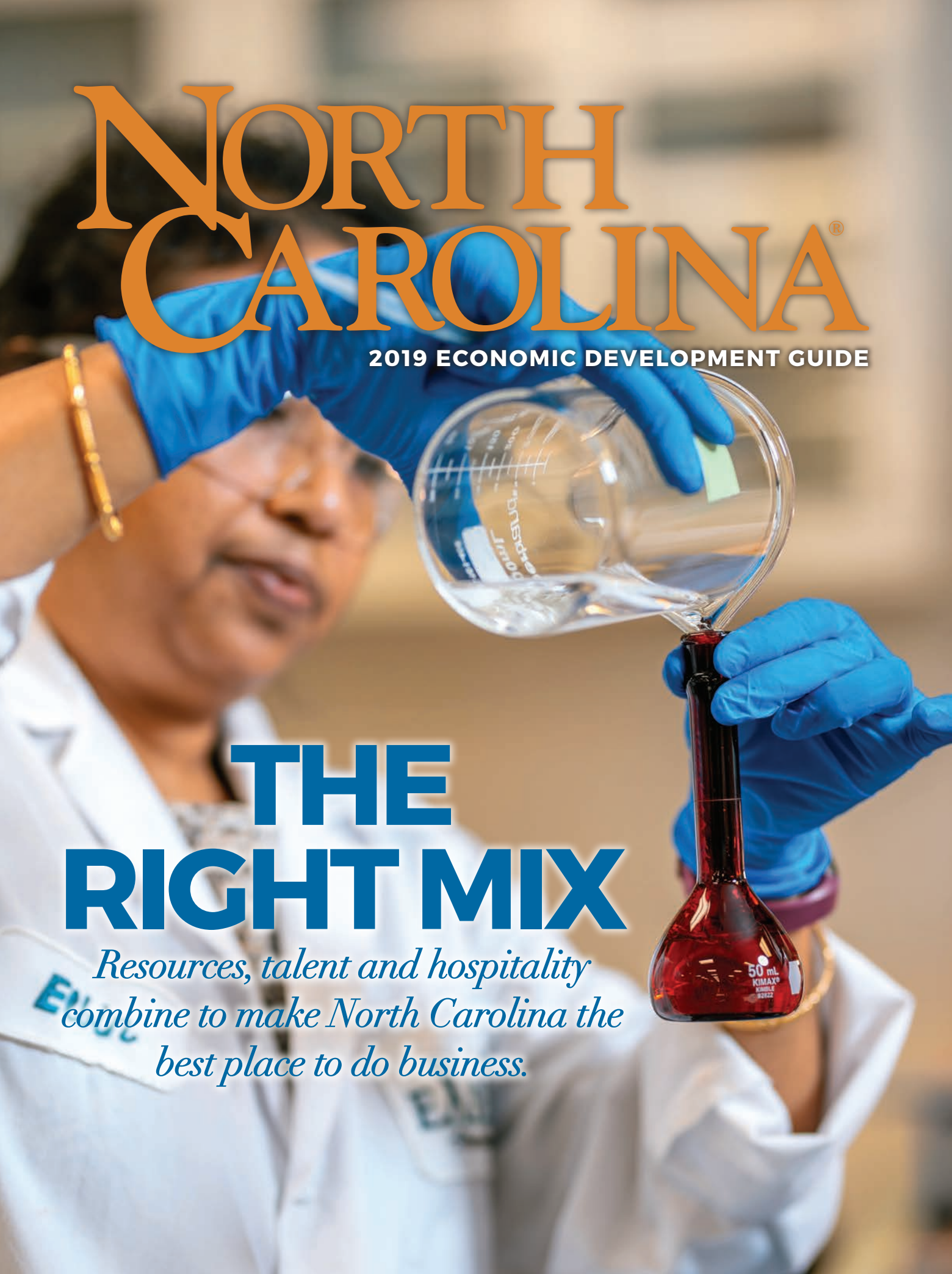


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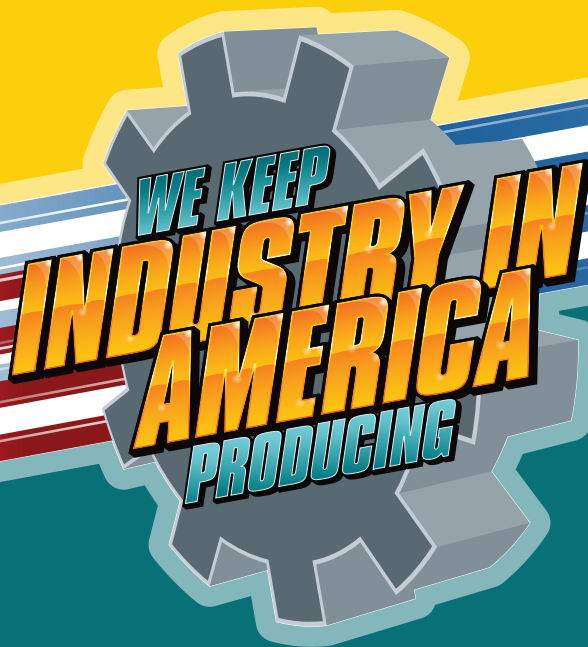
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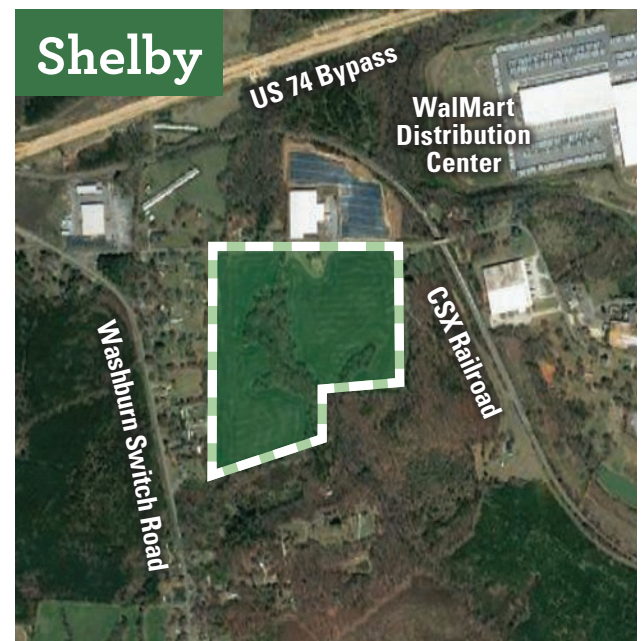
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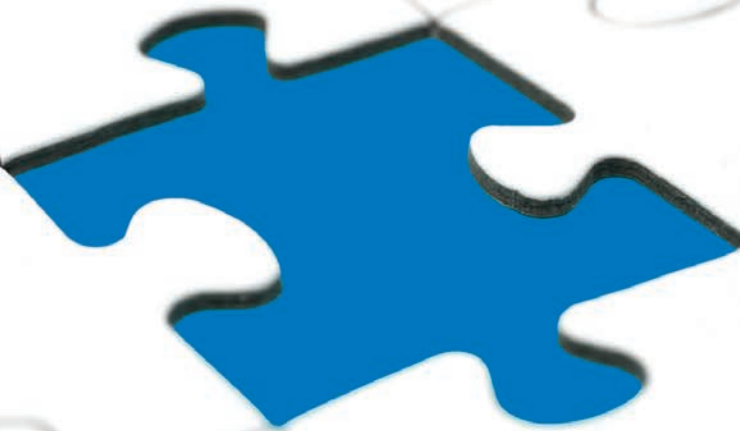


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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GUIDE

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Cover photo by Mike Belleme



10 REASONS TO BE IN N.C.

1. A BUSINESS-FRIENDLY TAX CLIMATE

North Carolina's 3% corporate income tax rate, already the lowest among the 44 states with the levy, will drop to 2.5% in 2019. Overall, North Carolina has the third-lowest business tax burden in the U.S., according to a 2018 Anderson Economic Group study. Producing its most comprehensive business-tax burden ranking ever, the economic research and consulting company considered 11 corporate taxes.

2. FAST-GROWING POPULATION AND TALENT POOL

North Carolina's population is 10.2 million and growing, and the state is now the nation's ninth-most populous. Being one of the fastest-growing states ensures a steady pipeline of workforce talent that has access to top-tier training: Students are earning degrees at more than 50 four-year colleges and universities across the state. The 58-campus community-college system is the nation's third-largest and a national model for customized workforce training.

3. AFFORDABLE BUSINESS-OPERATING COSTS

North Carolina's cost-effective business environment is clear across several measures, including construction costs (16% below the national average in metropolitan areas) and industrial electricity costs (nearly 7% below the U.S. average). In fact, North Carolina has the second-lowest business costs — including labor, energy and taxes — in the country, according to *Forbes'* Best States for Business list. Having the second-lowest unionization rate in the nation contributes to affordable personnel costs.

4. LOCATION AND LOGISTICS TO REACH MILLIONS

North Carolina's central East Coast location and superb road network provide access to more than 170 million customers within a day's drive. The state's two deep-water seaports and two Class 1 rail carriers enable companies to reach millions more domestic and international customers. North Carolina's international airports include the world's seventh-busiest in Charlotte as well as Raleigh-Durham International Airport, described by an MIT study as the best-connected medium-sized airport in the U.S.

5. LEADERSHIP IN RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

North Carolina's universities excel in research and development and generate significant intellectual property. UNC Chapel Hill and Duke University ranked among the top 50 universities worldwide for the most U.S. utility patents issued in 2017, and N.C. State University ranked among the top 100.

The state is also home to several research parks, including the world's largest at Research Triangle Park.

6. NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED BUSINESS CLIMATE

North Carolina consistently finishes among the leaders in national business rankings. *Forbes* lists North Carolina as the nation's No. 1 best state for business and careers — and it's the only state that has placed among the top five all 12 years of its Best States study. In 2018, *Site Selection* magazine's Prosperity Cup award again ranked North Carolina the most competitive state for attracting new plants, and *Chief Executive* magazine again listed North Carolina as the third-best state for business.

7. QUALITY OF LIFE

North Carolina's low cost of living and family-friendly reputation make it an ideal place to call home. Residents also enjoy a moderate climate year-round and unique access to a variety of stunning natural landscapes, flanked by the Great Smoky Mountains and Blue Ridge Mountains to the west and 300 miles of beaches to the east.

8. STRONG MANUFACTURING AND PROFESSIONAL WORKFORCE

At more than 464,000 employees, North Carolina has the largest manufacturing workforce in the Southeast. That workforce has grown 5% over the last five years. Meanwhile, the state's professional, scientific and technical-services workforce has grown 16% over the same period to more than 230,000 employees, one of the highest growth rates in the U.S.

9. PERFORMANCE-BASED, TARGETED INCENTIVES

North Carolina offers eligible companies state and local programs that lower their costs and increase their global competitiveness, including performance-based grants tied to job creation. In recent years, legislators have significantly expanded potential grants for projects that create large-scale employment and investment in the state.

10. ECONOMIC-DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

The Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina, based in Cary, helps companies of all sizes identify sites, navigate economic-development incentives, find workforce solutions and more. If you are interested in locating or growing your business in North Carolina, call 919-447-7744, email clientservices@edpnc.com or visit edpnc.com.

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HEAT WAVE

Newcomers to North Carolina are drawn to our moderate climate — not too cold, not too hot. What is hot is the state’s economy, driven, in part, by our low corporate tax rate and competitive costs of doing business. Our vibrant cities are magnets for millennials, technology startups and other businesses. In rural N.C., infrastructure that once sustained textile mills and furniture factories now powers data centers for some of the world’s largest tech companies and advanced-manufacturing plants for life-sciences, aerospace, automotive and other industries.

China’s Triangle Tyre is making a record investment in rural N.C., building a \$580 million plant in the heart of the state’s former tobacco belt (*Page 30*). Austria’s EGGER Group is looking to revitalize one of the state’s legacy trades with a new high-tech furniture plant near Lexington

(*Page 16*). Global technology consultant Infosys picked Raleigh over cities in more than a half-dozen states for a new innovation hub (*Page 24*). These and other companies are attracted to the state’s major research universities and acclaimed community-college training programs. The UNC System, known for its competitive tuition rates, provides a pipeline of talent and is a relocation magnet for families with college-age children. Dozens of private colleges and universities offer additional education opportunities.

Visitors to our beaches, mountains, golf courses, historic sites and cities spent nearly \$24 billion in the state in 2017. “Quality of life” is a phrase we hear often — it’s just another part of what makes this place special. Come take a closer look.

— Cathy Martin, *project editor*



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PICKING UP THE PACE

Sustaining North Carolina's economic success requires a bipartisan approach to improve education systems, Gov. Roy Cooper says.



CHRISTER BERG

Urging businesses to enter North Carolina or expand here was not a key part of Roy Cooper's career before he was elected governor in 2016. The Nash County native, 61, has bachelor's and law degrees from UNC Chapel Hill and had served as the state's attorney general for the previous 16 years. But his leadership in recruitment over the last two years has earned praise from industry experts.

"Cooper has done a number of things we like, and our clients have a good relationship with his office," says New Jersey-based site-selection consultant John Boyd. "They are willing to negotiate and deliver incentives. ... I like what I see in the legislature and how they are working together with the governor on economic development."





NORTH CAROLINA AT A GLANCE

10.2 MILLION

POPULATION, 9TH-LARGEST
IN THE U.S.

5 MILLION

CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE

MORE THAN 50

COLLEGES AND
UNIVERSITIES AND **58**
COMMUNITY-COLLEGE
CAMPUSES

10

FORTUNE 500 COMPANY
HEADQUARTERS

Cooper and the GOP-dominated N.C. General Assembly agreed to expand the incentives offered for “transformational” projects involving more than 3,000 jobs and \$1 billion in investment. The move is helping the state compete against aggressive rivals. Also, Cooper and the legislators supported an unprecedented \$3 billion bond issue to expand and improve state roads. Unlike most debt transactions, this fundraising approved last June bypasses the traditional voter referendum.

Midway through his four-year term, Cooper had an approval rating of 53% of N.C. voters surveyed in a Spectrum News North Carolina poll in October 2018. That compares with 23% who don’t approve of his leadership.

The governor shared his comments in an interview that was edited for brevity and clarity.

WHAT ARE KEY REASONS NORTH CAROLINA IS REGULARLY CITED AS A TOP STATE FOR BUSINESS?

There are a lot of reasons companies want to come to North Carolina. I hear often about the quality of our workforce and our emphasis on education, particularly our universities and community colleges. Employers say they need adaptable employees who have skills but also the ability to

collaborate and solve problems. Our universities and community colleges are doing a great job developing talent.

I also hear from businesses that they want to be here because of our quality of life. Once they get here, employees don’t want to leave. Everything from climate to cost of living and, most of all, the friendliness and openness of people.

YOU’VE SAID CEOS REGULARLY ASK ABOUT NORTH CAROLINA’S EDUCATION SYSTEMS. IS THE STATE MAKING PROGRESS IN IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES?

An educated North Carolina is a job-ready North Carolina. I’ve spoken to CEOs and business leaders across the globe, urging them to invest and create jobs in our state. The question business executives ask when they’re looking at North Carolina is whether we have the well-trained workforce to make their company successful. The answer is yes, we absolutely do.

When I took office, I set an ambitious goal: make North Carolina a top 10 educated state by 2025. To get there, we need to increase the number of 4-year-olds enrolled in high-quality pre-K, raise the high-school graduation rate and grow the number of North Carolinians with a postsecondary degree. We’re making progress, but more work remains.

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My mission statement for North Carolina is to build a state where people are better educated and healthier, and where they have more money in their pockets and the opportunity to live abundant and purposeful lives. By investing in education, we can improve our workforce, recruit better-paying jobs and grow the economy for everyone.

YOU'VE FOCUSED ON RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. ARE YOU PLEASED WITH THE RESULTS, SUCH AS TRIANGLE TYRE NEAR TARBORO AND EGGER GROUP IN DAVIDSON COUNTY?

Rural North Carolina is a special place. I grew up in eastern North Carolina and understand the unique benefits, opportunities and challenges

facing our rural communities. In two years as governor, I've visited dozens of small towns that any business would be lucky to call home. The quality of life, the goodness of people, the work ethic, the low cost of living, the access to community-college training — all these qualities make rural North Carolina a place where businesses like Triangle Tyre and EGGER Group will flourish.

We will make sure they flourish by investing in education and job training so that employers can find the workforce necessary for their companies to grow. I also believe that means trusting local business leaders, empowering local innovation and giving communities the tools they need to succeed.

Last spring, we launched Hometown Strong, an initiative to strengthen rural communities and build partnerships between local leaders and state government. Most local governments don't have big staffs and often spend a lot of their time just keeping the trains on the tracks. They also struggle with red tape and a web of state government agencies when looking for support. Hometown Strong was born of the idea that breaking down silos and increasing communication can help rural communities succeed. So instead of creating a new agency or new bureaucracy, Hometown Strong is a small action team in the Governor's Office that is charged with listening to local leaders in rural counties and helping them to achieve their goals.

YOU'VE URGED CAUTION ON FURTHER INCOME-TAX REDUCTIONS. WHAT IS YOUR REASONING?

There is no doubt that a competitive tax climate is necessary to grow our economy, and North Carolina has that. But when I talk to CEOs, they stress that the No. 1 quality they are looking for when considering a move or an expansion is a great workforce and education system. In order to train people for good-paying jobs, we must continue to invest in public education.



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Of states with a corporate income tax, North Carolina has the lowest rate in the country [at 3%], but teacher pay in North Carolina continues to lag behind the national average. We can improve our investment in public schools and grow our skilled workforce while maintaining a business-friendly tax climate.

WHAT IS YOUR GENERAL VIEW ON THE IMPORTANCE OF INCENTIVES TO BE COMPETITIVE WITH OTHER STATES?

Competitive incentives are often needed to recruit the kinds of companies we want. We are in a global competition for good jobs, and we are fortunate that North Carolina has a lot to offer. We have a high quality of life, low cost of living and a talented workforce that can meet any challenge. It's only in the last 18 months or so that we have stepped up to put in place the transformative incentives we need. I'm proud of that. While there must be accountability in incentives to ensure success, we should continue to use them to recruit employers who want to create good jobs across our state and grow roots here.

