

FirstHealth of the Carolinas is proud to call Moore County home, and we are more grateful than ever to serve patients throughout the Sandhills and beyond.

Our nationally recognized health care system is headquartered in Pinehurst and employs more than 5,600 people, serving 15 counties in the mid-Carolinas.

Licensed for four hospitals with 610 beds, the system also includes facilities for inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation, hospice, a palliative care program, home care, community outreach programs, behavioral health services, fitness facilities, primary, specialty and convenient care practices, concierge medicine, a hospitality house, EMS and critical care transport services, a philanthropic foundation and a host of other services.

With the latest developments and research in lung cancer diagnosis and treatment, highly specialized gynecologic oncology services, expertise in colon cancer and the development of a breast cancer center, FirstHealth has become a regional destination for cancer care.

To accommodate the growth in cancer services, FirstHealth will open a comprehensive cancer center on the Moore Regional campus this year. The new four-story, 120,000-square-foot cancer center will consolidate cancer services into one state-of-the-art facility to provide optimal patient-centered care.

The new center will feature services dedicated to providing unparalleled cancer support resources offered by a team of highly trained nurse navigators.

Nurse navigators will guide patients, families and caregivers through the cancer treatment journey by ensuring seamless access to care and support services. FirstHealth's nurse navigators are specially trained to assist patients as they go through the many stages of living with a cancer diagnosis. Patient navigation will be housed on the fourth floor of the center where traditional and holistic services for healing include fitness services, a meditation space, massage services, community classrooms for support groups, a patient resource room and palliative care.

FirstHealth demonstrates a commitment to treating the whole patient and improving the health of the communities it serves, and we all work each day toward fulfilling one core purpose—**To Care for People.**

Moore Regional Hospital, FirstHealth's flagship hospital, is fully accredited and boasts award-winning, quality care.

We were awarded the Outstanding Patient Experience Award in 2022 by Healthgrades for the 15th year in a row.

We also received the Healthgrades Stroke Care Excellence Award and were named a 5-Star Recipient for Total Knee Replacement, Hip Fracture Treatment, Treatment of Stroke, Treatment of Pneumonia, Colorectal Surgery, Treatment of GI Bleed and Treatment of Respiratory Failure.

Moore Regional was named to the Fortune/Merative 100 Top Hospitals list for the second consecutive year.

While the awards demonstrate our commitment to high-quality care, it's the **people** of FirstHealth who make that care possible. The success of our health system is built on the dedication and tremendous efforts of our exceptional employees, providers and volunteers. I invite you to learn more about our health system by visiting our website at firsthealth.org.

Our communities have continued to support our health care community and for that we are extremely grateful.

I hope you enjoy learning about Moore County. It is a special place, and we are thankful to call it home.



Sincerely,

Mickey Foster

Chief Executive Officer
FirstHealth of the Carolinas



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WRAPPED IN COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Moore County, known for country living, charming small towns and a vibrant economy rooted in tourism and golf, now has a new moniker under its belt: resilient.

After an alleged sabotage incident took out two power grids and plunged most of the county into darkness for five days in December, neighbors, businesses and communities came together, demonstrating the county's strong sense of community.

Phil Werz, executive director of the Pinehurst, Southern Pines, and Aberdeen Area CVB, recalls how Southern Pines Growler, a brewery across the street from his office, served up pancakes, and the town made space for no less than nine food trucks to feed hundreds of hungry residents for four days.

"We're known for southern

hospitality, and I think our response to the power outage made our residents and business owners realize how special this place is," he says.

"People have a lot of pride in this area, and our hospitality community is what makes our county so special and that's just going to continue, even now, after the power is back on."

While it is a community historically knit together by its golf history, Moore County is really much more than that. Golf is just what put it on the map.

Today, Moore is one of the fastest growing counties in North Carolina, says Natalie Hawkins,

executive director of Moore County Partners in Progress, the county's economic development arm.

More than 104,000 residents call the county home. The N.C. Office of State Budget and Management predicts the population will swell beyond 155,000 by 2050.

"A lot of that growth is being driven by military personnel moving to the area," Hawkins says. She adds that in a county traditionally known as a destination for retirees, there's been an uptick in families with young children. She attributes the demographic shift to industrial development in surrounding counties, and a



Southern Pines Growler

business climate that favors remote working.

"The fact that people can live and work from anywhere these days is certainly a factor in our growth, and obviously we have great golf and great health care," she says. "I think we are just an attractive rural community with convenient access to big city amenities in Charlotte, Greensboro and Raleigh."

