

## Program Focus Area

Existing Business Activity — Business Recruitment — Real Estate Development

### Project Averages

Active and Missed

58 Missed Project Over 12 Months



**38**

**JOBS**  
260



**12**

**THOUSAND**  
**SQUARE FEET**  
193K



**5**

**ACRES**  
48



**21**

**MILLION**  
**INVESTMENT**  
\$129M

### November Unemployment Rate

**3.6%** ↓ from 3.7% in October.  
Regional October Rate is 3.1%  
State October Rate is 3.5%

To learn more, visit the link below.



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

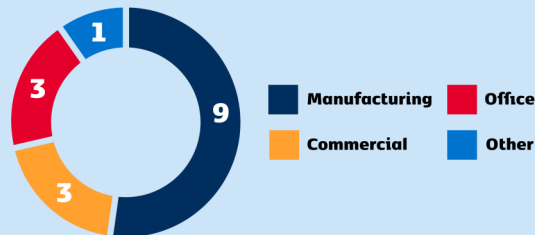
### Project Activity Stats



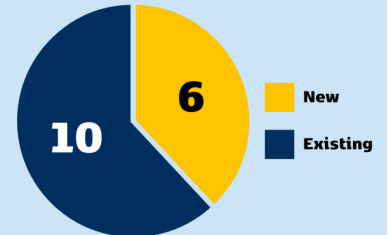
### Active Projects

**16**

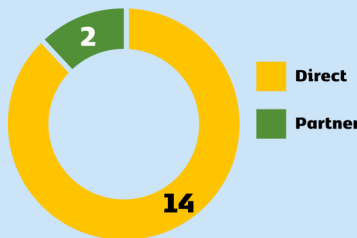
#### Project Industries



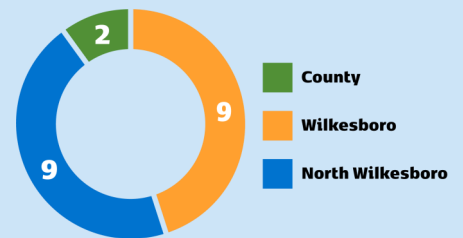
#### Projects by Type



#### Projects by Source



#### Projects by Location



### Existing Business

Current and YTD Total  
Activity since July 1, 2023



**2**

**UNIQUE VISITS**  
50



**3**

**FOLLOW UP VISITS**  
22

### Program Stats



**17**

**PARTNER**  
**MEETINGS**  
82



**5**

**REAL ESTATE**  
**DEVELOPMENT**  
40



**26**

**SOLUTIONS**  
**PROVIDED**  
186

## Wilkes EDC & Wilkesboro TDA Sponsors Young Professional Meetup

The first regional Young Professional Meetup was held in October 2023, with neighboring counties participating in this 40-and-under regional networking event. Wilkes EDC's marketing manager, Francisco Martinez, and Wilkes TDA director, Thomas Salley, were among the members of this first meeting, which drew out more than 50 people.

The first meeting examined the group's branding, marketing opportunities, and future activities. By being active members of this meetup, marketing opportunities will be available for Wilkes County among regional partners; awareness of regional amenities, assets, activities taking place per county, and relationships with neighboring counties will be strengthened.

Wilkes EDC and Wilkesboro TDA sponsored the following event in December. Wilkes community members were encouraged to join this event, resulting in eight business and organization leaders from Wilkes present and networking. Goers shared positive feedback on the gathering and stated they made valuable connections with others from surrounding counties.

The next Young Professional Meetup will be in Mount Airy, NC. Plans are in place to host a meetup in Wilkes County during the first quarter of 2024.

If you interested in joining the next Young Professional Meetup—40 and under, please contact Francisco Martinez at [info@WilkesEDC.com](mailto:info@WilkesEDC.com).



## Speedway Children's Charity Support Counties' Non-Profit

Wilkes EDC enjoyed celebrating a year of fundraising at the North Wilkesboro Speedway with local partners, organizations, and community advocates. In the Speedway Children's Charities first full year at the North Wilkesboro Speedway, the organization distributed \$215,000 to 14 area charities that directly impact the lives of Wilkes children in need.

For 2023, North Wilkesboro ranked fifth amongst all 11 SCC chapters nationwide in terms of dollars granted, largely thanks to the generous donations of supporters and race fans.

