



NESA

The North Eastern Strategic Alliance

Food Processing

The North Eastern Strategic Alliance (NESA) Region, located halfway between New York and Miami, is within an 8-hour drive to over 50 percent of the US major markets, making it an ideal location for food processing operations. With a skilled workforce, extensive transportation infrastructure, reliable electricity and an abundance of water, it's not hard to see why companies like Heinz, Perdue Farms and National Choice Bakery have chosen to make this nine-county region home.

Why locate your food processing facility in the NESA Region?

Located in the northeastern corner of South Carolina, the nine-county NESA Region is within an 8-hour drive to over 50 percent of the U.S. population. The region's prime location, strong workforce, great utilities infrastructure and extensive transportation network provide an exceptional business climate.

Reliable & Low Cost Electricity

NESA knows that having a reliable supply of electricity is vital for food processing operations. The counties that comprise the NESA Region are served by both Progress Energy and state-owned Santee Cooper via Horry Electric Cooperative, Lynches River Cooperative, Marlboro Electric Cooperative, Pee Dee Electric Cooperative, and Santee Electric Cooperative.

- Average electrical rates are \$.05/kWh and back-up power generation is available.

Qualified Workforce

- Industry wage rates that are 7% below national averages
- Population base of over 680,000 with a labor draw of over 340,000 workers
- Seven colleges and universities within the region
- One of the lowest unionization rates (4.1%) in the nation

Water & Wastewater

Many sites in the region have millions of gallons per day in excess water and wastewater capacity. Some sit atop aquifers, which provide unlimited supplies of clean water.

Infrastructure

The NESA Region is the ideal location for food processing operations and has easy access to many of the state's main transportation hubs including:

- Interstates 95, 20 and the proposed Interstate 73
- U.S. Highways 17, 378, 52, 521, 701, 301, 1, 501
- Florence Regional Airport and Myrtle Beach International Airport
- Class I CSX rail
- Port of Georgetown

The region is also conveniently located within 45 minutes of:

- Interstates 26 and 77
- Charlotte Douglas International Airport
- Port of Charleston and Port of Wilmington, N.C.

Fast Facts about Food Processing in the NESA Region

- Employment: **2,032 workers**
- **\$606.7 million** in sales by food processing firms in 2008
- **Top food processing firms** in the region:
 - Perdue Farms
 - Young Pecan
 - Popz USA
 - Sopakco
 - McCall Farms

Custom Workforce Training Service

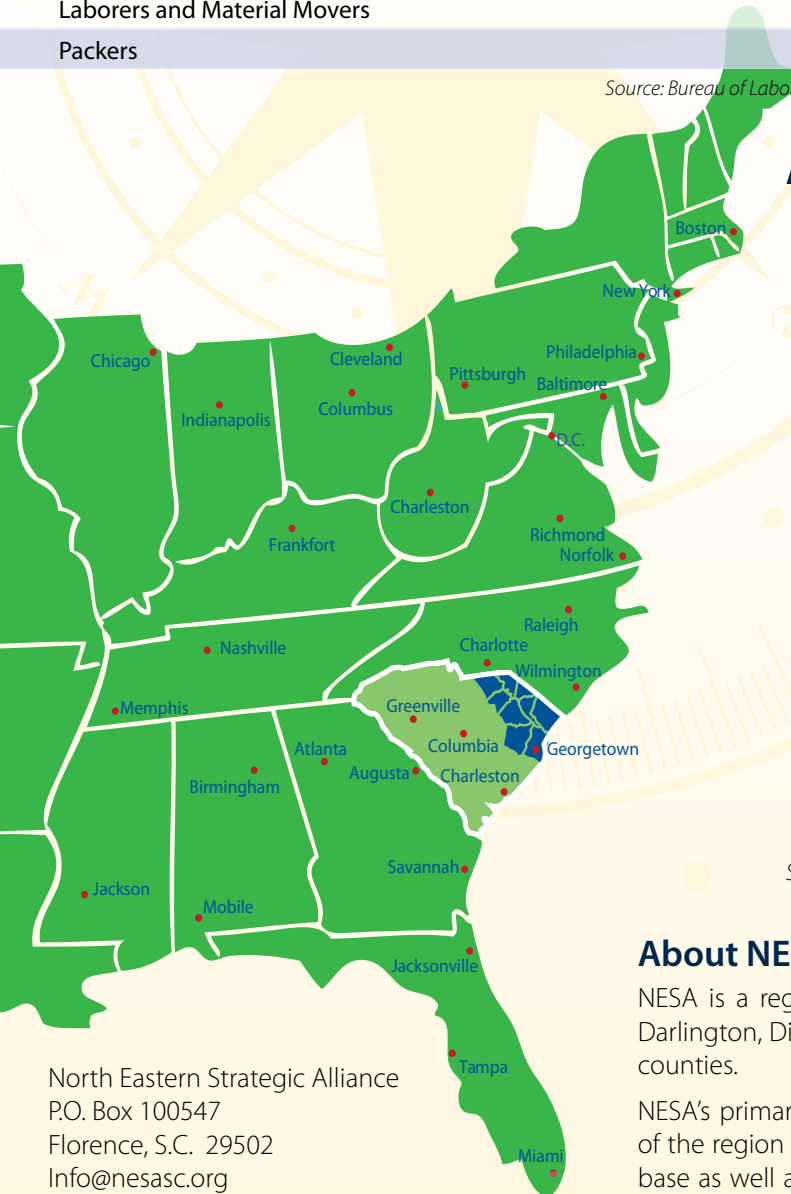
- ReadySC, a division of the S.C. Technical College System, is a pre-employment training program provided at no cost to employers and is 100% customized to fit the needs of new and existing businesses.
- The Southeastern Institute of Manufacturing and Technology (SiMT) is the first facility of its kind in the U.S. and features an Advanced Manufacturing Center, a Virtual Reality Center and a National Robotics Center. SiMT offers open-enrollment, on-site and customized training as well as manufacturing startup assistance and consulting services.