In 2022, economic analysis firm Policom recently ranked the Pinehurst-Southern Pines micropolitan statistical area No. 1 in the state for the fifth consecutive year. The area is also ranked 39th in the country, reflecting an uptick of 14 notches from last year's list.

Rankings are based on an area's economic strength, population stability and quality of life.

Hawkins points to economic development in surrounding

counties. "We're anticipating demand for suppliers to the industries in Chatham County, like Vinfast and Wolfspeed, as well as the Toyota battery plant coming to Randolph County," she says.

"Manufacturers that support those facilities want to be in close proximity, and the quality of life here may attract some of the executives moving to this area."

Quality of life goes deeper than golf and access to jobs. World class health care is also a factor that makes people want to live there. Last year, **U.S. News & World Report** recognized FirstHealth Moore Regional Hospital in Pinehurst as one of the top hospitals in North Carolina. Moore Regional has been on the rise in the publication's annual Best Hospitals recognition and is tied for third place with four other hospitals in the state.

This spring, FirstHealth is

opening a state-of-the-art comprehensive cancer center.

Kicking off the public phase of its fundraising effort in June 2022, the Foundation of FirstHealth launched its Building the Dream campaign, a \$30 million initiative to enable the health care system to finish building the cancer center. The total cost is \$68 million.

According to FirstHealth CEO Mickey Foster, the new center will change the face of cancer care in the Sandhills.

"We have made a commitment to the communities we serve to deliver high-quality care close to home, and the cancer center represents our next step to keep that promise," Foster says in a press release. "Our oncology clinicians and staff look forward to serving our cancer patients and their families in one, convenient location as we lead the way in cancer treatment and research."

In addition to treatment facilities, the four-story, 120,000-square-foot cancer center will house palliative care services, research and clinical trials, navigation and support services for patients and caregivers, nutrition services and a dedicated wellness center. A healing garden outside the building will offer a place for patients and their families to connect and relax.

"Health care makes up 30% of our employment," says Hawkins, who touts the hospital as a symbol of Moore County's reputation as a desirable live-work-play destination in a rural setting. And the new cancer center is just part of that equation.

"You don't find \$68 million

cancer centers in rural North Carolina or rural America, for that matter," she says.

Last July, FirstHealth of the Carolinas, The Foundation of FirstHealth and Moore County Partners in Progress brought together business leaders, health care and technology innovators and elected officials for the inaugural FirstHealth Innovation Summit in Pinehurst. The two-day summit was held to promote Moore County as a prime location for biotech companies, Hawkins says.

The summit was part of the Partners in Progress initiative to engage more deeply with area businesses and manufacturers to gauge their needs and connect

them with services, including workforce development and training opportunities.

Partners in Progress is also increasing its staff from two to three when a new business development director comes on board.

"Our new development director will be tasked with connecting businesses with resources as well as seeking out grants and administering them," Hawkins says. "They will also work on identifying possible industrial sites and will work with landowners to acquire options on the land or connect them with developers to build our inventory."

One new development and economic driver coming on the



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scene is a long-awaited Target store, which will anchor a new mixed-use retail complex at Morganton Park South. The retail center will generate 500 new jobs, Hawkins says.

"Target had looked at our market 20 years ago and never thought it was ready," she says. "But over the last 10 years, we've had a 27% increase in households with children, and that's what tipped the scale."

Moore County is also positioning itself to attract more young entrepreneurs and families with its recent designation as a Certified Entrepreneurial Community, Hawkins adds.

"We've seen a healthy rate of new business creation in Moore County with over 2,500 new business corporation and LLC filings with the NC Secretary of State's Office since January 2020," Hawkins says. "We want these businesses to be successful and this CEC designation signifies we have the resources to support them."

Small towns around Moore County are also transforming, including Carthage, the county seat.

With grant funding, Carthage is on the rise. A Duke Energy Foundation grant of \$25,000 will be distributed to local businesses to upgrade their storefronts and streetscapes.

The Southern Pines Brewing Company is expanding there, and Hawkins calls it a game-changer and a tremendous boost to the community.

"The future is bright in Moore County and I'm excited to see the next businesses that will locate here," she says.

On the horizon is perhaps the biggest business of all – the USGA, already constructing a new crown jewel at Pinehurst.

The Golf House Pinehurst, also known as the USGA's second headquarters, is expected to make a \$2 billion economic impact on North Carolina's economy.

