

R.W. Garcia locates in Shell Building

During a down economy, taking an industrial development “risk” is uncommon. The Keith Corporation, however, took a leap of faith last fall and demonstrated their belief in Lincoln County by committing an industrial shell building to the Lincoln County Industrial Park. Alan Lewis, Industrial Development Partner with The Keith Corporation commented, “With the number of site visits increasing and the overall improvement in the business climate, we felt very comfortable pulling the trigger on our shell building last fall. However, we did not expect to enter into a lease before we poured the footings. We were fortunate to be in the right place, at the right time, with the right product. The market continues to validate the attributes of the Lincoln County Industrial Park.”

R. W. Garcia Company has announced plans to initially invest \$4.6 million and occupy the new 60,650 square foot manufacturing facility in the Lincoln County Industrial Park. The company will initially employ 25 workers with an average wage rate of \$10 per hour. Total investment for the project is expected to reach \$8.6 million and create 75 new jobs in Lincoln County.

Lincoln County Commissioners helped solidify Garcia’s investment in Lincoln County by passing an incentive grant on March 1, 2004 totaling around \$81,000. This grant will be paid out over five years in equal installments. “This announcement once again shows the commitment the Lincoln County Commissioners have for economic development, more jobs, and increased tax base,” said county commission chair, Jerry Cochrane.



**R.W. Garcia Building Rendering
Lincoln County Industrial Park**

The **R. W. Garcia Company** has been manufacturing all natural tortilla chips since 1984. Currently the company is headquartered out of San Jose, California and has a second operation in Tampa, Florida. “Lincoln County is a great location for our company in that it has a historically good workforce, great community support and it offers perfect access for our distribution needs, serving our east coast customers including Harris Teeter” stated R. W. Garcia president, Robert Garcia.

According to the company, “Garcia is committed to using only natural ingredients in all products. All R. W. Garcia tortilla products are made from stone ground corn and use seasonings which are 100% natural with no additives and preservatives.” Garcia’s tortillas include natural, organic blues, salsa blues, spicy barbecue and organic black bean garlic chips. The company also manufactures salad toppings and dips. R. W. Garcia products are sold worldwide in supermarkets, natural food stores and specialty food stores. Locally, Garcia’s products can be purchased at Harris Teeter.



Concepts

Rehabbing Old Mill Buildings

Give an old mill a second change. Although most older mill buildings are not suited for today’s large industrial operations, they are still an economic asset to the community. Existing mills can be overhauled to accommodate several small operations in an up-to-date facility.

Many folks can remember the “hey days” of the textile mills. These huge facilities were once filled with hundreds of workers. You could walk into the mill and immediately smell cotton and dye and hear the constant strumming of the weaving machines. Mill owner and workers would say these are the sounds and smells of money.

That was the “good old days,” but those times are becoming distant memories. The textile industry has taken a tremendous hit. Once very prosperous, now many textile mills are empty. They stand

alone as the mortar begins to crumble and the bricks fall in heaps to the ground. The question is what do we now do with old mill buildings?

How about giving these buildings a total makeover? Old mills can be subdivided into smaller spaces that can accommodate offices, manufacturing and distribution operations. They can also be remodeled into apartments and condos. Equip these facilities with the latest in communications technology. Restore or add new store front entrances and awnings. Refurbish existing hardwood floors to give the space a unique charm. Update the lighting and add new windows to allow natural light.

Rehabbing an old mill will give businesses the opportunity to house their operations in a modern day facility with charm and history. By updating and modernizing old mills, these facilities can become productive assets to the community again.



LEDA News

Welcome LEDA Members

Allied Mfg. Technologies—Maria Navarro
Belding-Hausman, Inc.—Roger Muckenfuss
Blum, Inc.—Michael Geis
Duke Energy—Paul Beatty
First Citizens Bank—Mort Wadsworth
LeeBoy-Rosco Mfg.—Bob Grail
LM&M Consultants—Martin Eaddy
National Fruit—L.D. Shockley
Robert Bosch Tool—Shane Jones
Robert Bosch Tool—David Lee
Tree Brand Packaging—Dean Trent
Warp Knit Mills, Inc.—Bob Clewell

Since our Winter newsletter the above companies and individuals have renewed or recently joined the efforts of LEDA by providing financial backing to make us a competitive and prosperous community. We salute your investment and trust in us to help Lincoln and Lincoln County economy to grow. Thanks for your continued support!

The LEDA Board of Directors held their annual **Board Retreat** in January at the Sportsman Lodge in Lincolnton. A new aggressive plan of work and budget were developed for the coming fiscal year.

The LEDA Board of Directors held their March board meeting at the **Florence Soule Shanklin Memorial Library** in East Lincoln. The new facility is a great added resource for Lincoln County residents. The board was impressed with the accommodations and extends a heartfelt thanks to the library staff for hosting.

