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## Fayetteville-Cumberland County Economic Development Corporation

Board of Directors Meeting  
January 8, 2026 / 8:00 AM – 9:30 AM  
201 Hay Street, Suite 401-A  
Fayetteville, NC 28301

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FCEDC should purchase a table and identified members who may be interested in attending. A table is \$400 and individual tickets are \$35.

County Chairman Kirk deViere and Vice Chair Timothy Bryant are expected to attend. Chairman deViere emphasized the importance of FCEDC's representation at the event.

### **3.3. Proposed Understanding Data Centers Conversation**

Robert Van Geons outlined the details of the proposed Data Center Conversation scheduled for January 29, 2026. The purpose of the session is to offer an overview of data centers, including fundamental concepts, process understanding, and general industry context. John Geib, a retired Duke Energy employee, is available to serve as the presenter on this date.

The Board discussed the possibility of offering multiple sessions and inviting a broad group of participants, including stakeholders, board members, elected officials, and members of the press. The planned briefing would cover how data centers operate, what it means for our community, and the potential impacts (both positive & negative) associated with this type of development.

Robert Van Geons requested feedback from Board members as planning continues. County Chairman Kirk deViere emphasized the importance of ensuring that boards, stakeholders, and the press have accurate information, noting the value of equipping reporters, editorial writers, and online and social media journalists with context to shape informed coverage.

Members noted that elected officials may have questions they would like to ask outside the open session, and that multiple briefings may be best to accommodate schedules. It was clarified that this would not be a town hall but rather an informational briefing focused on transparency. Board members noted that the public session should take place in the evening.

Additional considerations included whether to involve a data center developer, academic representatives, or a panel; however, due to time constraints, it may be most effective to proceed with the current speaker.

### **3.3. Board Strategy Session**

Board Strategy Session is scheduled for January 23, 2026 at 3:00 P.M.

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### **4.0 Program of Work Update**

Robert Van Geons noted that FCEDC continues to maintain a full project pipeline with active updates and strong interest, despite turbulent conditions in the global economy and ongoing trade policy challenges. He emphasized that the team has had a busy year and anticipates a significant announcement early in the new year.

**4.1. Project Pipeline** – Rob Patton presented the Board with the Project Pipeline. Rob shared that FCEDC has generated 150 projects and hosted 40 project visits, well exceeding last year’s total of 128 projects.

### **4.2. Major Project Developments**

Robert reported that Project Forerunner visited during the Drone Competition (DCOMP). He also shared that Project Aero has moved to “Full Go” status and is progressing toward City annexation in the first quarter.

#### **Project Deep Dive:**

Rob Patton reported that Project Elsinore, a Canadian book distributor considering the 4800 Corporation Drive site, is expected to create approximately 175 jobs and would utilize a highly automated system.

Project Forerunner involves a Taiwanese drone battery manufacturer that participated in DCOMP and is exploring the development of a Taiwanese ecosystem locally. The company has a return visit planned for February 2026 and is currently focused on the Liberty Point #2 site.

Project Tight is a U.S. distributor of home décor products whose Phase II plans include manufacturing operations. The project is focused on the 3641 Legion Road site and is advancing on a rapid timeline.

Project IQ is a micro data center project under contract to purchase the Dunn Road spec building, with closing scheduled for the end of January. The project represents an estimated \$80 million investment.

Project Cookie is a recycler of unconsumed food that converts materials into animal feed. The company is considering the site at 382 Tom Starling Road and is currently working through County permitting processes.

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Robert noted continued activity across data centers—large, small, optioned, and conceptual. He reported that site inventory is at an all-time low and shared that efforts are underway to schedule a regional infrastructure update.

