

Ernest C. Pearson

MEMBER

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Practices

State and Local Taxation
International Business Transactions
Legislative & Regulatory
Public Policy & Governmental Affairs
Economic Development

Industries

Agribusiness
Manufacturing
Public Sector and Government
Real Estate
Financial Services
Energy
Alcohol Permitting and Licensing

Education

- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, J.D., 1975
- Clemson University
- North Carolina State University, B.A. with high honors, 1972

Ernie Pearson believes that experience, hard work and creative approaches lead to the best results for clients faced with new challenges and opportunities. Throughout his career, he has depended upon these foundations in building what has been rated by third party sources as one of the most successful economic development practices in the country. Best Lawyers in America listed Ernie as one of only 28 lawyers in the country in the category of Economic Development in 2013 has been listed in this category every year since. Southern Business and Development magazine has chosen him for several years as one of the top economic development lawyers in 18 southern states.

Helping Businesses and Communities Grow and Thrive

Ernie has unparalleled experience in economic development matters. As Assistant Secretary for Economic Development during one of North Carolina's most successful periods of economic growth, he worked with scores of economic development projects and understands matters from that perspective. Having worked for over one hundred companies in site selection and incentive negotiation projects he has seen the process from that side and understands the company's point of view. His work with numerous local and regional economic development programs gives him an understanding of economic development from that side of the table.

Admissions

- North Carolina
- Federal District Court for Eastern District of NC
- 4th US Circuit Court of Appeals
- US Supreme Court

That in-depth, varied experience makes it possible for Ernie to craft creative and successful solutions for companies expanding existing or locating new facilities that take into account all site selection needs and maximize incentive support. This experience also benefits local and regional economic development efforts by leading them to creative cost effective approaches to economic development successes.

Ernie's previous work is in a broad range of legal disciplines includes corporate, real estate, employment and labor law, environmental, litigation and regulatory matters. This broad experience coupled with his focused experience in economic development matters allows him to understand and coordinate all legal issues connected with a company's siting of a new or expanded facility, and to provide continuing assistance to a company on legal matters after a new site is chosen.

Experience, hard work and creativity equals client success.

Experience

USGA
Loparex LLC
Sheetz Distribution Facility

Recognitions

- Listed in *Best Lawyers of America* for Economic Development Law, Since 2012
- Martindale-Hubbell AV Preeminent Peer Rated for Highest Level of Professional Excellence
- North Carolina Department of Transportation – Director of Special Projects (1975-1977)
- North Carolina Industrial Commission – Chairman (1987-1989)
- North Carolina Department of Commerce - Assistant Secretary of Economic Development (1989-1993)
- Recipient of Order of the Long Leaf Pine
- Founder of Sanford Holshouser Economic Development Consulting
- Recipient of U.S. Army Meritorious Service Medal and Army Commendation Medal
- Board Member, NC State Board of Community Colleges from 2013 through 2019 (See a photo from the swearing in ceremony)

- President - Board of Directors for the North Carolina State University School of Physical and Mathematical Sciences Foundation
- Advisory Board - Fuquay School of Business Center for International Education and Research
- Member of Town Board of Commissioners for Holly Springs, N.C.
- Board - N. C. Economic Developers Association, Vice President 2014-15 and President-Elect 2015-16
- Board - Triangle Growth Strategies, Inc.
- Vice Chairman - Wake County Economic Development Commission
- Recipient of NC Economic Developers Association's President's Award for representation of Association before the NC Supreme Court in *Maready v. Forsythe County*, landmark lawsuit over recruitment incentives
- Selected by *Southern Business & Development* magazine in Spring of 2008 issue as one of the top thirteen economic development lawyers in eighteen southern states
- Only firm listed for both North and South Carolina in *Southern Business & Development* magazine's 2009 "Trade Allies Directory"
- The June 27, 2014 edition of *The Triangle Business Journal* featured a profile of Joanna Helms, Economic Development Director for the Town of Apex. In it, Helms noted that Ernie as one of the Triangle business people that she admires most.

Community & Professional

North Carolina Economic Development Association (NCEDA), President, 2015-2016

Chaired the *2016 North Carolina Economic Developers Association Annual Conference* (June)

- Moderated discussions with 2016 Gubernatorial Candidates, Governor Pat McCrory and Attorney General Roy Cooper, focused on their plans for future economic development if elected.
- Participated in panel discussion and presentation on public records law requirements in North Carolina and their impact on economic development organizations.