The USGA, with longtime offices in New Jersey, is establishing a larger presence in the South, and North Carolina is a perfect location for its second headquarters, says Janeen Driscoll, director of brand communications.

"Pinehurst is the home of American golf and the site of some of the most successful USGA championships in history," she says. "Nowhere are there more avid and passionate supporters, including players, patrons and volunteers, than in Pinehurst."

The new campus will feature two buildings located near the Carolina Hotel and the main clubhouse at the Pinehurst Resort. Construction started in late 2022.

The buildings will house The USGA Experience, a series of interactive displays offering an immersive view of golf, the USGA Golf Museum Special Exhibitions featuring the USGA's comprehensive collection of golf



A mural depicting the aviator James McConnell in Carthage and the Moore County Courthouse in downtown Carthage.



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Every year, we strive to provide award-winning care to all we serve. FirstHealth Moore Regional Hospital, including its Hoke and Richmond campuses, has been named to the 2022 Fortune/Merative 100 Top Hospitals list for the second year in a row. Moore Regional also received the Healthgrades Outstanding Patient Experience Award for 15 years in a row.

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[FirstHealth.org](https://www.FirstHealth.org)



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artifacts and priceless works of art by masters such as Rembrandt and Picasso, and the USGA's innovative Research and Test Center.

The Golf House also heralds the return of the World Golf Hall of Fame to Pinehurst after a 25-year absence. Founded in 1974, the Hall of Fame moved to St. Augustine, Florida, in 1999. That location will close at the end of its lease this year.

The new USGA campus also features outdoor environmental enhancements, including The Glade and The Grove, which will be home to native plants, a pollinator habitat and a restored longleaf pine forest. The USGA is also partnering with Pinehurst Resort to build an outdoor

testing pavilion and a STEM education space.

Pinehurst is making the land available to the USGA under a 150-year lease.

Both the USGA and Partners in Progress are excited about a partnership with Sandhills Community College that will establish a greenskeeper certification program and an apprenticeship.

"We need skilled greenskeepers who can install and maintain the golf courses including installing and maintaining irrigation systems," Driscoll says. "It is a high-tech data-driven science."

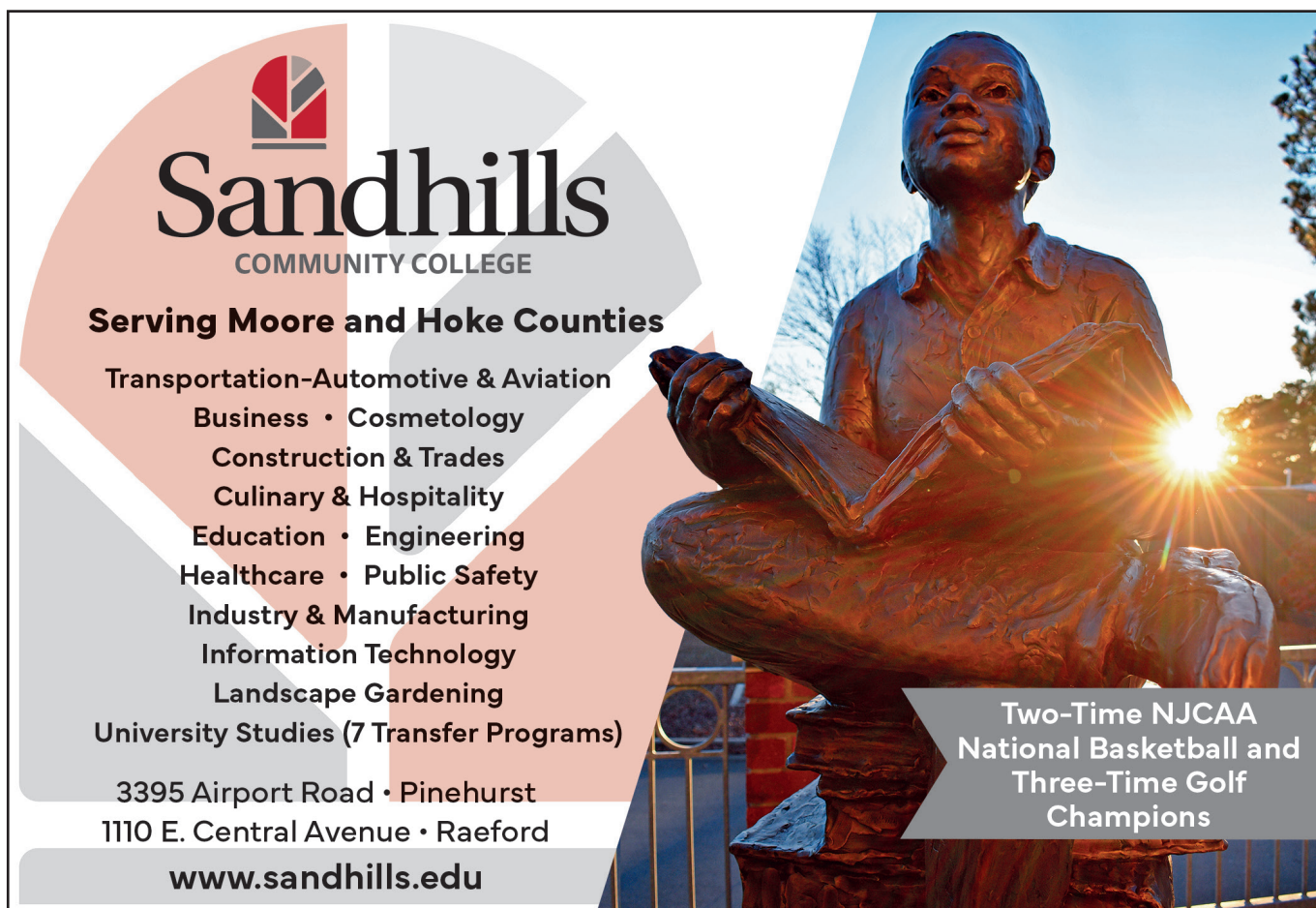
In addition, the Pinehurst Resort is constructing No. 10, its first new course in 30 years. Designed by