Industrial Properties Committee

Plans are to expand the Lincoln County Parkway on the east side of Finger Mill Road in the Lincoln County Industrial Park. The water/sewer expansion to the airport is in discussion phase to allow for additional industrial growth around the airport.

Existing Industries Committee reports that existing industries visits continue toward the goal of 55. A special thanks to our board members who take time out of their busy day to go on these visits to keep abreast of the industries in Lincoln County and how LEDA can better serve them.

Changes are beginning to occur on our website www.lincolnedata.org, if you have not been there lately now is a good time to check it out!

LEDA Annual Meeting
Thursday, June 17th—Noon
Please Mark Your Calendars Now!



Spring 2004

Address Correction Requested

Rhonda Hunter, Editor

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Development


Free Thoughts


Beyond Lincoln

 Congratulations to **Blum's** Basketball team for winning the Lincolnton – Lincoln County Parks and Recreation's Industrial League Tournament! The team finished the season with a perfect record. Blum has taken home the tournament championship three years in a row.

 **R-Anell Homes** recently highlighted its custom home designs at the second annual North Carolina Home Builders Association 21st Century Building Expo at the Charlotte Convention Center. R-Anell recently won a national Model Home Design Award from the National Association of Home Builders.

 **Warp Knit Mills** will manufacture the material used in a new product line called Pain Checker. "Pain Checker products are pain relief products made with patent pending fabrics which use an exclusive mixture of conductive yarn with either stretch nylon or polyester and are worn or placed on the body." Contact Pain Checker Executive Director **Bob Clewell** at 828-312-3776 for more information on Pain Checker!

 Congratulations to the **United Way of Lincoln County** for exceeding this year's campaign goal by \$10,000! The campaign total for this year amounted to \$460,000. United Way of Lincoln County was 1 of only 8 United Ways to exceed their goal in North Carolina. A big "thank you" to the numerous United Way volunteers and those who gave generously to make this campaign a success!

 Announcing **Groundbreaking—The Keith Corp Shell Building**, Thursday, April 15th at 11:00 a.m. on the corner of Finger Mill and Hatchett Road in Lincoln County Industrial Park.

Business Appreciation Week

The week of April 11, 2004 has been designated in the City of Lincolnton and Lincoln County. This event, co-sponsored by **LEDA** and the **Chamber**, will be a weeklong celebration to thank business and industry for their presence and commitment to the community. LEDA encourages you to participate by attending one or all of the planned activities.

Highlights of the week will include industry tours at **Blum, Inc.** and **Robert Bosch Tool Corporation, Distribution Center**. **Blum**, located at 7733 Old Plank Road in east Lincoln County will host a facility tour on **Tuesday, April 13, 2004 at 10:00 a.m.** **Blum** is an international company that manufactures hinge, drawer and rollout systems as well as assembly devices for cabinetry.

Robert Bosch Tool Corporation, Lincolnton Distribution Center is located at 1980 Indian Creek Road in Lincolnton. This tour will give individuals the unique opportunity to view the packaging and distribution operations of hand tools and power tool accessories. The tour of **Bosch Distribution Center** will be **Thursday, April 15, 2004 at 2:00 p.m.**

In addition, all chamber members are invited to honor their staff at the **Annual Staff Appreciation Day Luncheon** on **Wednesday, April 14, 2004**. The luncheon will be held at the James W. Warren Citizens Center from 12:00 p.m. until 1:00 p.m. Guest Speaker will be Ms. Lin Mitchell. Ms. Mitchell will speak on "A Positive Attitude – Your Most Priceless Possession." To reserve please call the Chamber office at 704-735-3096.

Centralina Council of Governments

CCOG is one of seventeen COGs in NC. According to **Centralina**, the organization "serves as a conduit of grants, a staff resource for members, and a forum for local governments to address current problems and future needs." Member organizations consist of counties, cities and towns in Anson, Cabarrus, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Rowan, Stanley and Union counties in NC.

Centralina offers many services including the Centralina Area Agency on Aging, marine commissions and planning resources and services. One of Centralina's biggest concerns is the Centralina Workforce Development Board (WDB). The WDB's mission is "to provide a workforce development system in the region that results in a highly skilled, productive workforce. The vision of the WDB is "a successful and highly regarded workforce development/JobLink system supporting free enterprise and improving the quality of life by meeting and exceeding employment and workforce needs in the region."

The conduit for the WDB is local **JobLink Career Centers**. These centers offer a variety of services for employers and job seekers. Services include, career information and guidance, assessment, job listings, arranging interviews and placement, job training and education, displaced worker assistance, labor market information, case management, vocational rehabilitation, Job Ready, WorkFirst, recruitment and placement, hiring incentives and coordinate networking to a wide range of public and private employment services.

For more information on the COGS visit their website www.centralina.org or the Lincoln JobLink Career Center www.centralinaworks.com or call 704-735-8035.

