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# ***THE GROWING EDGE***

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Dear John,

As the holiday season approaches, we have a lot to be thankful for in Greater Statesville. Yes, we have taken some lumps in the past year, and the coming year will likely be one of continued challenges, but, relatively speaking, we are fortunate in many ways:



Many of our manufacturing companies have started hiring again. Employment levels are not yet where they were two years ago, but jobs are ABSOLUTELY on the rebound from the low point last February and March.

Several of our Greater Statesville businesses are discussing or implementing expansion plans. The article below highlights one major expansion already under way, and the GSDC is currently working with several other companies on projects that will launch in early 2010.

North Carolina was once again named the state with the best business climate in the nation, and we all know that within the state, Greater Statesville has one of the best business climates.

The formation of the NC Data Center Corridor opens a whole new chapter on business recruitment and job creation for the region.

With museum exhibition openings, art crawls, fine dining choices and entertainment venues, downtown is once again becoming the heart and soul of the Greater Statesville community.

The development of the Troutman-Lake Norman Business Park and Barium Springs Technology Park will ensure high-quality site locations to support future growth in advanced manufacturing.

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**\*NEW\***



**In the News**

Finally, as we get ready to celebrate Thanksgiving, here are a few fun facts about the holiday, as gleaned from Nathaniel Philbrick's excellent book, [Mayflower](#).

We are taught in history class that the Pilgrims were seeking religious freedom. That's something of an understatement. Some of the Pilgrims faced fines or imprisonment in England, where King James (yes, that King James) considered them heretics.

Plymouth Colony was actually the Pilgrim's second attempt at creating a religious-based community. Their first attempt was in Holland where restrictions on the practice of religion were less strict than in England. Nonetheless, the Pilgrims ran afoul of the Dutch authorities and were asked to leave.

Two ships originally set sail for the Americas; the Mayflower and the Speedwell. The Speedwell, however, proved to be so leaky that the captain twice had to turn back to England after just a few days at sea. There is some evidence that the Speedwell's crew purposely sabotaged the ship because they did not want to make the treacherous Atlantic crossing. Neither of the vessels or crews had ever undertaken such a journey before. In fact, during the ship's regular trade voyages to continental Europe, they were rarely out of sight of land.

This loss of the Speedwell was a major problem, since the month delay made it impossible for the Pilgrims to arrive during the relatively warm late summer/early fall, as planned, and also decreased by one-third the supplies they could bring with them.

The Mayflower was a cargo vessel and there were virtually no passenger accommodations. The 102 Pilgrims wedged themselves in between the stores and the equipment in the hold of the 90 foot by 25 foot ship as best they could. This would be painfully uncomfortable for a three hour tour in good weather. The Pilgrims were at sea for a stormy 66 days.

The Pilgrims were originally chartered to colonize an area near the mouth of the Hudson River, but ran off course and landed far to the north. After attempts to sail south along the coast were thwarted by navigational hazards and weather, the Mayflower's captain essentially said, "this will have to do." The famous Mayflower Compact was drawn up because, technically, the London Company, who had authorized the colony under a patent agreement with the English government, did not have authority over the area where the Pilgrims landed.

The first Thanksgiving was more of a surf-and-turf affair than our current interpretation; featuring deer, lobster and mussels. There is mention of "wild fowl," but wild turkeys are not especially plentiful in the coastal part of Massachusetts, so this fowl was more likely duck, pigeon or (gulp!) swan.

However you celebrate it, have a happy Thanksgiving!

Best regards,

John

As always, feel free to email me with news about your company's events, awards, new products, honors, etc. and I will include them in an upcoming issue of *The Growing Edge*.

[jmarek@greaterstatesville.org](mailto:jmarek@greaterstatesville.org)

Site Selection Magazine again named North Carolina as the state with the Best Business Climate in the nation in their [November issue](#).

The state was noteworthy in many areas including its higher education infrastructure. This was the eighth time in nine years NC has been cited for Best Business Climate by the publication.