### 5.0 Reports and Analytics

**5.1. Marketing & Communications** – Brittany Odom highlighted Marketing Updates and Upcoming Events.

#### Marketing Updates:

- Posted “12 Days of Christmas” Campaign
- Published 2025 Year-in-Review flipbook
- Partnering with GFBJ on Power Breakfast Speaker – Save the Date: March 4<sup>th</sup>

#### Ongoing Projects:

- Working with ECU on hosting NCCED Course in May
- Building Existing Industry Spotlight Campaign
- Looking at domestic and international events to attend in 2026 (SelectUSA Belgium, Australia Shows)

#### Upcoming Events:

- January 29: NCSE Industrial Brokers Reception – Raleigh, NC
- February 26 – 27: SIOR Spring Carolinas Conference – Charlotte, NC (Sponsoring & Attending)
- March 1 – 3: IEDC Leadership Summit – Washington D.C. (Attending)
- May 3 – 6: SelectUSA Investment Summit – Washington D.C. (Attending with EDPNC)
- May 11 – 14: XPONENTIAL – Detroit, MI (Attending with EDPNC)
- July 22 – 24: Consultant Connect International – United Kingdom (Sponsoring & Attending)
- August 26 – 28: SIOR Fall Carolinas Conference – Palmetto Bluff, SC (Sponsoring & Attending)
- TBD Fall 2026: Dallas Consultant Event (Attending with EDPNC)

**5.2. Existing Industry Report** – Chela Scott reported that eClerx recently hosted a hiring event that FCEDC attended to support recruitment efforts. The company currently employs 403 staff members, including remote workers, and plans to hire an additional 100 employees to support a new client. eClerx provides customer service and call center

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operations for major clients such as Bank of America, Coinbase, and several cable service providers.

Chela also shared that Fay Block is exploring equipment upgrades and potential grant opportunities, with estimated electrical upgrade costs exceeding \$1 million. FCEDC met with the company's HR Manager and EDPNC's Jennifer Holcomb, who advised on suitable options for the scope of their project.

**5.3. Special Projects Updates** - Chela Scott presented the Board with the special projects updates.

**Black Voices Museum** – Robert reported that on January 5, 2026, the Project Leadership Team briefed the City Council during their Work Session, providing an update consistent with the presentation previously shared with the County. He reiterated the City and County's initial charge to the team and explained how the findings presented align with that directive. He noted that the project is nearing completion of its initial phase. Gensler presented the preliminary conceptual design, architectural renderings, and projected economic impact, emphasizing the museum's role as both a cultural and economic catalyst. Dr. Dauv Evans also introduced the nonprofit board members. Discussion with Council included next steps, private development opportunities, integration within the broader downtown landscape, and the importance of continued coordination between County and City leadership.

**Can Do Performance Financing Program:**

Robert discussed The Can Do Performance Finance Committee met to review seven eligible applicants with combined funding requests totaling \$1.9M.

One candidate was removed from consideration due to industry alignment and insufficient readiness for the program.

All eligible businesses will be referred to CEED for formal vetting to validate operations and support assessment of project viability.

**6.0. Items for Board Discussion** – Robert Van Geons presented the items for Board discussion.

**6.1. Strategic Planning** – Scheduled for January 23, 2026

**Next Gen Workforce Project-** Robert Van Geons provided updates from the previous

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meeting, noting ongoing efforts to build broader awareness through an expanded public relations program. This includes developing materials for students to share with parents, educators, and guidance counselors, as well as strengthening both internal and external media outreach, including engagement with the National Business Journal. A proposal is expected in the near future.

Ferd Irizarry inquired about Miller-Motte's involvement. Robert clarified that the current focus is on Healthcare Careers and Information Technology career pathways, with an emphasis on bringing employers to the table who can offer non-entry-level opportunities. These efforts aim to strengthen relationships and expand educational pathways.

Dr. Mark Sorrells highlighted the support of Samantha Wullenwaber, Executive Director of MCCOG Workforce Development, for an initiative serving disconnected youth.

Participants will attend a 4–5-day program in June designed to provide exposure, spark interest, and introduce additional career options.

**Innovation Nexus – 611 W. Russell Move** – Robert Van Geons provided an update on the building's progress and noted that no funds have been expended to date. Progress on the floors has been significantly delayed, and he is meeting with the general contractor this afternoon. The bathrooms, kitchens, and large meeting room are currently in design. FCEDC received the change-of-use permit on December 31. He hopes the space will be available in advance of the upcoming retreat.

### **7.0 Director's Round Table**

Robert Van Geons discussed preparations for the upcoming Strategic Planning meeting, including key conversations to address and topics directly tied to Board interests.

