

NORTH CAROLINA'S DEFENSE INDUSTRY TO BE ON DISPLAY AT NCDBA'S APRIL 19-20 EXPO IN PINEHURST

Triangle - Defense industry businesses from across North Carolina will have an opportunity to promote their services, uncover potential partnerships and forge relationships April 19-20 in Pinehurst at the state's first-ever trade show of its kind.

Gov. Bev Perdue and Lt. Gen. Frank Helmick, the XVIII Airborne Corps and Fort Bragg commander, have been invited to speak at the symposium and exposition at the Pinehurst Resort sponsored by the North Carolina Defense Business Association (NCDBA). Keith Crisco, N.C. Secretary of Commerce; Ronna Garrett, Officer in Charge, FORSCOM Forward and other dignitaries will participate.

"From the NCDBA's beginnings in 2009, the organization's strength has been its ability to bring together defense industry representatives and help forge new relationships that are vital to growing the state's defense industry," NCDBA board chairman Steven Moore said.

"For years, military-related trade shows have grown in North Carolina, but this is the first such expo to target all of North Carolina's defense industry players with the goal of helping to grow our state's share of that market space," Moore said.

"This meeting will provide the opportunity for defense industry businesses, N.C. leadership and military leaders to network one-on-one to promote the resources and advantages North Carolina has to offer to the defense industry," said NCDBA executive director Joy Thrash.

NCDBA member James R. McLean represents the Army Programs Sector of NCI Information Systems. "The NCDBA has been a pivotal organization for NCI entering the Fort Bragg/Fayetteville market," McLean said. "The diverse events, such as Breakfast with a Prime, Speakers and Patio Socials have been irreplaceable to getting NCI's name out in the community and giving us name recognition in the Fort Bragg/Fayetteville Business community.

"We look forward to the NCDBA expo as the capstone event to bring us statewide exposure. The NCDBA is a superb organization that is always trying to improve its service to its members," McLean added.

The symposium kicks off April 19 at 8 a.m. with a welcome breakfast featuring Crisco, who will present the N.C. Department of Commerce's perspective on the defense industry.

Additionally, two businesses will be named as winners of an economic development award totaling \$65,000 from the Partnership for Defense Innovation (PDI) Fusion Grant. PDI is a 501(c)3 organization that promotes economic development within the defense industry.

Gov. Perdue has been invited to speak at the keynote luncheon April 19 at noon. A Connection Forum will follow at 2:15 p.m., and the NCDBA Chairman's Networking Reception begins at 4 p.m.

Exhibits will be open throughout both days.

Lt. Gen. Helmick has been invited to speak by VTC (Video Tele-Conference) on April 20 at 8 a.m. during a breakfast at which the winner of the PDI grant will be announced. Ronna Garrett, Officer in Charge, FORSCOM Forward at Fort Bragg, will provide an update on the Forces Command move. Other morning activities include demonstrations and information forums.

Symposium attendees will later enjoy a reception, a performance by the 82nd Airborne Chorus and drawings for door prizes. Closing ceremonies will take place at 3 p.m.

On-site registration for the event begins at 8 a.m. on both days of the event. Pre-registration is encouraged.

For information on exhibiting at the NCDBA's Inaugural Symposium and Exposition, contact Jaime Thomas of the Suggs Group at (910) 483-2221 or suggsgroup@suggsgroup.com.

For information about joining the NCDBA, contact Joy Thrash at (910) 527-1103 or jthrash@ncdba.com.

The NCDBA is a statewide professional trade organization for businesses that operate in the defense industry – vendors who provide products and services either directly to DoD or to DoD contractors. The organization works with chambers of commerce, economic developers, universities, community colleges and other groups working to expand the defense industry in N.C.

For more information on the NCDBA, upcoming events or membership, please contact Thrash at (910) 527-1103 or jthrash@ncdba.com, or visit ncdba.com.

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