## Iredell Manufacturers Council Holds Inaugural Meeting

**Countywide initiative draws more than 40 companies to "organizational" luncheon and planning session**

There are "good problems" and "bad problems." Having to make a last-minute change of venue because registered attendance for a meeting is almost twice what the organizers anticipated definitely falls under the "good" category. On Monday afternoon, November 16th, 50 participants representing 41 different companies met for lunch at the town hall in Troutman to discuss the future of manufacturing in Iredell County.



The companies represented ran the gamut from large international companies like NGK and Engineered Sintered Components to well-known consumer products manufacturers like Carolina Beer & Beverage to established companies that are new to the area like Kook's Custom Headers. To a man (and woman), however, the message was the same; area manufacturers need to work together to address the challenges they face in today's ultra-competitive business environment. After a brief introduction and welcome from Robert Carney of the MSIEDC and John Marek of the GSDC, the meeting was facilitated by Mitchell College's Betty Scipione, who prompted the audience for their input on organizational matters such as meeting frequency and format, as well as substantive issues that need to be addressed in future sessions. Some of the areas of need/interest raised were:

- Info on exporting
- Finding higher skilled employees
- Info on available grants such as Incumbent Workforce Development Program and Duke Energy Grants
- Info on existing business as well as new business development

It was agreed that a quarterly meeting schedule would be adopted, with the next meeting scheduled for February of 2010. Regarding format, an agenda which includes networking time, a speaker with specific expertise in an area of interest to manufacturers and a profile/plant tour of a "host" company was suggested. It was also suggested that a business card exchange be conducted among the participants present, and that a website be established for the group. More details on the implementation of these ideas will be published in the next Growing Edge.

## Engineered Sintered Components Promotes Advanced Manufacturing Capabilities

**Troutman-based automotive parts supplier expects strong rebound from recession**

Troutman-based Engineered Sintered Components (ESC) served as host company for the inaugural



Iredell Manufacturers Council meeting on November 16th. The company, which celebrates its 20th year of operation in the Greater Statesville community in 2010, was a natural choice as host for the first meeting, according to GSDC Director of BRE & Marketing John Marek. "We wanted a company that demonstrates a high degree of technical excellence in advanced manufacturing, as well as one that has implemented a Lean manufacturing program and has been assisted in that by the state and the community college system. Further, it helped that ESC's Troutman location is a good central spot in the county, so manufacturers from both Mooresville and Statesville had just a 10-15 minute drive."

ESC is a manufacturer of powdered metal components, primarily for the automotive industry. Their largest customers are Ford and Toyota, so, while business has been slowed the past 18 months by the downturn in the economy, prospects for long-term growth appear very good.

Powdered metal technology is a forming and fabrication technique in which metal powder, created by pulverizing metals into many small individual particles, is injected into a mold or passed through a die to produce a weakly cohesive structure (via cold welding) very near the dimensions of the object ultimately to be manufactured. Pressures of 10-50 tons per square inch are commonly used. The end part is formed through high temperature during which self-welding occurs -- a process known as sintering.

Parts produced by ESC are typically found in the drivetrain and braking systems, and include; valve seat inserts and valve guides, ABS sensor rings, gerotors and compressor parts. ESC is owned by Sumitomo Electric and Eaton, making it a truly international company. In fact, five different languages can sometimes be heard on the shop floor!

While many companies are outsourcing production or moving facilities overseas, ESC remains highly committed to the United States and to Greater Statesville in particular. Company President Ryuichiro Goto noted during his comments on Monday that the type of advanced manufacturing which ESC represents needs to be "close to the customer" and cannot easily be relocated.

