

N. C. Commerce Sec. Keith Crisco Visits Union County, Praises Local Progress

STALLINGS, N.C.. Dec. 18, 2009 – Keith Crisco, N.C. Commerce Secretary, on Thursday praised innovations in economic development and technical manufacturing in Union County, as he visited CEM Corporation in Stallings in connection with the Union County Partnership for Progress.

Crisco had high praise for CEM Corporation, a global leader in microwave-based scientific technology, where he held a 10 a.m. press conference. “Here’s a company that started from zero right here in a garage, has doubled in size in the past five years to \$70 million in annual sales, and expects to double again in less than five years. They are achieving this through innovation, and 75 percent of their sales are outside of North America, including millions to China. All the manufacturing jobs are staying here. This is very impressive.”

Crisco also promised increased support for Legacy Business Park, a planned 5,000-acre development in eastern Union County, being coordinated by the Union County Partnership for Progress, the county’s economic development organization. “This is a great innovation to transform this area,” he said. “I have appointed my Deputy Secretary Dale Carroll to be the specific point person to work with and support Project Legacy. We’ll use every tool we can to ensure its success.”

“More and more people in North Carolina are trying to promote innovation, and Gov. Bev Perdue recently announced the creation of a N.C. Innovation Council,” Crisco said. “Bev Perdue is also very focused on economic development. In the past year I have asked her to make 46 appearances for economic development purposes, and she hasn’t turned me down once.”

Crisco said there were “three to five comparable announcements in the pipeline” similar in size to this week’s announcement that Electrolux was moving its U.S. headquarters to Charlotte. “Now they seem a little more likely to close the deal as the economy improves.”

CEM President and CEO Michael Collins, Ph. D., gave a demonstration of his company’s new Sprint Rapid Protein Analyzer. In two minutes it performs protein analysis in foods like milk that used to take six hours with standard chemical analysis techniques.

“Our equipment is water-based and generates no hazardous wastes,” Collins said. “It is truly green technology. Traditional methods used around the world are estimated to generate 15 millions pounds of hazardous waste per year. That’s why the EPA recognized our technology with a Presidential Green Chemistry Challenge Award.”

Collins said the Sprint System was purchased by the USDA Agriculture Research Service at N. C. State University, and he hopes it will soon be used statewide.

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