architect Tom Doak, the course is about four miles south of the main clubhouse and will be open in time for the USGA Men's Championship in 2024.

The USGA's growing reputation for innovation is also inspiring golf companies to move to Moore County, Hawkins points out.

One of these is Eaton's Golf Pride worldwide innovation headquarters in Southern Pines. The facility, which set up shop next to Pinehurst No. 8 in 2019, is a unique space designed to accelerate new product development and manage fulfillment of products around the world.

The site also includes a research



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"We like to look at our golf presence based on tradition and the opportunity to walk in the footsteps of golfing greats, but we also are bringing the game's innovation and focusing on what golf will look like in the future," Hawkins says. "This is something that sets Moore County apart from any other county in the state."

All this is music to Werz's ears. As the head of Moore County's travel and tourism efforts, he notes that even before the USGA began breaking ground on its new headquarters, the county was already setting visitation records.



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The county welcomes about 1.5 million visitors per year.

According to research conducted by U.S. Travel Association and Tourism Economics, Moore County was credited with the fourth-best rate of growth in visitor spending across all 100 counties in North Carolina from 2020 to 2021. Visitor spending increased by 70% and grew to \$673 million, an all-time county record, according to Werz. "This region is really red-hot right now," he says.

Werz uses numbers to tell Moore County's tourism success story, starting with occupancy tax collections, which have been at an all-time high for 20 months in a row.

"Occupancy tax makes up 97% of our budget, and we're already 8.1% ahead of where we were in our last fiscal year," he says. "We had our first \$3 million year in 2021-2022 and we're growing year after year."

While golf plays a big role in bringing people to Moore County, it's only part of the picture.

The N.C. legislature has designated 2023 as the Year of the Trail in North Carolina and Moore County is making big plans, Werz says.

From brewery and winery tours to excursions for viewing the many murals on barns and businesses across the county, The Year of the Trail opens the door to new ways to enjoy the natural beauty Moore County has to offer.

The new Pinecone Pathways program will entice locals and visitors to hit the trails. The CVB has partnered with the Town of Star, home of Star Works, a public

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access glass studio, to develop a scavenger hunt on local trails.

"We are going to have 100 glass pinecones made in different colors and hide them on local trails," Werz says. "We're launching Pinecone Pathways in mid-March and running it through Memorial Day."

Later, the CVB will partner with Seagrove Area Potters, a collective of potters, to create a pottery pathways event on local trails. An interactive story trail featuring Winnie-the-Pooh characters and a project to create signage and trail markers in Bear Creek will round out the events associated with Moore County's Year of the Trail observance.

From golfing glory, to a shopper's paradise, innovations in health care and fun in the great outdoors, Moore County is poised for a big year coming in 2023, and it's only getting bigger going forward. ■

— Teri Saylor is a freelance writer from Raleigh.



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