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Media Contact  
Katie Spigner  
BluePrint Business Communications  
[kspigner@blueprintbc.com](mailto:kspigner@blueprintbc.com)

### **Craven 100 Alliance's Stakeholder Meeting Highlights Unprecedented Growth and Investment Opportunities in Craven County**

**Craven County, N.C.** — The Craven 100 Alliance (C1A) held a highly successful stakeholder meeting on September 6th, at the [Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point](#), marking a significant milestone for economic development in Craven County. With over 50 community leaders in attendance, the event showcased the promising future of the region, with a focus on military advancements, the expansion of regional engineering programs, and the projected surge in industrial jobs across the county.

The growth of the region's military impact was at the forefront of the presentation. [Fleet Readiness Center East \(FRCE\)](#) at MCAS Cherry Point is North Carolina's largest aviation maintenance, repair, overhaul and technical services provider. With more than 4,000 civilian, military and contract workers, its annual revenue exceeds \$1 billion. As the keynote speaker, FRCE Executive Director Mark Meno shed light on the strategic influence of the Cherry Point base on national defense and aerospace advancement. As these sectors show signs of growth, with major contract opportunities in the pipeline, the FRCE partnership is set to be a driving force in propelling Eastern North Carolina towards unprecedented economic growth.

Dr. Bill Fortney, representing site-based Engineering Programs at NC State University, unveiled exciting news for the region's education landscape. Since 2012, 84 local students have graduated with their Bachelor of Science in Engineering (Mechanical Engineering Systems concentration) through the NC State program located at [Craven Community College's Havelock Campus](#), 91% of whom are employed locally. Amid key stakeholders, Dr. Fortney announced the expansion of the engineering program to include an electrical engineering concentration as of fall 2024. This move will not only provide local students with access to high-quality engineering education but also contribute to the region's skilled workforce, which was another focal point of the meeting.

“Projections indicate that the region is set to witness the creation of hundreds, if not thousands, of industrial jobs over the next five to ten years,” shares Craven County Economic Development Director Jeff Wood. “This anticipated job growth presents a unique opportunity for Craven County to further solidify its position as an economic hub in North Carolina.”

Stakeholders discussed the need for collaborative efforts to attract investors and developers to the area to support the expected surge in economic activity. The Craven 100 Alliance remains committed to fostering collaboration among public and private sectors to capitalize on these promising opportunities for growth and investment in Craven County.

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#### **About C1A:**

The [Craven 100 Alliance](#) (C1A) is a dynamic public-private partnership dedicated to promoting economic development and prosperity in Craven County, North Carolina. C1A connects stakeholders from city and county governments, as well as the public and private sectors, to drive innovation, job creation, and sustainable growth in the region.