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## Companies expanding to southeastern North Carolina featured in list of top 25 job-enriched projects

ELIZABETHTOWN, N.C. – Five projects within southeastern North Carolina made Business North Carolina's list of the [top 25 job-rich economic development projects](#) announced last year, including a project generated by North Carolina's Southeast.

"Our region is proving to be a cost-effective area for growing companies," said Steve Yost, president of North Carolina's Southeast. "We want to congratulate The Duplin Economic Development Commission, Wilmington Business Development, Fayetteville-Cumberland County Economic Development Corporation, and the Scotland County Economic Development Corporation for their efforts in working with the companies and projects."

The projects involve four counties: Duplin County, New Hanover County, Scotland County and Cumberland County. Three of the five projects that made the list were in the top 10.

Design Mode Cabinetry, a project generated by North Carolina's Southeast, [announced its plans](#) to move to Duplin County in June 2022. Incentivized by \$425,000 over the three years, the company will create 139 new jobs and invest \$13 million into the project. Design Mode Cabinetry chose a building in Warsaw to better serve the growing communities in eastern North Carolina and will renovate the building with the help of a \$375,000 grant from the N.C. Dept. of Commerce. The project ranked 25<sup>th</sup> on Business North Carolina's list.

"We were excited to announce Design Mode Cabinetry's plans to locate in Duplin County and we're even more excited to see so many other companies eager to grow within our 20 counties," said Megan Sellers, director of marketing and project management at North Carolina's Southeast. "It's a sign that there's more to come."

Third on the list was GE Hitachi Nuclear Energy, which specializes in making fuel for nuclear plants. It's partnering with TerraPower, a nuclear reactor designer, to expand its operations in Wilmington. GE Hitachi says it will boost payroll by \$63.5 million annually and 'help build the supply chain for a new generation of nuclear power plants,' according to Business NC. In total, GE Hitachi is investing \$85 million into the project and will create 485 new jobs in New Hanover County.

Also in New Hanover County, Live Oak Bank ranked at number 15 on Business NC's list. The bank announced in September 2022 that it planned to invest \$25 million to expand its operations and add 204 jobs to the area. It plans to hire analysts, underwriters, lending staff, info-tech professionals and others

with salaries starting at \$101,000. Live Oak Bank was given a state incentive of \$1.54 million over 12 years to support this project.

Home construction company NVR is investing \$33.9 million into a project partly in Cumberland County and creating 261 jobs as it expands. Co-located in Cleveland County since 2002, the project will build a 145,000 sq. ft. plant in Fayetteville. Nearly 60 positions will be added to its Cleveland County location in Kings Mountain. The project was incentivized by \$1.64 million over 12 years.

Fourth on Business NC's list is So-Pak-Co, a top supplier of military field rations (MREs) to the U.S. military. It also makes foods for popular national brands such as Bush's Baked Beans. Its expansion into Scotland County will bring 440 jobs to Laurinburg, involving an \$85 million investment. It received a hefty incentive of \$4.6 million over 12 years as part of a Job Development Investment Grant and will also receive \$2.2 million in road enhancements from NCDOT and \$585,000 in training support from the N.C. Community College System. According to Business NC, it's the largest-ever economic development win for Scotland County.

*A public-private partnership headquartered in Elizabethtown, N.C., North Carolina's Southeast's mission is to provide strong economic development leadership in southeastern North Carolina through innovative marketing and collaborative regional initiatives that will support the creation of new jobs, generate capital investment and secure new business locations. Member counties include Anson, Bladen, Brunswick, Columbus, Craven, Cumberland, Duplin, Hoke, Jones, Lenoir, Montgomery, Moore, New Hanover, Onslow, Pender, Richmond, Robeson, Sampson, Scotland and Wayne. For additional information, visit [www.ncse.org](http://www.ncse.org)*