



Community and Economic Development in North Carolina and Beyond Blog: The Top Small Cities for Corporate Facilities in 2010

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Article: <https://ced.sog.unc.edu/the-top-small-cities-for-corporate-facilities-in-2010/>

This entry was posted on May 03, 2011 and is filed under Community Development, Economic Development

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Small communities can face numerous challenges in competing for new and expanding corporate facilities. Many of them lack the sites and buildings, workforce skills, infrastructure, and financial resources required to be a viable location for major corporate real estate projects. Despite these challenges, several small cities and towns across the U.S. are enjoying some degree of success in landing corporate facilities. In 2010, under weak economic conditions, two small cities in North Carolina outperformed their counterparts elsewhere in the nation in terms of new and expanding facility locations. Who are they?

Site Selection magazine recently released its 2010 rankings of the top “micropolitan” areas for corporate facilities based on the number of projects reported for inclusion in the Conway New Plant database. The U.S. Office of Management and Budget defines a micropolitan statistical area as having an urban core with a population between 10,000 and 50,000. Thomasville/Lexington (Davidson County), NC led the way in the 2010 rankings with 26 projects. Statesville/Mooresville (Iredell County) took second place with 17 projects. Two other North Carolina cities were included among the top 25 micro areas in the nation: Shelby (6 projects) and Salisbury (4 projects).

The Thomasville/Lexington micro area's top ranking in 2010 is notable, especially when considering that its number of projects significantly exceeds those reported by the other communities making the list. What accounts for the success of this micro area within Davidson County? As it turns out, Thomasville/Lexington has some assets that many smaller communities may not have to the same extent or may not be leveraging to their fullest advantage. According to an executive of TIMCO Aviation Services, which will operate a \$5 million facility with 500 jobs in Wallburg, the local work ethic was the most important factor in choosing to locate in Davidson County. The Wallburg site's accessibility to Interstates 40, 77, and 85 was also important and a “move-in-ready” building helped close the deal. The TIMCO executive sees the role of local economic development professional as being essential to the process of finding a suitable location for a corporate facility: “In North Carolina, all you have to do is find a good economic developer and let them do their magic.”