

Carolinas Gateway Partnership News

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Auto Parts Manufacturer Announces Expansion in Edgecombe County

Gov. Bev Perdue announced during a visit to the Keihin Carolina System Technology plant in Tarboro that the company plans to create 50 new jobs and invest more than \$13 million in expanding their facility. KCST is a world leader in the manufacture of Engine Control units and electronic assemblies for Honda and Acura automobiles and Honda Power Sports.

“North Carolina, the home of NASCAR, has a strong tradition in auto parts manufacturing because of our highly skilled workforce and customized training programs,” said Gov. Perdue. “We have built a top ranked business climate, not just to attract new companies, but to fuel growth among those that are already here. KCST’s expansion is another reminder that North Carolina has extended its economy around the globe.”

KCST’s state-of-the-art facility has been in Tarboro since 1997 and currently has 370 employees. Keihin is a Japanese-owned firm that employs 1,800 people at seven locations in North America. Globally, Keihin has facilities in 11 countries and employs more than 16,000 associates.

“KCST is excited about our growth throughout this year and the addition to our workforce. The exceptional capabilities and dedication of our associates allows us to continue to be successful through these challenging economic times,” said Chris Eckhardt, KCST Vice President.

Eckhardt said “KCST invests heavily in the continuing education and manufacturing skills development of their associates through a long standing and successful partnership with Edgecombe Community College and the East Carolina University School of Technology and Computer Science.”

“KCST knows what more and more companies are discovering,” said Sen. Clark Jenkins, of Tarboro, “That North Carolina provides the skilled workforce, transportation infrastructure and business-friendly government agencies that enable businesses to thrive.”

“Companies such as KCST look at more than just the bottom line when it comes to where they will call home,” said Rep. Jean Farmer-Butterfield. “They want a place where the business climate and quality of life create the right place to work, live and play. In other words: North Carolina.”

“North Carolina has earned national acclaim for leading the nation out of recession,” said Rep. Joe Tolson, of Pinetops. “Companies like KCST know that the investments we have made in education and worker training have paid off with the kind of skilled workforce those firms need.”

North Carolina continues to have a top-ranked business climate. Through Gov. Perdue’s JobsNOW initiative, the state works aggressively to create jobs, train and retrain its workforce, and lay the foundation for a strong and sustainable economic future.

Chairman of the Edgecombe County Board of Commissioners Leonard Wiggins said, “the Edgecombe County Commissioners are very excited about KCST’s announcement today and the creation of 50 new jobs and \$13 million investment for Tarboro and Edgecombe County. KCST has been and continues to be a great corporate citizen.”

“The Partnership is pleased to have assisted QVC in its expansion. We also thank Edgecombe County, the Town of Tarboro, and the NC Dept. of Commerce for their assistance on this project. With our available workforce and positive business climate, this confirms the advantages of a Twin County location for companies doing business throughout the Southeast,” said Carolinas Gateway Partnership Chairman Frank Harrison. “QVC will be providing much needed jobs to the area’s workers that are so important in these tough economic times.”