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Tech firm to expand, add 2,000 Wake jobs

BY JOHN MURAWSKI
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RALEIGH
Infosys, a global technology consulting firm based in India, plans to hire 2,000 people in

Wake County over the next five years.

As part of its North Carolina expansion, Infosys received approval from the N.C. Department of Commerce for a \$25 million state incentive package early on Thursday. The new jobs will pay \$72,146 on average,

nearly \$20,000 a year more than the Wake County average wage.

The Infosys facility in Wake County will be one of four planned innovation and technology hubs in the United States. The company has previously announced its first tech

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hub in Indiana. The Wake County hub, the location of which has not yet been selected, will focus on cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, big data and cloud applications.

Infosys President Ravi Kumar, who joined Gov. Roy Cooper and other state officials for the announcement Thursday, said the company expects to fill the first 500 positions by the end of 2018. Kumar said the jobs will be filled locally, not by importing workers from elsewhere.

The positions will include software developers, analysts and digital architects. But Kumar said Infosys also hires people with backgrounds in the humanities to focus on the client experience with new technology.

Kumar said one reason Infosys picked North Carolina for its next U.S. hub is proximity to existing clients in such areas as financial services, industrial manufacturing, insurance and pharmaceuticals. The company's Wake County site will host client employees for several

SEE INFOSYS, 7A

N.C. joins states suing education secretary

BY ANNE BLYTHE
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RALEIGH
N.C. Attorney General Josh Stein says a lawsuit he joined Thursday could help students who attended fraudulent, for-profit colleges ease their federal student-loan debt.

Stein joined other attorneys general from around the country to sue U.S. Education Secretary

Betsy DeVos, who froze rules last month that would have forgiven the federal loan debt of students cheated by predatory for-profit colleges.

The attorneys general, all Democrats, from 18 states and the District of Columbia accuse the Trump administration's education secretary of breaking federal law and giving the questionable schools free rein by rescinding the Borrower Defense rule that was to go into effect on the first of this month. They filed the lawsuit Thursday in federal court in the District of Columbia.

"The delayed rules are deeply troubling," Stein said in a statement. "Students who borrow money for their education are taking a risk to improve their lives - and they must be protected from those who take advantage of vulnerable student borrowers. Delaying these rules that protect students is irresponsible and reckless."

The rule was adopted late last year before former President Barack Obama left office and the new Republican administration took over. It was created to protect student borrowers by making it easier for students at colleges found to be fraudulent to have their federal loans forgiven.

"With this ideologically driven suit, the state attorneys general are saying to regulate

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These four townhome projects are under construction in Raleigh's urban core, clockwise from top left: The Saint on St. Mary's Street, Transfer Co. Olde East on Davie Street, West + Lenoir on the southern side of downtown and 10 Arros on New Bern Avenue.

There's a new kind of luxury living downtown

BY SARAH NAGEM
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RALEIGH

The new rowhomes of Hargett Place stand tall just to the east of Moore Square, their brick exteriors, front stoops and shared walls a throwback to old-school, big-city living.

But the structures represent a new era of luxury in downtown Raleigh. Many high-end townhomes, some with price tags that exceed \$1 million, are being built in response to a growing demand from people who want to live downtown but desire more privacy and autonomy than condominiums offer.

Hargett Place, which will

feature about 17 homes on Hargett Street when it is finished, set out to "change the lens of how people look at living downtown," said Trish Healy, who developed the project with her husband, John.

The duo, co-founders of Hyde Street Holdings, wanted to connect the thriving downtown district with the historic Oakwood neighborhood. So they opted for a traditional design with special attention to detail - including the homes' address numbers on transoms above the doors.

Inside, the homes feature open floor plans, quartz countertops, custom-made cabinets that rise to 10-foot ceilings, marble or glass backsplashes and steps

that lead to rooftop terraces with views of the city skyline.

About 40 percent of the units have been sold, and four buyers have already moved in.

"These are early visionaries," Healy said.

Developers have been building townhomes in Raleigh for decades, often at reasonable prices to serve first-time buyers who are OK with no-frills features. Higher-end townhomes have gone up in some parts of the city, but many of the fanciest houses - most of them sprawling - have been built in suburban communities like Wakefield.

About half a dozen townhome projects are now in the works downtown, and some say they

represent a shift in thinking when it comes to luxury living - smaller, taller and within walking distance to jobs, restaurants and stores.

Developers say many new townhome buyers are moving from condos or bigger homes inside the Beltline. Some are drawn to urban living, and some like the idea of owning a home without having a lawn to mow or shrubs to trim.

Buyers include a mix of young professionals, baby boomers and families with school-age children.

Ed Miles and his partner are buying a three-bedroom townhome at West + Lenoir, a 12-unit project planned for the southern end of downtown with prices from the mid-\$400,000s to \$600,000.

"We both want to get closer to downtown, where we both spend a lot of time - going out to dinner, meeting friends," said Miles, who has spent the past 18

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