The Triangle Business Journal called on Nexsen Pruet attorney Ernie Pearson for insight into economic development in the Tar Heel state. The story published on May 13th was entitled "Drowning under N.C.'s \$524 million tax credit tab."

The *Charlotte Business Journal* reported "N.C. economic developers issue their legislative wish list for 2016" on April 21, 2016. An excerpt:

Ernie Pearson, NCEDA president, says changes to the Jobs Development Incentive Grant program are vital for 2016. "The investment made in economic development especially with the passage of performance based self-funding JDIG program has generated excellent returns to our state so far and we look forward to continuing to work with the legislature to bring more jobs to North Carolina," Pearson says in a news release about the organization's legislative wish list.

Raleigh's *The News & Observer* quoted Ernie in an article entitled, "Ultimate economic impact of HB2 uncertain as opposition grows" in April 2016.

In his role as President of the North Carolina Economic Developers Association, Ernie recently responded in a letter to the editor, to concerns raised about state incentives being used to support Corning, Inc.'s move of its headquarters from Catawba County to Mecklenburg County. See those published in the *Raleigh News & Observer*, "No misuse of incentives in Corning case" and *Hickory Record*, "Corning article leaves misconception" dated January 12, 2016.

Ernie wrote an op-ed that Raleigh's *The News and Observer* published on November 5, 2015 entitled "Look at entire N.C. development picture."

In December 2015, *The Associated Press* called on Ernie in reporting on a "megadeal that lured a Danish drug company to the state."

Legal Authority for Multi-Jurisdictional Industrial Park Projects: PDF Version

Speaking

- Led three sessions for East Carolina University's Economic Development Academy (part of the university's NC Certified Economic Development program) on business/industrial park development projects, multi-jurisdictional business/industrial park projects, and public-private shell building development projects - November 2020
- Presented *Opportunity Zones – Update on Status* at the December 2018 Virginia Economic Development Association Conference
- Presented to the Southern Economic Development Council conference in August 2018 on impacts of the tax reform act
- On November 9, 2016, Ernie made a presentation at the Product Development Seminar on the topic of "Product Development: Why and How for Local Governments." You can view the slides for the presentation [here](#).
- On April 20, 2016, Ernie spoke to the Economic Transformation Council (ETC) at the University of North Carolina's General Administration offices. He spoke to them regarding measures which should be taken on a sustained basis to improve the economic situation in rural counties. This included strategies as to how the State universities could participate in these efforts within the regions in which they are located around the state.
- On April 19, 2016, Ernie made a presentation to the 2016 Summit of representatives of Councils of Government and local government officials on the topic of "Improved Collaboration Between Economic Development Community and Council of Governments." You can view the slides for the presentation [here](#).
- On February 18, 2016, Ernie spoke to a group of lawyers as part of a CLE program for the North Carolina State Bar Association's Business Law Institute. His topic was to provide an overview of state and local incentives for new or expansion industry projects. You can access the manuscript [here](#) and the PowerPoint presentation [here](#).
- On January 21, 2016, Ernie presented to the NCEDE Emerging Executives Forum. The forum is offered to young economic development professionals. His program was entitled, "You Can't Sell Out of an Empty Wagon: The Importance of Product Development."

- Ernie presented at the Nexsen Pruet Economic Development Seminar: NC vs. SC on November 6, 2015 on the topics of NC State Incentives and the Status of the Transition of Economic Development Programs from the Commerce Department to the Economic Development Partnership of NC.
- Panel member in December 2014 for Leadership North Carolina, discussing the site selection process for Horsehead Corporation and their \$600 million facility in Rutherford County, NC.
- Ernie spoke about state and local business recruitment incentives to a MPA Intergovernmental Relations Seminar Class at UNC-Chapel Hill, November 2015.
- Panel member in November 2014 for UNC School of Law Entertainment and Sports Law Association, discussing film industry incentives.

News

02.04.2021

Site Selection Consulting - US Golf Association

10.25.2018

Nexsen Pruet's Economic Development Attorneys Among the Best in the South

Insights

02.05.2021 | Article

For-Profit Economic Development Corporations

09.04.2020

When You Cannot Afford to Get It Wrong

04.06.2020

Act Now - SBA Loans Available

03.31.2020

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE NC STAY AT HOME ORDER

03.25.2020

SHELTER IN PLACE IMPACTS ON MANUFACTURING AND DISTRIBUTION FACILITIES

04.10.2019

So you're thinking about economic incentives for your NC real estate project?