

# Program Focus Area

Existing Business Activity — Business Recruitment — Real Estate Development

## Project Averages

Active and Missed

58 Missed Project Over 12 Months



**34**

**JOBS**  
249



**14**

**THOUSAND SQUARE FEET**  
168K



**5**

**ACRES**  
42



**\$21**

**MILLION INVESTMENT**  
\$124M

## October Unemployment Rate

**3.7%** ↑ from 3.6% in September.  
Regional October Rate is 3.1%  
State October Rate is 3.4%

To learn more, visit the link below.



High Country WDB  
Overview | LEAD  
Analytics (nccommerce.com)

## Project Activity Stats

**6**

**Inquiries**

**3**

**Responded**

**3**

**Missed**

**1**

**Inactive**

**1**

**Announced**

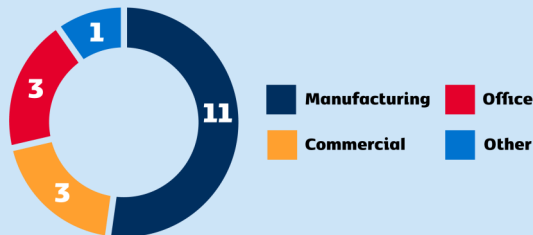
**3**

**Site Visits**

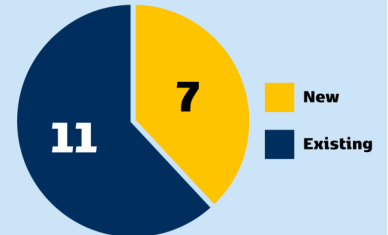
## Active Projects

**18**

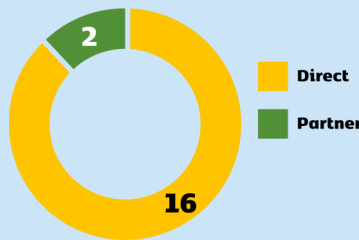
### Project Industries



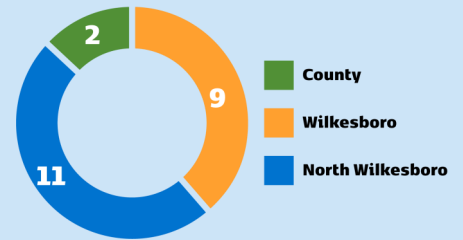
### Projects by Type



### Projects by Source



### Projects by Location



## Existing Business

Current and YTD Total  
Activity since July 1, 2023



**14**

**UNIQUE VISITS**  
48



**3**

**FOLLOW UP VISITS**  
19

## Program Stats



**12**

**PARTNER MEETINGS**  
65



**4**

**REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT**  
35



**27**

**SOLUTIONS PROVIDED**  
160

## Childcare Working Groups

Wilkes County Childcare Taskforce members held two Working Group meetings, Childcare Expansion and After School Childcare, on November 2nd at the Wilkes County Library. The task force identified partners and members of the community based on interests to participate in the Working Groups.

The group received a review of the Wilkes County Childcare Study and learned the purpose of the gathering. The meeting moved to group exercises to revisit the recommendations from the Childcare Study and discuss



The groups will meet regularly to devise plans to implement recommendations from the study to help solve the childcare challenges in Wilkes.

To learn more about Wilkes County Childcare Study, click the link or scan the QR Code.

[Wilkes County Childcare Study | Wilkes EDC](#)



## Wilkes Early College High School Tory Oak Project

The Tory Oak Project took Wilkes Early College High School students on field trips throughout Wilkes County. Students learned about the county's career and leisure opportunities through this exploration. Sixty 10th-grade students participated in this program and visited 21 businesses during their field trips.

Additionally, students created business plans & pitched sixteen Wilkes-based business ideas ranging from an escape room concept immersed in Wilkes County history themes, a vendor craft mall on U.S. 421, Wilkes County van tours, a food truck selling seasonal beverages, and a bowling alley near W. Kerr Scott Reservoir.

Wilkes Economic Development Corporation provided a sponsorship of \$1K and spoke with the students while serving as judges alongside Mick Zulpo, owner of The Block and other local businesses; Linda Cheek, Wilkes Chamber of Commerce president; Laurie Brintle-Jarvis, director of the Small Business Center at Wilkes Community College; and Doren Tripp, community manager of the Masthead.