HAS ANYTHING ABOUT THE ECONOMIC-DEVELOPMENT PROCESS SURPRISED YOU?

I've been somewhat surprised by the recognition among so many CEOs that education and a skilled workforce are first on their list when looking to move or expand. Employers want to be here and want to be a part of the community in North Carolina. But while a competitive tax climate is important, they know that the top requirement for their long-term success is the ability to hire skilled employees.

I am committed to improving public education and working with business leaders to tailor job training to growing industries so that North Carolinians can find the training they need for good jobs right here at home. 

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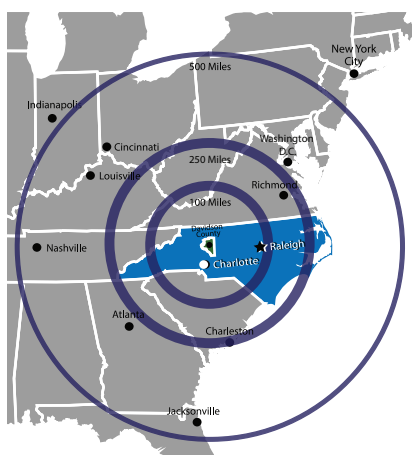


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WOOD FOR GOOD

In attracting EGGER Group, planning and patience are economic virtues.

BY D. LAWRENCE BIVINS



It's midmorning at the I-85 Corporate Center near Lexington, and the dust is flying. An access road is being paved. Construction crews lay foundations for buildings that will house a training center and executive offices. Wastewater and natural-gas lines are going in. Railroad tracks are being extended. Not far away, at Davidson County Community College, nine apprentices sign on to a unique four-year experiential learning commitment.

Karl Grasser is among those watching the action, all of which is intended to get Austria-based EGGER Group's first-ever U.S. operations ready in the time frame that company executives hope for. "Our production is slated to start in mid-2020," says Grasser, an EGGER manager who worked closely on the company's yearlong search for a North American outpost. The family-owned, wood-materials manufacturer is investing \$700 million in a production site that will employ 400 in its initial six-year phase. The numbers could go higher — as many as 370 more workers could be hired if demand for the company's products remains strong. "This is the first stage of our investment," Grasser says. "We try to keep our commitments realistic."

EGGER began in 1961 with a single chipboard plant in St. Johann in the Tyrol region of Austria, between Innsbruck and Salzburg. Today the company operates 19 plants around the world and employs a workforce of more than 8,700 making worktops, cabinets, flooring and other building products. Since the mid-2000s, EGGER has grown significantly in Europe and, more recently, expanded into South America with a facility in Argentina. In exploring options for its initial move into the U.S., the company's search was self-guided. "We didn't have a consultant," Grasser says. Instead, company officials quietly pored over census forecasts, data on North American wood-fiber markets and other research.

"We assembled a scorecard," Grasser says. The company's analysis led to primary consideration of a region stretching from Florida to Virginia. From there, EGGER contacted officials in seven states to begin identifying possible properties. The focus turned to the availability of

EGGER Group is building a high-tech particle-board plant in Lexington, its first U.S. manufacturing operation. The Austria-based wood-products company looked at more than 50 locations before choosing central North Carolina.



By summer of 2018, nine apprentices had signed on for an experiential-learning program at Davidson County Community College. Working with EGGER, the college designed two four-year tracks that each lead to an associate degree. Students will graduate with a guaranteed job and no student debt.

220-plus-acre sites equipped with the right infrastructure. Technical needs included abundant supplies of natural gas, electricity, water and wastewater service, along with highway and rail access. An initial list of 50 specific properties was winnowed to 10 sites that Grasser and his colleagues presented to top EGGER executives for their feedback. Three finalists emerged: Dublin, Ga.; Orangeburg, S.C.; and Lexington, N.C.

On several fronts, North Carolina's reputation preceded its entry into EGGER's search. The presence of Austrian and German companies in the state, especially in the Charlotte region, offered ready evidence that North Carolina was an accommodating backdrop for central European firms. (Charlotte is about 60 miles southwest of Lexington.) "There's a pretty strong community," Grasser says. "Knowledge-sharing with other Austrian companies was very helpful to us."

Ryan Nance, business-development director at the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina, soon introduced Grasser to Steve Google, Davidson County's economic-development director. Google, who has since retired from a 25-year career with the county, got to work on a 12-page Request for Information that EGGER presented to its three finalists.

Google was armed with answers to the company's questions. He also had ready partners to help the county recruit EGGER. Most of all, Google had an appealing site he had long worked to market. In fact, what is now the I-85 Corpo-

rate Center was nearly two decades in the making. Automotive giants Toyota Motor Corp. and Mercedes-Benz each had considered the property early on, evidence of the site's appeal. "Those projects didn't work out because we weren't ready," Google explains. "We had two options: We could sit and do nothing and hope someone would come by, or we could go ahead and put in the infrastructure."

County officials chipped away at the remaining ingredients: bringing the site under local government ownership, conducting the necessary engineering and environmental assessments, and organizing a plan to extend the necessary infrastructure that would hasten development.

The city of Lexington pledged to provide natural gas and wastewater service, while officials from Norfolk Southern Corp. and the North Carolina Railroad Co. agreed to extend tracks to the property from their nearby mainline.

"Rail projects have almost quadrupled over the last two to three years," says Anna Lea Moore, vice president for economic development at N.C. Railroad, which has worked closely with the state's communities to equip more industrial properties with access to rail service. "It's important that communities pay attention to the readiness of their rail sites and, at a minimum, understand how sites can be served," Moore says.

In the case of Davidson County, planning and patience were rewarded. "Nine years later, EGGER comes along, and that opened the door for a lot of support," Google says.

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Started in 1961, Austria-based EGGER Group is owned by Michael Egger, above, and his brother, Fritz. The wood-products company broke ground in March 2017 on its Davidson County plant.

With EGGER in hand, the North Carolina Rural Infrastructure Authority soon approved more than \$2.9 million in funds from the state's Industrial Development Fund-Utility Account, which is derived from proceeds of the state's Job Development and Investment Grant program. State legislators established JDIG in 2002 to encourage corporate expansions across North Carolina. The program channels a portion of the awards going to companies in wealthier urban counties into the Utility Account in order to help less prosperous communities such as Davidson County modernize industrial infrastructure. The area was stung in the last 20 years by massive job losses at local furniture plants.

The authority also approved more than \$2.2 million in federal Community Development Block Grant funds to support the county's construction of a nearly 24,000-foot natural-gas line into the site. Rural authority awards complemented a \$1 million grant from the Golden LEAF Founda-

tion. Those funds, derived from the state's portion of the 1998 Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement, will be used to improve public infrastructure at the project site.

Laying down new hard assets is not uncommon when communities recruit large manufacturers. But the arrival of EGGER also required the relocation of one key piece of existing infrastructure: The presence of a Duke Energy transmission line at the site interfered with the company's plans to develop its campus there.

"We had a line that was squarely in the way of how they were proposing to build their plant," says John Geib, director of North Carolina economic development for Duke Energy. The Charlotte-based utility, which will provide electricity to EGGER, agreed to move the line at its own expense once the company finalized its development plans. Duke's transmission engineering and planning teams worked vigorously to find solutions that met EGGER's ambitious vision and timetable. To accomplish that, Duke is investing as much as \$5 million in serving the company. "It makes sense to spend the money in order to win the project," Geib says. "We're prepared to do that, and there's a system for how we do it."

Googe, who now works for EGGER as a consultant, credits Duke's flexibility as one of the keys to addressing the company's needs. Based on his experience, he also knew that the recruitment of international companies required collaboration at the highest reaches of state government. In 2004, he worked to bring Belgium's UNILIN Flooring, now part of Mohawk Industries Inc., to Thomasville. That effort, which involved an \$80 million investment and 250 new jobs, required close collaboration with Tony Copeland, then an assistant secretary at the N.C. Department of Commerce.

Copeland returned to lead the department in January 2017 after being appointed secretary by Gov. Roy Cooper. In the following months, as EGGER narrowed its options, Copeland and Googe traveled to Austria at the invitation of company officials, visiting EGGER's headquarters and plant in St. Johann before flying to Suceava, Romania, home of the company's largest production facility.

"We saw their manufacturing and their products, and the sophistication of their employees and training," says Copeland, whose career has included work as location adviser, telecom-industry executive and attorney. The seasoning of Copeland and Googe included understanding the demands of working with family-owned European firms. "The decision-making process is generally much more streamlined than that of a publicly held company," Copeland says. "They're usually faster and more direct."

EGGER's Grasser says the company invited officials from the other finalist destinations to Europe as well. "We wanted them to be comfortable with our values as a company," Grasser says. The personal touch included a home-cooked dinner hosted by the company's owners, brothers Michael and Fritz Egger.

That hospitality was returned by Davidson County leaders when EGGER executives visited there. “They sensed our passion and pride,” says Lexington Mayor Newell Clark, who worked with the city’s tourism director to organize a bus tour that hit local hot spots like Richard Childress Racing, Childress Vineyards and Lexington’s vibrant downtown district. Lexington leaders have revitalized the city’s core, which now boasts coffeehouses, craft breweries and free public Wi-Fi. Vacancy rates along Main Street are now a scant 4%, Clark says, down from as much as 35% 20 years ago when local officials established a downtown development district.

“The size of our community reminded them of home,” Clark says. He believes Google’s success in landing EGGER came down to knowing who to put in front of the company — and when. “Steve knew just who to bring in at the right time, and it was key.” Unlike domestic business leaders, Europeans don’t always understand the political significance of counties, the role of county commissioners or the nuances of North Carolina local government, he says. “But as Austrians, they understood what a mayor is,” Clark says. “EGGER identified with cities. It’s what they know.”

Also included on EGGER’s bus tour were stops at two educational facilities that factor closely into the county’s economic strategy. The first was Yadkin Valley Regional Career Academy, a career and technical high school that opened in fall 2012. Known locally as “Valley Academy,” the school forges career-ready graduates through a four- or five-year course of study that emphasizes project-based learning in science, technology, engineering and math. The school partners with Davidson County Community College, and its 250 students are drawn from across the county’s three school systems.

“As a nation, we’ve fallen behind the rest of the world in providing hands-on industrial training for our students,” says Larry Potts, a long-time member of the Davidson County

“In North Carolina, there is fertile soil for these types of apprenticeship programs. It is further ahead than other states.”

KARL GRASSER
EGGER GROUP



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EGGER Group initially will make particle-board furniture at its Davidson County plant. The company also makes building products and interior-design elements such as laminate flooring.

Board of Commissioners who was elected to the North Carolina House of Representatives in 2016. Potts believes secondary education curricula in the U.S. are designed around the assumption that every graduate will proceed to a four-year university. Technical diplomas earned from places such as Valley Academy will be key in rekindling the nation's manufacturing sector. "We have to change our mindset and realize that not everyone is going to do mind work for a career," Potts says.

Davidson County Community College had already begun working with local industry leaders to create an apprenticeship consortium like those in other parts of the state, all of which had risen at the urging of European manufacturers. "The consortium is industry-led and industry-driven," explains Margaret Annunziata, vice president

for academic affairs at the college. Local manufacturers that have worked with Annunziata's team include Ingersoll Rand and CPM Wolverine Proctor — companies with Irish and Scottish roots, respectively.

Apprenticeships enable students to hone industry-specific skills while also gaining connections to an employer's unique corporate culture. The experience cements an early and mutual commitment companies and workers make to each other, which clarifies paths for career advancement and reduces turnover. "It's not always skills that are the greatest challenge but finding a fit with the culture of the organization, the practices and the expectations," Annunziata adds. "That's difficult in a lot of the industries we're talking about."

Grasser calls North Carolina's apprenticeship programs a competitive advantage. By summer 2018, the company had signed its first nine apprentices. Working with EGGER, the college has designed two four-year tracks based on a model that has proven itself in Austria: an electronics concentration leading to an associate degree in electronics engineering technology and an operations and maintenance concentration that leads to an associate in applied engineering technology. Receipt of a degree, designed to give apprentices additional career flexibility, was EGGER's idea. The company provides salary and benefits to students as they learn and covers the cost of tuition and textbooks. Students will graduate with a journeyman certificate, a guaranteed job and no student debt. "In North Carolina, there is fertile soil for these types of apprenticeship programs," Grasser says. "It is further ahead than other states."

In March 2018, the college sent a delegation to Austria to view EGGER's operations and training systems and tour schools around Innsbruck that train EGGER apprentices. The college also intends to provide other workforce services such as continuing education and training on Six Sigma, a data-driven quality control methodology. It is lending EGGER classroom space on campus while the company completes construction of its own training facility. "Davidson County Community College is one of our most important partners in North Carolina," Grasser says.

Secretary Copeland believes workforce was a key factor that landed EGGER, which he calls "a phenomenal investment" for Davidson County. "They were satisfied they would find a strong workforce," he says. The win, especially when paired with the arrival of China's Triangle Tyre to Edgecombe County in late 2017 (*Page 30*), is evidence that big transformative projects still happen outside the state's major metro areas.

He is also quick to point out that, for his agency, big projects don't end when companies make their choice public. "With large investments like EGGER, there's a tremendous amount of work that Commerce does post-deal — things like permitting, site placement, training and other needs," he says. "We'll continue to partner with them for years." 

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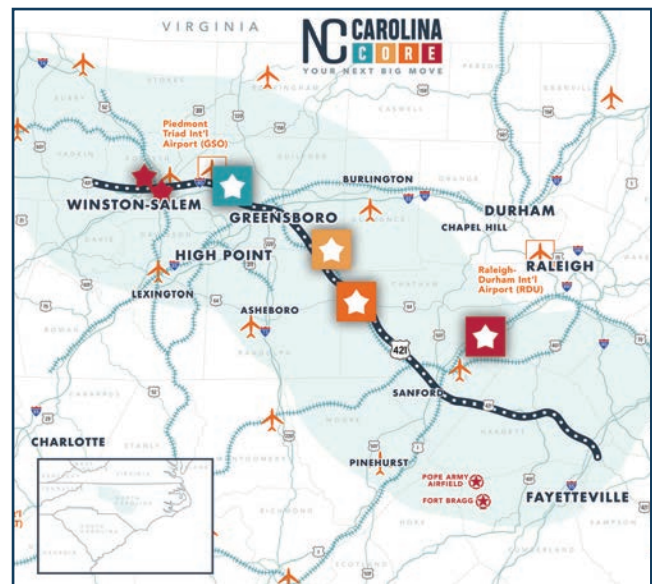
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TECH ON DECK

Access to top-notch educational institutions and teamwork — aided by a longtime friendship — help attract an Infosys technology hub.

BY TERI SAYLOR

A thriving education and business ecosystem, a longtime friendship and a dose of Southern hospitality all came together in 2017 to lure a global technology firm and 2,000 jobs to the Triangle region of North Carolina. Early that year, N.C. Sen. Jay Chaudhuri learned that India-based Infosys Limited had established a technology and innovation hub in Indianapolis and was looking to develop four others in the United States. At the hubs, workers assist customers with issues such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, emerging digital technologies and big data.

Overseeing the search for new locations was Anurag Varma, vice president and head of global government affairs for Infosys. About 20 years earlier, a mutual friend had introduced Chaudhuri to Varma — both are attorneys, and both share an interest in developing relations between the U.S. and India. Recognizing that Wake County would be an ideal location for the company, Chaudhuri reached out.

“We are a perfect fit, first and foremost, because of the talent pool we have in the region, in addition to the educational institutions we have here, particularly Wake Technical Community College and N.C. State University,” Chaudhuri says.

By July, economic-development officials had inked a deal: Infosys said it would invest \$8.7 million in an innovation hub in Raleigh, following a process that seemed to move at warp speed compared with the sometimes glacial pace of many economic-development projects. North Carolina edged out seven other states under consideration for the jobs, which will be created over five years and will pay an average annual salary of \$72,146.

“I suspect if you talk with economic-development recruiters, they will tell you this was an incredibly fast turnaround,” Chaudhuri says of the 90- to 120-day process.

N.C. Gov. Roy Cooper and Deverre Lierman, head of Infosys’ technology and innovation hub in Raleigh, cut the ribbon on the new office in August 2018. The company plans to create 2,000 jobs in the state.



PROVIDED BY INFOSYS



CHALLENGE:

Convince a global technology-consulting company to locate an innovation hub in North Carolina's Triangle region.

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Infosys is working with the N.C. Community College System and N.C. State University to train young workers so they are ready for the workforce immediately upon graduation.

In August 2018, Infosys, a \$10.9 billion company with headquarters in Bangalore, India, cut the ribbon on a new office in the Brier Creek mixed-use development near Raleigh-Durham International Airport. The firm is the anchor tenant in the six-story building. By September, Infosys had hired 500 employees in the state, representing a quarter of its target workforce of 2,000.

The Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina, a public-private organization that helps with job-recruiting efforts, touts the new hub as one of the largest economic-development wins in the history of Wake County. Raleigh, the state capital, is the county seat.

For Infosys, picking Raleigh was an easy decision.

“One of the many reasons we chose to establish a hub in Raleigh is that the Research Triangle is home to a skilled and talented workforce as well as a rich higher-education ecosystem, including top universities such as Duke, UNC [Chapel Hill] and N.C. State,” says Ravi Kumar, president and deputy chief operating officer of Infosys.

Kumar was specifically attracted to an N.C. State program offering a master of science in analytics, one of the company’s key technology consulting offerings. He also cites the area’s vibrant professional community, affordable housing, cultural activities and relatively low cost of living.

Aggressive growth has been a hallmark of Infosys’ history. In 1981, N.R. Narayana Murthy and six engineers in Pune, India, established the company with an initial capital investment of \$250. Today, the publicly traded consulting and technology-ser-

vices company has more than 209,000 employees who work with clients in 45 countries, Kumar says.

In addition to the operations in North Carolina and Indiana, Infosys has announced additional hubs in Connecticut and Arizona, along with a design and innovation hub in Rhode Island, each targeting 2,000 employees.

