

## Former N.C. Commerce Secretary Joins Brooks Pierce

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Tony Copeland, who served as North Carolina’s Secretary of Commerce from January 2017 to January 2021, has joined Brooks Pierce as Senior Economic Development & Corporate Strategist to launch the firm’s new economic development practice area.

“Brooks Pierce has always been committed to helping businesses grow and prosper in North Carolina. This new practice area will bring together many of our existing areas of focus to provide new opportunities to meet client needs,” said Reid Phillips, the firm’s managing partner. “Tony knows the state’s business climate and potential better than anyone, so it is a natural fit for him to spearhead this effort on our behalf.”

Brooks Pierce’s economic development practice will help businesses considering expansions or additional operations evaluate a wide range of needs including real estate, incentives and regulatory requirements.

Copeland has a rich background in economic development with real-world international experience as a corporate executive. During his tenure as the state’s commerce secretary, North Carolina recruited \$18.4 billion in capital investment and created nearly 81,000 jobs through the use of incentives. Among his top achievements were negotiating \$400 million in incentives to secure Centene Corp.’s \$1 billion, 3,200-employee campus in Charlotte, the single largest job creation project in North Carolina history, and securing the largest global headquarters incentive agreement in the state on behalf of Red Hat Inc., now a division of IBM. He also led the recruitment of high-profile corporate announcements involving Honeywell, Lowe’s, Eli Lilly, Corning, Merck, Nestle Purina, Lenovo and Honda Aviation.

From 2003–2008, Copeland served as assistant commerce secretary, helping to secure the creation of nearly 100,000 jobs and \$12 billion in investment to North Carolina while in that role. He previously directed the economic development practice at another law firm. From 1991 to 2002, he served as executive vice president, secretary and general counsel of BTI, a telecommunications company, in which he was a founding member of the management team. There, he raised more than \$500 million in debt and equity financing and grew the company from less than 50 employees to more than 1,500.

Copeland is a graduate of Duke University and the Western Michigan University School of Law. He has served on more than 20 boards and commissions, including previously serving as a member of the Federal Communications Bar Association as well as the chair of the Audit and Finance Committee for MCNC, a nonprofit that owns and operates the

North Carolina Research and Education Network, one of America's longest-running regional research and education networks.

"I am honored to be joining a law firm with both a deep history in North Carolina and a strong commitment to public service," Copeland said. "I look forward to using this new opportunity to continue to help businesses flourish and grow North Carolina's economy."