

From: South Carolina Department of Commerce <marketing@sccommerce.com>
To: Mayer, DougDougMayer@gov.sc.gov
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Subject: Fostering South Carolina's Knowledge Economy

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March 20, 2015

In his 1999 book, *Business at the Speed of Thought*, Bill Gates wrote, "Information technology and business are becoming inextricably interwoven." At the time that book was published, less than 45% of Americans used the internet. Today, that figure has ballooned to more than 85%, making Gates' statement even more profound. Technology, like business, doesn't sit still; both are constantly changing and evolving. To be successful in South Carolina, it's not enough just to adapt to the changing business and technological environments; we must promote them and foster a robust knowledge economy that enables entrepreneurship and technology-based economic development in our state.

That was the focus at [Wednesday's Summit on Information Technology](#), an annual event featuring a multitude of state and local officials as well as leaders in industry and education. The underlying theme of the day-long conference was collaboration. Only by working together can Team South Carolina successfully foster a positive business climate for innovation and develop a workforce prepared for the jobs of the future.

With the tremendous growth in IT and other innovative industry sectors, there truly is a remarkable energy in this state. Through our collaborative efforts as Team South Carolina, we can cultivate that energy and ensure a cutting-edge, thriving economy in the Palmetto State for many years to come.

Bobby Hitt, Secretary of Commerce

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Spotlight: South Carolina Work Ready Communities

There is no question that South Carolina has a top notch workforce - one of the finest in the country. That is why we have been able to attract businesses big and small from all over the world to locate here.

Maintaining a competitive workforce is a top priority for our state in terms of working toward full employment and also in terms of economic development. That is the basis behind the public and private sector collaboration that is the [South Carolina Work Ready Communities](#) (SCWRC) initiative.

The SCWRC helps individuals and businesses by assessing the needs of businesses in local economies and helping individuals gain the necessary skills to fill those needs. To become certified, a community must meet improvement targets in four areas: soft skills, graduation rates, public-private partnerships and WorkKeys assessments. In the end, the goal is for businesses to have qualified workers and for all individuals in South Carolina who want a job to have a job.

With all 46 counties in the state participating, and 22 already recognized for being certified, Commerce supports all efforts to maintain a skilled workforce and is proud to be a partner of the SCWRC.

Commerce Capture: Center for Applied Innovation

Three weeks ago, the [University of South Carolina](#) (USC) broke ground on its Center for Applied Innovation, a collaboration between the University, [IBM](#) and [Fluor](#). [Announced in November](#), the Center is part of an ongoing effort to prepare for a rapidly increasing number of jobs in the information technology field. Expected to open in 2016, the Center for Applied Innovation will provide application services to both public and private sector organizations with specialties in the areas of analytics and education industry solutions.

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