



Michael F. Easley, Governor

James T. Fain III, Secretary

North Carolina Department of Commerce

Release: IMMEDIATE
Date: August 9, 2006

Contact: Deborah Barnes
Phone: (919) 733-5082

ROADMAP OFFERS PATH TO ENHANCE NORTH CAROLINA'S ECONOMIC FUTURE

RALEIGH – Commerce Sec. Jim Fain today unveiled a state task force report that shows how North Carolina can nurture the emerging science of nanotechnology – which operates on the tiniest scale of atoms and molecules – to provide secure, high-paying jobs and a strong economy well into the 21st century.

“The findings and recommendations of the Governor’s Task Force on Nanotechnology provide a roadmap for optimizing North Carolina’s considerable potential for job creation and investment using this technology,” said Fain. “This work continues North Carolina’s pioneering efforts in identifying technologies of the future and establishing plans and investments to ensure our success as those technologies find practical business applications.”

The report, entitled *A Roadmap for Nanotechnology in North Carolina’s 21st Century*, was put together by a 28-member task force comprised of academic and business leaders and headed by Bob McMahan, executive director of the Commerce Department’s Office of Science and Technology.

“Nano” means one-billionth, and nanotechnology refers to technology on the smallest scale at which matter can be studied and manipulated. One nanometer, for example, is 100,000 times thinner than a single strand of human hair.

Using nanotechnology, researchers can fabricate materials molecule by molecule, which scientists say will have an impact on virtually every commercial sector. Using nanotechnology, textile companies are producing “smart” fabrics that have permanent stain-repellant properties; in medicine, the technology is being used to develop advanced drug delivery systems such as implantable devices that automatically administer drugs when a patient needs them; and on the environmental front, water filters made of nanoparticles can take out the tiniest bacteria, particles and viruses from water systems.

Small Times Magazine, a leading source of business information about micro and nanotechnology, last year ranked North Carolina ninth in the nation among the country’s top states in nanotechnology. More than 40 companies in North Carolina currently use nanotechnology actively in their products or services. McMahan said the state is well positioned to help that number grow.

“This is a situation similar in many ways to that which existed in the state at the time of the creation of the North Carolina Biotechnology Center,” McMahan said “North Carolina has benefited significantly from its early and sustained investments in biotechnology, and it can reap similar benefits from developing the emerging nanotechnology economy across the state.”

-- MORE --

North Carolina Department of Commerce
301 N. Wilmington St., Raleigh, NC 27626
919-733-7651, 733-8356 fax

The task force made 22 recommendations to Gov. Mike Easley and Sec. Fain in the report: 12 focus on enhancing North Carolina's technology economy overall while 10 focus specifically on improving and developing North Carolina's nanotechnology economy. The recommendations include:

- Ensuring that nanotechnology is considered in education and workforce development activities
- Emphasizing education of policymakers, the public, the business community and the scientific community about issues related to nanotechnology
- Establishing a North Carolina Nanotechnology Alliance
- Strengthening teacher knowledge of advances in nanoscale science
- Convening an annual North Carolina symposium on nanotechnology

To fulfill one of the recommendations of the task force's roadmap – that North Carolina create an information clearinghouse about nanotechnology – the Commerce Department's Office of Science and Technology has launched a nanotechnology Website. The site, www.ncnanotechnology.com, provides information of use to a broad audience as well as specific information targeted to nanotechnology users and investors in the state.

For more information about the task force's roadmap or to obtain a copy of the report, visit the new Website or call the Commerce Department's Office of Science and Technology at (919) 715-6500.

###