“Across the board, collaboration between government, business, and colleges and universities here was incredibly seamless, and I think that clearly resonated with Infosys,” Chaudhuri says. “Infosys understood the Raleigh Chamber of Commerce was working closely with Wake Technical Community College and N.C. State University, members of the General Assembly, the N.C. Commerce Department and the governor’s office. We were all in this together, and they knew we were going to be there to support the company once they made their decision to select Raleigh.”

Chaudhuri was appointed to the N.C. Senate in April 2016 to complete the term of Josh Stein, who had been elected as the state’s attorney general. He won the seat in the November 2016 election, and before long he began selling Varma on Raleigh as a perfect fit for the new Infosys hub. “The conversations with Anurag started in earnest in February or March of 2017. At that point, I put him in touch with Chris Chung, executive director of the EDPNC, and the North Carolina Department of Commerce,” Chaudhuri says.

In May, Kumar and other top Infosys executives met with Gov. Roy Cooper, and by June, the company had begun to indicate they were going to select Raleigh for the new hub. Other key players were Adrienne Cole, president and chief executive officer of the Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce, Raleigh Mayor Nancy McFarlane, and Tom Looney, a veteran technology executive who is chairman of the Wake Technical Community College board of trustees and a leader in economic-development initiatives.

“North Carolina has a unique story to tell,” Looney says. “Our value proposition is a large university system and [one of the] the largest and strongest community-college systems in the country. All of our community colleges will play a large role in growing technology talent to serve industries.”

Infosys plans to put the community colleges to good use. “Training and recruiting at community colleges is critical to expanding the U.S. talent pipeline and addressing the skills gap,” Kumar says. “We are focused on reskilling people at all phases of their careers, from current students to more experienced professionals.”

Infosys’ Raleigh hub coincides with construction of a new Wake Tech campus in Research Triangle Park, near RDU airport and about 7 miles from the company’s new office. The 94-acre campus will offer substantial technology coursework, including networks, cybersecurity, open-source computing and artificial intelligence, according to Rita Jerman, vice president of student services and the RTP campus manager. The campus also will house corporate and business training programs.



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About a year after announcing plans to establish a technology and innovation hub in Raleigh, Infosys opened an office near Raleigh-Durham International Airport. The company chose North Carolina over several other states for one of five U.S. hubs — others will be located in Arizona, Connecticut, Indiana and Rhode Island.

“When companies locate here, part of the incentive package is customized training, and this is a big selling point for economic development,” Jerman says. “On this campus, we have three classrooms dedicated to Infosys training.”

In August 2018, Wake Tech held a ribbon-cutting for the first of nine buildings at RTP. The campus welcomed its first students the next month, with more than 1,000 enrolled. When complete, it will accommodate 9,000 students, according to Jerman. The new Wake Tech campus was a major selling point in convincing Infosys to locate a hub in Raleigh, company officials say.

“When we first decided to expand our operations in North Carolina, we also expanded our partnerships with institutions of higher education to create a pipeline of talent from top universities and community colleges,” Kumar says. “But our partnerships go way beyond recruitment. We are working with the N.C. Community College System and N.C. State University, among others, to create a customized program designed to train our new hires in the latest technological skills to be workforce ready on Day 1, following graduation.”

Infosys is taking hiring from colleges a step further, offering a career track including significant training to employees who graduate from community colleges with two-year associate degrees. It is the first effort of this kind in the company’s history, according to Kumar.

The approach is unique, Kumar says. “Our value proposition is to hire right out of college and create new jobs.” Such programs will help Infosys — which has a history of hiring H-1B visa workers to fill U.S. jobs — fulfill a goal announced in 2017 of hiring 10,000 U.S. workers. Last year,

Forbes ranked Infosys among the top 50 companies in the United States for hiring new graduates.

The region and state will start seeing tangible economic benefits as the new hub becomes fully staffed.

“This new location will add \$140 million to the new payroll, which will lead to new spending,” says Chung, who has led the EDPNC since 2015. “In addition, a global information-technology company like Infosys is the best recommendation letter the state can get to attract global companies to select North Carolina for their long-term strategies.”

Kumar says hiring from local markets allows Infosys to stay close to its clients, mainly large corporations needing to rapidly bring digital technology to their businesses to compete with next-generation companies. In May 2018, longtime IBM executive Deverre Lierman of Raleigh was named to head the Raleigh hub.

While Infosys is targeting 2,000 employees, Chaudhuri has encouraged the company to establish a full campus in Raleigh. Kumar won’t rule out additional growth but prefers waiting to see how the demand for technology and digital services evolves in the state. Meanwhile, the company is moving at an aggressive pace to hire and train employees.

Chaudhuri, a Democrat serving in a GOP-controlled Senate, says helping recruit a company that is going to hire 2,000 employees for high-paying jobs is his single greatest achievement during his first elected term in office.

“I have been thinking about my role and all the ways I can help my community, and this experience has created a lot of incentives for me to continue to reach out to my own personal network and to other networks to sell this region,” he says.

“We were all in this together, and they knew we were going to be there to support the company once they made their decision to select Raleigh.”

N.C. SEN. JAY CHAUDHURI

It wasn't by chance or accident that Infosys answered the call, Chaudhuri says. Rather, it was a team effort. Once a connection was made between Infosys and the EDPNC, there was much behind-the-scenes gathering of information as well as continued lobbying, which involved sketching out a comprehensive agenda and orchestrating each team member's assignment. No detail was overlooked, all the way down to the seating arrangement inside the SUV driven to RDU Airport to meet Kumar during a site visit.

“Making the connection in many instances is not the only important factor in recruiting a company. You have to be actively engaged once the process starts,” Chaudhuri says. “Gov. Cooper actively reached out, and the folks at Commerce and the [EDPNC] were incredibly active in following up to make sure we addressed any of the needs the company had.”

Kumar says North Carolina has been very kind to Infosys.

“From academic institutions to large corporations to local businesses, everyone said they looked forward to having us locate here,” he says. “They showed us a unique government and business partnership, so we made visits and evaluated the area based on our top three criteria: good academic environment, good local client pool and good proactive government.” 🗺️

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BURNING RUBBER

*North Carolina woos a Chinese tire-maker —
and lands the biggest rural manufacturing
investment in state history.*

BY MARK TOSZAK



When North Carolina economic-development officials toured the company's manufacturing operations in Weihai, China, in June 2017, they knew they were looking at the factory of the future.

"It's all air-conditioned, it's robotic, it's spotless," says N.C. Commerce Secretary Tony Copeland, who led the state delegation. "It's incredible." But that summer, as Copeland marveled at the manufacturing sophistication, he was unsure whether it would be part of North Carolina's future.

State and local officials had been pursuing Triangle Tyre Co. since the early spring. The company, which was founded in China's Shandong province in 1976, makes more than 22 million tires annually. When Triangle announced in December it had given the 1,507-acre Kingsboro megasite in Edgecombe County the green light for its first U.S. manufacturing operation, it was a potentially transformative economic-development win for the region: Edgecombe's unemployment rates had been among the highest in the state in recent years, and the new jobs will pay an average annual wage of \$56,450, about 70% higher than the county average. Initial plans call for \$580 million in capital investment and the creation of 800 jobs.

"What this really fits into is the governor's vision ... and my vision of bringing large-scale manufacturing back to rural North Carolina," Copeland says. Landing the deal involved a combination of relationship-building and a rich incentives package, including a pad-ready site with roads cut in, utilities ready to be connected and the ground prepped for a builder to construct the concrete slabs on which factory buildings will sit. In all, state and local incentives could total as much as \$152 million.

Since 2015, Chinese firms have faced higher import duties on tires made at home and shipped to America, prompting a U.S. factory-building spree. Other Chinese tire-makers have announced plans for new plants in South Carolina and Georgia.

Triangle Tyre ranked as the world's 16th-largest tire-maker based on estimated 2016 sales, according to industry publication *Tire Business*. Its subsidiary, Triangle Tire USA, established its headquarters in Franklin,

The N.C. Department of Transportation and Rocky Mount-based Barnhill Contracting Co. performed site work for the first phase of Triangle Tyre's manufacturing operation at the Kingsboro megasite in Edgecombe County.



N.C. Commerce Secretary Tony Copeland and Gov. Roy Cooper meet with Triangle Tyre executives in Raleigh. “Part of what we had to do was establish the confidence level and the trust level with the company,” Copeland says.

Tenn., in 2016. The company had opened a technical center in Akron, Ohio, in 2011 to focus on the U.S. market.

Once it is up and running at full capacity, the Edgecombe County operation will roll out an estimated 6 million tires per year. They won’t be the first Tar Heel-made tires, though. North Carolina is the nation’s third-largest tire-producing state, churning out some 75,000 tires a day. South Carolina is No. 1, with Oklahoma the second-biggest producer.

The U.S. Tire Manufacturing Association says the industry directly provides 16,368 jobs in North Carolina. Bridgestone Americas, the U.S. arm of the world’s largest tire-maker, employs about 2,000 people at a plant in neighboring Wilson County. In 2016-17, the Japanese company announced a 10-year, \$344 million expansion. Akron, Ohio-based Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co., the third-largest world tire-maker, employs about 2,500 at a plant in Fayetteville in southeastern N.C. And Japan’s Yokohama Rubber Co. announced plans for a 56-employee R&D center in the Charlotte suburb of Cornelius in April 2018.

When state officials first learned about Project Diamond, the code name for the Triangle Tyre expansion, they only knew it was a manufacturer in the automotive industry. Consultants from Deloitte’s Chicago office who had been scouting sites for Triangle Tyre contacted officials at the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina, the Cary-based organization that assists with business recruiting. Given the criteria — a large industrial site, available workforce and good transportation infrastructure — Edgecombe’s Kingsboro megasite was a logical fit.

The county had been working on the megasite for years, says Oppie Jordan, vice president of the Carolinas Gateway

Partnership, an economic-development agency covering Edgecombe and Nash counties.

“It just didn’t happen overnight,” she says. “That was something I had been working on for probably 15, 16 years.” In 2012, the megasite was designated a CSX Select Site, a certification awarded by the Jacksonville, Fla.-based railroad company based on size, access to rail, proximity to highways and other infrastructure criteria for industrial development.

In 2016 — before Triangle Tyre was even on the radar — the state provided \$1.7 million for water, sewer, road infrastructure and a groundwater study at the site, and the Golden LEAF Foundation awarded the partnership \$7 million for additional infrastructure. Golden LEAF deploys funds derived from the 1998 tobacco settlement to assist rural communities.

The company will take about 400 acres that offer access to U.S. 64 and CSX rail and are 10 minutes from Interstate 95. Raleigh-Durham International Airport is an hour away, while Rocky Mount, population about 55,000, is less than 15 minutes.

Project Diamond began to crystallize in late April 2017, when Triangle Tyre executives visited the site. North Carolina officials were aware the company was visiting other U.S. locations, including Laurens County, Georgia.

“We flew the site with them in a helicopter,” Copeland says. “They got to walk on the site. They got to examine the community, the livability.” After that meeting, state officials continued to exchange information with the Deloitte consultants, sending details on workforce, utilities and more. In early June, Copeland and Norris Tolson, president of Carolinas Gateway, took a group to visit Triangle Tyre executives in Weihai, a city of about 2.8 million just across the Yellow Sea from South Korea.



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“[They weren’t] showing their hand,” Copeland recalls, “but we believed they were down to one other state.” With more than a half-billion-dollar investment at stake, establishing a trusting relationship with Triangle Tyre was critical, he says. As a former assistant secretary at the N.C. Department of Commerce and an attorney who ran his own site-selection firm from 2008-13, Copeland had experienced working with Chinese companies.

One selling point was that other large Chinese companies have invested in North Carolina. Lenovo, a Chinese computer-maker, purchased IBM’s PC business in 2005 and based the U.S. business in the state, while China’s WH Group bought pork giant Smithfield Foods in 2013.

“North Carolina is not unknown among Chinese business circles,” Copeland says. Nonetheless, when the Tar Heel delegation left China, Triangle Tyre hadn’t made a decision.

On June 21, another group of Triangle Tyre executives, including the company’s vice chairman, dined with Gov. Roy Cooper in the Governor’s Mansion before returning to the Commerce Department to negotiate into the evening. “We knew they were serious then,” Copeland says, but Georgia was also still in the running when company executives returned to China.

One key to the deal, Copeland and Jordan say, was being able to provide the pad-ready site. With the help of legislation passed as negotiations proceeded, the state enlisted the N.C. Department of Transportation, which has engineering and contracting capabilities.

Other partners included the North Carolina Railroad Co. and Richmond, Va.-based Dominion Energy.

On July 25, a call was scheduled between Triangle Tyre’s top executive, Chairman Ding Yuhua, and Cooper to work

“You’re going to have more or less 800 people ... making 6 million tires a year. ... If that had been 20 years ago, you would have had 4,000 people doing that.”

TONY COPELAND
N.C. SECRETARY OF COMMERCE

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out the final broad strokes of a deal. (Yuhua died in June 2018.) Most of the details had been settled, but a few key points remained up in the air. When the call ended, the state had secured the largest manufacturing investment ever in rural North Carolina.

The Triangle Tyre plants will be the company's most advanced. "You're going to have more or less 800 people ... making 6 million tires a year," Copeland says. "If that had been 20 years ago, you would have had 4,000 people doing that."


But that kind of high-tech manufacturing, which relies heavily on robotics and computers, is how North Carolina is reviving manufacturing in places that have lost investment and jobs to foreign factories with cheaper labor over the last 25 years. These plants require a different kind of worker, someone who might be more adept with a keyboard and coding than a wrench or welding torch. On many of Triangle Tyre's assembly lines in China, tires aren't touched by a human hand until the quality control inspection, says Jordan, who visited the plants in summer 2018.

A big part of the incentives package was a \$10 million Advanced Manufacturing Training Center, funded by another Golden LEAF Foundation grant and run by Edgecombe Community College. The training center, which will be located at the Kingsboro site, is designed to serve Triangle Tyre initially, says Harry Starnes, vice president of instruction at the college. However, it could also help other employers.

"We'll be working with other companies as the needs arise, so we're really excited about how we can do that," he says. Edgecombe Community College already runs a four-week class for potential Bridgestone workers in Wilson. Starnes expects to run a similar class for Triangle Tyre, as well as provide other specialized training.

Triangle Tyre has been closely involved with the training center. Starnes has visited China to learn more about the company and its worker-training needs. The community college, which hadn't finalized plans for the building as of fall 2018, has modified original blueprints based on what Starnes learned in China. For example, it has reduced the amount of flex space, which college officials originally

thought could be used to house a partial assembly line for training. Instead, more square footage will be devoted to classrooms and labs.

Starnes wishes he had more students going through Edgecombe's manufacturing-related training programs. Students who enter the community-college programs, he says, often do so in the same county where they anticipate getting a job after graduation. With hundreds of high-paying Triangle Tyre jobs coming to Kingsboro over the next couple of years, that wish may just come true. 

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FURNITURE TO PHARMA

Exela Pharma Sciences helps bring manufacturing jobs back to a region where furniture once reigned.

BY EDWARD MARTIN
PHOTOS BY MIKE BELLEME

Hyderabad would seem to hold the high cards. Construction cranes loom over skyscrapers in the area dubbed “Genome Valley” in deference to its established biomedical and pharmaceutical industry. The city’s nearly 7 million people speak dialects unfamiliar to American ears but not to Phanesh Koneru. He grew up in the southeastern India state of Andhra Pradesh, though not in Hyderabad, the capital.

“Our little village had about 80 people,” he says, and no running water or electricity. His parents didn’t attend college, but Koneru was bright. “I was good in school,” he says, earning scholarships and multiple degrees from colleges in India and later, advanced degrees from prestigious California and New York universities.

To Koneru, founder and CEO of Exela Pharma Sciences LLC, it’s the North Carolina town of Lenoir that might seem strange. That’s where Koneru established his drug-manufacturing business, with employment more than tripling since launching a decade ago.

The Caldwell County town of about 18,000 is in the state’s foothills region, in the shadow of the Blue Ridge Mountains. More than a century ago, hydroelectricity from the region’s rivers attracted furniture and textile manufacturers. More recently, a \$1.2 billion Google data center arrived, also drawn in part by abundant energy.

Gradually, manufacturers withered, including Tar Heel icon Broyhill Furniture Industries Inc., founded here in 1926 and lured away by cheaper labor overseas. “You have to remember, in the first three years of this century, we lost more manufacturing jobs than any other state in the country,” says Tony Copeland, North Carolina’s secretary of commerce. Caldwell’s unemployment inched up until nearly one potential worker in five could not find a job.

But some things didn’t change. It still had energy, clean air and water, open spaces and a mild climate — plus ample workers. As industries



In a former furniture factory, Exela Pharma’s workforce labors in a sterile environment of filtered air and clean-room standards. “We develop our own products here, and our manufacturing is the most complicated,” says CEO Phanesh Koneru.



CHALLENGE:

Identify an ideal location for a startup biotechnology manufacturing operation.

SOLUTION:

Previously a hub for large-scale furniture manufacturing, North Carolina's western region already had a solid infrastructure, including abundant electricity and water from area rivers.



Founder Phanesh Koneru picked Caldwell County and North Carolina over several other U.S. states and Hyderabad, India, to open Exela Pharma. “Generally, labor costs in India are lower, but we concluded overall, North Carolina was the best place to do business,” he says.

shut down, they left empty buildings, prompting state and local authorities to sweeten incentives to attract newcomers, such as Google, and startups to fill them.

In 2008, Koneru chose Lenoir over Hyderabad and several other U.S. locations as the home of Exela, now one of North Carolina’s most successful biotechnology companies.

“We’ve gone from about 75 employees two and a half years ago to more than 300 now,” says Mark Hartman, chief commercial officer. “We started with one product in 2008 and have 20 now,” mostly injectable drugs used in more than 5,000 U.S. hospitals and clinics during surgery and in emergency rooms. They’re marketed both as generics and Exela brands.

In a state that bled manufacturing jobs to cheaper overseas venues for decades, Exela Pharma is a welcome addition.

