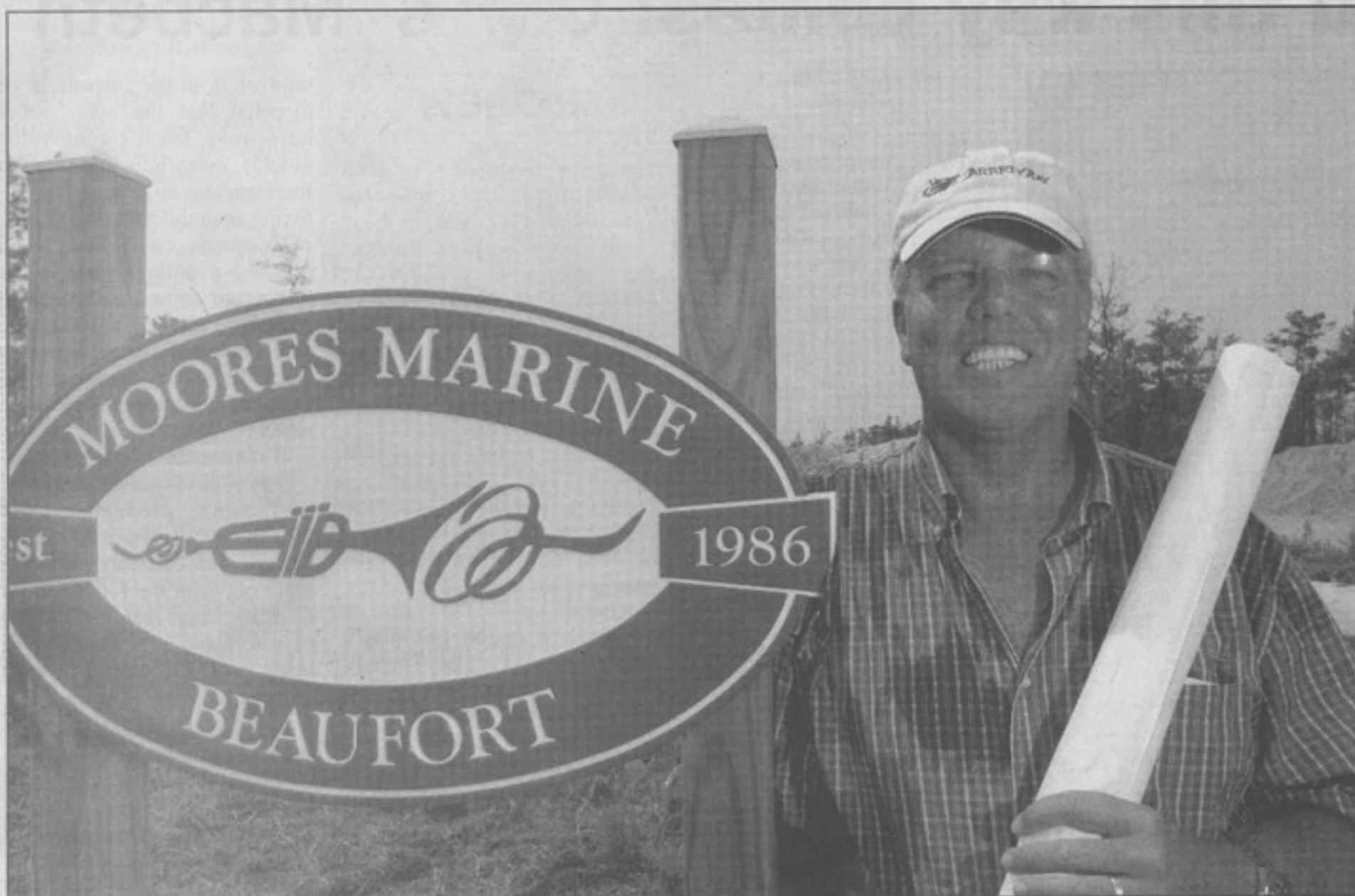


Business Pulse



Jim Moores, president of Moores Marine gets ready Tuesday for a groundbreaking ceremony set for today at the company's construction site at Jarrett Bay Marine Industrial Park north of

Beaufort. The company, which restores classic high-end wooden yachts, is one of several Florida-based marine services firms that has invested in Carteret County. (Dylan Ray photo)

Florida takes notice of Tar Heel industry recruitment efforts

BY MARK HIBBS
NEWS-TIMES

MOREHEAD CITY — North Carolina's recent successful efforts to lure industry — especially boatbuilders and other marine-related firms — from Florida has raised attention in newspapers and the governor's office there.

The Tar Heel State's incen-

have included some attractive incentives packages, including tax breaks and grant awards. But in Carteret County, incentives have not been much of a factor, said Dave Inscoe, director of the Carteret County Economic Development Council (EDC).

He said company officials who are considering relocation are finding plenty to like about

erty lost, industry must deal with escalating insurance costs.

But Florida may be ready to up the ante. Florida Gov. Jeb Bush in June announced nearly \$237,000 in grants intended to keep boatbuilder Sea Ray Boats and its 644 full-time jobs from leaving Flagler County.

The money will be used for roadway, sidewalks and drain-

see more companies like Moores Marine and I think what is beneficial is that they attract other companies in the supply and service areas, so instead of getting one Chriscraft, we get a lot of companies that attract more related firms," he said.

North Carolina's efforts to lure these businesses are not based simply on cash incentives,

tactics have targeted the marine industry, a strategy that has paid off, with several recent examples in Carteret County.

Moore's Marine Inc. of Riviera Beach, Fla., near Palm Beach, the most recent firm to announce a move to Carteret County, was set to hold a groundbreaking ceremony today for its shipyard at Jarrett Bay Marine Industrial Park north of Beaufort.

