

CNBC RANKINGS

BACK ON TOP



WALT UNKS, WINSTON-SALEM JOURNAL

North Carolina Gov. Josh Stein makes an announcement that JetZero will build its manufacturing facility for its future Z4 passenger jet at Piedmont Triad International Airport in Greensboro during a ceremony at PTI Airport in Greensboro on June 12.

NC regains status as best state for business

RICHARD CRAVER  
Winston-Salem Journal

North Carolina has regained its status as the nation’s Top State for Business, as determined by cable business channel CNBC for 2025.

The Tar Heel State has been ranked No. 1 for the third time in the past four years, along with being in the top two each of the past five years.

Although there is a cottage industry of state business climate rankings, CNBC is often cited by economists and site-selection officials as carrying the highest profile and the most influential.

In moving past Virginia, North Carolina overcame significant economic and natural disaster challenges.

“The Tar Heel State is still recovering from the tragic loss of Hurricane Helene, a \$60 billion disaster that killed more than

100 people in North Carolina, worsened a statewide housing shortage, and created new challenges for the state’s already stressed infrastructure,” CNBC said.

Texas finished runner-up, followed by Florida, Virginia and Ohio. Three of the top five are red states, while North Carolina and Virginia are purple.

Amid an increasing number of cultural war legislative clashes, CNBC cited North Carolina’s ability to maintain a bipartisan state government approach to business recruitment and retention with new Democrat Gov. Josh Stein and new Republican House speaker Destin Hall.

Stein was interviewed by CNBC live Thursday morning as part of the unveiling of N.C. returning to the top ranking.

“North Carolina has been on a roll for years now,” CNBC special correspondent Scott Cohn said.

“With its world-class workforce, a solid economy and a heritage of innovation, North Carolina keeps winning business and keeps winning our rankings.

“The state faces some formidable challenges right now, including the recovery from Hurricane Helene last fall. But if any state can do it, this one can.”

CNBC touted North Carolina’s performance in the 10 individual categories that included being third in economy, fourth in both workforce and in business friendliness, sixth in education and eighth in access to capital.

The other categories are: cost of doing business (ranked 21st); cost of living (23rd), infrastructure (11th); quality of life (29th); and technology and innovation (13th).

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Weather forecast changes may benefit Trump appointees

Cabinet members have ties to companies that stand to gain from privatizing

BRIAN SLODYSKO AND MICHAEL BIESECKER  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — As commerce secretary, Howard Lutnick oversees the U.S. government’s vast efforts to monitor and predict the weather.

The billionaire also ran a financial firm, which he recently left in the control of his adult sons, that stands to benefit if President Donald Trump’s administration follows through on a decadelong Republican effort to privatize government weather

forecasting.

Deadly flooding in Texas has put a spotlight on budget cuts and staff reductions at the National Weather Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, agencies housed within the Commerce Department that provide the public with free climate and weather data that can be crucial during natural disasters.

What’s drawn less attention is how the downsizing appears to be part of an effort to privatize the work of such agencies. In several instances, the companies poised to step into the void have deep ties to people tapped by Trump to run weather-related agencies.

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JULIO CORTEZ, ASSOCIATED PRESS

A wall is missing on a building at Camp Mystic along the banks of the Guadalupe River on July 5 in Hunt, Texas.