

Program Focus Area

Existing Business Activity — Business Recruitment — Real Estate Development

Project Averages

Active and Missed

60 Missed Project Over 12 Months



86

JOBS
272



34

THOUSAND SQUARE FEET
188K



12

ACRES
53



\$21

MILLION INVESTMENT
\$140M

Project Activity Stats



Inquiries



Responded



Missed



Inactive



Announced

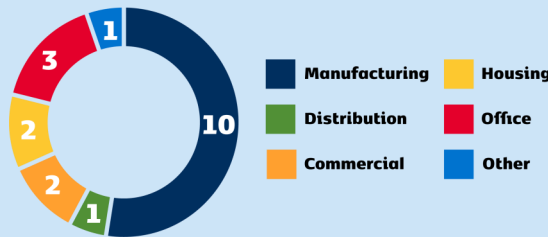


Site Visits

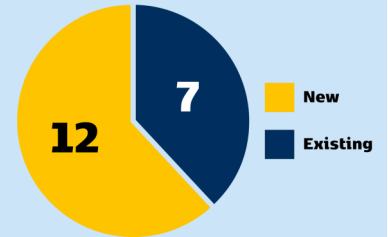
Active Projects

19

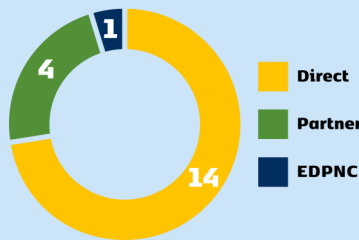
Project Industries



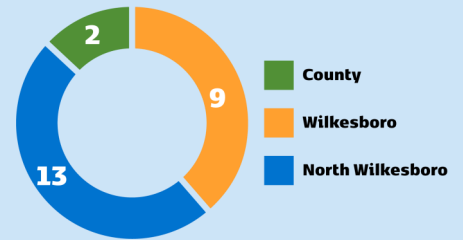
Projects by Type



Projects by Source



Projects by Location



Existing Business

Current and YTD Total
Activity since July 1, 2023



6

UNIQUE VISITS
31



5

FOLLOW UP VISITS
8

Program Stats



11

PARTNER MEETINGS
39



7

REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT
23



39

SOLUTIONS PROVIDED
110

August Unemployment Rate

3.9% In-line with 3.9% in July.

Regional July Rate is 3.4%

State July Rate is 3.3%

To learn more, visit the link below or scan the QR Code.

[High Country WDB Overview | LEAD Analytics \(nccommerce.com\)](#)

T&J Produce Expanding in North Wilkesboro

T&J Produce Inc., located at 1605 Industrial Drive in Wilkesboro, North Carolina, specializes in shipping and selling fresh, quality wholesale produce from their 20,000-square-foot warehouse facility and offices. As a family-owned operation with over 65 years of combined experience in the produce industry, John, Trevor, and Jonah Critcher lead a company founded on hard work, values, ethics, and family. The company has 30 employees who work with local farmers across fourteen U.S. states to deliver produce such as cabbage, corn, potatoes, watermelon, pumpkins, and more to major grocery chains.



On September 8, 2023, T&J Produce acquired 1208 Industrial Park Rd. in Wilkesboro, offering their operations an additional 43,000 square-foot facility. The building has been the home of a sewing operation managed by Shamron Manufacturing. Shamron decided to phase out its sewing operations, moving to a contract-only relationship for supplying garments to their clientele. Wilkes EDC's relationship with Shamron Manufacturing and awareness of T&J Produce's need to expand led to introductions and assistance throughout the change of ownership process. Planning allowed Shamron to ensure their 15 employees were connected to local sewing opportunities.



Jonah Critcher stated we are so happy we found a place to stay in Wilkesboro; the Lord has blessed us so much. We have been here a few years and love the area and location. It is a great place to be, and the people and town have been very good to us. Lee Ann especially has helped us and has been wonderful. When we started outgrowing the previous warehouse that we used, LeeAnn went straight to work and helped us so we could stay in Wilkesboro. We have just put in a new potato repacking machine and hopefully will be putting in some coolers. We are very excited to see what is next and so thankful for what the Lord has done for our family.

LeeAnn Nixon, Wilkes EDC's president, stated, "We are grateful for our relationships with T&J Produce and the Critcher family, as well as Shamron Manufacturing's owner Ronnye Shamam and her local leadership team. This allowed us the opportunity to assist in a transition that has met the needs of both companies and the future of their employees. We congratulate T&J Produce on their past and future success where their new larger location will allow for continued growth."

To learn more about T&J Produce, visit [T&J Produce \(tandjproduce.com\)](https://tandjproduce.com) or scan the QR code.

