

BEVERLY EAVES PERDUE
GOVERNOR



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
20301 MAIL SERVICE CENTER • RALEIGH, NC 27699-0301

June 14, 2011
Contact: Chris Mackey
Office: (919) 733-5612

**Gov. Perdue Highlights Education as key to NC's Manufacturing Success
in Keynote to Influential Policy Group**
Discusses Opportunities with Governors, Policymakers, and Business Leaders

ROANOKE, VA. – A different kind of manufacturing, fueled by North Carolina's emphasis on education, is helping drive the state's economy, Gov. Bev Perdue told the Southern Growth Policies Board Tuesday at its 2011 conference.

"I haven't had a conversation with a manufacturing business leader where they didn't ask about our education system in North Carolina," Gov. Perdue said. "Because manufacturing for us isn't just about furniture anymore – today it's about specialized airplane seats and aircraft components. We're not just making traditional textiles, we need folks today who can produce high-tech fabrics and lightweight components for wind turbines. Today, the jobs that come with these companies often require more than just a high-school degree."

North Carolina has been the most productive manufacturing state in the Southeast for over a decade. While the sector has been challenged by the recent recession, more than 430,000 people in North Carolina rely on a manufacturing job for their livelihoods. One in every five private sector jobs in rural North Carolina is in manufacturing.

Gov. Perdue told the crowd at the conference that, as North Carolina works to bring modern manufacturers into the state, she and her administration recognize that growing companies will always demand more advanced skills and training from the workforce. If North Carolina wants to lead in innovative manufacturing, or any sector, the state must invest in the research and development that produces new projects.

“We must invest in the brainpower of our workforce,” Gov. Perdue said. “That means no matter how hard the budget winds are blowing, we cannot retreat from education and the training it brings. For North Carolina, education is product development and workforce training.”

Perdue’s emphasis on education was echoed by other speakers such as Jeffrey M. Lacker, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond. He emphasized the importance of investing in “human capital,” in education funding that is balanced with both short term results, such as vocational training, and long term benefits.

“Investment in early childhood education is an area where research suggests substantial social returns over several decades,” Lacker said in comments that mirror the results of North Carolina’s nationally acclaimed Smart Start and More at Four programs.

Gov. Perdue pointed to a number of initiatives that are helping the manufacturing sector in this challenging economy. She first highlighted North Carolina’s nationally recognized community college system and its customized training programs. North Carolina community college campuses work closely with private businesses to customize classes to meet their industry needs.

In addition, Gov. Perdue profiled the Industrial Extension Service at N.C. State University. IES works with manufacturers all over the state to deliver better results in quality, productivity, safety, growth and more. She emphasized the need not to retreat from investing in education.

“Education and economic development go hand-in-hand,” said Gov. Perdue. “Going backwards on our commitment to education would be counterproductive to our job creation efforts.”

One Gov. Perdue-led initiative that was focused on was Biz Boost. Biz Boost started as job aversion/job retention pilot project in the Charlotte region during the recession. After a successful pilot project, Gov. Perdue took the initiative statewide and it is now aimed at helping many of the non-urban counties. In just 13 months of Biz Boost:

- 1,324 companies are participating
- 5,100 jobs created and retained
- Nearly \$70 million in capital formation
- 814 government contracts received for \$213 million
- More than 1/3 of participants are in manufacturing

Gov. Perdue said for the South and for America to maintain its competitive edge, “we must out-educate, out-innovate, and out-build the competition.”

###