If you or your organization is interested in getting involved or supporting next year's Tory Oak Project, please contact Olivia Walsh. See her contact information below. Also, learn more about the program by visiting the [Wilkes Journal Patriot's article](#).

[Wilkes Early College High School](#)  
[walsho@wilkes.k12.nc.us](mailto:walsho@wilkes.k12.nc.us)  
(336) 838-6247



## Conclusion of WilCoNGE

Wilkes County Next Generation of Entrepreneurs (WilCoNGE) held its last networking meeting of the year at The Masthead. The meeting started with an introduction from each member present, sharing a little about themselves and their business endeavors.

Laurie Brintle-Jarvis, Director of the Small Business Center, shared that WilCoNGE will be undergoing a rebrand with the possibility of a new website. She shared the history of WilCoNGE, and noted that the rebranding will be an opportunity to create a more inclusive tone for future meetings. Attendees had a chance to vote on names with an option to write in a potential name for the networking program. Laurie also shared the new format of the meetings, which will continue to be held at The Masthead.



The meeting concluded with a drawing for a Squarespace design day valued at \$1,000. The winner will work with a personal web designer for their website needs.

WilCoNGE will resume in January under a new name. Follow their page on Facebook to stay up-to-date on future events. [Wilkes Next Generation of Entrepreneur—Facebook Page](#)

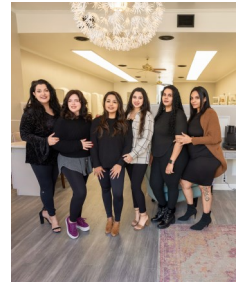


## Wilkes EDC Fall Entrepreneur Grant Program Winners

North Wilkesboro, N.C. — Ten local businesses received Entrepreneur Grants from the Wilkes Economic Development Corporation (EDC) at the EDC's Board Meeting on Friday, December 8, 2023. This grant program is held twice a year thanks to EDC's private/public investors and the sponsorship of the [Small Business Center](#) (SBC) at Wilkes Community College. Twenty local businesses of various types applied for this year's program, representing several industry sectors: services, hospitality, agriculture, legal, and childcare.

Submissions were judged based on the potential funding impact on the business and the sustainability of each respective recipient. Applicants submitted a video pitch in addition to their business plans and financial summaries to give the judges insight into their proposed use of funds. The grant amount totaled \$14,000, distributed between the ten winners.

Bliss Hair & Nail Salon is owned and operated by Valery Guevara. They have been operating for seven years, where this year, they relocated to their newly owned building at 314 10th Street, North Wilkesboro. Their services include personal care for hair, nails, makeup, and esthetics. Valery expresses that her team enjoys making their clients feel and look beautiful and improving their day by stopping by the salon. Bliss Hair & Nail Salon received \$2,200 for a double-sided station and two chairs, enabling the business to grow their team. To learn more or to book an appointment, visit their [Facebook](#) page today!



Blue Mountain Flowers, operated by Mikayla and Steven Calloway, is a new business located in Ronda that locally grows and cuts flowers for floral experiences offered to customers, businesses, and events. They recently included a bouquet subscription service that they will continue to expand in 2024, and they plan to hold more pop-ups and floral classes. Blue Mountain Flowers received \$1,000 for ground cover and irrigation to produce the highest quality cut flowers. Learn more by visiting [BlueMtnFlowers.com](#).



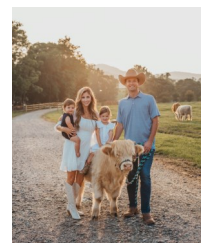
Blue Ridge Reflexology is a new business operated by Nicole Wagoner at 807 B Street, North Wilkesboro. Her service addresses a whole-body approach to wellness using micro-movement techniques to facilitate the client in relaxation and healing. Blue Ridge Reflexology received \$1,500 towards an Ion Cleanse detox system to expand their reflexology services. To learn more or to book an appointment, visit [BlueRidgeReflexology.com](#).



Buttercups Ice Cream and Beverages is a mobile premium ice cream business. Monica Bolick is the owner, and she and her family members operate the business. Their products are high quality and presented in an appealing manner that makes them ideal for special events and occasions such as community events, birthday parties, weddings, and more. Buttercups Ice Cream and Beverages received \$1,500 toward a trailer/pushcart to expand the catering side of their business. Follow their [Facebook](#) page to stay up-to-date on events and locations.

