

# Expert: Incentives 'driving force' in deals

**BY PAT KIMBROUGH**  
ENTERPRISE STAFF WRITER

**HIGH POINT** — High Point and the rest of Guilford County have a lot of advantages when it comes to competing for new industries.

But, according to a national economic development expert, one factor can still carry a lot of weight when it comes to company decisions to expand in or relocate to a particular locale: How much cash, free land, infrastructure and/or tax benefits a city, county or state is willing to pony up.

"Incentives are still a driving force for a lot of company decisions," said Jay Garner. "However, incentives don't make a bad site good. They are used primarily as a deal sweetener. I've never been a fan, but they're there, and you have to be on the front end of a policy that deals with incentives effectively or you're going to be left behind."

The president of Atlanta consulting firm Garner Economics, he told the Guilford County Economic Development summit Thursday that having



Sunday, June 30, 2019

## DEALS

FROM THE **FRONT PAGE**

prepared sites with water, sewer, natural gas, electricity, broadband and roads in place is vital to staying competitive.

The summit at the Guilford Technical Community College Cameron Campus served as a status report to the governing bodies of High Point, Greensboro and Guilford County. They formed the alliance in 2015 in an effort to make the region more competitive for industrial and commercial expansions and relocations.

Garner said companies and individuals considering relocating to new cities look at crime levels, ratings of public schools and health-care facilities as the top factors in making a decision.

Site selection consultant Blake Hall with the

Timmons Group said it can take a company three to eight years to identify and develop a site before it's up and running.

For example, the site of the Publix distribution center in Greensboro that was announced last year was found in 2012, he said.

Guilford has more than 300 parcels that are more than 100 acres that could accommodate up to 1 million square feet of building, but only 70 of the sites are developable on this scale because of environmental constraints and other factors.

There are 457 sites in the county that are at least 50 acres. Hall called this a good amount of sites when it comes to competitors.

"You're in a really good position. Your land cost and utility availability are really good," Hall said.

pkimbrough@  
hpenews.com | 336-888-  
3531

SEE **DEALS/PAGE A11**