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Date: 2/2/2015 2:44:13 PM
Subject: South Carolina's first statewide Applied Research Center to focus on supply chain

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- NEWS RELEASE -

For Immediate Release
February 2, 2015

South Carolina's first statewide Applied Research Center to focus on supply chain

*Center to leverage state's higher education research assets,
provide contract services to private sector*

CHARLESTON, S.C. - The [South Carolina Department of Commerce](#), in conjunction with the [South Carolina Research Authority \(SCRA\)](#), has established the first statewide Applied Research Center in Charleston, S.C. The center will focus on supply chain and logistics and provide applied research services to the private sector.

"As South Carolina continues to recruit world-class companies, gaining efficiencies in the supply chain becomes even more important," said Secretary of Commerce Bobby Hitt. "We have many assets in the state that are advantageous for logistics - our port and growing rail infrastructure among them. The Applied Research Center is another way we can boost our service to clients in this area."

The Applied Research Center for Supply Chain and Logistics is unique in that it will serve as a centralized point of contact for the state's business community, leveraging the research assets of Clemson University, the College of Charleston and the University of South Carolina to solve real-world business problems.

Peter Straub serves as the executive director of Applied Research Center for Supply Chain and Logistics. Prior to this position, Straub was manager of international transportation at Michelin North America, where he spent more than 15 years managing the tire-maker's complex transportation network on both the domestic and the international front. Before joining Michelin, he worked in logistics for TRW Vehicle Safety Systems, Inc. and held various operations and sales positions with Roadway Express.

"Where the Applied Research Center will bring real value to companies in the state is that the research will result in recommendations for immediate application, as well as for future enhancements, rather than addressing hypothetical situations," said Straub. "By focusing on solutions to real-world issues these companies are facing, we hope to help improve their efficiencies, which will hopefully result in cost savings and lead to better profitability. Ultimately, this will help them to be better positioned for continual growth in South Carolina."

During the start-up phase, the center will be developing pilot projects for a select number of large manufacturers in the state. After this initial stage, Straub anticipates establishing an application process whereby companies could request specific services through the center. Over a longer term, Straub expects to expand the center's mission to include research for manufacturing suppliers, logistics service providers, other sectors such as medical and eventually, to small businesses with supply chain challenges.

Importantly, the center also will serve as a workforce development tool, as students assisting in the research projects will be exposed to real-world business models and would have the potential to gain internship experience with the various companies involved.

While Commerce will offer strategic oversight of the program and serve as the center's fiduciary agent, SCRA will oversee management of contracts with the private-sector businesses, tapping SCRA's decades of expertise in managing applied research and development (R&D) for a variety of industries.

"SCRA is pleased to take a leadership role in this new statewide initiative," said SCRA CEO Bill Mahoney. "The supply chain and logistics center will leverage SCRA's capabilities in applied research and development, helping both South Carolina companies and universities gain traction and further economic growth."

The center is housed on the fourth floor of the Beatty Center, home to the College of Charleston's School of Business, located on Liberty Street.

While the supply chain and logistics center is the first to be established, there eventually could be Applied Research Centers in additional parts of the state, focusing on other competencies that boost competitiveness and efficiencies in the business sector.

Initial funding for the Applied Research Center was appropriated to Commerce by the South Carolina General Assembly during the 2012 and 2014 legislative sessions.

About S.C. Department of Commerce

As South Carolina's leading economic development agency, the Department of Commerce works to recruit new businesses and help existing businesses grow. Commerce has recruited world-class companies to South Carolina such as Boeing, Bridgestone, Continental, Monster.com, ZF Group, BMW and Google Inc. and also supports small and existing business, rural development initiatives and community development. Commerce partners with the [S.C. Technical College System](#) via [readySC](#) to support workforce training and recruiting, and with the [S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce](#), which provides worker training and employment opportunities within the state. South Carolina ranked first in the nation for attracting jobs through foreign investment, according to IBM-Plant Location International reports in both 2012 and 2013. The state won the Gold Shovel Award and the Project of Year Award from Area Development magazine in 2012. For more information, visit www.SCcommerce.com.

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