“We looked at many different places in India and this country, at things like availability of buildings, labor, personnel costs and taxes,” says Koneru, a former pharmacist and patent attorney. His search included sites in California, New York and Pennsylvania. “Generally, labor costs in India are lower, but we concluded overall, North Carolina was the best place to do business.”

Ten years later, Exela’s decision to locate in western North Carolina underscores a trend that is tilting the region’s economic landscape. Life-sciences industries are locating and expanding in the area 200 miles west of the traditional biotech bastion of the Research Triangle and Raleigh-Durham.

“As a percentage of growth, biotech jobs in the west, over a five-year period, have increased by about 25%,” Copeland

says. “That compares to about 4% for the state in general.” Hollis Crosby, the Commerce Department’s labor and economic analysis manager, calculates that more than 225 life-sciences businesses such as Exela employed 5,699 workers in western and northwestern North Carolina in 2017, up from 4,572 in 2013. The figures include pharmaceutical manufacturing, medical and diagnostic labs, research-and-development groups and medical-equipment manufacturers. At the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce, Research Director Heidi Reiber cites a study finished in 2018 that concludes bioscience is the top-performing cluster of industries in the region.

Particularly important to a young company are state and local financial incentives. For Exela, those inducements included local incentives and an initial \$250,000 grant from the One North Carolina Fund, a state program that awards cash based on job creation, investment, location and expected economic impact. Starting with 18 employees in 2008, the company grew steadily, and when Exela added 38 jobs in 2013 in an \$8.5 million expansion, it received another \$190,000 from the fund. Another \$5 million expansion followed in 2016, adding 50 jobs and making the company eligible for a \$2,000-per-job credit from Caldwell County.

Some view those incentives as investments rather than costs. “Our average [annual] wage in Caldwell is going up and is currently about \$37,600,” says Deborah Murray, executive director of the Caldwell County Economic Development Commission. “But the average wages at Exela are approaching \$60,000, and it’s exciting when you go in and

WELL DIVERSIFIED



Caldwell's initiative to be well diversified in the economy since The Great Recession has yielded cutting-edge, core industries requiring 21st century skill sets. From plastics, packaging, pharmaceuticals, furniture, or the backbone of the Internet, an array of global leaders call Caldwell their home.

NATURAL ATTRACTION



Around Brevard, known for spectacular fall color, Gaia Herbs Inc. sticks out like a green thumb. Instead of the reds and yellows of autumn leaves, its colors are the vivid blues, pinks and purples of 40 fragrant species of medicinal herbs growing in arrow-straight rows in an incongruously flat valley in the rugged Blue Ridge Mountains.

One of its 260 employees compares this to working in the Garden of Eden. Elena Lecue, executive vice president for sales and marketing, doesn't dispute him. "Since we were just a seedling in 1987, we've remained true to our original vision of connecting plants with people to nurture health and well-being."

Gaia is the nation's largest herbal brand, she says, growing and processing more than 200 liquid extracts, powders, teas and other products on its 350-acre farm here and a smaller farm in Costa Rica. In western North Carolina, it's a reminder that the life-science industry's roots are as deep as the Cherokees and pioneers who tapped nature for its health and healing properties.

"We have a strong history of natural products, which include botanical and medicinal materials," says Chris Reedy, who heads industry training for food, beverage and natural products at the statewide BioNetwork. "Years ago, there was the traditional herbal healing that people knew about in the mountains. The area was known for things like ginseng and goldenseal.

That part of the industry is definitely growing."

Gaia has lived most of its more than 30-year life in these mountains. President Rick Scalzo started it in Massachusetts in the 1980s and moved to Brevard in 1996 when demand for botanicals and natural-health products surged. Annual sales now top \$50 million, and its products are sold at Whole Foods Markets, Publix Supermarkets and more than 2,300 health-food stores.

"We use only organic methods to cultivate our 6.5 million plants, and we test them in our analytical laboratory to pinpoint the exact right time to harvest them," Lecue says. The result is increased potency and purity.

Now, the company is growing not only herbs but its footprint in western North Carolina. In addition to its Brevard site, where it maintains offices, a processing plant and laboratory, Gaia is building a 140,000-square-foot office, manufacturing and distribution complex in nearby Mills River.

By 2021, the company will have added 30 jobs and spent \$12 million on the building and equipment in the Broadpointe development, where neighbors include the medical-device-maker Raumedica AG and beer brewer Sierra Nevada, one of the region's heavily visited tourist attractions. The new complex represents Gaia's outlook for the future of life-sciences industries. It will have room to nearly double in size in coming years, Lecue says.

— Edward Martin

tour these kinds of companies. You see large numbers of young people. They offer good upward mobility in addition to strong, 21st-century skill-driven careers."

Exela is just one of the region's successful life-sciences companies. Also in Lenoir, London-based Staller-genes Greer Plc has grown to about 350 employees who develop and distribute allergy drugs. Less than 10 miles down the road in Hudson, with a population of fewer than 4,000, Adhesion Bio-medical LLC researches and develops cyanoacrylate adhesives that seal skin wounds, protecting them against bacteria. "It's like Super Glue for skin," Murray says. Like Exela, its growth has been aided by economic incentives, such as a \$100,000 state grant when it added 40 employees in a \$3.5 million expansion in 2017. Blue Ridge Energy, the region's electric cooperative, and Caldwell County and its economic-development commission, also pitched in.

Obviously, such incentives help start-ups. "Your business is not established enough to go to the bank and get a loan, and it can be daunting," Koneru says. But other factors come into play. Newcomers make headlines, but the region also has a bedrock of established bioscience companies that encourage outsiders. One of the oldest is Baxter Healthcare Corp., an hour from Lenoir in mountainous McDowell County, which makes about a million sterile intravenous solution units a day, according to spokeswoman Jessica Szramiak. Its plant, "equivalent to nearly 20 football fields," she says, was established in 1971 and employs 2,800.

Avadim Health Inc., founded by Buncombe County native Steve Woody in 2007, is building a new \$25.4 million headquarters on the outskirts of Black Mountain and expects to add more than 500 employees by 2020. The skin-care products manufacturer landed one of the top spots on *Inc.* magazine's list of the nation's fastest-growing health care companies in 2018, with revenue of almost \$11 million and a three-year growth rate of 901%.

"One thing that happens when you have this type of growth, particularly



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In 2017, the public-private North Carolina Manufacturing Extension Partnership, which supports and encourages young industries, gave Exela its leadership award.

in biotech, is that employees feel more secure in moving to an area that has multiple biotech companies,” Copeland says. “It gives them flexibility of career growth.”

Like financial assistance and available buildings, Koneru agrees that such successful companies figure into a startup’s location decision. “It should be reassuring, showing them that the people of the community are aware of the technology and that it’s not foreign to them. It’s beyond the proof-of-concept stage now. Companies can come here and make a commitment.”

Still, Exela underscores how difficult it can be for a startup to gain a toehold, but also how aggressive recruiting and salesmanship can help surmount difficulties.

Koneru didn’t lack credentials. Exela’s founder arrived in America with bachelor’s and master’s degrees in pharmaceutical science, then plunged into similar studies at the University of Southern California School of Pharmacy in Los Angeles. He obtained a doctorate in biomedicine and chemistry and became a licensed, practicing pharmacist.

After earning a degree from the University of San Diego School of Law, he shifted coasts, earning a master’s in law from Columbia University School of Law in New York. He worked for law firms there and in Palo Alto, Calif., and became vice president for intellectual property at Watson Pharmaceuticals Inc., a drug-development company that’s now Allergan Inc., known for its premier product, Botox.

At the former headquarters of Broyhill, whose furniture saws once whined and the scent of sawdust prevailed throughout the region, Exela has nearly doubled its footprint to more than a quarter-million square feet in three buildings — a fourth is in reserve for expansion — but in doing so it has faced challenges.

“For Lenoir, we have the power infrastructure dating back to the furniture industry,” Koneru says. “It’s a huge power grid, and we had the water and transportation, so getting into pharmaceutical manufacturing from that standpoint was not difficult. But we also had to factor in the labor ... and the training costs. We knew if we hired somebody, they would not be ready to work for some time, so we factor in about six months of training.”

Exela scientists, researchers and employees must deal with the intricacies of stringent Food and Drug Administration requirements and highly technical and specialized equipment. “We’re finding very dedicated, committed people, willing to learn,” Koneru says. For example, an Exela job fair for 35 positions last January attracted 200 job seekers.

Though companies such as Exela will always depend on in-house training, the region is responding to the education and training needs of life-sciences industries. Murray says it starts at the public-school level. Caldwell High School’s Middle College program is a magnet school on the campus of Caldwell Technical Community College where students can earn industry-standard credentials and graduate with half of their two-year associate degree already in hand. “These days, the largest concern of any company is, ‘Where do I find my prospective workers,’” she says. “This is developing a nice pipeline into community college.”

Copeland, the commerce secretary, points to the state’s three universities in the west: Western Carolina in Culhewee, UNC Asheville and Appalachian State University in Boone. He also commends the community-college system’s customized training and BioNetwork, which can provide training in biomanufacturing, pharmaceuticals, natural products and other areas, including on-site sessions.

Nevertheless, some of the factors that attract life-sciences companies to the region can’t be reduced to tax breaks, campuses and colleges. “I lived in Los Angeles for 20 years, and in the Bay area,” Koneru says, followed by Washington, D.C., and New York City. “The traffic, I don’t miss. Five minutes, and I’m here at the building.” Nearby are the mountains for hiking, fishing and other pursuits. Lenoir’s relative isolation is an asset, not an obstacle, Koneru and others say.

“I came here from Atlanta,” Murray says. “Here, we’re just over an hour from Charlotte Douglas International Airport in Charlotte, and Asheville Regional. In Atlanta, you were an hour from everything. In Atlanta, I’d drive several hours to get to the great outdoors.”

Similarly, a survey of major biotech companies in the region — nine, including Exela, responded — found employees were willing to drive as much as an hour to reach jobs. “People are driving from counties all over the region to get to good employers,” says Jonathan Snover, executive director of the North Carolina Biotechnology Center’s western office, which covers 25 mountain and foothills counties.

Along with drugmakers, there is a strong cluster of global medical-device and -equipment manufacturing not counted as bioscience, Snover says. The biotech center calls them support industries. Thermo Fisher Scientific Inc. in Asheville makes ovens and cold-storage equipment for research laboratories, and Print-pack Inc. in Marshall makes medical packaging. Others include Aero-flow Healthcare Inc., which makes medical products including respiratory equipment, breast pumps and walkers, and Atlas Precision Inc., a plastics manufacturer.

For western North Carolina and dozens of small communities like Lenoir, the surge of life-sciences industries means much-needed jobs. In Lenoir, unemployment has dropped from 17% two decades ago to less than 4%, partly as a result of new industries. Caldwell County's cost of living is 82.2% of the national average, despite increasing demands on limited housing stock, Murray says.

"The truth is, Exela is certainly a shooting star for any industry, and a complement to our newly diversifying economy," she says. "I hate to say it, but many folks do still know us as a furniture manufacturing hub from the old days, and we still are. But now we've added plastics and packaging and pharmaceuticals. We've added 1,000 jobs in the last six months. And with Google, we're the birthplace of the North Carolina Data Corridor." Google's data center joins others nearby, including Facebook and Apple.

Far from Hyderabad, in early 2018, Exela sponsored a Chicago speech by former President George W. Bush at a convention of hospital administrators and executives. Koneru took the microphone, peppering Bush with questions about current events, but the former president changed the subject.

"How great is it," Koneru asks, "that someone who grew up in a small village in India can come to the U.S., be successful, and be interviewing a president?" 🇺🇸

"It's exciting when you go in and tour these kinds of companies. You see large numbers of young people. They offer good upward mobility in addition to strong, 21st-century skill-driven careers."

DEBORAH MURRAY
CALDWELL COUNTY EDC

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NO PLACE LIKE HOME

Gaston County rolls out the welcome mat for manufacturers.

BY ALYSSA PRESSLER

When you're looking to expand or move your business, there's a lot to consider: Proximity to an airport is important for shipping purposes and to facilitate visits by out-of-town executives. Being close to your target market is a factor because distribution costs often increase along with distance. Many manufacturers require resources such as fresh water and abundant land and electricity. The capability to draw on the local workforce for available jobs is another priority when making important site decisions.

In North Carolina, Gaston County checks many of the boxes manufacturers are seeking when it's time to find a new or second home. About 10.8% of the state's workforce is employed by manufacturers, compared with 8.5% nationally, according to the North Carolina Chamber. In Gaston, manufacturing makes up a whopping 20% of employment, says Steve Nye, marketing director of the Gaston County Economic Development Commission. Manufacturing in North Carolina is a staple, but here, it's especially important.



Belgium-based Dholdandia NV broke ground in April 2018 on its first U.S. manufacturing plant in Gaston County. Manufacturing accounts for 20% of jobs in the county, which abuts Cleveland, Lincoln and Mecklenburg counties.

“Like air and water, it’s necessary,” Nye says. The county has prided itself on being a choice home for manufacturers for decades. “Our folks, they’ve made product all their lives.” Among other considerations, Nye and other local officials say hospitality is key to attracting new development, and manufacturers who have recently moved to Gaston praise its business climate.

“It made a big difference because we felt right at home, and they were very welcoming to us, very responsive,” says Lothar Burger, CEO of Dholdandia North America. The international vehicle-parts company is opening a manufacturing headquarters in Bessemer City in the western part of the county. It plans to invest \$30 million and add at least 150 jobs over five years. The building is being constructed on 45 acres in South Ridge Business Park and should be operating by September 2019, Burger says. Dholdandia NV, the parent company, was founded

in Belgium in 1968 and opened a distribution and installation plant in Bessemer City in 2016. The company decided to bring manufacturing overseas to better connect with its U.S. market.

Dholdandia makes hydraulic tail lifts and gates for vans as well as cantilever, slider, tuck-away, special tail, column and passenger lifts. According to Burger, choosing Gaston County had a lot to do with the local market potential. Many of the products can be used at Charlotte Douglas International Airport, a short 30 minutes away. Local highways and airways make Gaston a great hub for distribution as well.

But what really sold Burger was the effort by local officials in Bessemer City and Gaston County to showcase the region for Dholdandia executives and help them obtain local grants and partnerships. “[The decision] wasn’t just about cost or savings — you also need to feel welcomed and at home,” Burger explains.



The Gaston County EDC works closely with Gaston College, a local community college, to provide workforce training for manufacturers. Proximity to Charlotte Douglas International Airport, about a 30-minute drive, and Interstate 85 also make Gaston an ideal hub for distribution.

Part of making a prospective company feel comfortable is making sure you can answer questions posed by business leaders while meeting their key needs. Providing tours of the area — and sometimes even attending local sporting events — can be part of the recruitment.

“It’s that human element that makes a difference,” says Stuart Gilbert, director of community and economic development in Kings Mountain, a town of about 10,800 that is split between Gaston and Cleveland counties. “We had a client last week and at the last minute, we went to a tailgate party at a Carolina Panthers [NFL football game] with them. That’s what we like to do: really understand the client’s needs and make it a win-win for both the community and for the manufacturer interested in us.”

A recent achievement in Kings Mountain was the expansion of Firestone Fibers & Textiles Co., owned by Bridgestone Americas Inc., the world’s largest producer of tires with annual revenue of \$32.5 billion in 2017, according to *Tire Business*, an industry publication.

Firestone Fibers & Textiles has called the area home since 1935 when it opened a plant in Gastonia, the largest city and the county seat, to produce tire cords and similar products. In 1992, the work was shifted to a Kings Mountain site. In 2017, the company decided to consolidate its Canadian plant and add 25 people to its 400-employee payroll in Kings Mountain, says President Brian Goldstine. The \$19.8 million expansion will add about 110,000 square feet to its facility, putting it near 600,000 square feet overall.

“We did have terrific partners from the local community: the North Carolina Department of Commerce, the Gaston County Economic Development Commission, the city of Kings Mountain,” says Goldstine, who joined Firestone

in 2017 after working at Kraft Foods Group Inc., Unilever and Kimberly-Clark Corp. “Obviously, they helped us in terms of providing support so we could [expand].”

The relationship between Kings Mountain and Firestone has been beneficial on both sides over the last two decades, according to Assistant City Manager Nick Hendricks. One of the town’s major selling points is its municipal-owned utilities that provide gas, water and electricity for residents and businesses. The unusual consolidated ownership helps the city keep utility rates competitive, Hendricks says.

Last year during a particularly harsh cold snap, the city faced debilitating penalties related to large purchases from its gas supplier. At the city’s request, Firestone executives agreed to shut the plant down for a week to limit usage. Remembering this gesture when the company started discussing its expansion, Hendricks and the city agreed to cover costs to relocate about 800 feet of a natural-gas line that was in the expansion zone, saving the company a significant expense.

“I always refer to it as the *Andy Griffith* mentality,” Hendricks explains, referring to the 1960s sitcom. “In the show, everything is rigid and black and white, and Andy brought the human element. ... We don’t skirt regulations, but we also understand behind every decision there is a human element, and there are other scenarios that may work better.”

In Gaston County, local officials also help with grant applications, at times a tedious and confusing process that can help offset the costs of a business move or expansion. These grants can also help with local job creation, such as the North Carolina Job Development Investment Grant program, which provides incentives to help expanding and

relocating businesses that commit to certain investment and employment goals.

Dhollandia's Burger says obtaining JDIG funds was a major factor in the company's decision. His company, which also considered Atlanta and Rock Hill, S.C., could receive more than \$1.4 million over 12 years.

Separately, Gilbert says the city of Kings Mountain recently delivered a client's grant proposal three minutes before deadline after working seven straight days on the application. If approved, the grant will offset costs and create 30 jobs for the area. "We'll work around the clock and do whatever it takes to help our citizens and industries," Gilbert says.

But Nye says when talking with a manufacturer who is interested in making Gaston County its home, officials also want to be sure that the business fits local needs. Just as executives study the benefits of relocating to Gaston County, Nye says the seven employees in his office also search for businesses that will offer competitive wages and great benefits and experience little staff turnover.

