

Roaming Around Reidsville

By Angela G. Stadler
Public Information Officer
City of Reidsville

Whether big or small, economic development is the catalyst to a City's growth. City leaders, along with County and Chamber officials, are always on the lookout for ways to bring in new businesses and industries and to keep our existing corporate partners here. We hate to see any business close, be it an industry with hundreds of workers, or a small "Mom & Pop" business with a minimum number of employees. All of these combine to create the fabric of small town life.



Reidsville officials have been working hard, along with their County counterparts, to bring new economic development to our City. Much of it has been based on helping local industries and businesses expand. At a City Council Retreat held earlier this year, the City's Economic Development Director Jeff Garstka listed several items of good news related to area businesses. He hinted at the possibility of a major industry expansion producing some 300 jobs.

Several members of Reidsville City Council pose, above, with Governor Roy Cooper at the announcement of Albaad's expansion back in April at the Reidsville Industrial Park. At right, Mayor Donecker takes a photo with Sen. Phil Berger.



That announcement was made recently when Governor Roy Cooper came to Reidsville to share that Albaad, located in the City's industrial park, was planning an expansion that would lead the company to open a second location at an existing site. When the company announced its plans, the City felt it won in several ways. First, the company is bringing 302 new jobs and some \$45 million in new investment, which helps our tax base. That alone is wonderful! But secondly, it also shows Albaad's commitment to Reidsville. And third, it also makes use of an existing building (Ball Corporation on Barnes Street) that had been sitting empty. The Ball facility had not even been put on the market before Albaad leased it from a third-party investor who bought it within a year of Ball's operations closing.

Of course, there are also the opportunities for more people to come to work and live in Reidsville because of these kinds of announcements, which, again adds to our tax base. In some cases, other businesses affiliated with these industries may eye Reidsville as a good location to be. There are a lot of benefits that can be reaped from such large scale development.

Unfortunately, such large scale announcements don't happen every day. Reidsville has been blessed to have two such announcements in the past two years. Then-Governor Pat McCrory came to Reidsville in September of 2016 to announce the grand opening of Unifi's Repreve Processing Center at its plant here. The opening involved more than \$28 million in investment by the company and the need for 87 new jobs. Since then, Unifi has acquired the dyed yarn business from National Spinning Company and transferred about 45 jobs to Reidsville.

However, small and medium-sized businesses also contribute to keeping a city moving forward. Garstka noted that in the past year or so, we have been lucky to have benefitted from several expansion announcements. It started with Smith-Carolina noting in June of last year its plans to expand with a second manufacturing location in Reidsville and add 10 new jobs. Then in September of last year, Plastic Revolutions, a full-service plastic recycler, announced it would add 35 jobs with the expansion of its processing plant on Barnes Street. Bibey Machine and Fabrication said in November it would be expanding its business by purchasing the 78,000-square-foot building adjacent to its existing facility on Industrial Drive. On the heels of that Elevated Environmental said it would expand its operation after purchasing the former Reidsville Armory building on North East Market Street and along with it, 10-20 new jobs. Foss Industrial Recycling came before Reidsville City Council in April to ask for a special use permit to allow them to construct an equipment shop at their Watlington Industrial Drive location. The addition of that shop means three new jobs are needed, according to company officials.

But it isn't only the large and mid-sized businesses that seem to be thriving. The downtown area and Freeway Drive business district have seen a lot of changes in recent years. And while jobs and machinery investment help the City monetarily, a lot of these small business changes help stimulate the local economy by bringing in new visitors and providing a great quality of living for our residents. Not to mention that these renovations and additions help improve the City aesthetically.

Especially in the downtown area, businesses seem to come and go, either due to retirements or shutdowns. Yet some mainstays like Pelham Transportation have been able to add a few jobs while some new enterprises, such as Sip Coffee House and The Thrift Shack, are also making their presence known, among others. Back on Market Street, Sophisticated Soul has joined other longtime eateries in the downtown area to provide our citizens and visitors another place to enjoy. Traveling a little further down Scales Street, McDonald's closed down for a while to complete its building makeover. Even longtime business Pete's Burgers closed briefly to do some renovations to its building.

