. Input was received from the chambers and stakeholders throughout the county and region. The final plan was presented and adopted in October 2020.

- Submitted the county's 142-acre I-95 NC Distribution Site to a rigorous site evaluation certification program through Duke Energy. The property was evaluated by a national site location consultant, Global Location Strategies, and certified as a Duke Energy Site Readiness Site.
- Experienced a significant increase in new single-family residential developments from 2019, with 354 new dwellings, for a total investment over \$63 million.
- Joined the Research Triangle Regional Partnership, a 12-county regional marketing group. The Research Triangle is home to some of the fastest growing companies and communities in the world; joining the RTRP allows Nash County to participate in and benefit from national and global marketing efforts by highlighting the county's location within the Research Triangle region.
- Worked closely with the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina to market the county's assets and align the county's efforts with our state partners. Nash County, with the support of EDPNC, announced 128 new jobs and \$33.7 million in new investment in 2020.
- The North Carolina DMV Headquarters began operations with over 400 employees and over 100 available jobs for the local workforce.
- Despite COVID, the county's partnership with the state and its own business recruitment efforts generated an extensive pipeline of 51 active projects. These projects spanned across many industry sectors and could bring a potential capital investment of \$1.8 billion dollars and 6,300 new jobs to Nash County. This activity was especially centered around the county's 62,500 square foot Middlesex shell building, which is expandable to 100,000 square feet, and the completion of the infrastructure and road in the 320-acre Middlesex Commerce Centre.

One of the greatest economic indicators for a county's economic growth is when an existing business expresses interest in expanding their facilities and retains or creates more new jobs in Nash County. The Nash County Economic Development Team has been busy working to assist many requests from the county's existing businesses, both small and large, who want to continue to grow and prosper in Nash County.

Despite the challenges of last year, 2020 was also an exciting and productive time for Nash County. According to Chief Executive magazine, while there are still many unknowns for 2021, business confidence is soaring and the Nash Economic Development Team continues to see an increase in new leads and requests for information.

"I believe 2020 has made Nash County stronger and has positioned the county to experience an exceptional year for job growth and capital investment in 2021", said Hagy.

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