"A lot of people here are in the mentality of being hired and fired, and we want to go the other way round and grow a little slower," Burger says. "We want to hire them for the long term. We want to build trust."

To maintain a workforce that is supportive of manufacturing jobs and alternative career paths, the Gaston County Economic Development Commission works closely with local schools and Gaston College, a community college with campuses in Gaston and neighboring Lincoln counties. The goal is to ensure students are aware of their options, says Malissa Gordon, the group's existing industry manager. Last year, Gaston County celebrated students who signed full-time contracts with area businesses while getting a two-year degree rather than going to a four-year school or signing a college sports scholarship.

"It was a bigger event than we anticipated," Gordon says. "So many people were so excited for these kids, because they're making a decision that will probably be a more positive outcome in terms of the experience

they'll get, plus the education ... plus what they're going to make as far as money."

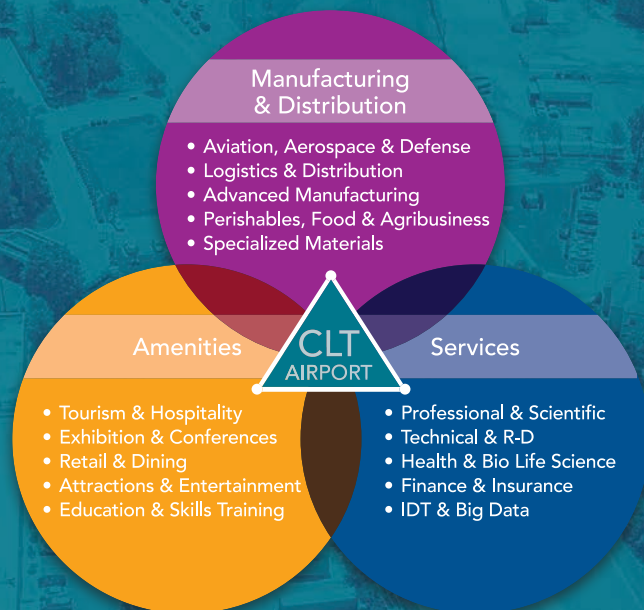
For manufacturers such as Firestone Fibers & Textiles, Dhollandia and others, doing business in Gaston County is a no-brainer. The resources are too plentiful to pass up, the local workforce is strong and it feels like a home away from home.

Asked if other manufacturers should relocate here, Goldstine, Burger and other officials say "absolutely."

"As long as they don't take our workforce," Burger adds with a laugh. 🐾

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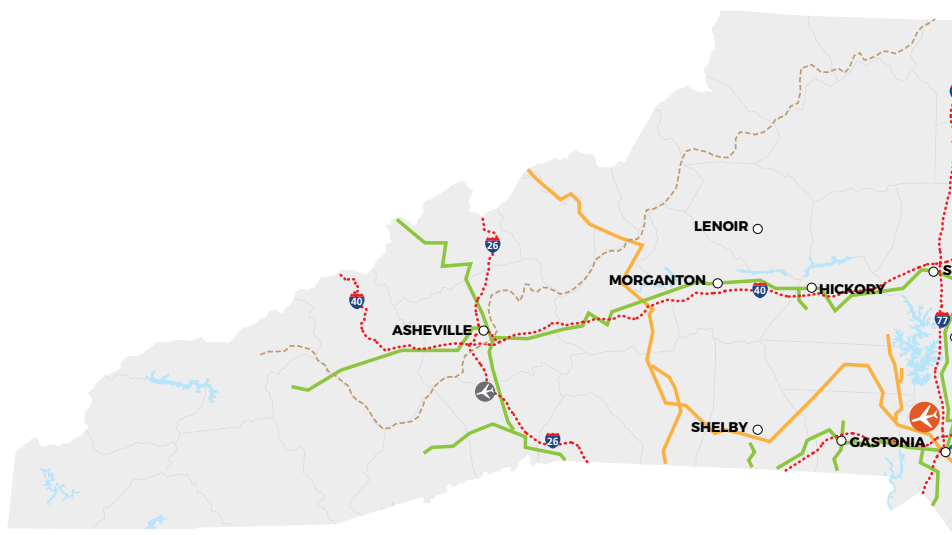


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PRIME TIME

Excellent infrastructure and competitive costs of doing business make these shovel-ready sites ideal for advanced manufacturers.



With a central East Coast location, North Carolina offers several shovel-ready megasites — each comprising 1,000 or more contiguous acres — suitable for large-scale manufacturing. The Kingsboro CSX Select Megasite in Edgecombe County was the first to land a major tenant when China-based Triangle Tyre announced it would build its first U.S. plant there (*Page 30*). Each site listed here offers access to four-lane roads, rail and international airports, and proximity to major ports, including Port of Wilmington, which is undergoing \$150 million in infrastructure upgrades. They join additional megasites in Brunswick and Person counties and dozens of smaller industrial sites across the state that boast highway access and other infrastructure assurances. More than 290 automotive-parts manufacturing operations are already located in the state, with a workforce of 26,000, according to the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina. With utility and construction costs below the U.S. average, North Carolina is poised and prepared for large-scale manufacturing.

1 CHATHAM-SILER CITY ADVANCED MANUFACTURING SITE

Two international airports, Piedmont Triad International in Greensboro and Raleigh-Durham International, are less than an hour's drive.

Direct access to Norfolk Southern rail line

A proposed interchange on U.S. 421 and a 1.1-mile connector road will provide truck access from the four-lane divided highway to the site.

The 1,802-acre Chatham-Siler City site includes a 1,214-acre megasite and 588-acre feeder park. Total buildable area is 1,606 acres at the site, which has two owners. Port of Wilmington is 160 miles away, while three other ports are within five hours. A Duke Energy transmission line that crosses the property can be configured to serve a large industrial customer. Less than 20 miles east of the site is Chatham Park, a 7,000-acre planned community that is in the initial stages of development. When fully built, Chatham Park is expected to have 22,000 homes.

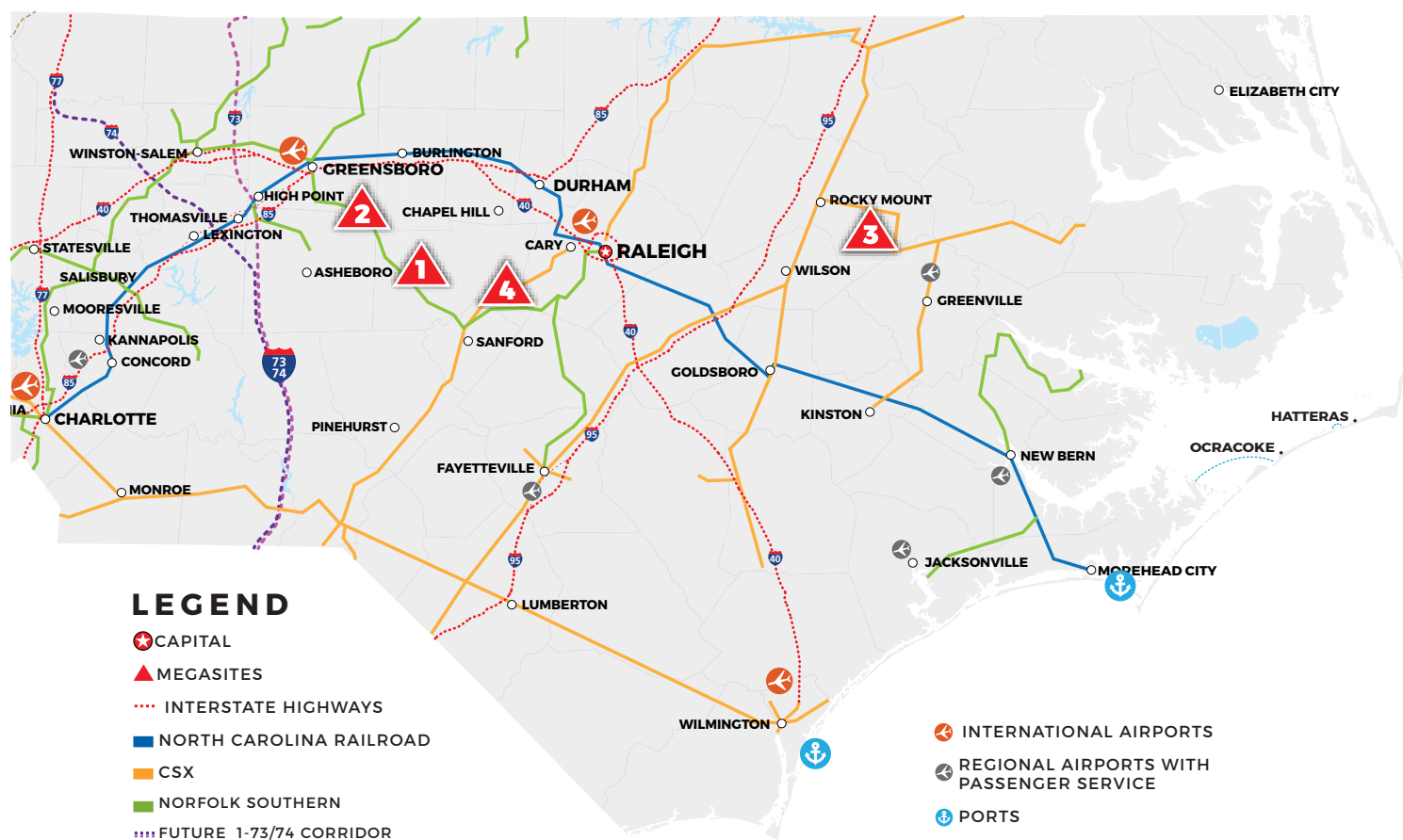
2 GREENSBORO-RANDOLPH MEGASITE

All three of the state's major airports are within 100 miles; Piedmont-Triad International in Greensboro is the closest at 30 miles away.

The site is adjacent to a Norfolk Southern rail line.

Interstate 85 is less than 10 miles away via U.S. 421.

The 1,825-acre site offers convenient access to 11 universities and nine community colleges. It is 25 miles from the Greensboro intermodal yard, providing access to Interstates 40, 85 and 73 and the Port of Virginia in Norfolk. The CSX intermodal yard in Charlotte, located about 100 miles from the site, offers access to Interstates 85 and 77 and ports at Charleston, S.C., Savannah, Ga., and Jacksonville, Fla. Port of Wilmington is 210 miles away. All utilities to the site can be constructed within approximately 12 months of a project announcement. In 2018, the Greensboro-Randolph site was the runner-up for a \$1.6 billion Toyota-Mazda auto plant.



3 KINGSBORO CSX SELECT MEGASITE

The site is located about 75 miles east of Raleigh-Durham International Airport and 30 miles from the Pitt-Greenville general-aviation airport.

CSX Transportation is adjacent to the site, and a new CSX Intermodal Facility — expected to be complete in 2020 — is 12 miles west.

The Kingsboro site is located 12 miles east of Interstate 95. An industrial access road that will connect parcels in the central part of the site is under construction and scheduled to be complete in the second quarter of 2019.

Planning for the Kingsboro site near Rocky Mount began more than 15 years ago. Triangle Tyre will occupy 400 of its 1,507 acres, and a new Corning Inc. distribution center will sit on 150 acres. An \$8.7 million utility infrastructure upgrade, including water and sewer, is under construction and scheduled to be complete in the third quarter of 2019. The site, which can accommodate water and wastewater needs for heavy manufacturing, was first in the state to receive CSX Select Site designation. A 416-acre portion of the Mid-Atlantic Industrial Rail Park in Brunswick County near Wilmington also earned the designation.

4 MONCURE MEGASITE

The site is located within a 45-minute drive of Raleigh-Durham International Airport and 5 miles from the Raleigh Executive Jetport in Lee County.

The Moncure site is served by two rail lines, CSX and Norfolk Southern.

Accessible by a four-lane road, the site is 10 miles from N.C. 540 and interstate access, U.S. 421 and U.S. 1. It is served by four complete interchanges.

The 2,500-acre site is the state's largest. Proximity to Raleigh, about 45 minutes away, provides convenient access to major universities, community colleges and Research Triangle Park. The Chatham County site is adjacent to Wake, Lee and Harnett counties and is 7 miles from the southern entrance to Chatham Park, a proposed 7,000-acre live-work-play development. Water is on-site, and sewer is under construction with an expected completion date of 2020. This single-owner site is about 20 miles from Fort Bragg, providing access to thousands of soldiers transitioning back to civilian life.

ICING ON THE CAKE

North Carolina stays competitive in providing incentives to companies seeking that extra edge as they expand or relocate.



Cities and states offer billions in tax breaks to keep or attract employers and protect or lure jobs. It often means local governments just miles apart are pitted against each other with bundles of incentives. While the case is no different in North Carolina, site selectors and others say the state has the work culture, educational systems and other tools to ensure continued success.

Labor needs are critical for many companies that employ esrp, a Frisco, Texas-based commercial real-estate firm that advises businesses considering expansions or headquarters moves, says Susan Arledge, president of site-selection services. “[Clients] are looking for us to tell them where can we find not just affordable labor but sustainable labor, qualify workforce and the ability for retention,” she says. “When we compare labor costs, we’re not just looking at what it costs to hire that person, but how affordable is it to live in that market when they are hired? And that is an area where the Carolinas fare very well.”

North Carolina’s economic-development efforts face a strong competitor from its southern neighbor. South Carolina expanded the list of business activities that may qualify for the state’s Job Development Credit to include legal, accounting, banking or investment services. S.C. lawmakers also added a tax credit for entities that increase annual purchases of agricultural products certified as South Carolina-grown. Moreover, South Carolina continually offers incentives to lure Charlotte companies across the state line.

But Tar Heel officials aren’t intimidated. “North Carolina doesn’t really try to match competing states on a dollar-by-dollar basis through cash incentives largely because we

don’t have to,” says Mark Pope, president of the N.C. Economic Developers Association and director of the Wayne County Development Alliance in Goldsboro. “Our natural and man-made advantages — mid-Atlantic location, great roads, exceptional universities and community colleges, growing population and appealing quality of life — keep our competitive edge sharp. Not every state can match us on that level. For most projects we see, incentives are icing on the cake — not the meal itself.”

Providing incentives can be especially important to attract companies to rural areas, which are often in the greatest need of economic stimulus. Unfortunately, projects in the less-populated regions tend to be less successful in living up to their promises of job creation, investment or wages than those in urban markets, according to a 2015 study of the JDIG program by Allan Freyer, director of the Workers’ Rights Project at the North Carolina Justice Center in Raleigh. Incentive grants should go to firms in targeted industries poised for robust growth rather than those in decline, and grants should be designed to bring infrastructure development and job training resources to needy rural counties, Freyer says.

State Sen. Rick Gunn, a Burlington Republican who focuses on economic development, says the state is making progress in rural development with a multipronged approach, including an emphasis on infrastructure improvements. “We are nowhere near where we need to be and where we think we can go,” he says. “But I think the general consensus is there is a heightened awareness of the challenges that we have in our rural communities.”

— David Dykes

▶ OPEN FOR BUSINESS

North Carolina is a great place to establish or grow your business. Recent economic-development announcements include:

ALLSTATE INSURANCE NORTHBROOK, ILL.

NEW JOBS: **2,250**

COUNTY: **MECKLENBURG**

PROJECTED INVESTMENT: **\$22.6M**

N.C. INCENTIVES: **\$17.9M**

Allstate joins Axa and Brighthouse Financial among insurance companies recently adding jobs in the Charlotte region. The expansion of an operations center will more than double its regional employment of about 1,400. With 2017 revenue of \$38.5 billion, Allstate is the largest publicly held U.S. personal-lines insurer.

LABCORP BURLINGTON

NEW JOBS: **422**

COUNTY: **DURHAM**

PROJECTED INVESTMENT: **\$30M**

N.C. INCENTIVES: **\$8.2M**

The medical-testing company with a market cap topping \$16 billion has expanded aggressively through acquisitions, adding services beyond diagnostics. Jobs at a new Research Triangle Park facility will include information-technology designers, software developers, operations staff and managers. LabCorp employs more than 60,000 people worldwide, including more than 8,900 in the state.

FRESENIUS KABI BAD HOMBURG, GERMANY

NEW JOBS: **445**

COUNTY: **WILSON**

PROJECTED INVESTMENT: **\$150M**

N.C. INCENTIVES: **\$7.2M**

The German drugmaker is building a plant to produce prefilled syringes for a variety of conditions, a market that is expected to top \$6 billion by 2020. The average annual salary for the new jobs will be about \$60,000, including benefits. Fresenius first came to North Carolina through its 2016 acquisition of Becton Dickinson & Co.'s prescription-drug business.

CORNING CORNING, N.Y.

NEW JOBS: **428**

COUNTIES: **DURHAM (317 JOBS), EDGECOMBE (111 JOBS)**

PROJECTED INVESTMENT: **\$275M**

(\$189 million in Durham and \$86 million in Edgecombe)

N.C. INCENTIVES: **\$4.5M**

With more than 4,000 employees in the state, Corning has been one of North Carolina's most active job creators in recent years. A new Durham plant will make Valor Glass, a damage-resistant product used to make medicine containers, a result of a collaboration with drugmakers Merck and Pfizer. In addition, the company will build a warehouse in Tarboro adjacent to the 1,449-acre Kingsboro Megasite.

EY LONDON

NEW JOBS: **375**

COUNTY: **MECKLENBURG**

PROJECTED INVESTMENT: **\$8.2M**

N.C. INCENTIVES: **\$3.2M**

The professional-services firm formerly known as Ernst & Young is establishing an innovation center with a focus on financial services and energy. The company operates more than a dozen similar "wavespace" centers globally. Average annual salary for the new jobs will be \$74,926. The third-largest accounting firm in the world has more than 1,300 employees in North Carolina.

▶ DISCRETIONARY GRANTS

Job Development Investment Grants provide performance-based incentives directly to new and expanding businesses to help offset the cost of establishing or expanding in the state.

