

From: South Carolina Department of Commerce <marketing@sccommerce.com>
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Date: 11/7/2014 3:11:59 PM
Subject: Developing Home-Grown Talent

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November 7, 2014

In sports, a great team separates itself from the pack with the quality talent that resides on its bench. This practice of ensuring a deep bench also relates to economic prosperity. It's no secret that workforce development is a critical issue for the success of the economy in any state. In South Carolina, we are working hard to maintain a deep bench of talented workers ready to contribute as industry continues to thrive and expand in our state.

In October alone, two South Carolina communities released in-depth reports examining the competitiveness of their respective regions. Last month, the organization EngenuitySC, released their **Midlands Regional Competitiveness Report**, and the Charleston Regional Development Alliance and Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce partnered to **release their annual Regional Economic Scorecard**. Both reports emphasize the importance of matching local talent and workforce development offerings with the needs of industry.

As a state, preparing our citizens for the job market is imperative to our economic success. Few initiatives are having as much success in that endeavor as the Palmetto State's Apprenticeship Carolina program. On Thursday, **National Public Radio (NPR) featured the program** on its *Morning Edition* broadcast. The program, established in 2007, has seen a dramatic increase in participation in recent years. Today, nearly 700 companies are offering apprenticeship programs in South Carolina, up from 90 in 2007.

Ongoing efforts by our local communities and statewide initiatives, like Apprenticeship Carolina, are critical as we all work to maintain a first-class workforce and develop a deep bench of skilled workers.

Bobby Hitt, Secretary of Commerce

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Spotlight: Rural Infrastructure Authority

This week, the **South Carolina Rural Infrastructure Authority (RIA)** announced nearly \$6.2 million in grant awards, the first round of grants in Fiscal Year 2015. The grants will fund 20 water and sewer projects in 16 counties across the state. By providing financial assistance for needed infrastructure improvements, the RIA helps rural communities by enhancing quality of life for local residents as well as supporting new and existing business. Approximately 1,250 businesses and 9,000 residential customers are expected to benefit from this round of grants.

A second round of grant applications will be accepted through March 16, 2015 for infrastructure projects that solve public health or environmental quality problems or help to build local capacity to support economic and employment opportunities. To view the full list of grant recipients and to learn how to apply, visit www.ria.sc.gov.

Commerce Capture: STARTEK Grand Opening

With one snip of a ribbon, Governor Haley along with local and regional representatives, join **STARTEK Inc.** to official grand opening of the company's customer support center in Myrtle Beach. The company's investment of \$10 million create as many as 665 new jobs over a five-year period and result in an annual economic impact exceeding \$45 million, according to studies by economists at Coastal Carolina University. The company's new Myrtle Beach center is built in Towne Centre, one of the fastest-growing sections of Horry County. STARTEK is a global provider of business process outsourcing services with 11,000 employees worldwide.

*Photo courtesy of **STARTEK, Inc.***

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