

Carolina Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives Article

The Greater Mount Airy Chamber of Commerce proudly hosted its inaugural Advocacy Conference on March 21st, 2024, at the Service Center in Dobson, North Carolina. The event marked a significant milestone in the Chamber's efforts to foster collaboration, promote economic growth, and drive positive change within the community.

Keynote speaker Gary J. Salamido, President and CEO of the North Carolina Chamber of Commerce, delivered an inspiring address focused on North Carolina's Winning Formula for Business. Highlighting the Chamber's vision and mission to establish and maintain North Carolina as a national leader for private sector job growth, Salamido emphasized the importance of research, advocacy, and collaboration in creating a competitive business climate. He underscored the Chamber's role in driving positive change through legislative, regulatory, and political initiatives, citing recent recognitions such as North Carolina being named America's Top State for Business in 2022 and 2023 by CNBC.

Looking ahead to 2024, Salamido outlined the NC Chamber's priorities, including the development and expansion of the NC Health Talent Alliance, removing barriers to employment, executing strategic planning processes for NC Agriculture Leads, and conducting critical research on infrastructure and growth.

The conference featured a lineup of distinguished speakers who shared their expertise and insights on key issues impacting the community:

- Chris Knopf, Surry County Manager, provided a local perspective on advocacy and economic development efforts within the county.
- Gene Rees, Downtown Mount Airy Merchant and Local Developer, discussed the importance of advocacy in supporting small businesses and revitalizing downtown areas.
- Dr. Travis Reeves, Superintendent of Surry County Schools, addressed the role of education in workforce development and community progress.
- Nancy Dixon, Executive Director of Surry Medical Ministries, highlighted the importance of healthcare access and equity in building a healthy and prosperous community.
- Jimmy Flythe, Director of Local Government and Community Relations at Duke Energy for the Northwest Piedmont Triad, shared insights on corporate advocacy and community engagement.

The conference provided attendees with a platform to exchange ideas, discuss challenges, and explore opportunities for collaboration. It served as a catalyst for meaningful dialogue and action, with participants leaving inspired and motivated to make a positive impact in their respective fields and communities.

As the Greater Mount Airy Chamber of Commerce continues its advocacy efforts, it remains committed to promoting economic growth, supporting local businesses, and enhancing the quality of life for all residents in the Greater Mount Airy area.

Photo 1: The Greater Mount Airy Chamber of Commerce Staff with NC Chamber of Commerce President & CEO Gary Salamido

Photo 2: Greater Mount Airy Chamber of Commerce President & CEO John Pynakker

Photo 3: Panelists, Left to Right: Gary Salamido, Chris Knof, Gene Rees, Jimmy Flythe, Nancy Dixon, and Dr. Travis Reeves

Photo 4: The Greater Mount Airy Chamber of Commerce Public Policy Committee with NC Chamber President & CEO Gary Salamido

Photo 5: NC Chamber of Commerce President & CEO Gary Salamido