The company restores high-end classic wooden boats, specializing in Trumpy yachts.

Company owner Jim Moore's said operations in Florida will continue and the new facility will provide a central East Coast location. But his plans mean more business and marine-industry jobs are going to come here instead of Florida.

Recently, several newspapers in the Sunshine State have included stories about how North Carolina is "eating our lunch."

"Their closer is cash: North Carolina and states around it offer millions of dollars in financial incentives to convince manufacturers to relocate or expand," reporter Kevin McQuaid recently wrote in the Sarasota, Fla., *Herald-Tribune*.

Reporter Doreen Hemlock wrote recently in the *South Florida Sun-Sentinel* of Fort Lauderdale that North Carolina "goes the extra mile for boat builders" by providing specialized assistance in land acquisition, worker recruitment and other investments.

The key problem is that Florida firms are struggling to find and keep skilled workers. Employees have trouble finding affordable housing in the high-priced real estate market.

As director of N.C. Marine Trades Services, Mike Bradley provides confidential assistance and support to business owners interested in what the state has to offer. The program is part of the Small Business Technology Development Center (SBTDC), and a business development service of UNC in partnership with the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Mr. Bradley said the Florida issue is almost all related to the availability of manpower. Companies are leaving to find skilled workers.

"The reason is these companies have been there in Florida a long time in cost-prohibitive areas, and the people who work there can't afford to live nearby.

North Carolina's successes

They are nearly always impressed with the quality of life here and the skill level of the workforce, which is due in large part to the educational programs such as the Marine Training and Education Center (MARTEC) at Carteret Community College, according to Mr. Inscoe.

"MARTEC is playing a huge role," Mr. Inscoe said. "It shows how North Carolina and Carteret County are gearing up to support the industry."

But the county's assets alone would probably not be enough to entice these companies if not for the troublesome climate for businesses in Florida. There, real estate development is driving marine businesses away. The waterfront properties they occupy there have become far too valuable and pressure is building to redevelop industrial sites.

"Waterfront issues are huge, from what they're telling us," Mr. Inscoe said.

Jim Moore's of Moore's Marine was facing eminent domain issues as the community eyed the area for redevelopment, Mr. Inscoe said.

"He saw the handwriting on the wall and decided to get out while he could get out," he said.

Another factor has been the toll of recent hurricanes in Florida. In addition to the prop-

help retain those jobs, which contribute more than \$21 million to the economy there.

But the efforts to keep businesses in Florida may not be enough to stem the tide. Government spending there is not going to solve the problem, Mr. Inscoe said.

"It's much more complex than that. The issues of water access and working waterfronts play into it and the values of waterfront properties in Florida. The basic business climate in North Carolina — based on the results we're seeing — there must be some difference in the business climate," he said.

A double-whammy got attention in Florida recently with the announcements that western North Carolina would be the new home for a Chris-Craft Corp. boat plant and an Indian Motorcycle Co. facility that will create more than 800 jobs and pump an estimated \$566 million into the state's economy by 2016.

But officials say smaller but related marine service firms are a better fit for this area. Smaller companies such as Moore's Marine will attract related firms, providing a much more stable industry than one large operation. Mr. Bradley described the growth as "a cluster effect."

"I think Carteret County can

"North Carolina is the only state with a marine trades program. I work for the state on behalf of businesses here and those considering coming in," Mr. Bradley said.

County industrial recruitment efforts are also focused on marine trades. The EDC, which is currently wooing at least one other company from Florida, recently participated in a study that recommended that now is a good time for the state to move forward on creating another marine industrial park, such as the one as Wanchese. The study showed that the marine industry is growing and there are plenty of opportunities for North Carolina.

The next step is to identify suitable sites for such a complex.

"Of course, we would hope to be able to present some sites that have potential here in Carteret County," Mr. Inscoe said.

The EDC, in cooperation with the college, will once again sponsor a booth at International Boat Exposition, in the fall. The largest business-to-business tradeshow in the world for the marine industry yielded four or five significant leads last year.

On the Web:
ncwaterways.com

BUSINESS HAPPENINGS

Two join bank advisory board

Dan Reitz, CEO and co-owner of Jarrett Bay Yacht Sales north of Beaufort, was recently named chairman of the Sound Bank Morehead City Advisory Board, the bank announced this week.

Two new advisory board members were also announced this week, Geraldine Delu and Patrick McLaughlin.

Ms. Delu is a real estate developer and president of First Commercial Properties and the Ocean Club Resort, Spa and



REITZ

Conference Center in Indian Beach.

Mr. McLaughlin is a chiropractor and owner of McLaughlin Chiropractic of Morehead City.

"We welcome Jerry and Patrick to our Sound Bank family," said bank President and CEO Phil Collins. "They are extremely busy people, and we appreciate their willingness to serve on our advisory board."

Sound Bank is a full-service community bank with offices in Morehead City and Cape Carteret and a loan production office in New Bern. It is the only bank home based in Carteret County.

Jennifer Smith joins CVC staff

MOREHEAD CITY — Jennifer M. Smith, O.D., recently joined the staff at Carteret Vision Center.

She started July 24, joining

Dr. John Scibal, the owner of the center.

Dr. Smith was born and reared in Burnsville. She graduated with honors from Appalachian State University in 2001 with a Bachelor of Science degree in biology and minors in chemistry and music. She obtained her doctorate of optometry from the University of Alabama, Birmingham, in 2005.

During her clinical education, she spent time at Carteret Vision Center as an intern. She then went on to complete a one-year residency in pediatric optometry and vision therapy at the Southern California College of Optometry in June 2006.

She said she is excited about returning to the Crystal Coast and becoming more involved with the community.

Her husband is the pastor of Broad Creek United Methodist Church.