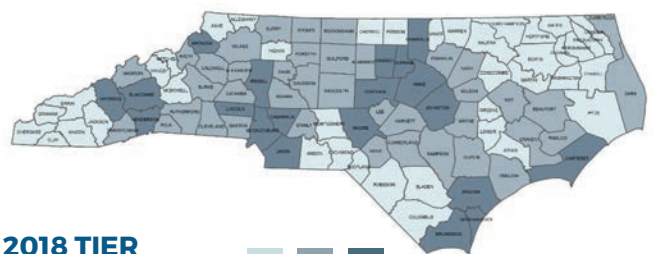
The **One North Carolina Fund** is another incentive program that awards cash grants based on the number of jobs created, amount of investment, location and expected economic impact.

In 2018, legislators approved a **Transformative Project** provision of the JDIG grant program. To qualify, companies must create at least 3,000 jobs and invest at least \$1 billion within 10 years.

Other programs include **Building Demolition** and **Building Reuse** grants that provide funds for site rehabilitation and renovation of vacant industrial and commercial buildings.

▶ TIERED TAX CREDITS

North Carolina annually assesses the economic health of its 100 counties, assigning each to one of three tiers. The 40 most distressed counties — the lightest-shaded below — are eligible for greater tax credits. Lesser incentives are available for other counties.



2018 TIER DESIGNATIONS 1 2 3

source: Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina Inc.

EAST

Eastern North Carolina is known for its 300-mile stretch of beautiful sandy beaches that kiss the Atlantic Ocean. The region is also rich in history: It is home to Battleship North

Carolina, Cape Hatteras and a half-dozen other lighthouses, and the birthplace of aviation, the Wright Brothers Memorial. The region also features vibrant agricultural, education and health care sectors.

BIGGEST COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

- East Carolina University, Greenville
- UNC Wilmington
- UNC Pembroke
- Fayetteville State University
- Fayetteville Technical Community College
- Cape Fear Community College
- Pitt Community College

ATTRACTIONS

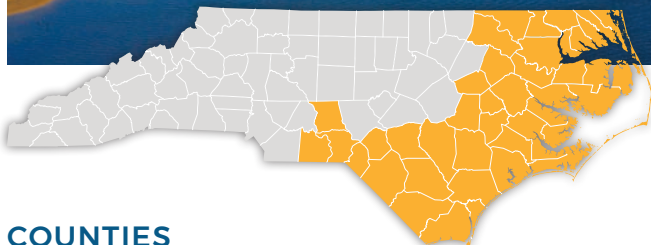
- Cape Hatteras Lighthouse and Wright Brothers Memorial, the Outer Banks
- Historic Tryon Palace, New Bern
- Battleship North Carolina, Wilmington
- Airlie Gardens, Wilmington
- 1886 Roanoke River Lighthouse, Edenton
- North Carolina Aquariums: Kure Beach, Roanoke Island, Nags Head and Pine Knoll Shores
- Fort Fisher State Historic Site, Kure Beach
- N.C. Maritime Museums: Beaufort, Hatteras, Southport

EVENTS

- North Carolina Azalea Festival, Wilmington, April
- Fayetteville Dogwood Festival, Fayetteville, April
- North Carolina Pickle Festival, Mount Olive, April
- Hang Gliding Spectacular, Nags Head, May
- Big Rock Blue Marlin Tournament, Atlantic Beach, June
- Blackbeard's Pirate Jamboree, Ocracoke, October
- North Carolina Seafood Festival, Morehead City, October
- Wilmington Riverfest, Wilmington, November
- Wilson Whirligig Festival, November

INDUSTRIES

- Aerospace and defense
- Agriculture
- Biotechnology
- Marine trades
- Metalworking
- Textiles
- Tourism



COUNTIES

Anson, Beaufort, Bertie, Bladen, Brunswick, Camden, Carteret, Chowan, Columbus, Craven, Cumberland, Currituck, Dare, Duplin, Edgecombe, Gates, Greene, Halifax, Hertford, Hoke, Hyde, Jones, Lenoir, Martin, Montgomery, New Hanover, Northampton, Onslow, Pamlico, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Pender, Pitt, Richmond, Robeson, Sampson, Scotland, Tyrrell, Washington, Wayne and Wilson

CHARLOTTE

Long known as a base for banking and Fortune 500 companies, the state's most populous metro area is also experiencing growth in financial technology, logistics and advanced manufacturing. The region draws thrill-seekers with

screamworthy attractions at Carowinds amusement park and some of the sports world's fastest and loudest action at Charlotte Motor Speedway in nearby Concord. Others flock to the U.S. National Whitewater Center to ride zip-lines through the trees or splash through the rapids.

BIGGEST COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

- UNC Charlotte
- Central Piedmont Community College, multiple locations
- Rowan-Cabarrus Community College, multiple locations
- Gaston College, multiple locations

ATTRACTIONS

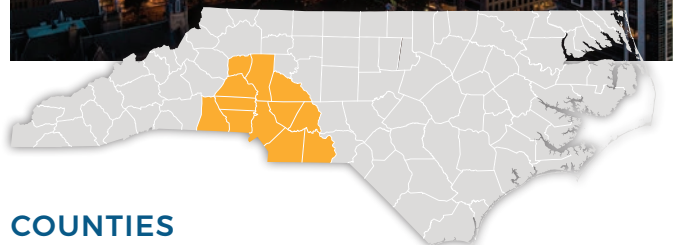
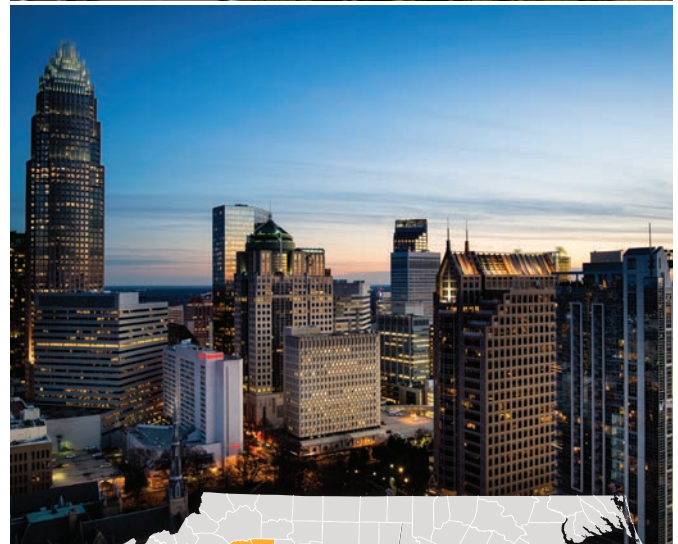
- U.S. National Whitewater Center, Charlotte
- Charlotte Motor Speedway, Concord
- Carolina Panthers NFL team, Charlotte
- NASCAR Hall of Fame, Charlotte
- Charlotte Hornets NBA team, Charlotte
- Carowinds amusement park, Charlotte
- Discovery Place, Charlotte
- Daniel Stowe Botanical Gardens, Belmont
- Schiele Museum of Natural History and Planetarium, Gastonia
- N.C. Transportation Museum, Spencer
- Lake Norman and Lake Wylie

EVENTS

- Rural Hill Scottish Festival and Loch Norman
- Highland Games, Huntersville, April
- Beer, Bourbon and BBQ Festival, Charlotte, May
- Circle K Speed Street, Charlotte, May
- Carolina BalloonFest, Statesville, October
- Carolina Renaissance Festival, Huntersville, October-November
- Christmas Town USA, McAdenville, December

INDUSTRIES

- Business and financial services
- Corporate headquarters
- Aerospace and defense
- Textiles
- Energy
- Automotive parts manufacturing



COUNTIES

Alexander, Anson, Cabarrus, Catawba, Cleveland, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Rowan, Stanly and Union

TRIAD

Smack dab in the middle of the state, the Triad is renowned as a hub for education, distribution and manufacturing. Three UNC System campuses and thriving private universities boast combined enrollments topping 50,000.

Meanwhile, visitors enjoy wineries across the Yadkin Valley, the Old Salem settlement in Winston-Salem and the North Carolina Zoo in Asheboro, home to more than 1,600 animals. Then there's Mount Airy, the small town that inspired *The Andy Griffith Show*.

BIGGEST COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

- UNC Greensboro
- Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem
- Elon University
- High Point University
- N.C. A&T State University, Greensboro
- Guilford Technical Community College, multiple locations
- Forsyth Technical Community College, multiple locations
- Winston-Salem State University

ATTRACTIONS

- North Carolina Zoo, Asheboro
- International Civil Rights Center & Museum, Greensboro
- Old Salem Museum & Gardens, Winston-Salem
- Greensboro Science Center, Greensboro
- Andy Griffith Museum, Mount Airy
- Yadkin Valley Wine Country, Elkin
- Kaleideum science and children's museums, Winston-Salem

EVENTS

- National Black Theatre Festival, Winston-Salem, July-August
- Wyndham Championship golf tournament, Greensboro, August
- Winston-Salem Open tennis tournament, August
- Yadkin Valley Pumpkin Festival, Elkin, September
- Mayberry Days, Mount Airy, September
- Dixie Classic Fair, Winston-Salem, September-October
- Annual Barbecue Festival, Lexington, October
- Autumn Leaves Festival, Mount Airy, October
- Seagrove Pottery Festival Weekend, Seagrove, November

INDUSTRIES

- Aerospace and defense
- Furniture
- Finance
- Insurance
- Textiles
- Winemaking



COUNTIES

Alamance, Caswell, Davidson, Davie, Forsyth, Guilford, Randolph, Rockingham, Stokes, Surry and Yadkin

TRIANGLE

The Triangle is an internationally known center of higher education, with three major research universities plus several smaller institutions. Raleigh is home to state museums of art,

history and natural sciences, which together attract more than 1 million visitors annually. Arts, music and cultural opportunities fill the region's calendar in the state capital and nearby Durham and Chapel Hill.

BIGGEST COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

- N.C. State University, Raleigh
- N.C. Central University, Durham
- UNC Chapel Hill
- Duke University, Durham
- Wake Technical Community College, multiple locations
- Central Carolina Community College, multiple locations

ATTRACTIONS

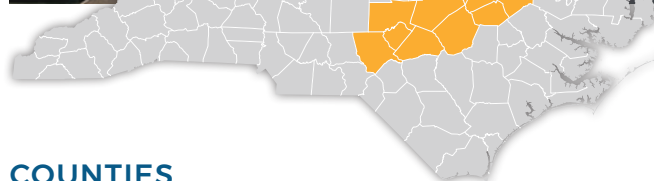
- North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences, Raleigh
- PNC Arena, home of the Carolina Hurricanes hockey team, Raleigh
- State Farmers Market, Raleigh
- North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh
- Durham Performing Arts Center
- Morehead Planetarium and Science Center, Chapel Hill
- Marbles Kids Museum, Raleigh
- North Carolina Museum of History, Raleigh
- Museum of Life and Science, Durham
- Koka Booth Amphitheater, Cary

EVENTS

- Moogfest, Durham, May
- Apex Peakfest, May
- American Dance Festival, Durham, June-July
- Festival for the Eno River, Durham, July
- Lazy Daze Arts and Crafts Festival, Cary, August
- World of Bluegrass, Raleigh, September
- Hopscotch Music Festival, Raleigh, September
- North Carolina State Fair, Raleigh, October

INDUSTRIES

- Biotechnology and pharmaceuticals
- Information technology
- Clean technology
- Higher education
- State government



COUNTIES

Chatham, Durham, Edgecombe, Franklin, Granville, Harnett, Johnston, Lee, Moore, Nash, Orange, Person, Vance, Wake, Warren and Wilson

WEST

There is one undeniable fact when it comes to western North Carolina: The views are breathtaking. Visitors from around the world flock to the Blue Ridge Parkway to glimpse changing leaves in the fall and the bloom of nature in the spring.

Outdoor activities include hiking, whitewater rafting, wildlife viewing or sipping on local wine, craft beer and cider. Asheville, with its art galleries, restaurants and breweries, regularly ranks among the world's most intriguing cities, according to travel publications.

BIGGEST COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

- Western Carolina University, Cullowhee
- UNC Asheville
- Appalachian State University, Boone
- Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College

ATTRACTIONS

- Biltmore Estate, Asheville
- Blue Ridge Parkway
- Nantahala Outdoor Center, Bryson City
- Tryon International Equestrian Center, Mill Spring
- Sliding Rock, Transylvania County
- North Carolina Arboretum, Asheville
- Grandfather Mountain, Linville
- Chimney Rock State Park, Chimney Rock
- Linville Caverns, Marion
- Cherokee Cultural Attractions, Cherokee
- Tweetsie Railroad, Blowing Rock

EVENTS

- Blowing Rock WinterFest, January
- MerleFest, Wilkesboro, April
- Lake Eden Arts Festival, Asheville-Black Mountain, May and October
- An Appalachian Summer Festival, Boone, June-August
- Folkmoot USA, Black Mountain, July
- Grandfather Mountain Highland Games, Linville, July
- Autumn at Oz, Beech Mountain, September
- N.C. Apple Festival, Hendersonville, September
- Brushy Mountain Apple Festival, North Wilkesboro, October
- Colorfest: Fine Arts and Fine Crafts Fair, Dillsboro, October
- Leaf Festival, Black Mountain, October
- Woolly Worm Festival, Banner Elk, October

INDUSTRIES

- Aerospace and defense
- Furniture
- Beer
- Data centers
- Tourism
- Advanced manufacturing
- Christmas trees



COUNTIES

Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Swain, Transylvania, Watauga, Wilkes and Yancey

THE PLACE TO BE

A low cost of living, competitive tax rates and top-notch educational institutions are just some of the reasons North Carolina consistently ranks as a top state to do business.

#1 MOST COMPETITIVE STATE

Site Selection, 2018

#1 BEST STATE FOR BUSINESS

Forbes, 2017

#3 BEST STATE FOR BUSINESS

Chief Executive, 2018

GOLDEN SHOVEL AWARD

Area Development, 2018

12TH MOST COMPETITIVE BUSINESS TAX CLIMATE

Tax Foundation, 2019

▶ TOP 15 PUBLIC COMPANIES BASED IN NORTH CAROLINA*

	COMPANY	HEADQUARTERS	INDUSTRY
1	Bank of America	Charlotte	Financial services
2	Lowe's	Mooresville	Home-improvement stores
3	Duke Energy	Charlotte	Utilities
4	BB&T	Winston-Salem	Financial services
5	VF	Greensboro	Apparel
6	Red Hat [^]	Raleigh	Software
7	IQVIA Holdings	Durham	Pharmaceutical services
8	Nucor	Charlotte	Steel
9	Laboratory Corp. of America	Burlington	Medical testing
10	Martin Marietta Materials	Raleigh	Building materials
11	Old Dominion Freight Line	Thomasville	Trucking
12	Albemarle	Charlotte	Chemicals
13	Qorvo	Greensboro	Semiconductors
14	Hanesbrands	Winston-Salem	Apparel
15	Sealed Air	Charlotte	Containers and packaging

*ranked by market value as of 6/30/2018

[^] pending acquisition by IBM

source: Capital Investment Companies and The Nottingham Company

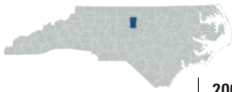
▶ LARGEST CITIES

RANK	CITY	POPULATION
1	CHARLOTTE	845,235
2	RALEIGH	457,583
3	GREENSBORO	288,186
4	DURHAM	260,251
5	WINSTON-SALEM	243,026
6	FAYETTEVILLE	207,583
7	CARY	159,006
8	WILMINGTON	121,150
9	HIGH POINT	111,454
10	ASHEVILLE	91,910
11	CONCORD	90,820
12	GREENVILLE	89,226
13	GASTONIA	75,919
14	JACKSONVILLE	75,748
15	CHAPEL HILL	59,903
16	HUNTERSVILLE	59,494
17	ROCKY MOUNT	54,686
18	BURLINGTON	53,067
19	WILSON	49,170
20	APEX	48,435
21	KANNAPOLIS	47,276
22	HICKORY	40,638
23	MOORESVILLE	40,001
24	INDIAN TRAIL	38,795
25	WAKE FOREST	36,398
26	MONROE	35,034
27	SALISBURY	34,463
28	GOLDSBORO	33,685
29	HOLLY SPRINGS	32,472
30	CORNELIUS	31,158
31	MATTHEWS	31,028
32	GARNER	30,008
33	NEW BERN	29,942
34	SANFORD	29,444
35	MINT HILL	27,237
36	THOMASVILLE	27,055
37	STATESVILLE	25,791
38	ASHEBORO	25,787
39	FUQUAY-VARINA	25,548
40	MORRISVILLE	25,242
41	KERNERSVILLE	25,164
42	LUMBERTON	21,144
43	CARRBORO	20,928
44	KINSTON	20,393
45	CLAYTON	20,112
46	HAVELOCK	20,089
47	SHELBY	19,960
48	CLEMMONS	19,903
49	BOONE	19,458
50	LELAND	18,893

source: Office of State Budget and Management, 2017

ALAMANCE

Alamance Chamber
of Commerce
336-228-1338
alamancechamber.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	143.5	161.1
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	60.3	60.3
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	5.1%	4.2%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$32.1	\$36.2

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Health care: 16.3%
Retail: 15.5%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Laboratory Corporation of America

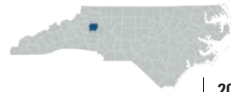
LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Burlington (part): population 52,323

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
59.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Elon University;
Alamance Community College

ALEXANDER

Alexander County Economic
Development Corp.
828-632-1161
alexanderedc.org



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	36.4	38.5
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	10.3	9.1
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	5.2%	3.7%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$27.7	\$34.0

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Manufacturing: 39.6%
Government: 11.2%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Craftmaster Furniture

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Taylorsville: population 2,146

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
79.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Catawba County Community College

ALLEGHANY

Alleghany Chamber
of Commerce
336-372-5473
sparta-nc.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	11.0	11.2
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	3.7	3.2
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	5.0%	5.2%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$27.1	\$34.7

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Manufacturing: 16.6%
Health care: 15.1%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Parkdale Mills

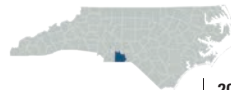
LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Sparta: population 1,806

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
54.8 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Wilkes Community College

