

North Carolina's Eastern Region

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PRESS RELEASE

Eastern Region Awarded Grant for Farmland Preservation Plans

Kinston, NC, September 16, 2010 – North Carolina's Eastern Region (NCER) was recently awarded a \$100,000 grant from the North Carolina Agricultural Development & Farmland Preservation (ADFP) Trust Fund to assist Jones, Lenoir, Onslow, Greene (and potentially Carteret) counties with the development of Farmland Preservation Plans. Cash and in-kind support for the project will be provided by NCER and its key partners, the NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NCDENR) and the Mt. Olive College Lois Britt Agribusiness Center.

The long-term goal of this project is to develop a regional strategy and partnership that encourages profitable and sustainable family farms while acknowledging the need for compatible land use to sustain existing military training operations. The successful adoption of the Farmland Protection Plans (as well as Voluntary Agricultural Districts, VADs) will result in recommendations to encourage and engage education and incentives for farmers and foresters in the region.

"This project is an important step in our efforts to preserve our military presence and provide an environment that sets the stage for development of our value-added agriculture sector. Both are of great significance to our region - the military employs over 80,000 people," said John D. Chaffee, President and CEO of North Carolina's Eastern Region.

The ADFP Trust Fund was established by the General Assembly in 2005 following Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler's "Agriculture Development and Farmland Preservation Strategy." According to the ADFP website, agriculture/agribusiness comprises 20.3% of the state's income and is the number one industry in the state at \$70 billion.

North Carolina's Eastern Region is a 13-county partnership established by the General Assembly to promote economic development in Nash, Edgecombe, Wilson, Lenoir, Pitt, Wayne, Greene, Duplin, Jones, Onslow, Pamlico, Craven and Carteret Counties. The region encompasses almost 7,000 square miles stretching from the eastern fringe of the Research Triangle to the Atlantic Ocean and has approximately one million residents. For more information on North Carolina's Eastern Region, please visit www.nceast.org.

For more information, please contact John D. Chaffee of North Carolina's Eastern Region, 252-522-2400 (email: chaffee@nceast.org).

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