## Commercial Vehicle Group Announces New Investment and Jobs

**Ohio-based company investing \$1.7 million and creating 45 new jobs at Statesville facility**

Truck seating and interior systems manufacturer Commercial Vehicle Group has announced that it is investing more than \$1.7 million in its Statesville facility and will create approximately 45 new jobs there by year's end. The expansion resulted from new business in its truck seating segment and from a strategic realignment which relocated and consolidated certain types of manufacturing processes at the Trim Systems facility located on Salisbury Highway, 2 miles from I-77.



With facilities in the United States, Mexico, Australia, China, Belgium, the UK and the Czech Republic, Commercial Vehicle Group is a global leader

in commercial vehicle system solutions for the heavy duty truck, construction, agricultural, industrial, marine and specialty industries.

## Statesville Owls Announce Detailed Plans for Baseball in Statesville

**Nonprofit organization wants to emphasize commitment to the community**

*Following is a letter from Statesville Owls President Jeff May:*

As the Statesville Owls College Baseball Club, our commitment is to provide a safe and life changing environment for our youth through baseball while promoting the Greater Statesville community and providing a competitive collegiate baseball experience to be enjoyed by the entire family.



Our goals are:

- The development of youth baseball in the Greater Statesville area through camps and seminars available to all who want to participate regardless of their economic environment and -- although there will be a participation fee -- no child will be turned away.
- To offer college players from around the country the opportunity to become part of the Statesville community while they hone their baseball skills on the field and life skills off the field.

Although the collegiate players primary task will be to promote Greater Statesville and the Owls as a vibrant community and winning organization, all players will be required to teach the importance of education and point our community youths toward a positive lifestyle through sport. Your Statesville Owls players and coaches will work with young players and organizations, helping to develop their baseball skills and allow them to further their dreams of playing baseball in middle school, high school and college. If we can touch one child and make a positive impact in their life our mission will be complete. Our promise is to instill players with a love for the game and inspire all to work hard in school and on the field to reach a level of skill that will provide them with the tools to further their imaginings beyond baseball while excelling in the classroom.

During the seven week season the colligate team will play fourteen (14) home games at Statesville Senior High School. Since your Owls are a registered 501c3 nonprofit organization we will be reaching out to the business community looking for sponsors in an effort to raise funds to support the Owls collegiate team, youth programs and improve the High School baseball facility.

The Statesville Owls will also be working closely with the Major League Baseball RBI (Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities) program in bringing baseball to minority youths in Statesville, Troutman, Mooresville and Hickory.

Our charter is to expand baseball beyond the field, bringing baseball to all that want to learn the importance of sportsmanship, leadership and

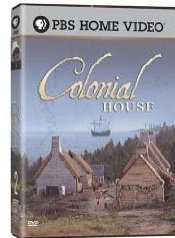
education.

For more information about your Statesville Owls please visit our website at [www.statesvilleowls.net](http://www.statesvilleowls.net).

## Just for Fun

### PBS's Colonial House provides a slice of 17th century life

Looking for something different to do this Thanksgiving -- I mean seriously, are you going to actually watch the Detroit Lions? You might take a look at PBS's fascinating Colonial House. This short-run television series from 2004 was an exercise in vicarious "experiential history," intended to recreate daily life in Plymouth Colony in 1628 along the lines of the recreated Plimoth Plantation. It brought home to viewers the rigors of life for colonists in the early seventeenth century. The show was videotaped in an isolated area near Machias, Maine and featured colonists and several members of the current Passamaquoddy tribe of Maine. Historians from Plimoth Plantation and Maine historian and archaeologist Emerson Baker of Salem State College helped to make the setting as accurate as possible.



You can visit the PBS Colonial House page here. Or buy it from Amazon here.



The Greater Statesville Development Corporation (GSDC) is a public-private partnership of local governments and business leaders. Our purpose is to promote the industrial and commercial development of the City of Statesville, the Town of Troutman and the surrounding area of upper Iredell County, North Carolina. We provide a variety of services and assistance to help locate, maintain and expand new and existing businesses and industries in our area.

View available [sites and buildings](#).

View [resources](#) for existing industry.

Learn more about the [Committee of 100](#).

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