ANSON

Anson Economic
Development Partnership
704-694-9513
ansonedp.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	26.6	25.6
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	8.1	7.1
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	7.0%	5.3%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$26.3	\$32.7

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Manufacturing: 20.3%
Government: 15.9%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Hornwood

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Wadesboro: population 5,463

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
77.7 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
South Piedmont Community College

ASHE

Ashe County
Economic Development
336-846-5501
ashencedc.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	26.3	27.2
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	8.3	7.2
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	4.9%	4.2%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$27.3	\$32.9

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Retail: 16.0%
Health care: 14.5%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
American Emergency Vehicles

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Jefferson: population 1,576

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
44.3 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Wilkes Community College

AVERY

Avery County Economic
Development Committee
828-733-8201
averycountync.gov



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	18.0	18.1
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	7.4	6.9
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	4.6%	4.4%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$26.0	\$32.5

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Government: 14.9%
Health care: 13.3%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Lees-McRae College

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Banner Elk: population 1,126

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
55.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Lees-McRae College;
Mayland Community College

BEAUFORT

Beaufort County
Economic Development
252-946-3970
beaufortedc.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	45.9	47.5
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	17.8	15.9
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	5.5%	5.1%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$31.5	\$38.8

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Manufacturing: 14.0%
Retail: 14.0%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Nutrien

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Washington: population 9,436

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
61.5 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Beaufort County Community College

BERTIE

Bertie County
Economic Development
252-794-5301
co.bertie.nc.us



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	20.8	19.9
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	7.0	5.9
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	5.5%	6.0%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$25.9	\$32.5

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Government: 13.8%
Health care: 12.3%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Perdue

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Windsor: 3,471

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
83.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Rowan County Community College;
Martin Community College

BLADEN

Bladen County Economic Development Commission
910-645-2292
bladennc.govoffice3.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	34.6	34.4
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	13.4	13.0
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	6.1%	6.0%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$25.8	\$33.5

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Manufacturing: 45.2%
Health care: 9.3%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Smithfield Foods

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Elizabethtown: population 3,509

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
82.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Bladen Community College

BRUNSWICK

Brunswick Business and Industry Development
910-408-1603
brunswickbid.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	98.6	131.7
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	28.6	32.0
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	4.5%	5.6%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$32.8	\$38.0

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Retail: 16.2%
Health care: 13.1%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Duke Energy Progress

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Leland: population 18,893

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
48.5 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Brunswick Community College

BUNCOMBE

Economic Development Coalition Asheville-Buncombe County
828-258-6101
economicdevelopmentasheville.org



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	229.5	261.5
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	115.9	129.8
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	3.5%	3.4%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$35.3	\$43.2

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Health care: 20.4%
Retail: 13.6%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Mission Health

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Asheville: population 91,910

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
52.9 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
UNC Asheville; Montreat College; Warren Wilson College; Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College

BURKE

Burke Development Inc.
828-764-9370
burkedevinc.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	89.0	90.2
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	32.7	29.5
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	5.9%	4.3%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$26.5	\$32.5

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Health care: 25.6%
Manufacturing: 24.6%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Carolinas HealthCare System
Blue Ridge

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Morganton: population 16,969

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
69.5 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Western Piedmont Community College

CABARRUS

Cabarrus Economic Development
704-782-4000
cabarrusedc.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	164.5	205.5
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	66.9	76.3
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	4.4%	4.1%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$34.8	\$41.1

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Retail: 15.9%
Health care: 13.1%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Atrium Health

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Concord: population 90,820

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
72.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Barber-Scotia College; Rowan-Cabarrus Community College; Cabarrus College of Health Sciences

CALDWELL

Economic Development Commission of Caldwell County
828-728-0768
caldwelledc.org



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	81.0	83.3
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	27.2	24.8
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	7.0%	4.5%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$26.9	\$32.5

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Manufacturing: 24.9%
Health care: 13.3%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Bernhardt Furniture

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Lenoir: population 17,841

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
63.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute

CAMDEN

Camden County Economic Development Commission
252-338-6363, ext. 103
camdencountync.gov



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	9.6	10.4
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	2.2	1.3
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	3.9%	4.5%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$36.9	\$41.9

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Retail: 12.3%
Government: 10.5%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Swain & Temple

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
South Mills, unincorporated

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
74.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
College of The Albemarle

CARTERET

Carteret County Economic Development Department
252-222-6121
carteretcdc.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	64.1	70.2
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	23.4	23.5
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	3.9%	4.5%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$37.4	\$46.1

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Retail: 18.8%
Hospitality: 17.0%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Carteret Health Care

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Morehead City: population 9,380

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
31.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Carteret Community College

CASWELL

Caswell County Office of
Economic Development
336-694-4193
caswellcountync.gov



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	23.6	23.7
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	3.3	3.0
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	6.6%	4.8%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$23.3	\$32.0

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Government: 20.7%
Education: 19.0%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
WS Construction

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Yanceyville: population 2,029

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
70.9 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Piedmont Community College

CATAWBA

Catawba County Economic
Development Corp.
828-267-1564
catawbaedc.org



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	150.6	156.9
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	88.7	87.3
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	5.5%	4.2%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$34.4	\$41.5

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Manufacturing: 27.5%
Retail: 12.7%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Catawba Valley Medical Center

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Hickory (part): population 40,550

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
57.5 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Lenoir-Rhyne University;
Catawba Valley Community College

CHATHAM

Chatham County Economic
Development Corp.
919-542-8274
chathamcdc.org



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	59.2	74.8
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	16.9	14.7
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	3.8%	3.8%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$44.7	\$53.3

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Health care: 16.6%
Retail: 11.6%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Carolina Meadows

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Siler City: population 8,443

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
62.8 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Central Carolina Community College

CHEROKEE

Cherokee County
Economic Development
828-837-5527
cherokeecounty-nc.gov



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	27.1	29.2
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	8.4	8.0
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	6.0%	5.0%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$24.3	\$29.5

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Health care: 17.1%
Retail: 16.6%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Murphy Medical Center

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Andrews: population 1,831

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
52.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Tri-County Community College

CHOWAN

Edenton Chowan
Partnership Inc.
252-482-2007
edenton.net



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	15.0	14.3
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	5.7	4.6
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	5.9%	5.4%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$30.3	\$35.8

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Health care: 21.4%
Manufacturing: 10.0%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Vidant Health

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Edenton: population 4,726

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
74.5 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
College of The Albemarle

CLAY

Clay County Economic
Development Commission
828-835-9564
claycountyedc.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	10.2	11.5
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	2.3	1.9
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	3.9%	4.9%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$26.7	\$30.4

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Retail: 18.7%
Government: 13.6%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Ingles Markets

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Haynesville: population 375

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
43.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Tri-County Community College

CLEVELAND

Cleveland County Economic
Development Partnership
704-669-4701
ccedp.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	96.1	98.6
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	34.3	34.7
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	5.8%	4.7%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$28.3	\$34.4

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Manufacturing: 18.7%
Health care: 14.5%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Atrium Health

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Shelby: population 19,960

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
72.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Gardner-Webb University;
Cleveland Community College

COLUMBUS

Columbus County Economic
Development Commission
910-640-6608
columbusedc.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	55.9	56.9
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	16.9	15.1
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	5.3%	5.5%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$26.5	\$31.2

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Health care: 17.1%
Retail: 13.6%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
International Paper

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Whiteville: population 5,259

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
80.5 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Southeastern Community College

CRAVEN

Craven County
Economic Development
252-633-5300
cravenbusiness.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	97.6	103.7
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	42.0	39.3
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	4.1%	4.7%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$35.6	\$42.0

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Health care: 17.1%
Government: 16.9%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
CarolinaEast Health System

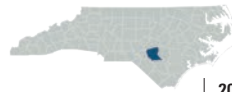
LARGEST CITY/TOWN
New Bern: population 29,942

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
53.9 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Craven Community College

CUMBERLAND

Fayetteville Cumberland County
Economic Development Corp.
910-500-6464
fayedc.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	304.1	329.6
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	118.3	118.8
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	5.3%	5.6%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$31.8	\$37.8

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Health care: 19.2%
Retail: 14.3%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Cape Fear Valley Health System

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Fayetteville: population 207,583

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
79.9 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Methodist University; Fayetteville State University; Fayetteville Technical Community College

CURRITUCK

Currituck County Economic
Development Department
252-232-6015
thinkcurrituck.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	23.4	26.6
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	5.7	6.7
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	3.2%	4.6%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$34.3	\$41.8

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Retail: 18.3%
Hospitality: 10.3%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Academi Training Center

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Myock, unincorporated

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
48.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
College of The Albemarle

DARE

The Outer Banks
Chamber of Commerce
252-441-8144
outerbankschamber.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	34.2	36.8
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	19.8	19.3
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	4.7%	6.2%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$39.3	\$49.2

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Hospitality: 23.1%
Retail: 19.1%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Vidant Health

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Kill Devil Hills: population 7,212

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
47.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
College of The Albemarle

DAVIDSON

Davidson County Economic
Development Commission
336-243-1900
davidsoncountyledc.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	156.7	167.1
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	44.2	43.3
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	5.5%	4.3%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$30.2	\$35.6

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Manufacturing: 22.5%
Retail: 11.9%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Bradley Personnel

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Thomasville (part): population 26,728

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
54.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Davidson County Community College

DAVIE

Davie County Economic
Development Commission
336-751-2714
daviecountyledc.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	39.8	42.7
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	11.2	12.7
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	4.9%	4.0%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$37.9	\$42.8

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Manufacturing: 26.3%
Retail: 11.1%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Ashley Furniture Industries

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Mocksville: population 5,472

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
73.8 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Davidson County Community College

DUPLIN

Duplin County Economic
Development Commission
910-296-2180
duplinedc.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	55.9	59.5
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	20.6	19.4
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	4.3%	4.8%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$25.5	\$31.8

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Manufacturing: 28.5%
Agriculture: 13.2%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Butterball

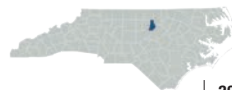
LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Wallace (part): population 3,959

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
71.5 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
James Sprunt Community College

DURHAM

Greater Durham
Chamber of Commerce
919-328-8700
durhamchamber.org



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	252.0	306.2
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	183.0	199.3
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	3.8%	4.0%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$38.9	\$45.9

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Health care: 17.9%
Education: 14.5%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Duke University

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Durham (part): population 259,977

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
77.8 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Duke University; NC Central University; Durham Technical Community College

EDGECOMBE

Carolinas Gateway
Partnership
252-442-0114
econdev.org



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	55.2	52.9
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	21.0	16.5
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	7.5%	7.7%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$26.7	\$33.1

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Retail: 17.7%
Manufacturing: 17.6%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
QVC

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Rocky Mount (part): population 15,832

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
95.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Edgecombe Community College

FORSYTH

Winston-Salem
Business Inc.
336-723-8955
wsbusinessinc.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	337.2	372.7
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	186.6	183.5
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	4.4%	4.4%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$39.6	\$44.7

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Health care: 21.2%
Retail: 11.7%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Winston-Salem: population 243,026

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
72.4 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Wake Forest University; Salem College;
Winston-Salem State University; UNC
School of the Arts; Forsyth Technical
Community College

FRANKLIN

Franklin County Economic
Development Commission
919-554-1863
franklincountync.us/services/edc



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	56.8	66.5
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	12.0	11.9
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	4.3%	4.5%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$28.6	\$32.8

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Manufacturing: 21.2%
Education: 11.9%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Novozymes North America

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Louisburg: population 3,328

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
80.5 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Louisburg College;
Vance-Granville Community College

GASTON

Gaston County Economic
Development Commission
704-825-4046
gaston.org



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	199.0	218.5
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	70.1	72.0
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	5.5%	4.5%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$31.3	\$38.6

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Manufacturing: 20.1%
Health care: 16.1%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
CaroMont Health

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Gastonia: population 75,919

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
87.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Belmont Abbey College;
Gaston College

GATES

Gates County
Chamber of Commerce
252-357-2411
gatescounty.govoffice2.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	12.1	12.0
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	1.6	1.5
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	4.2%	4.6%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$27.9	\$34.1

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Retail: 10.4%
Government: 10.2%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Ashton Lewis Lumber

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Gatesville: population 319

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
76.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
College of The Albemarle

GRAHAM

Graham County
Economic Development
828-479-7984
grahamcountyedc.org



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	8.5	8.8
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	2.9	2.0
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	7.0%	6.9%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$24.6	\$29.5

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Construction: 17.9%
Hospitality: 16.0%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Crisp and Crisp

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Robbinsville: population 587

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
58.5 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Tri-County Community College

GRANVILLE

Granville County Economic
Development Commission
919-693-5911
granvillecounty.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	57.3	60.0
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	19.9	21.4
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	5.0%	3.8%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$27.7	\$35.2

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Health care: 24.6%
Manufacturing: 24.2%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Altec Industries

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Oxford: population 8,503

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
84.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Vance-Granville Community College

GREENE

Greene County Economic
Development Commission
252-747-3446
cogreenenc.us/economic-development



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	20.9	21.5
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	4.4	4.2
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	5.3%	4.5%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$21.3	\$29.7

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Government: 27.3%
Health care: 14.3%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Greene County Health Care

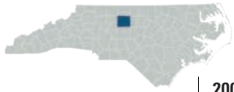
LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Snow Hill: population 1,628

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
78.6 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Lenoir Community College

GUILFORD

Greensboro Chamber of Commerce
336-387-8312, greensboroeda.com
High Point Economic Development Corp.
336-883-3116, highpointnc.gov



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	464.4	524.0
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	281.5	279.7
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	4.7%	4.7%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$37.4	\$43.6

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Health care: 12.8%
Manufacturing: 12.2%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Cone Health

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Greensboro: population 288,186

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
73.1 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Bennett, Guilford and Greensboro colleges; High Point and NC A&T State universities; UNC Greensboro; Guilford Technical Community College

HALIFAX

Halifax County Economic Development Commission
252-519-2630
halifaxdevelopment.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	55.2	51.8
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	18.2	15.6
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	6.3%	7.4%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$27.1	\$34.0

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Health care: 17.9%
Retail: 14.6%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Halifax Regional Medical Center

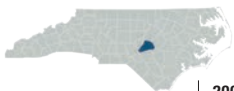
LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Roanoke Rapids: population 14,952

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
77.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Halifax Community College

HARNETT

Harnett County Economic Development Commission
910-893-7524
harnettedc.org



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	105.3	130.8
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	24.3	25.2
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	4.7%	5.0%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$27.8	\$32.0

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Retail: 16.7%
Health care: 13.6%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Food Lion

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Dunn: population 9,642

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
75.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Campbell University;
Central Carolina Community College

HAYWOOD

Haywood Economic Development Council
828-456-3021
haywoodedc.org



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	57.7	62.3
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	17.7	17.2
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	4.0%	4.1%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$30.1	\$39.2

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Retail: 18.1%
Health care: 15.2%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Blue Ridge Paper Products

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Waynesville: population 10,137

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
58.5 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Haywood Community College

HENDERSON

Henderson County Partnership for Economic Development
828-692-6373
gohendersoncountync.org



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	102.2	116.2
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	36.7	37.5
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	3.5%	3.8%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$34.5	\$39.0

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Health care: 18.9%
Manufacturing: 14.6%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Pardee Hospital

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Hendersonville: population 14,165

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
56.5 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Blue Ridge Community College

HERTFORD

Hertford County Economic Development Commission
252-358-7801
hertfordcounty.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	23.9	23.9
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	9.6	9.0
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	5.2%	5.7%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$24.9	\$30.8

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Health care: 24.3%
Retail: 15.9%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Vidant Health

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Ahoskie: population 4,806

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
84.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Chowan University;
Roanoke-Chowan Community College

HOKE

Raeford Hoke Economic Development Commission
910-875-6113
hokecounty.net



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	42.9	53.3
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	8.3	8.4
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	5.0%	5.6%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$25.8	\$29.2

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Manufacturing: 21.0%
Health care: 17.1%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Butterball

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Raeford: population 4,983

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
75.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Sandhills Community College

HYDE

Hyde County Office of Planning and Economic Development
252-926-4178
hydecountync.gov



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	5.8	5.6
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	2.0	2.0
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	5.6%	8.9%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$26.9	\$36.8

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Government: 21.2%
Wholesale: 17.4%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
ITW

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Swan Quarter, unincorporated

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
77.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Beaufort County Community College

IREDELL

Statesville Regional Development,
704-871-0062, statesvilleregion.com
Mooresville South Iredell Economic
Development Corp.
704-664-6922, edcmooresville.org



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	150.7	176.6
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	66.6	71.7
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	4.4%	4.2%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$36.5	\$45.8

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Manufacturing: 15.5%
Retail: 13.6%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Lowe's

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Mooresville: population 40,001

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
52.8 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Mitchell Community College

JACKSON

Jackson County Office of Economic
Development, 828-586-2155,
jacksonthrive.jacksonnc.org
Jackson County Chamber of Commerce
800-962-1911, mountainlovers.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	38.2	43.1
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	14.6	13.4
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	3.5%	4.7%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$28.1	\$33.1

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Education: 21.2%
Hospitality: 17.8%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
DLP Partner Midwest

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Sylva: population 2,720

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
38.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Western Carolina University;
Southwestern Community College

JOHNSTON

Johnston County Economic
Development Office
919-205-1232
jcnecd.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	154.6	194.7
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	44.6	47.3
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	4.0%	4.1%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$33.1	\$36.6

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Retail: 15.1%
Manufacturing: 14.7%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Johnston Health

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Clayton (part): population 20,112

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
78.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Johnston Community College

JONES

Jones County
Economic Development
252-448-7571
jonescountync.gov



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	10.2	10.4
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	1.6	1.6
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	4.2%	4.4%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$29.7	\$37.0

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Health care: 23.1%
Government: 10.8%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
CarolinaEast Health System

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Maysville: population 1,027

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
81.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Lenoir Community College

LEE

Sanford Area
Growth Alliance
919-774-8439
growsanfordnc.com/edc



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	55.3	59.3
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	27.5	26.0
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	5.5%	5.1%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$32.4	\$37.3

