

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOCUS THE NORTH CAROLINA ARBORETUM

As an affiliate institution of the University of North Carolina system, The North Carolina Arboretum delivers programs and services in five mission areas: education, conservation, demonstration, research and economic development.

Economic development focus among American botanical gardens and arboreta is a relatively rare mission commitment. However, since its inception in 1986, The North Carolina Arboretum has crafted all of its programs toward benefitting our mountain region and state economically. The illustrative chart on the reverse side captures the major components of our economic development emphasis.

Several general approaches have proven to be productive for us:

Assisting regional recruitment efforts. The Arboretum is used frequently as both a partner and a venue in the recruitment of companies, conventions, and initiatives.

Supporting and exhibiting regional strengths. A walk through the Arboretum campus features regional art and craft, landscapes with regional plant materials and commodities, examples of green building techniques, and specialty plant groups with particular economic significance.

Incubating companies and ideas with economic promise. Recognizing the national uniqueness of our regional biodiversity, the Arboretum has placed great focus on the research and commercialization of our native medicinal plants. These efforts for over a decade have generated the Bent Creek Germplasm Repository, a sophisticated collection of seeds and extracts that are valuable not only for conservation, but also for research and commercialization in a variety of natural product sectors.

Building bridging organizations. Partnered with the Bent Creek Germplasm Repository is Bent Creek Institute, Inc., an independent non-profit corporation operating under a collaboration agreement with the Arboretum. BCI, Inc. functions as the Arboretum's agent for commercializing its research findings.

Engaging a wide array of partners to leverage efforts. The Arboretum continues to play a leadership role in deriving regional economic benefit from the presence in Asheville of the National Climatic Data Center. Other long-term engagements include the nursery and landscape industry, NC Biotechnology Center, NC educational institutions, and schools, craft and art organizations, and numerous business and economic organizations.

Maintaining active pursuit of mission initiatives. The Arboretum is organized around a Strategy Council model that keeps strategy at the forefront, and seeks both continuous improvement and nimble posture in a changing resource environment.