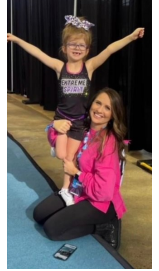


Crooked Creek Highlands is a new business owned and operated by Megan and Evan White. They specialize in Scottish Highland Cattle breeding, agri-tourism events, a venue for professional photography, and more. To enhance its customer experience, Crooked Creek Highlands will use its \$2,000 grant towards a farm store to showcase merchandise. This addition would also help organize their inventory, adding to the agri-tourism, event, and cattle-purchasing experience. To learn more or to schedule a tour, visit [CrookedCreekHighlands.com](#).





Extreme Spirit Allstarz Cheer, Dance, & Tumble, owned and operated by April Holleman, is a cheer and dance gym at 308 Cothren St, Wilkesboro. They offer classes for competitive cheerleading, competitive dance, recreational tumbling, special needs competitive cheerleading, summer camps, and more. Their business started in 2012 and has grown from 22 kids to over 140 with 21 competitive teams. They received \$1,000 dedicated to installing new flooring to help expand their facility space, increasing class availability for new participants. To learn more, visit [ESACheer.com](https://ESACheer.com).



Growing Faith Farms & Retreat is a new business in Moravian Falls, NC, founded and operated by Christina and Joseph Angott. They offer cut flowers, herbs, tea, and seeding in the high country of North Carolina. On-farm experience includes you-picks, small events, and on-site farm stays in glamping tents. They received \$1,000 towards informational signage to aid in the arrival of visitors. To learn more or to book your getaway, visit [GrowingFaithFarms.com](https://GrowingFaithFarms.com).



High Country Estate Law is a new business operating at The Masthead. Victoria A. Brooks owns this firm and helps individuals and families plan their future, protect their loved ones, and guide them through estate and probate administration processes. They received \$800 for a printer to help manage client's paperwork needs. To learn more or to book a

consultation, visit [HighCountryEstateLaw.com](https://HighCountryEstateLaw.com).



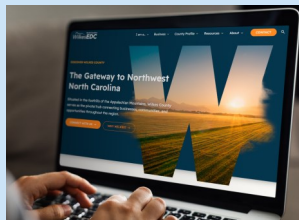
Hometown Collaborative is owned and operated by Erica Marsh and Holly Piotrowski. The business is located at 903 Main St, North Wilkesboro, and has been operating for the last three years. They showcase local artisans' craftsmanship and offer locally crafted items, including jewelry, an assortment of teas and accessories, unique gifts, budget-friendly women's clothing, and more. They received \$1,000 towards displays to allow more vendor showcases in their store. They will continue working with the Small Business Center for a marketing grant toward filming a commercial with Jared C. Shumate Media & Marketing. Learn more about their shop by visiting [HomeTownCollaborative.com](https://HomeTownCollaborative.com).



MeMe's Little Learners Family Childcare is a new in-home childcare provider. Care is provided to preschool children through a nurturing and safe environment. Melissa Allen, the owner, has completed her associate degree in early childhood development from Wilkes Community College, training through Wilkes Partnership for Children, and several required certifications to become licensed. She is working on her last semester of classes to complete her bachelor's in early childhood education, which is a necessary step to becoming a licensed childcare provider. Being licensed will give Melissa more childcare spots for MeMe's Little Learners Family Childcare. Melissa received \$2,000 for learning materials for her childcare space. To learn more, email Melissa at [AllenMissy333@hotmail.com](mailto:AllenMissy333@hotmail.com).



Wilkes EDC President LeeAnn Nixon thanked this cycle's judges. "Their commitment to the program is greatly appreciated. Local business advocates from North Wilkesboro and Wilkesboro, as well as regional organizations that provide support for entrepreneurial endeavors, are members of the judging panel. Applicants frequently can find referrals and guidance that they were unaware of, thanks to their experience and information." The Fall 2023 judges were Thomas Salley of Wilkesboro Tourism Development, Taylor Gann of The Town of North Wilkesboro, Lesa Hensley of First Community Bank, Doren Tripp of The Masthead, and David Henson of Small Business Technology Development Center. We give a special thanks to Laurie Brintle-Jarvis of the Wilkes Community College Small Business Center for continuing to help applicants with their Business Plans and Financial Summaries during the grant cycle, and we thank the SBC for being a sponsor of the Fall 2023 Entrepreneur Grant Program.



Visit [WilkesEDC.com](https://WilkesEDC.com) to read the full Press Release for our Fall 2023 Grant Program.

