

LEAP Forward

Local Expansion & Attraction Program

Together We Can Grow!

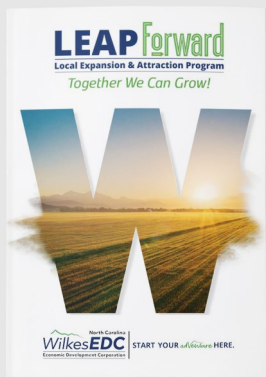
On Tuesday, February 6th, Wilkes EDC held an Economic Overview forum at Wilkes Community College's Walker Center. Wilkes EDC president LeeAnn Nixon welcomed guests and introduced Ted Abernathy, Economic Leadership's Managing Partner, as the program guest speaker. Ted is the principal author of close to 100 reports on future trends, economic and workforce development, technology, and leadership, and he speaks on the economy almost weekly.

Ted gave an economic overview of the U.S., North Carolina, and [Wilkes County's Past, Present, and Future](#) economic trends and forecast. The presentation addressed changes in population, consumer spending, income, industry clusters, jobs, and workforce.

LeeAnn shared a presentation of the accomplishments and impact of the past LEAP Campaign (Local Expansion & Attraction Program), which is the private funding source of our non-profit's public/private partnership. She followed by announcing Wilkes EDC's 5-year LEAP Forward campaign: *Together We Can Grow!*

LEAP was broken down to show its accomplishments during the last 13 years. The funding went toward Direct Company assistance, Real Estate Development, and Marketing of Wilkes. The metrics indicated that the LEAP funding exceeded the expectations of the last campaign projections.

The goals of the newly announced campaign are based on the organizations strategic plan which encompasses Retaining & Recruiting New Businesses, Marketing Wilkes for Businesses & Talent, Real Estate & Amenities Development, Community Capacity Building, and Organizational Needs.



Click the image to view.

Wilkes EDC has reached almost 60% of our 5-year goal of \$1 million.

Will you join us in impacting the future of Wilkes County?

View our campaign booklet. Call LeeAnn Nixon to discuss your involvement at (336) 838-1501.

LEAP Forward

Local Expansion & Attraction Program

Together We Can Grow!

Private Investors as of Today!

Alex and Amy Blair	Holiday Inn Express
Andrew Palmer	Holly Minton
Arnold and Becky Lakey	Jim Smoak
Blair Properties	Joe and Debbie Johnston
Bumgarner Services, Inc.	Ken Noland
Cam Finley	Leonard G. Herring Family Foundation
Champion Towing	Lesa Hensley
Dale and Michelle Isom	Mountain View Hardware, LLC
Duke Energy	Riverstone Land and Equipment, LLC
Eddie and Anna Holland	Scott Nafe
First Community Bank	Shelmer Blackburn
Fortress Management Group, Inc.	and Additional Anonymous Donors
Hampton Inn	

Public Investors:

Wilkes County Government
Town of North Wilkesboro, Town of Wilkesboro, and Town of Ronda

Join us! Together We Can Grow!



Program Focus Area

Existing Business Activity — Business Recruitment — Real Estate Development

Project Averages

Active and Missed

61 Missed Project Over 12 Months



38

JOBS
230



12

THOUSAND SQUARE FEET
190K



5

ACRES
48



21

MILLION INVESTMENT
\$134M

December Unemployment Rate

3.2% ↓ from 3.6% in November.
Regional December Rate is 2.8%
State December Rate is 3.5%

To learn more, visit the link below.