The following 14 area nonprofits received life-impacting grants to change and shape the lives of Wilkes County area children in need:

- Blue Ridge Opportunity Commission (BROC)
- Catherine H. Barber Memorial Homeless Shelter
- Ebenezer Christian Children's Home
- Anchor Ridge
- Wilkes Ministry of Hope
- The Child Abuse Prevention Team of Wilkes County (Our House)
- Unified City Church-Justice Project
- Wilkes Youth Life Development
- North Wilkesboro Kiwanis Club
- Safe Kids Wilkes County
- Wilkes Community College Foundation
- Wilkes Community Partnership for Children
- Wilkes Library
- YMCA Camp Harrison



To learn more, click the link to read the full story or scan the QR code. [Momentous Day of Giving for Speedway Children's Charities North Wilkesboro](#)



## Select Steel Expands in North Wilkesboro

**North Wilkesboro, NC** – Select Steel Buildings (SSB) has operated since 2017 at 3648 US-421, Wilkesboro. Israel Alonso is the founder and owner of this company. SSB offers complete manufacturing of portable steel buildings, including delivery and installations.

Alonso states that customer service and the quality of products are what set them apart from their competitors. As part of their customer experience, they maintain inventory on their lot and website. Their website showcases available buildings, including customizable features to add to user experience.

SSB currently employs 26 full-time members, with three being recent additions to the team. SSB services North Carolina, Southern Virginia, and Northern South Carolina. Their target market includes residential and commercial clients.

Wilkes EDC was privileged to connect Alonso to their new location at 2715 Statesville Road, North Wilkesboro. They are updating the offices and adding five more portable office spaces. Their 2024 plans consist of diversifying their product line, which include portable greenhouses, manufacturing garages, and storage sheds.

Alonso said, "It is a blessing to expand and remain in Wilkes. North Carolina will always be our home division. We plan to continue growing and bringing more jobs to the area. Our next step is to have a steel mill within 24 months so we may produce our tubing on site."

Wilkes EDC President LeeAnn Nixon shares, "We are grateful Israel Alonso and his team have chosen to remain in Wilkes and take their business to the next level. We look forward to being a resource and celebrating their growth over the years ahead."

Click the link or scan the QR Code to view the full Press Release: [Select Steel Buildings Expands In North Wilkesboro | Wilkes EDC](#)



## Hydrate Heroes Announces Opening of New Distribution Center

Hydrate Heroes the First Plant Based Certified Beverage with elderberry, zinc, vitamin D and no harmful stimulants has announced their expansion, with the launch of a 20,000 square foot distribution center warehouse.

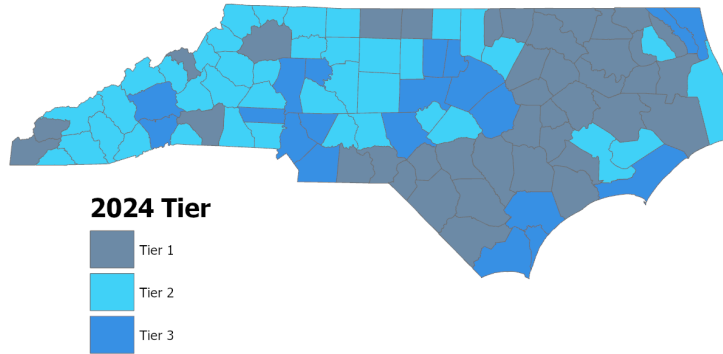
Local businessmen partner to promote Health and Wellness for North Wilkesboro and communities throughout. Our local heroes Gary Foster, Randy Whittington, and Jamie Caudill are committed to improving our community's health physically and financially by bringing their beverage distribution center locally.