Freeway Drive has seen a lot of activity over the past couple of years. Under new ownership, the Reidsville Bowling Center has seen a resurgence after its rehab. Verizon built a new store in front of the bowling lanes, and between the two of them, about 15 new jobs have been realized. Dominoes

relocated and rehabbed a building there while NAPA Auto Parts left Scales Street but moved into the former Sears building on Freeway. Wendy's renovated its existing building as well.

I am sure I have missed some openings and renovations, but that's a good thing. It means the list is too long, and I just can't keep up!

We are excited about the future as well. The possibility exists that the State of North Carolina will put its Youth Development Center in Reidsville. That could mean some 126 new jobs for the area. We have been told that Reidsville was selected because of its geographic location with a direct connection to Interstate 40 and 840 along with a congregation of workforce and support businesses for such a facility. Lucky City Brewing has broken ground for its renovations to its Gilmer Street location with plans for the other levels to be used by the Rockingham County Arts Council and the Rockingham County Theatre Guild. The building for Elizabeth's Pizza is still being upfitted and will hopefully be opening soon along Freeway Drive, and other possibilities are in the works, but I can't give away too much!

In other news around Reidsville:

Movies @ Market Square June 9.

Maybe a little campy but good! The classic *Godzilla vs. Mothra* will be the second offering for "Movies @ Market Square" starting at 8 p.m. (around dusk) on Saturday, June 9. Bring your chairs and blankets for this movie shown on the lawn of Market Square in downtown Reidsville. It's free!

"Music on the Square" starts this month.

"Music on the Square" begins in June at Market Square in downtown Reidsville. On the fourth Saturday of each month from 6:30-8:30 p.m. through September, these free musical concerts will hit the downtown stage. Back by popular demand, "Trial by Fire", a Journey tribute band, will be the first to entertain the crowds on Saturday, June 23. Just remember to bring a chair when you're not up dancing and singing along! I don't know about you, but I can't wait!

Kids Fishing Rodeo @ Lake Reidsville.

This annual event is always a favorite! Bring the kids aged 12 and under on Saturday, June 2, for this fishing event at Lake Reidsville on Water Works Road. Time is 8:30 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. and it's free! Call the Lake Store at 336-349-4738 for more details!

Fishing Tournaments @ Lake Reidsville.

And now, something for the big kids! June is the month for fishing tournaments at Lake Reidsville. Call the Lake Store for details at 336-349-4738 about the Big Bass Tourney June 9th (Cost is \$15 per person); the Night Catfish Tourney June 16th (Cost: \$10/per person); and the Crappie Fishing Tourney June 23rd (Cost: None! It's free!).

Art on the Square.

Feeling creative? The Rockingham County Arts Council joins the Farmers Market with a free family ARTivity, artist demos, and works by local artisans available for purchase. Be there June 16 from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. for “Art on the Square” at Market Square in downtown Reidsville.

Other Happenings at Market Square.

The Downtown Farmers Market at Market Square continues every Saturday, Tuesday and Thursday from 7 a.m.-1 p.m. or until items run out! Visitors to the market will find a variety of items. SNAP/EBT, Farmers Market WIC, Debit and Credit are accepted. Interested in becoming a vendor? You can call Judy Yarbrough at 336-349-1099 to reserve a space.

Downtown Cruise-In June 8.

These monthly cruise-ins are sponsored by the EZ Street Cruisers Car Club. Held rain or shine, the cruise-ins feature cars that are from the year 1987 or older. Downtown streets close at 5:30 p.m. for the cruise-ins, which are held from 6-9 p.m. If interested in participating, contact Lou at 508-320-8751 or check out www.ezstreetcruisers.com/

Get Your Zumba On!

“Fitness on the Square” continues from 6-7 p.m. on Mondays and Wednesdays, weather permitting, at Market Square. No rhythm required! And it’s free!