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## Raleigh Chamber Is Half-Way To Fundraising Goal

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The Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce is nearly half-way towards its ambitious goal of raising \$8.3 million from local business for its next five-year economic development program.

The co-chairs of the five-year program — Scott Custer, CEO of RBC Bank, and Bill Johnson, Progress Energy's chief executive — unveiled the initiative this morning and announced that \$4.05 million already has been raised behind the scenes from local businesses. The goal: to add 50,000 new jobs to the region during the five-year period that begins Jan. 1.

The program, its full title is Edge4 — Growing Great, is a public/private partnership between the chamber and the City of Raleigh and Wake County with a goal of raising a total of \$12 million. The two government partners have made a \$3.3 million commitment, pushing the total amount raised to date to \$7.35 million, or 61 percent of the overall goal.

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Johnson acknowledged before a group of more than 150 business and government officials assembled at a breakfast meeting at the Raleigh Convention Center that it's a tough time to be asking businesses for five-year financial commitments. But he stressed the importance of investing in the future.

Noting the goal of adding 50,000 new jobs, he remarked: "What is more important today than adding new jobs?"

"As we all know, our national and local communities are suffering," Johnson said. "But our communities in this area are positioned to grow stronger, to grow jobs, especially when the economy turns around. We all have to believe that it is going to turn around, and it is going to turn around. But we have to be prepared when the time comes. We can't afford to lose the edge that we have. That's where Edge4 comes in."