Wilkes EDC Entrepreneur Grant Program is OPEN

The Wilkes EDC Entrepreneur Grant Program is open until October 31st, 5:00 PM. Visit our website today to learn more about the program, see past winners, and get started on application materials!

We encourage applicants to meet with the Small Business Center (SBC) at Wilkes Community College for help with Business Plans, Financial Summaries, and more! Applicants who go through the SBC are one of the stronger applicants based on the judge's review.



Don't wait! Get started today: [Wilkes EDC Entrepreneurial Grant Program | Wilkes EDC](#)



EDPNC Regional Tour

Wilkes EDC enjoyed hosting EDPNC's Business Recruitment and Marketing Team along with 11 counties' ED from the Northwest Prosperity Zone at the North Wilkesboro Speedway. EDPNC elects an organization annually to host this event for their regional tours. We were honored to host this year and enjoyed sharing the speedway experience with our guests.

The event was made possible thanks to sponsors: Wilkie Construction Company, Carolina West Wireless, and City Florists. Dooley's Grill and Tavern provided lunch, and the visit was concluded with dinner at 6th & Main. Members learned about NC Carolina Core and North Wilkesboro Speedway's success, and we were delighted to have them walk away with gifts from our sponsors, venue, and snacks from Brushy Mountain Granola Company. We enjoyed giving our guests the Wilkes Warm Welcome, and we look forward to next year's NC Regional Tour!



Outdoor Economy Conference

Wilkes EDC team attended the three-day Outdoor Economy Conference in Cherokee, NC, as exhibitors to represent Wilkes County's outdoor economy. The team engaged with attendees from all over the United States, discussing our outdoor businesses, amenities, opportunities, and events to potentially draw in more businesses and visitors.

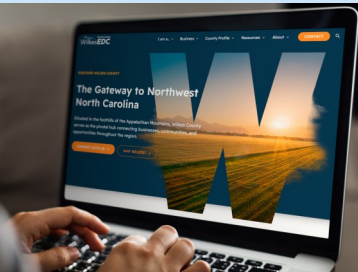
The conference drew in more than 650 members and included several guest speakers and workshops for participants. The programs were based on the conference's theme, "Connecting the Ecosystem." The team had the opportunity to join the Breakout Sessions, which covered various topics such as Building Vibrant Outdoor Recreation Communities, Advancing Effective and Inclusive Coalitions, Leveling Up Outdoor Businesses, and Envisioning Outdoors 2.0.

We received donations from Cook's Sports, Raffaldini Vineyards & Winery, Wilkesboro TDA, and the Town of North Wilkesboro for SWAG giveaways at our booth. Pressin' Buttons made our Great State of Wilkes buttons, which helped us promote and talk about the Great State of Wilkes Action Plan. We gave away Brushy Mountain Granola packets and shared more about our local businesses in a rotating slideshow. Greene Mountain Outdoors provided a medical pack and cooler as a conversational piece and to encourage connections. Our Spin-to-Win was an excellent tool to help us engage with visitors and an opportunity for them to receive SWAGs. For our visitors to spin, they were required to drop a business card or give a form of contact. Giving us this information also put them in a drawing for MerleFest tickets, a horseback riding session with Leatherwood Mountain Resort, and tickets to the Walker Center with their choice of event. We received over 100 business cards and conversations ranged well beyond that number.

We are thankful to the outdoor businesses of Wilkes and our partners who were also in attendance for helping us create a successful representation of Wilkes County at this conference. We look forward to participating in future events such as this one.



Wilkes EDC's New Website



Wilkes EDC's new website is live! New look, improved ease of use, and refined access to our content.

The EDC team is thankful for Katie Logan's services with Logan Provisions. We decided to work with Katie for her passion for the Wilkes community, ability to organize, and articulate the content from our site. We enjoyed working with her and felt confident in her ability to keep the website's construction moving forward! Contact Logan Provisions today for web design, social media, and graphic design, and more!

Click the link or scan the QR code to visit our website. [Wilkes EDC | Start Your Adventure In Wilkes County](#)



Carolina in the Fall

Organizers and attendees noted the seventh Carolina in the Fall Music and Food Festival in the Carolina West Community Commons in downtown Wilkesboro on Friday and Saturday was a success. Wilkes EDC was a proud sponsor of this event and was delighted to learn attendance reached around 1,500, and several food vendors sold out on the second day of the festival, according to Dale Isom, Festival Organizer and Chairman of Wilkes EDC.

The Kruger Brothers, hosts of the festival, performed 45-minute sets on Friday and Saturday nights, ending with jam sessions featuring festival artists. Presley Barker and Alex Key joined the Kruger Brothers and Balsam Range on Friday, both from Wilkes. Saturday's lineup included the Gibson Brothers, Woody Platt & Shannon Whitworth, Shay Martin Lovette, His & Hers (Caleb and Sara Davis of Mocksville), Thurler-Mosimann Project, and Hank, Pattie & the Current.