Members emphasized the importance of leveraging individual strengths, increasing public awareness, and participating in community events. Robert noted that identifying what the organization needs to succeed is a top priority.

Robert also discussed determining which members are willing to travel or attend events, as well as identifying personal interests and hobbies that may support specific outreach or engagement opportunities.

Members raised questions about whether Board updates should be presented as a one-year snapshot or in a monthly format. There was interest in having a concise, easily accessible summary that Board members can reference when asked about organizational progress. Robert referenced the balanced scorecard and agreed to develop a more streamlined version for the Board to use when sharing organizational updates.

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**Action:** Vice Chair Timothy Bryant made a motion to move into closed session. The motion was seconded by Ferd Irizarry.

**Vote:** Unanimous in favor.

**8.0 Closed Session**

**Action:** Vice Chair Timothy Bryant made a motion to end the closed session at 9:00 A.M. The motion was seconded by Ferd Irizarry.

**Vote:** Unanimous in favor.

**9.0 Adjournment**

**Action:** Ferd Irizarry made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Timothy Bryant. Chairwoman Kathryn Cox adjourned the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 9:02 A.M.

**Vote:** Unanimous in favor.

**Next Meeting: February 12, 2026**

# Marketing and Communications Report – February

## Marketing & Communications Updates

- Hosted Public Data Center Information Session – January 29<sup>th</sup>
  - Reached capacity at 68 registrations
- Attended NCSE Industrial Brokers Economic Briefing – January 29<sup>th</sup>
- Attended SelectUSA Roadshow in the Netherlands & Belgium – February 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup>

## Marketing & Communications Ongoing Projects

- Working with ECU on hosting a NCCED Course in May
- Building Existing Industry Spotlight Campaign
- Updating Marketing Strategy
- Reviewing TBJ, DCI, and Airport Advertising Proposals
- Coordinating Infrastructure Summit with Utility Partners & Mayors

## Upcoming Events:

- **February 26 – 27:** SIOR Spring Carolinas Conference – Charlotte, NC
- **March 1 – 3:** IEDC Leadership Summit – Washington D.C.
- **March 4:** Greater Fayetteville Business Journal Power Breakfast – Cape Fear Botanical Garden
- **May 3 – 6:** SelectUSA Investment Summit – Washington D.C. (Attending with EDPNC)
- **May 11 – 14:** XPONENTIAL – Detroit, MI (Attending with EDPNC)
- **May 19:** NC DOL Annual Safety Awards – Crown Coliseum
- **July 22 – 24:** Consultant Connect International – United Kingdom
- **August 26 – 28:** SIOR Fall Carolinas Conference – Palmetto Bluff, SC
- **TBD Fall:** Dallas Consultant Event (Attending with EDPNC)

## January Online Metrics

Facebook					
	Jan 2026	Dec 2025	Nov 2025	MoM Growth	YTD Growth
Page Followers	2,731	2,727	2,726	-	-
Page Reach	6,159	2,808	3,047	119%	-
Post Engagement	40	50	69	-20	-

Instagram					
	Jan 2026	Dec 2025	Nov 2025	MoM Growth	YTD Growth
Profile Views	541	465	540	16%	-
Page Followers	42	38	35	11%	-
Post Reach	217	131	248	66%	-

LinkedIn					
	Jan 2026	Dec 2025	Nov 2025	MoM Growth	YTD Growth
Page Followers	1,557	1,550	1,536	-	-
Impressions	3,687	5,014	2,346	26%	-
Engagement	170	483	327	65%	-

Twitter					
	Jan 2026	Dec 2025	Nov 2025	MoM Growth	YTD Growth
Followers	739	740	739	-	-
Impressions	179	532	227	66%	-
Engagement	2	7	3	71%	-

Website - Google Analytics					
	Jan 2026	Dec 2025	Nov 2025	MoM Growth	YTD Growth
Total Users	2,246	1,712	1,342	31%	-
Page Views	3,019	2,282	2,039	32%	-
Engaged Sessions	562	528	488	6%	-

Constant Contact					
	Jan 2026	Dec 2025	Nov 2025	MoM Growth	YTD Growth
Email Blast	1	1	1	-	-
Open Rate	42%	43%	47%	2%	-
Click-Thru	28	30	46	6%	-