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Occupational Wage Rate Comparison

Occupation Title	USA	SC	NESA
	Median Hourly Wage		
General and Operations Managers	\$42.64	\$36.54	\$33.78
First-Line Supervisors/Managers of Production and Operating Workers	\$23.40	\$24.02	\$23.38
Bakers	\$10.86	\$9.35	\$9.53
Butchers and Meat Cutters	\$13.21	\$12.52	\$12.20
Meat, Poultry and Fish Cutters and Trimmers	\$10.12	\$8.48	\$8.96
Food Batchmakers	\$11.41	\$10.63	\$9.76
Machinists	\$16.94	\$15.25	\$15.19
Mixing and Blending Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	\$14.59	\$14.89	\$14.07
Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	\$14.57	\$13.55	\$12.58
Packaging and Filling Machine Operators and Tenders	\$11.42	\$10.86	\$10.24
Truck Drivers or Light Delivery Service	\$12.68	\$11.52	\$10.88
Laborers and Material Movers	\$10.53	\$10.00	\$10.82
Packers	\$8.80	\$8.16	\$8.96

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, May 2007 Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates; NESA (extrapolated data)



Available Business Incentives

- Job Tax Credits (JTC) – By creating jobs in South Carolina, companies may be eligible for a tax credit against state income tax liability. Five of the nine counties represented by NESA meet the criteria for the maximum amount of JTCs allowable.
- Corporate Income Tax Moratorium – Companies that create 100-200 “net” new jobs in economically distressed areas are granted a moratorium on corporate income taxes. Qualifying companies can completely eliminate state corporate income tax liability for 10-15 years.
- Job Development Credits (JDC) – JDCs are discretionary incentives that can address specific needs of individual companies. The credit provides a rebate of employee wages subject to South Carolina withholding tax and can be used to offset certain approved expenses such as real property costs, workforce training or infrastructure.
- Sales and Use Tax Exemption – Purchase of electricity, packaging products, process fuel, manufacturing machinery and equipment, manufacturing replacement parts and attachments, pollution control equipment, recycling machines, and R&D machines.

Source: South Carolina Department of Commerce, 2008

About NESA

NESA is a regional economic development organization that serves Chesterfield, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Georgetown, Horry, Marion, Marlboro and Williamsburg counties.

NESA's primary objective is to significantly enhance the quality of life for residents of the region by creating additional jobs and capital investment within the existing base as well as through recruitment of new companies and expansion of tourism-related development.

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