Wilkes EDC values this event for its ability to draw in visitors and citizens to experience the culture of Wilkes and all its amenities. Learn more about the event by clicking the link or scanning the QR Code. [7th Carolina in the Fall is a big hit | News | journalpatriot.com](#)

North Wilkesboro Speedway Activities

Brushy Mountain Powersports 150 was held on Sept. 30 at the North Wilkesboro Speedway. In a historic night of doubleheader modified racing, Matt Hirschman excelled en route to victory in the Brushy Mountain Powersports 150, the first-ever NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour race at North Wilkesboro Speedway. Race fans have the NASCAR All-Star Race weekend to look forward to again, May 17-19, 2024. Tickets are on sale now. [NASCAR All-Star Race | Events | North Wilkesboro Speedway](#)



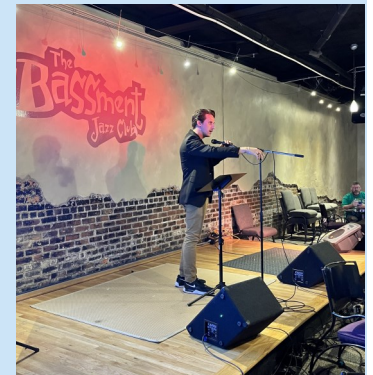
Leading up to the All-Star Race, the STEAM Expo will take place at the track on Mar. 27, 2024, hosted by Charlotte Motor Speedway and Wilkes County Schools. This event allows Wilkes County Middle School students to engage with companies and organizations highlighting the Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (STEAM) aspects of their goods and services. To be a partner at this event, click here: [2024 North Wilkesboro STEAM Expo \(google.com\)](#)

The Masthead's Idea Expo Concludes with a Pitch Competition.

Participants in the 6-week series, which included events, presentations, including Wilkes EDC staff, were able to test the feasibility of their business ideas. Wilkes EDC was happy to sponsor The Masthead's Idea Expo because it fits with the organization's objective to help local businesses and entrepreneurs.

At the end of the program, there was a Pitch Competition at Talia's Basement Club. Participants pitched their ideas to a group of judges in the style of an elevator pitch. The judges were Lori Brintle-Jarvis from the Small Business Center, Chris Beckwith Taylor from GREENStick Marketing, Wilkes EDC's marketing manager Francisco Martinez, Karen Barnes from Agile City, and Greg Brady from Anchor Coffee. The people who ran the Pitch Competition were:

- Carl Bjerke, who has a software system that makes it easier for people in certain fields to meet their reporting obligations;
- Tiger Posey, a place for kids to learn through play and activities outside;
- Luke Jarvis, a food truck by Wilkes Youth Life Development;
- Caleb Drown, making and selling non-alcoholic beer;
- Andy Johnson, a drone service for studying farms;
- Michael Miller, dealership/ag center that focuses on electric vehicles;
- Kris Hurley, building one-of-a-kind private homes;
- Katie Jones, who drops-ships guests' toiletries and beauty items while they travel.



The winners were chosen by judges based on the strength of the idea, the endurance, the business model, and feasibility. \$1,000 was given to Drown, and \$500 was given to Jones. Jones will also get free help from GREENStick with promotion and her website. Miller will get help from Chappell Business Strategies for free. Jarvis will be able to print for free at the Print Shop. And Karen Barnes gave each participant a free business coaching lesson.

Wilkes EDC wants to thank Doren Trip, Community Manager at The Masthead, for putting together a great program and event. We also want to praise everyone in the program for how hard they worked and how well they delivered their business pitches. We wish them much success in their business endeavors!



To find out more about the event and schedule, click on the link or scan the QR Code. [IDEA EXPO 2023 - The Masthead](#)

Wilkes Chamber Leadership Group

Wilkes Chamber of Commerce's Leadership Wilkes is a nine-session enhancement program designed to develop a group of informed, committed, and qualified individuals capable of providing visionary and progressive leadership for Wilkes County. The program runs from August through mid-November. Members will walk away from this program with an in-depth study of management styles, personalities, and involved activities to illustrate positive leadership opportunities.

Wilkes EDC was one of the stops for the group in early September. Our presentation taught the group about the organization and our mission. The group also learned about local and regional reports, our major employers, focus areas, and more! We were grateful to be a part of this group's activity and look forward to seeing leaders succeed in Wilkes!



Stay up-to-date with activities at the Wilkes Chamber of Commerce's Facebook page. Click the link or scan the QR Code to visit today! [Lead - Wilkes Chamber of Commerce](#)