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Manufacturing: 30.5%
Retail: 12.2%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Pilgrim's Pride

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Sanford: population 29,444

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
79.5 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Central Carolina Community College

LENOIR

Lenoir County
Economic Development
252-527-1963
lenoirredc.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	59.2	57.5
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	28.3	28.4
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	5.2%	4.6%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$30.1	\$38.6

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Manufacturing: 28.0%
Health care: 18.2%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Sanderson Farms

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Kinston: population 20,393

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
83.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Lenoir Community College

LINCOLN

Lincoln Economic
Development Association
704-732-1511
lincolnedc.org



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	73.6	83.3
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	22.7	22.4
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	4.8%	4.0%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$31.9	\$40.6

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Manufacturing: 20.4%
Retail: 13.3%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Atrium Health

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Lincolnton: population 10,578

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
61.1 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Gaston College

MACON

Macon County Economic
Development Commission
828-369-2306
maconedc.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	33.2	35.4
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	11.9	11.0
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	4.0%	4.7%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$31.2	\$36.7

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Retail: 19.6%
Hospitality: 14.6%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Drake Enterprises

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Franklin: population 4,082

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
34.9 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Southwestern Community College

MADISON

Madison County
Economic Development Board
828-649-1377
investinmadison.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	20.3	22.2
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	4.2	3.7
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	3.9%	4.3%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$25.0	\$31.0

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Health care: 14.6%
Government: 12.0%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Mars Hill University

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Mars Hill: population 2,127

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
52.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Mars Hill College; Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College

MARTIN

Martin County
Economic Development Corp.
252-789-4904
martincountyledc.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	24.4	23.5
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	8.9	6.9
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	5.3%	5.7%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$28.3	\$35.7

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Retail: 15.7%
Health care: 15.3%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Flagstone Foods

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Williamston: population 5,382

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
79.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Martin Community College

MCDOWELL

McDowell Economic
Development Association Inc.
828-652-9391
mcdowellnceda.govoffice3.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	44.1	45.7
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	16.7	16.1
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	5.4%	4.1%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$24.9	\$31.5

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Manufacturing: 38.6%
Retail: 12.0%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Baxter International

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Marion: population 8,444

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
58.8 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
McDowell Technical Community College

MECKLENBURG

Charlotte Chamber
of Commerce
704-378-1300
charlottechamber.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	870.4	1,077.3
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	566.2	680.4
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	4.5%	4.3%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$56.1	\$54.1

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Health care: 11.4%
Retail: 9.6%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Atrium Health

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Charlotte: population 845,235

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
82.3 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Davidson College; Johnson C Smith, Johnson & Wales, Pfeiffer and Queens universities; UNC Charlotte; Central Piedmont Community College

MITCHELL

Mitchell County Economic
Development Commission
828-537-1404
mitchellcountyledc.org



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	15.5	15.2
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	5.5	4.7
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	6.9%	5.3%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$25.8	\$32.1

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Health care: 16.4%
Education: 15.4%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Unimin

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Spruce Pine: population 2,171

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
58.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Mayland Community College

MONTGOMERY

Montgomery County Economic
Development
910-576-4221, ext. 1307
montgomerycountync.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	27.5	27.9
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	10.0	9.4
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	6.2%	4.6%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$27.1	\$34.3

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Manufacturing: 34.1%
Health care: 11.1%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Grede II

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Troy: population 3,353

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
62.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Montgomery Community College

MOORE

Moore County
Partners in Progress
910-246-0311
moorebusiness.org



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	84.4	97.6
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	32.0	34.7
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	4.4%	4.4%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$39.5	\$45.2

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Health care: 26.4%
Hospitality: 15.4%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
FirstHealth of the Carolinas

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Pinehurst: population 16,754

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
46.5 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Sandhills Community College

NASH

Carolinas Gateway
Partnership
252-442-0114
econdev.org



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	92.3	94.4
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	43.4	39.8
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	5.4%	6.1%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$32.3	\$39.9

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Manufacturing: 18.2%
Health care: 14.1%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Hospira

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Rocky Mount (part): population 38,854

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
67.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
N.C. Wesleyan College;
Nash Community College

NEW HANOVER

Wilmington Business
Development
910-763-8414
wilmingtonbusinessdevelopment.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	193.9	227.3
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	105.3	111.3
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	3.7%	4.1%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$37.3	\$42.3

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Health care: 16.8%
Hospitality: 14.1%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
New Hanover Regional Medical Center

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Wilmington: population 121,150

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
55.5 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
UNC Wilmington;
Cape Fear Community College

NORTHAMPTON

Northampton County Economic
Development Commission
252-534-1092
northamptonnc.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	21.9	20.7
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	6.0	5.3
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	5.8%	6.3%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$26.5	\$32.1

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Government: 12.6%
Wholesale: 11.0%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Lowe's

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Gaston: population 1,124

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
92.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Halifax Community College;
Roanoke-Chowan Community College

ONslow

Jacksonville Onslow
Economic Development
910-939-7023
joednc.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	163.8	195.6
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	44.7	48.6
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	4.3%	5.0%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$36.6	\$47.5

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Retail: 23.6%
Hospitality: 15.8%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Walmart

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Jacksonville: population 75,748

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
70.5 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Coastal Carolina Community College

ORANGE

Orange County Economic
Development
919-245-2325
growinorangenc.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	127.3	142.4
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	61.5	70.7
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	3.2%	3.8%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$49.5	\$58.4

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Education: 28.6%
Health care: 25.1%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Eurosport

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Chapel Hill (part): population 56,703

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
85.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
UNC Chapel Hill;
Durham Technical Community College

PAMLICO

Pamlico County Office of
Economic Development
252-745-3081
pamlicocounty.org



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	13.0	13.3
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	3.2	3.3
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	4.1%	4.7%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$32.1	\$39.8

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Retail: 19.1%
Health care: 17.0%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Food Lion

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Bayboro: population 1,255

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
62.5 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Pamlico Community College

PASQUOTANK

Elizabeth City Pasquotank County
Economic Development Commission
252-338-0169
elizabethcitypasquotankcdc.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	40.0	40.6
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	17.8	15.9
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	4.9%	5.6%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$30.4	\$36.3

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Health care: 17.0%
Retail: 16.1%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Sentara Healthcare

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Elizabeth City (part): population 17,565

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
77.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Elizabeth City State University;
College of The Albemarle

PENDER

Wilmington
Business Development
910-763-8414
wilmingtonbusinessdevelopment.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	48.9	61.0
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	10.7	11.6
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	4.2%	4.7%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$29.3	\$33.7

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Retail: 13.8%
Health care: 12.5%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Pender Memorial Hospital

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Burgaw: population 4,081

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
68.5 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Cape Fear Community College

PERQUIMANS

Perquimans County Economic
Development Commission
252-312-5314
econdevperquimansnc.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	12.9	13.5
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	2.1	2.1
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	5.0%	5.7%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$32.2	\$37.7

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Hospitality: 16.8%
Government: 14.8%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Guest Services

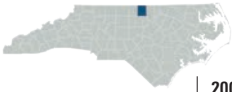
LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Hertford: population 2,116

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
57.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
College of The Albemarle

PERSON

Person County Economic
Development Commission
336-597-1752
personcountyedc.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	38.1	39.9
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	11.4	9.9
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	6.5%	4.6%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$29.2	\$35.4

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Manufacturing: 16.5%
Retail: 15.3%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
GKN Automotive Components

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Roxboro: population 8,204

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
70.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Piedmont Community College

PITT

Pitt County
Development Commission
252-902-2075
locateincarolina.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	156.0	176.4
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	72.4	75.9
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	5.0%	4.9%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$31.6	\$37.9

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Health care: 22.3%
Education: 14.6%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Vidant Health

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Greenville: population 89,226

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
69.6 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
East Carolina University;
Pitt Community College

POLK

Polk County Office
of Economic Development
828-894-2895
polknc.org/economic_development



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	19.8	21.2
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	5.2	5.0
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	3.4%	4.2%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$36.5	\$42.6

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Health care: 30.3%
Education: 10.0%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
St. Luke's Hospital

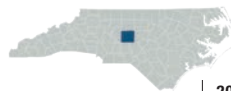
LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Tryon: population 1,772

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
52.9 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Isothermal Community College

RANDOLPH

Randolph County Economic
Development Corp.
336-626-2233
rcedc.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	137.3	144.7
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	49.4	44.8
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	4.6%	4.3%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$29.2	\$34.1

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Manufacturing: 34.1%
Health care: 9.6%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
United Furniture Industries

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Asheboro: population 25,787

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
65.3 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Randolph Community College

RICHMOND

Richmond County
Economic Development
910-997-8190
richmondnced.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	46.4	44.9
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	15.3	13.5
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	7.3%	6.1%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$25.3	\$32.8

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Manufacturing: 22.7%
Retail: 14.1%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Perdue

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Rockingham: population 9,167

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
83.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Richmond Community College

ROBESON

Robeson County Office of
Economic Development
910-739-7584
robesoncountyoed.org



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	130.4	132.0
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	42.6	38.6
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	6.1%	6.6%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$23.7	\$27.7

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Health care: 18.9%
Manufacturing: 16.6%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Mountaire Farms

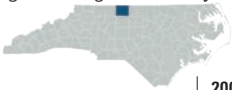
LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Lumberton: population 21,144

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
77.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
UNC Pembroke;
Robeson Community College

ROCKINGHAM

Rockingham County Center for
Economic Development, Small
Business & Tourism
336-342-8138
gorockinghamcountync.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	92.4	91.8
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	29.5	25.6
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	6.0%	5.2%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$29.0	\$34.4

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Manufacturing: 21.5%
Retail: 15.0%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Walmart

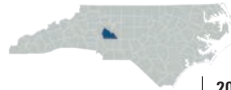
LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Eden: population 15,047

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
69.6 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Rockingham Community College

ROWAN

Rowan EDC
704-637-5526
rowanedc.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	134.4	141.9
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	47.8	47.8
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	5.9%	4.6%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$29.6	\$35.3

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Health care: 17.1%
Manufacturing: 14.8%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Food Lion

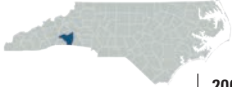
LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Salisbury: population 34,463

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
66.3 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Catawba College; Livingstone College;
Rowan-Cabarrus Community College

RUTHERFORD

Rutherford County
Economic Development
828-287-6200
rutherfordncedc.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	65.5	67.8
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	22.8	18.0
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	6.4%	6.1%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$25.4	\$30.0

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Manufacturing: 16.0%
Health care: 14.6%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Rutherford Regional Health System

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Forest City: population 7,449

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
60.7 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Isothermal Community College

SAMPSON

Sampson County Economic
Development Commission
910-592-8921
sampsonedc.org



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	62.5	63.1
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	20.0	18.3
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	3.9%	4.8%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$29.1	\$36.6

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Manufacturing: 14.9%
Agriculture: 13.2%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Smithfield Foods

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Clinton: population 8,471

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
82.5 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Sampson Community College

SCOTLAND

Scotland County Economic
Development Corp.
910-266-4326
scotlandcountyedc.org



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	36.3	35.7
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	14.4	11.7
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	9.7%	7.9%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$25.9	\$31.0

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Manufacturing: 17.8%
Health care: 17.2%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Scotland Health Care System

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Laurinburg: population 15,613

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
\$1 per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
St. Andrews University;
Richmond Community College

STANLY

Stanly County Economic
Development Commission
704-986-3682
stanlyedc.org



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	59.2	62.4
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	20.0	19.2
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	4.7%	4.2%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$28.8	\$36.1

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Manufacturing: 17.2%
Retail: 14.9%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Atrium Health

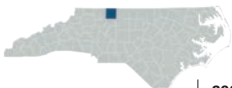
LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Albemarle: population 16,109

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
67.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Pfeiffer University;
Stanly Community College

STOKES

Stokes County Economic
Development Commission
336-593-2496
stokesedc.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	46.4	46.7
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	7.3	7.4
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	4.3%	4.3%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$27.4	\$33.4

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Retail: 15.5%
Health care: 13.0%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Wieland Copper Products

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
King (part): population 6,235

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
66.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Forsyth Technical
Community College

SURRY

Surry County Economic
Development Partnership Inc.
336-401-9900
surryedp.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	72.5	72.8
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	31.5	28.5
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	5.2%	4.2%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$29.2	\$35.6

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Retail: 14.8%
Health care: 13.7%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Pike

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Mount Airy: population 10,284

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
58.2 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Surry Community College

SWAIN

Swain County Economic
Development Commission
828-736-1303; swaincountync.gov/
economic-development.html



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	13.8	15.0
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	7.9	7.9
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	6.0%	4.9%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$25.3	\$33.1

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Entertainment: 38.3%
Government: 21.8%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Bryson City: population 1,521

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
36.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Southwestern Community College

TRANSYLVANIA

Transylvania Economic Alliance
828-393-4130
transylvaniaalliance.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	32.0	34.5
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	9.4	9.0
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	3.6%	4.3%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$31.3	\$37.2

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Health care: 16.6%
Retail: 15.1%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Brevard College

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Brevard: population 8,045

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
51.1 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Brevard College;
Blue Ridge Community College

TYRRELL

Tyrrell County
Economic Development
252-796-1371
tyrellcounty.org



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	4.4	4.1
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	1.1	1.2
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	5.5%	7.9%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$22.8	\$29.4

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Government: 23.7%
Manufacturing: 12.6%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Whitecap Linen

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Columbia: population 845

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
84.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Beaufort County Community College

UNION

Monroe-Union County
Economic Development
704-282-5780
developunion.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	183.0	228.2
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	58.4	63.1
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	4.0%	3.9%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$37.3	\$46.2

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Manufacturing: 19.3%
Retail: 12.3%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Tyson Farms

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Indian Trail: population 38,795

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
73.1 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Wingate University;
South Piedmont Community College

VANCE

Henderson-Vance County Economic
Development Commission
252-492-2094
vancecountyedc.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	44.8	44.9
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	16.5	14.9
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	6.5%	6.2%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$27.8	\$32.6

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Health care: 14.9%
Retail: 14.6%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Walmart

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Henderson: population 15,044

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
89.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Vance-Granville Community College

WAKE

Wake County Economic
Development
919-664-7000
raleigh-wake.org



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	823.6	1,048.8
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	449.6	543.5
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	3.4%	3.8%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$46.0	\$54.1

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Retail: 11.6%
Health care: 10.8%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
WakeMed Health & Hospitals

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Raleigh (part): population 456,260

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
65.4 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Meredith College; William Peace
University; St. Augustine's University;
Shaw University; N.C. State University;
Wake Technical Community College

WARREN

Warren County Economic
Development Commission
252-257-3114
warrencountync.org



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	20.6	20.1
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	3.6	3.2
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	6.1%	6.8%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$21.5	\$29.2

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Government: 22.5%
Education: 15.9%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Glen Raven

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Norlina: population 1,083

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
79.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Vance-Granville Community College

WASHINGTON

Washington County
Economic Development
252-793-5823
washconc.org



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	13.3	12.3
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	3.5	3.4
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	6.3%	6.8%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$28.4	\$33.9

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Manufacturing: 22.3%
Health care: 15.2%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Domtar Paper

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Plymouth: population 3,600

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
85.5 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Beaufort County Community College;
Martin Community College

WATAUGA

Watauga County Office of
Economic Development
828-264-3082
wataugaedc.org



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	48.2	56.2
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	22.8	23.2
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	3.2%	4.0%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$29.5	\$34.1

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Hospitality: 19.3%
Education: 18.4%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Samaritan's Purse

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Boone: population 19,458

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
35.3 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Appalachian State University;
Caldwell Community College and
Technical Institute

WAYNE

Wayne County
Development Alliance Inc.
919-731-7700
waynealliance.org



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	118.8	124.9
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	45.7	42.2
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	4.5%	5.1%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$30.3	\$37.0

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Health care: 19.3%
Retail: 14.6%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Wayne Memorial Hospital

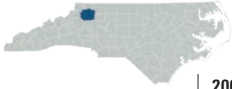
LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Goldsboro: population 33,685

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
66.4 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Mount Olive College;
Wayne Community College

WILKES

Wilkes Economic Development Corp.
336-838-1501
wilkesedc.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	68.2	70.5
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	23.3	22.4
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	5.3%	4.3%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$28.2	\$33.5

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Manufacturing: 21.9%
Retail: 12.9%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Tyson Farms

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
North Wilkesboro: population 4,397

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
67.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Wilkes Community College

WILSON

Wilson Economic Development Council
252-237-1115
wilsonedc.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	78.3	82.0
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	40.2	36.6
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	6.1%	7.2%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$32.0	\$38.3

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Manufacturing: 19.7%
Health care: 13.8%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
BB&T

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Wilson: population 49,170

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
73.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Barton College;
Wilson Technical Community College

YADKIN

Yadkin County Economic Development Council
336-679-2200
yadkinedc.com



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	37.8	37.7
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	9.5	9.9
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	4.2%	4.0%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$28.3	\$34.3

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Manufacturing: 28.1%
Transportation: 10.0%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Unifi

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Yadkinville: population 3,004

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
66.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Surry Community College

YANCEY

Yancey County Economic Development Commission
828-682-7722
yanceyedc.org



	2007	2017*
POPULATION (000S)	17.9	18.2
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	4.1	3.7
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	5.6%	4.5%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$26.2	\$32.3

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Retail: 16.0%
Health care: 13.5%

LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER
Ingles Markets

LARGEST CITY/TOWN
Burnsville: population 1,723

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX
60.0 cents per \$100 value

HIGHER EDUCATION
Mayland Community College

SOURCES

Population, counties, largest city/town, employment and unemployment rate: N.C. Office of State Budget and Management. Hyde, Camden and Currituck counties have no incorporated towns. Employment share by industry sector and largest private-sector employer: N.C. Department of Commerce Labor and Economic Analysis Division, as of fourth quarter of 2017. 2018-19 property-tax rate: North Carolina Association of County Commissioners and N.C. Department of Revenue. Per capita income: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. Community colleges are listed for every county in their designated service area.

*Per capita income is for 2016, the most recent year available.



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