*"Hydrate Heroes is grateful for this opportunity to bring more jobs and opportunities to our community as we have already committed to the equipment purchase to enhance our operations which will elevate our business while we elevate the lives around Wilkesboro County", -Executive Team Hydrate Heroes*

*"We are excited to be part of the Wilkesboro community making a positive impact with our Health and Wellness brands and also helping the financial health of this great community", said Michael Gardner, CEO/ Founder at Hydrate Heroes.*

Click the link or scan the QR Code to view the full Press Release: [Hydrate Heroes Announces Opening Of New Distribution Center | Wilkes EDC](#)





## Wilkes County Remains Tier 1 Status for 2024

Tiers are assigned to all 100 Counties to determine various state funding opportunities that assist with economic development. For 2024, Wilkes will remain a Tier 1 ‘Most Distressed.’ Being a Tier 1 gives us the ability to request the most assistance in relation to state incentives and grants. **Since we remained a Tier 1 for 2024, the question is, did we improve or decline?** We continue to improve our rank in the Property Tax Base Per Capita, Population Growth, and Median Household Income. Our Unemployment rate shows some progress, however, our ranking declined compared to other counties. Although we improved in most areas, we still have a lot of work to do in relation to the North Carolina averages. Our overall Economic Distress rank improved from #22 to #26 out of 100 counties, where one is the ‘most distressed’ and 100 is the ‘least distressed.’

### Adjusted Property Tax Base Per Capita:

*Tax base increased 4.75% allowing more infrastructure and public service revenue. Ranking went up from 28 to 30.*

### Population Growth:

*% of population loss reduced. Ranking went up from 27 to 29.*

### Median Household Income:

*Income increased by 2.7%. Ranking went up from 29 to 31.*

### Unemployment Rate, 12 Month Avg:

*Unemployment percentage improved. Ranking declined from 47 to 41.*

|   |                    |                    |                    |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b>2023 - 2024</b>                      | <b>2022 - 2023</b> | <b>2021 - 2022</b> | <b>2020 - 2021</b> |
| \$96,295 (#30)<br>*NC average \$136,274 | \$91,928 (#28)     | \$90,091 (#35)     | \$83,712 (#35)     |
| <b>2019 - 2022</b>                      | <b>2018 - 2021</b> | <b>2017 - 2020</b> | <b>2016 - 2019</b> |
| -0.75% (#29)<br>*NC average 3.20%       | -0.85% (#27)       | -1.56% (#28)       | 0.29% (#30)        |
| <b>2020 - 2021</b>                      | <b>2019 - 2020</b> | <b>2018 - 2019</b> | <b>2017 - 2018</b> |
| \$47,891 (#31)<br>*NC average \$61,997  | \$46,830 (#29)     | \$45,250 (#27)     | \$44,080 (#40)     |
| <b>2022 - 2023</b>                      | <b>2021 - 2022</b> | <b>2020 - 2021</b> | <b>2019 - 2020</b> |
| 3.68% (#41)<br>*NC average is 3.48%     | 3.70% (#47)        | 4.90% (#56)        | 5.99% (#64)        |

Visit the NC Commerce website to learn more about the County Distress Rankings (Tiers)  
[County Distress Rankings \(Tiers\) | NC Commerce](#)



North Carolina  
**WilkesEDC**  
**START YOUR *adventure* HERE.**

Please plan to join us for breakfast.

**Wilkes County's Economy:**  
**Past-Present-Future**

An Economic Overview & Strategy for our Future with  
Ted Abernathy and Wilkes EDC

**Tuesday, February 6th at the  
Walker Center from 8:00 - 9:30 AM**

**RSVP Today**

Email Francisco Martinez at [info@WilkesEDC.com](mailto:info@WilkesEDC.com) to RSVP  
or call (336) 838-1501 ext. 3



To RSVP online, scan the QR Code.



**Guest Speaker:**  
**Ted Abernathy**

Ted Abernathy is a North Carolina native and resident who is the Managing Partner at Economic Leadership, based in Shallotte, NC. For the last nine years, the team has worked on 146 projects in more than twenty states and internationally.

Ted is the principal author of close to 100 reports on future trends, economic and workforce development, technology, and leadership, and he speaks on the economy almost weekly.

In his 42-year career, Ted has led city, county, and regional economic development organizations and an economic policy think tank. Born in Dallas, North Carolina, Ted received his bachelor's degree from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and his master's from Johns Hopkins University. He is an Economic Development Institute graduate and an Eisenhower Fellow for Global Economics.

# VISION FOR NORTH WILKESBORO COMMUNITY SURVEY

Want to share your vision for the Town of North Wilkesboro? Here is your opportunity! Scan the QR code and help us create North Wilkesboro's future!



**HAVE QUESTIONS?  
CONTACT US AT  
336-667-7129**

**[townclerk@northwilkesboronc.gov](mailto:townclerk@northwilkesboronc.gov)**

