



**For Immediate Release
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Moore County, NC

Moore County Industrial Site Receives State “Certified” Designation

Moore County now has a new economic development tool that will enhance our competitiveness in attracting new business and industry to the area. The North Carolina Department of Commerce (DOC) recently approved the Iron Horse Industrial Park in Aberdeen for designation as a “Certified Site”. This is the first site in Moore County to apply for and receive that designation.

The DOC’s Certified Sites Program was created to establish a statewide inventory of available, “client-ready” sites that would improve North Carolina’s competitive edge in business and industry recruitment. Every site with the “Certified” designation has undergone a rigorous and in-depth analysis by professional engineers and other specialists who have conducted the Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, topographical analysis, preliminary geotechnical study, and a multitude of other assessments and tests required by the program. Certified sites must be a minimum of 10 acres and fully served by all utilities: electric, natural gas, public water and sewer. The Iron Horse Industrial Park also has rail service through Aberdeen & Rockfish Railroad.

The Iron Horse Industrial Park is located just off of NC Highway 211 East on Carolina Road and is adjacent to the property where Eritech, Inc. operates a manufacturing facility. The site is actually composed of 3 parcels, one owned by Aberdeen & Rockfish (A&R) Railroad Company and 2 owned by the Sandhills Area Land Trust. Altogether, Iron Horse is almost 200 acres available for industrial development.

“The main advantage of state certification is that the preliminary legwork has already been done in preparing a site, like Iron Horse, for industrial development”, said Ed Lewis, A&R President. “There is no lag time waiting for environmental analysis and other testing to be completed, so it saves the client a lot of time in searching for the right site.”

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“A&R has always been committed to local economic development efforts, especially for those industrial sites served by our rail lines. The Iron Horse Park is an excellent location; it has the infrastructure; and with our connections to CSX and Norfolk Southern lines, we can easily serve customers locating there”, added Lewis. “Interested companies will also find that Iron Horse is very competitively priced.”

The application process requires that the site be sponsored for certification by a local entity such as a government unit, economic development organization, or Chamber of Commerce. Moore County Partners in Progress, the County’s economic development group, was more than willing to serve as the sponsor.

Ray Ogden, Executive Director of Partners in Progress, commented, “We were just as eager as A&R to start the application process. Certification lets clients know that we are serious about development, and it puts Moore County on a more level playing field with other counties that also have certified sites. So, it’s a big deal in economic development terms to have the Iron Horse Industrial Park as Moore County’s first certified site.”

Ogden added, “Partners in Progress is certainly going to continue working with A&R to aggressively market the site to prospective clients.”

While the Department of Commerce, the support of the County Commissioners, and the assistance of many others were all important to the process, Hobbs Upchurch & Associates, an engineering firm headquartered in Southern Pines, was especially instrumental. “They essentially put the application together with all of the technical documentation required and submitted it to the DOC”, said Ogden. Lewis added, “We are very appreciative of their hard work in contributing to this designation.”

Partners in Progress is already looking ahead to certifying a second site, this one in Southern Pines. “It’s premature to actually begin the application process just yet, but we’re keeping that goal in mind”, Ogden said.

Additional information about the Iron Horse Industrial Park can be found on A&R Railroad’s website, www.aberdeen-rockfish.com. For more information about Partners in Progress, the non-profit economic development organization representing all of Moore County, visit www.moorebusiness.org.

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