



WestPark Business and Industry Center Tops the List as Best Large Industrial Site in Great Freight Rail Sites in North Carolina Event, Hosted by NC Railroad

As a part of its *Progress in Motion* Forum the North Carolina Railroad Company (NCR) challenged local communities to identify and submit sites for recognition in the, Great Freight Rail Sites in North Carolina, WestPark Business and Industry Center, of Duplin County, was selected as a Best Large Industrial Site site. Recognizing the rapid disappearance of rail-served sites because of our state's rapid growth, the challenge was designed to provide a learning opportunity for those with properties they think are suitable for consideration as rail industrial sites to get professional input.

Working closely with state, local and regional economic developers, NCR engaged site consultants McCallum Sweeney Consulting to evaluate rail sites submitted from across the state. " We were pleased to have received 34 entries from local economic development organizations," says Richard Wiley, Senior Consultant for Economic Development for NCR. " The economic developers really stepped up and took advantage of this opportunity to showcase properties from their regions. Rail-served sites are extremely important to the state's economic growth. Last year numerous new industries located in North Carolina because we had available sites with access to rail, creating hundreds of jobs."

The categories in the Great Freight Rail Sites event were Large Industrial Rail sites, Small Industrial Rail sites, Distribution Center sites and Best Presentation. The sites were judged by such criteria as proximity and access to rail lines, roads and air service, the presence of utilities such as electricity, natural gas, water, and actual usable acreage. The sites could be on or near any railroad in the state— Norfolk Southern, CSX, or one of the 21 short line railroads across NC.

McCallum Sweeney Consulting provides site selection services and economic development consulting to businesses and organizations worldwide. The Progress in Motion Forum brought together those with an interest in North Carolina's rail industry and its role in the state's transportation system and economic health. Held in Raleigh on May 10 and 11th, the forum hosted experts from across the state and country to share ideas and information.

The North Carolina Railroad Company owns and manages the 317-mile rail corridor extending from Morehead City to Charlotte. The railroad carries 60 freight trains and eight passenger trains daily. NCR is the state's oldest corporation and remains at the forefront of rail improvements

and partnership development to promote jobs and rail-served industry across the state. It touches nearly a quarter of the state's economy. END