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Sept. 12, 2013

Duke Energy to help prepare Rutherford County, N.C., location for potential industrial development

CHARLOTTE — Duke Energy Carolinas has chosen a 90-acre tract near Forest City and Spindale, N.C., to participate in the utility's 2013 Site Readiness Program to prepare the location for potential industrial development.

The Site Readiness Program is one of the cornerstones of Duke Energy's economic development model.

The program is designed to identify, evaluate, and increase awareness of industrial sites in the company's service territory. It is a progressive effort toward making communities more competitive and attractive for new industry and jobs.

"Speed to market is the new normal in economic development. Companies are deadline driven. They are looking for sites ready for quick development," said Bill Roberts, Duke Energy's economic development manager for Rutherford County. "The comprehensive assessment offered by our Site Readiness Program will help get the Daniel Road site in Rutherford up and running."

As part of the four-month assessment, Duke Energy has hired McCallum Sweeney, a nationally known consulting firm, to conduct a site study. McCallum Sweeney has been instrumental in many high-profile industrial locations and expansions.

Duke Energy will work with professional land-use planners to develop conceptual plans for the site. Duke Energy, McCallum Sweeney and the planners will present all recommendations to community leaders in November.

"One of the things that makes the Daniel Road site particularly valuable is its next door neighbor, Isothermal Community College. The college provides customized training programs and has a reputation of developing highly skilled workers to meet the needs of local industry," said Matt Blackwell, executive director of Rutherford County Economic Development.

More than 35 counties submitted applications for Duke Energy's Site Readiness Program in North Carolina and South Carolina in 2013.

The Rutherford County site was one of 10 North Carolina sites chosen by the utility.

Rutherford County's unemployment tops the 10 percent mark as a number of industries, particularly textile mills, have closed their doors.

“We are committed to boosting the local economy in Rutherford County. That might mean encouraging an existing industry to expand or a new one to relocate here,” said Stu Heishman, vice president of economic and business development for Duke Energy.

“Duke Energy’s approach to economic development is unique in the utility industry. Our enterprisewide team identifies and proactively recruits large national and international companies to our service areas,” said Heishman.

This month, Duke Energy’s overall economic development program was named *by Site Selection Magazine* as one of the nation’s “Top 10 Utility Economic Development Programs.” It has held that prestigious title for more than a decade.

Ideal properties for Duke Energy’s Site Readiness Program are 75 acres or larger, served by the utility. A qualified site can either be suited for a single, large industrial facility, data center, or potential industrial park (multi-tenant site).

For more information about Duke Energy’s economic development programs, visit www.considerthecarolinas.com.

Duke Energy

Headquartered in Charlotte, N.C., Duke Energy is a Fortune 250 company traded on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol DUK. More information about the company is available at: www.duke-energy.com.

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