



Darlington County
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP



A Year in Review for the I-20 Industrial Park

Since the ground-breaking on October 1, 2014, the I-20 Industrial Park has come a long way. Over the past year, the majority of the land has been cleared and the drainage ditch has been graded. The roadway has been paved and striped. The next phase will include some landscaping and the construction of a permanent sign at the entrance to the park. A ribbon cutting

is expected once the final touches are complete, likely sometime in the spring of 2016.

At the August 2015 meeting of the Darlington County Economic Development Partnership, board members voted for their top choices for the new street recently paved through the I-20 Industrial Park. After review by the Planning board, the winning name is Partnership Drive, considered a fitting choice after the joint efforts involved in getting the industrial park to completion.

Also under way is the certification of the I-20 Industrial Park through McCallum Sweeney which is expected before the end of 2015. The certification process involves exhaustive records from a title search, wetlands surveys, utilities surveys and other information gathering essential to selling the property for manufacturing use. "We're really excited to finally have a product that we can invite people to come look at," said Mr. Frank Willis, executive director for DCEDP. "Now we have something we can show prospects. We finally got real dirt and land that we can show, and this is what we need to compete."

The Park is generating interest as it nears completion and it has been submitted to several prospects as a potential location for development. Interested companies can contact Mr. Frank Willis at fwillis@dcedp.biz for more information on locating at the park.

For more information, click [here](#).

Darlington County has achieved certification through the South Carolina Work Ready Communities initiative. Darlington County has met all needed workforce and education goals including earning National Career Readiness Certificates (achieved through WorkKeys® testing), meeting or exceeding the three-year graduation rate average or improvement percentage, and engaging business support.

According to Cheryl M. Stanton, Executive Director of the S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce, the state has seen record high employment over the past year. She goes on to say this certification will further pave the way to filling open job positions with qualified workers. "Seven more counties gaining certification illustrates just how committed South Carolina is to developing a world-class workforce."

"We are well on our way to becoming the nation's first certified work ready state, and that is a huge reason to celebrate in every part of South Carolina," Gov. Haley said. "This is a perfect example of Team South Carolina coming together to prove how committed we are to training a highly skilled workforce that is capable of meeting every need a company in our state may have."

Counties who receive this designation will receive "gold" status on the Work Ready Communities website. Darlington County is pleased to have achieved 100% of its goals, creating an environment conducive to business and workforce development. Jim Hill of Florence Darlington Technical College will represent the county to accept a plaque at the third annual ACT Work Ready Communities Symposium in late September in Charleston, SC.

Tech Foundation Park certification is complete

In April of this year, Darlington County reached a new milestone in economic development with the announcement of the Darlington County Technical College Foundation Park being named a South Carolina Certified Industrial Park by the Department of Commerce. The "Certified" designation is the result of an exhaustive three-step process that took over a year to complete.



"In simple terms, site certification allows potential industries to know that a site, such as the Tech Foundation Park, is project ready. The process covers all of the due diligence that a prospective company may need completed before it can buy a site for development," explained Frank Willis, executive director of the Darlington County Economic Development Partnership.

A certified site such as the Tech Foundation Park provides prospective companies with detailed property, geotechnical, utility, environmental, ownership, transportation and permitting research in a single package allowing them to save time, money and risk during the site selection process.

The Tech Foundation Park is located at 122 Palmetto Road in Darlington County and has 121 acres available for development. The Park has access to rail and Highway 52 near exit #164 on I-95.

For more information, click [here](#).

Sonoco's Grand opening of R&D facility

Sonoco will be holding an open house to showcase its

newest facility, the iPS Studio, on October 27, 2015 at its Hartsville campus. The new center for packaging innovation is a unique space designed to encourage curiosity, collaboration and creativity.

The new facility is a result of a joint effort between Sonoco, the Darlington County Council and the South Carolina Coordinating Council. On June 22, 2015, the Darlington County Council gave unanimous approval to a proposed agreement between the county, Sonoco and the South Carolina Coordinating Council to establish performance and criteria in awarding a \$300,000 Rural Infrastructure Grant to Sonoco to assist in the construction of a nearly \$11.9 million research and development facility for consumer packaging products in Hartsville. The funding subsidized infrastructure costs for the state of the art facility.



The newly renovated facility includes a consumer interaction studio, collaboration space, a prototyping lab, and a pilot plant and food fill room all designed to use their i6 Innovation Process.

"We think of ourselves as a solutions company that offers packaging, rather than as a packaging company that happens to offer solutions. We work with our customers to craft a packaging-neutral 360° Customized Solution™ tailored to their specific needs and target markets. We are able to do this by offering the industry's broadest range of packaging formats and services, combined with our unique i6 Innovation Process™ and our deep technical expertise in design, packaging, testing and material science."



Darlington County Progress, Inc. holds Industry Appreciation event

On Wednesday, June 10th Darlington County Progress, Inc. held its Industry Appreciation event. Chip Wile, President of the Darlington Raceway, the track "Too Tough to Tame", was our gracious host for the event. This event was

in appreciation and support for our existing industries, who provide quality jobs and investments in our community. The occasion was our way of thanking our local Industries and Plant Managers for their contribution to economic development in Darlington County.

The casual drop-in was held in the spacious Darlington Room in the Sprint Tower Suite, with an abundance of delicious food, treats and adult beverages catered by Out in Left Field. The occasion was well-attended, with lots of networking, with everyone being on a 'first-name' basis (because no last names or business names were put on the name tags). Participants were afforded a spectacular view of the raceway from the Sprint Tower as NASCAR tire tests were being conducted on the track.

A great time was had by all in attendance, at a great facility, with great food and lots of great camaraderie, I can't wait to do it all again.

Story written by John Kimbrough, Chairman of Darlington County Progress, Inc.

