

## Gov. Pat McCrory Lays Out Legislative, Administrative Priorities For 2014

By Administrator

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RALEIGH, (SGRToday.com) - Gov. Pat McCrory laid out a wide ranging set of priorities for 2014 at a news conference Monday, including a push for teacher pay raises and putting North Carolina in the energy exploration business. The governor also renewed his support for First Lady Ann McCrory's signature initiative: a law that would require reform of puppy mills.

Flanked by members of his Cabinet and other key state officials who gathered at the Executive Mansion in Raleigh, the governor and others spoke for nearly 45 minutes, answering questions from news media following prepared remarks. Following are Gov. McCrory's priorities, as released by his office.

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### Economy

Increasing energy production, leveraging transportation connections and expanding the military's presence in North Carolina are three initiatives the governor vowed to pursue to stimulate economic growth and job creation.

### Powering the Economy: Energy Exploration

Governor McCrory said North Carolina must increase production of the state's energy resources. The governor personally requested a meeting with President Barack Obama to discuss seismic testing off North Carolina and other coastal states, a first step toward more offshore energy production. Governor McCrory will soon become chairman of the multi-state Governors' Outer Continental Shelf Coalition, which advocates for more offshore energy exploration.

Renewable energy development also received the governor's support, as well as the development of regulations that will allow for the safe, environmentally responsible exploration of inland natural gas and oil. Governor McCrory has tasked the newly reorganized Energy Policy Council, which includes Department of Environmental and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary John Skvarla and Commerce Secretary Sharon Decker, to develop an inclusive, long-term energy plan for the state.

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### Governor's Transportation Vision: Moving People, Moving Products

To keep people and products moving and the economy growing, Governor McCrory said Transportation Secretary Tony Tata will unveil a 25-year plan that will focus on leveraging transportation needs and assets, such as roads, rail, ports and airports. Additionally, Cultural Resources Secretary Susan Klutz will be in charge of "Art That Moves You," a transportation beautification program that will promote tourism through the use of creative landscaping, artwork and lighting.

### Promoting and Protecting Our Military

Increasing the military's \$30 billion annual contribution to the state's domestic product will be another major economic push in 2014. Last year, the governor signed legislation that protects military operations in North Carolina from encroachment. He and Military Advisor Cornell Wilson also met with senior Pentagon officials to discuss expanding defense contracting in North Carolina. The governor also tasked Wilson and Veterans Affairs Advisor Illario Pantano with increasing job and education opportunities for recently separated veterans so they make North Carolina their permanent home. The governor said the high-level training and discipline veterans receive during their military service greatly enhances the state's labor pool.

### Education

#### Funding Our Future: Investing in Education/Teacher Compensation

The governor's education plan would increase pay for K-12 teachers and boost starting pay to attract and keep talented teachers in the classroom. The plan would also reward highly productive teachers and those in high-demand subjects, such as mathematics and the sciences. Full details of the Results, Rewards, Respect plan will be unveiled in the coming weeks by Senior Education Advisor Eric Guckian, who has been working with lawmakers. Some elements of the plan will be introduced during the General Assembly's upcoming session.

#### Collegiate Wellness Initiative

Reducing substance abuse and underage drinking among college students is the aim of a new initiative headed by Department of Public Safety Secretary Frank Perry and ABC Commission Chairman Jim Gardner. Underage drinking will be targeted through the enforcement of existing laws. To deal with substance abuse, the governor called for increased support of recovery programs.

### Efficiency

#### Putting Patients First: Medicaid Reform

Medicaid reform continues to be a top efficiency goal, not only to get costs under control, but to improve patient care. The governor wants Medicaid to treat the whole person, including mental health needs, and not just treat a patient's physical symptoms. Since she took office, Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Aldona Wos has gathered feedback from patients, doctors, nurses, hospital executives and lawmakers for a collaborative "Partnership For A Healthy North Carolina."

#### Driving Change: DMV Modernization

Increasing the customer friendliness and modernization of the Department of Motor Vehicles will continue in 2014. New business practices and the increased use of technology will build upon the gains realized in 2013. Last year, 19 driver license offices extended their evening and Saturday hours for customer convenience.

Wait times in North Raleigh and Cary were reduced by adding greeters to direct customers to kiosks for walk-up service. Nick Tennyson, Department of Transportation chief deputy secretary of support, is leading this effort.

#### Rebuilding NC: State Capital Projects

Work will continue in earnest to renovate, repair and rebuild state facilities to increase workplace safety, and where possible, appearance. The need is glaring. During the recent cold snap some work places in the Secretary of State's Office could only be heated to 45 degrees. Secretary of Administration Bill Daughtridge Jr. and DENR Secretary John Skvarla are heading up this project.

#### NCGEAR: Too Big To Succeed

The North Carolina Government Efficiency and Reform (NCGEAR) initiative is charged with performing a top-to-bottom review and analysis to see that state government is using tax dollars effectively. NCGEAR will tackle large issues, not trim around the edges, so that government agencies are not too big to succeed. State Budget Director Art Pope is leading the NCGEAR program to review policy, personnel and organization of state agencies.

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### Working For Workplace Safety: Workers' Comp Reform

### Striving For Success: Performance Management

State Personnel Director Neal Alexander will head up two efficiency efforts. One will increase workplace safety with the intent of reducing injuries and workers' compensation costs. The other is increasing employee, productivity, satisfaction and engagement by implementing a uniform performance management system. DENR has already piloted this project, and after adjustments, it will be implemented in other state agencies.

### First Lady Initiative: Puppy Protection Program

The governor and first lady will continue to work for a law that provides basic standards of care for animals by large commercial dog breeders. These standards include food and water, sufficient space, regular exercise and routine veterinary care for dogs and puppies.