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# 2014: The State of Chatham County

## Exciting Job Growth & Other Economic Trends

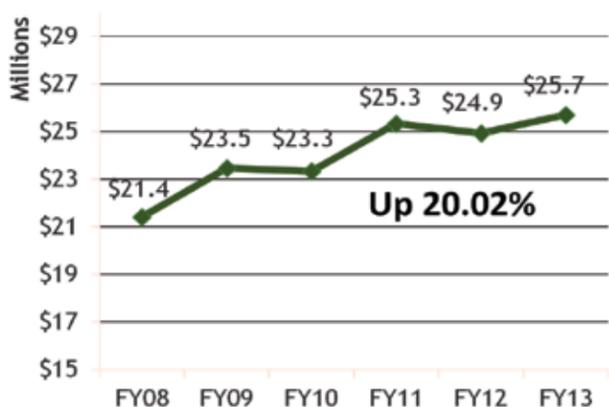
The creation of new jobs in Chatham County continues to be headline news that will have a positive ripple effect. The chart below shows the past two years (FY 11-13) compared to the previous two years, based on data provided by the Chatham Economic Development Corporation (EDC). It illustrates the upward trends for job creation, growth in annual payroll and the influx of capital investment by the private sector.

In FY 2013, many new jobs came from the expansion of existing businesses, such as Olympic Steel, Brookwood Farms and Lazar Industries. Major new employers coming included Walmart and Piedmont Health SeniorCare.

### POSITIVE INDICATORS

- 📌 **Mid-Year Optimism:** The report for the first six months of FY 14 exceeds targets, with 368 new jobs created representing \$11.5 million in payroll and \$13.25 million in new capital investments.
- 📌 **County Investment:** The amount of county funding per job created dropped from nearly \$2,500 per job in FY 09 to less than \$500 in FY 13.
- 📌 **Low Unemployment:** Chatham had the lowest unemployment rate in the state in October 2013 at 4.7% and was among the lowest throughout 2013.
- 📌 **Building Indicators:** For the first half of FY 14, building inspection revenues climbed 21% and excise fees (Register of Deeds) increased 19% over the same period a year ago.
- 📌 **"Most Positive" Audit Report:** The county's audit firm lauded the county's "most positive" audit report for FY 13. They cited revenue trends, sound capital planning and a healthy fund balance as key factors. Sales tax revenues increased 4% over FY 12 when most other counties reported little or no increase.

### Six-Year Spending History for School Operations



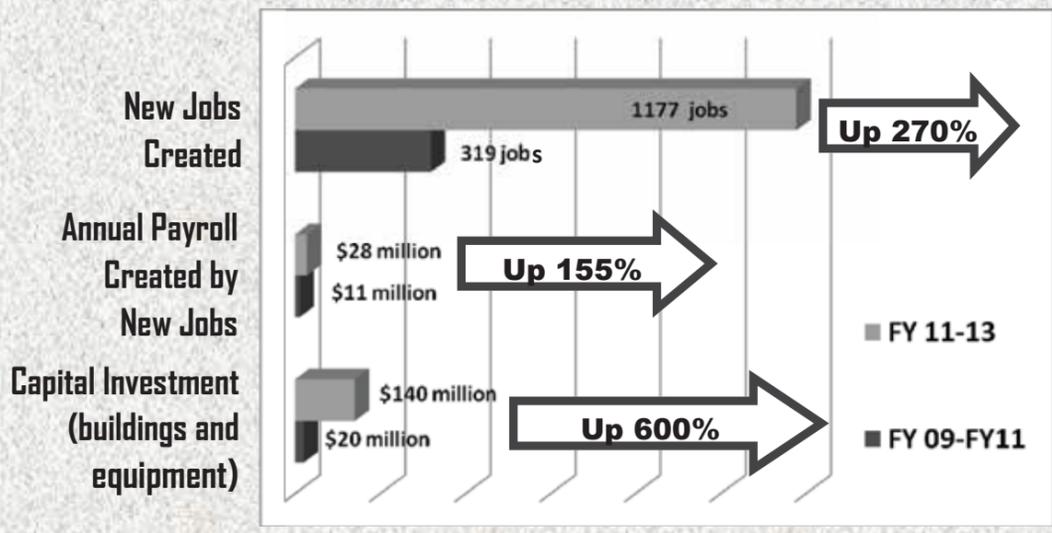
Does NOT include school capital expenses. FY11 includes a one-time payment of \$458,000 to charter schools.

### Megasites Coming

**CHATHAM-RANDOLPH MEGASITE:** Major progress has been made to certify the 1,800-acre Chatham-Randolph Megasite west of Siler City. It would be the first certified megasite in the state and has been touted as having great potential for an automotive plant.

**MONCURE MEGASITE:** The Moncure megasite, served by CSX railroad, is 1,049 acres with major road frontage. The site will be reviewed by Duke's Site Readiness Program. Next steps include assessments for development and a master plan for the site.

### Great News for Jobs and Business Investment: Four-Year History



### Updates on County Facilities

**HISTORIC COURTHOUSE:** April 20, 2013 marked the greatly anticipated Grand Reopening of the Historic Chatham County Courthouse, badly damaged by fire in 2010. More than 1,200 people toured the "grand lady" and visited the new Chatham County Historical Association Museum on the first floor.

**AGRI-CONFERENCE CENTER:** On Sept. 16, 2013, the Board of Commissioners approved a schematic design for a new Chatham County Agriculture & Conference Center. It will be built on a site just west of Central Carolina Community College's Pittsboro campus. Design above was produced by Hobbs Architects, P.A.

To build it the county set aside funds to pay the debt service on a loan with no tax increase required. Construction is expected to begin May 2014.



AGRICULTURE & CONFERENCE CENTER

### Fiscal Year 2012-13 Budget & Education Highlights

- 📌 **No Tax Increases:** The property tax rate has remained at 62.19 cents since FY 11.
- 📌 **School Funding:** In FY 13, county commissioners increased funding for school current expense by \$714,904 in FY13 to offset state budget cuts. They also increased funding for the supplement for teachers and teachers aids to provide a 2% increase.
- 📌 **School Facilities:** Projects completed in FY 13:
  - Updated heating and air conditioning systems in all high school gyms;
  - Revised traffic patterns at North Chatham Elementary to improve safety;
  - Completed multi-year bathroom renovations with hot water at 10 schools; and
  - Added more restrooms at Chatham Central's softball field as well as at the football fields at Northwood High and Jordan-Matthews High.
- 📌 **Putting Education to Work:** The Board of Commissioners is supporting a new regional partnership, Central Carolina Works, which will place academic and career advisors in all high schools. The goal is to increase the percentage of students taking advantage of a state-funded program that allows students to enroll tuition-free in college credit courses and jumpstarts their careers. The county is providing \$50,000 over two years.

### Protecting Natural Resources

**JORDAN LAKE:** For several years, Chatham County has had more stringent stream buffer and stormwater rules than the state's current Jordan Lake Rules, developed to protect the lake's water quality. The county opted to apply some of its water quality protections countywide. Even though the General Assembly delayed compliance with the state's rules for five years, the Board of Commissioners voted in 2012 to continue the county's water protective quality regulations.

**LOCAL CONTROL:** The Board of Commissioners has advocated for local environmental control, including urging legislative committees not to delay or repeal the Jordan Lake Rules and urging a state commission to reject compulsory pooling as part of any hydraulic fracturing rules.