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Rocky Mount Area Chamber of Commerce Hosts 2026 Agriculture Forum Spotighting Innovation, Policy, and the Future of North Carolina Farming

Rocky Mount, NC — The Rocky Mount Area Chamber of Commerce welcomed farmers, industry leaders, county representatives, and community partners to their 2026 Agriculture Forum at Nash Community College in Brown Auditorium for a powerful morning centered on the future of North Carolina agriculture. The event brought together voices from across the agricultural landscape to share insight, foster collaboration, and address the opportunities and challenges shaping the industry.

Guests gained valuable perspective from a keynote address by Dr. Garey Fox, Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at NC State University, who presented on “Future Proofing the Land Grant Legacy: Innovation, Extension, and Education for the Future.” Dr. Fox highlighted how agricultural research, workforce development, digital agriculture, applied artificial intelligence, and extension programs are strengthening communities across North Carolina while driving long term economic resilience and sustainability.

Following the keynote, an engaging panel discussion moderated by Lynda Loveland of the North Carolina Farm Bureau Federation offered real world viewpoints from farmers and agricultural leaders across the state. Panelists explored three timely topics impacting agriculture today, including U.S. tariffs and trade policy, the future health of agriculture in North Carolina, and how agricultural policy decisions influence consumer food prices. The discussion sparked thoughtful conversation around economic pressures, innovation, and the evolving relationship between policy and the agricultural community.

The Chamber expressed deep appreciation to the sponsors who made the forum possible, including Nash Community College (Host Sponsor) and Southern Bank (Keynote Speaker Sponsor), along with support from Braswell Family Farms (Breakfast Sponsor), Farm Bureau (Advocacy Sponsor), Ripe For Revival (Community Crop Sponsor), Davis Furniture Company, and Media Sponsors, Earp Entertainment Services and Garry Hodges at Sunset Studios, LLC. Additional regional businesses also contributed to the success of the event through Harvest and Sweetpotato level sponsorships.

Vendors showcased resources and services throughout the event, further strengthening connections within the agricultural community. The 2026 Agriculture Forum reinforced the Chamber’s ongoing commitment to supporting one of North Carolina’s most vital industries through education, partnership, and meaningful dialogue focused on growth and sustainability.

To learn more about the Rocky Mount Area Chamber of Commerce, upcoming events, and business resources, visit www.rockymountchamber.org