



# CoEE INVESTOR SPOTLIGHT: BMW



In 2002, BMW chose to invest \$10 million in South Carolina's Centers of Economic Excellence (CoEE) Program, partnering with the Center of Economic Excellence in Automotive Manufacturing and the Center of Economic Excellence in Automotive Systems Integration, both located in the Campbell Graduate Engineering Center on the Clemson University International Center for Automotive Research (CU-ICAR) campus.

BMW's investment allowed Clemson to recruit one of the world's leading manufacturing experts, Dr. Tom Kurfess. At CU-ICAR, Dr. Kurfess is helping the automotive industry increase its

leadership in the areas of precision systems, controls, automation, and robotics.

Why would one of the world's top companies invest millions in South Carolina research? Because an investment in the CoEE Program offers compelling benefits, including R&D savings, access to the work of world-class researchers, and long-term workforce development advantages.

Below, BMW Manufacturing Public Relations Manager Bobby Hitt explains why BMW made a strategic decision to invest in the CoEE Program.

## Why did BMW invest in the CoEE Program?

**Hitt:** For companies like us, the CoEE Program represents a remarkable investment opportunity. The dollar-for-dollar, 100 percent match the state of South Carolina provides makes it one of the smartest investments our company could make. How many investments guarantee a 100 percent return?

## How is BMW benefiting from its investment in CoEE?

**Hitt:** First, it has allowed us to improve our products and processes. Constant innovation is the only way that companies can stay competitive today, and the partnership with South Carolina's research universities is a big part of our efforts to continuously improve what we make and the way we do things.

By investing in CoEE, we're also improving education quality in South Carolina. As a leading company in the Dow Jones Sustainability Index, BMW is committed to developing an educated workforce focused on innovation and continuous learning, which are essential ingredients for success.

Now, CoEE is increasing South Carolina students' access to advanced degrees in auto-related fields and the world-class automotive engineering and design faculty who have been recruited through the program.

On a related note, our investment in CoEE is helping BMW build its future talent pipeline. To be successful in the long-term, the key is to recruit a workforce that is highly skilled and committed to continuous improvement. Our investment in CoEE is helping to identify the best and brightest students at Clemson and other educational institutions and to prepare them for careers in South Carolina's automotive industry.

Also, by supporting the CoEE program, BMW is giving back to South Carolina in a way that builds the state's economy and makes it a better business destination. As CoEE helps cultivate knowledge-economy industries in the Palmetto State, expanding companies are choosing the state as a business location because of its research and innovation capabilities. And what's good for South Carolina is good for BMW.

## What does BMW see as the potential long-term advantages of being involved with the CoEE Program?

**Hitt:** In a decade, I believe South Carolina will consistently compete against top-tier locations across the globe for knowledge-based jobs and corporate investment—and win. This state has long been renowned for its technical colleges and workforce training. With the help of CoEE, the state's research institutions can also become world leaders. Prioritizing education and research makes a statement to the world and can change the course of South Carolina.

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I would encourage all corporate leaders to take a look at an investment in CoEE. It's a remarkable opportunity to develop a "joint venture" with one or more of South Carolina's research universities. [The three South Carolina research universities are Clemson University, University of South Carolina, and Medical University of South Carolina.] The benefits to a company are compelling—access to innovation, talent development, and so on.

The CoEE Program is truly a win-win proposition. The state of South Carolina is saying to industry, "If you invest in South Carolina research, we'll match that investment dollar for dollar, and we'll help you get the business outcomes you want." At the same time, South Carolina becomes a better business destination, increases the status and productivity of its research programs, and offers more opportunities for success and professional fulfillment to its citizens. That's a smart investment.



### About the CoEE Program

Established by the S.C. General Assembly in 2002, the South Carolina Centers of Economic Excellence Program receives an appropriation from S.C. Education Lottery funds to help Clemson University, the Medical University of South Carolina, and the University of South Carolina create Centers of Economic Excellence (CoEE) in research areas that will advance South Carolina's economy and lead to high-paying jobs. The program also provides funding for CoEE endowed chairs, world-renowned scientists recruited to South Carolina to lead the Centers. Every dollar the state invests must be matched dollar-for-dollar with non-state funds from companies, philanthropies, or federal agencies.

For details on how your company can benefit by investing in the CoEE Program, please use the following contact information:

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