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

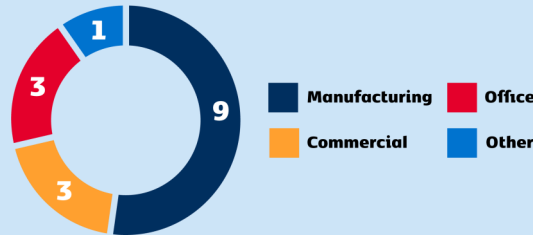
Project Activity Stats



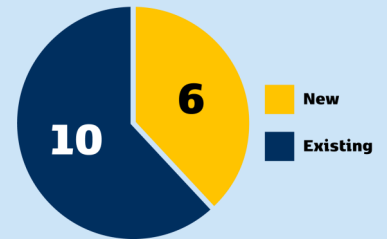
Active Projects

16

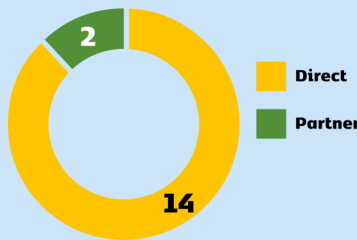
Project Industries



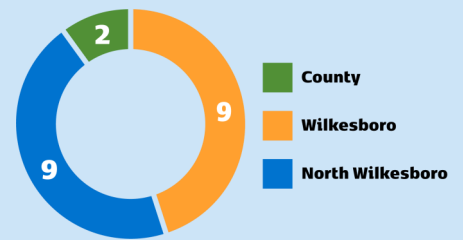
Projects by Type



Projects by Source



Projects by Location



Existing Business

Current and YTD Total
Activity since July 1, 2023



1

UNIQUE VISITS
51



5

FOLLOW UP VISITS
27

Program Stats



12

PARTNER MEETINGS
94



4

REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT
44



23

SOLUTIONS PROVIDED
209

NC Carolina Core

Wilkes County is a part of the NC Carolina Core, a region of counties along the 421 corridor where skilled talent, affordability, and market access help enterprises in many industries succeed.

NC Carolina Core is including Wilkes in a study across the state and along the Hwy. 421 corridor. Your help is needed to ensure Wilkes County data is accurate by participating in this 5-minute survey.

In addition to the Core study, your input will assist in focusing on a Wilkes Housing Summit that will be held in the Summer of 2024. *Thank you for your input!*



CAROLINA CORE EMPLOYER SURVEY



How is housing impacting your business and staff?

TELL US HERE OR SCAN BELOW:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CarolinaCoreEmployer>

SURVEY
CLOSES
2/16/24



SCAN
ME 

Conducted By:
**BOWEN
NATIONAL
RESEARCH**

Employer and Resource Partner Survey

LIVE OR WORK IN THE CAROLINA CORE?



- Housing Needs/Challenges
- Current Housing Situation
- Interest in Moving

WE WANT TO
HEAR FROM **YOU**

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CarolinaCorePublic>

Counties Include: Alamance, Caswell, Chatham, Cumberland, Davidson, Davie, Forsyth, Guilford, Harnett, Hoke, Johnston, Lee, Montgomery, Moore, Person, Randolph, Rockingham, Stokes, Wilkes, & Yadkin

Conducted By:
**BOWEN
NATIONAL
RESEARCH**

SCAN
ME 
SURVEY CLOSES 2/16/24

Community Member Survey

Childcare Working Groups Update

The Childcare Working groups for Expansion and After School childcare have held their second meetings during the month of January and February. The After School Working Group met Thursday, January 25th via Zoom. The discussion kicked off with members sharing available programs to after school childcare and identifying potential programs. Other topics the group discussed were How Can the Group Encourage More Options, Removing Obstacles, and Improving Communication of Offerings. The meeting concluded with determining the leadership for this group. Four volunteered for leadership and are currently identifying the next meeting date for members.

The Childcare Expansion Group met on Friday, February 2nd via Google Meets. The meeting was led by Chair, Jennifer Blackburn-Bracey and Co-Chair, Katie Reynolds. The meeting opened with introductions from each member and moved to break out rooms with topics discussions: Resources & Findings, Journey for New Teachers, Family Friendly Workplaces, and Childcare Center voices. Members came back together to share their findings. The groups assigned to topic discussions will continue their research until the next meeting.

The groups will continue meeting regularly to devise plans in implementing recommendations from the study to help solve the childcare challenges in Wilkes.

To learn more about the Wilkes County Childcare study, click the [link](#) or scan the QR code.



Registration for the Techstars Startup Weekend is now OPEN!

Secure your spot for this incredible opportunity to learn how to think, work, and build like a startup in 54 thrilling hours. Learn how to move from idea to a viable business model using lean startup methods. We're looking for future founders of main street and scalable businesses.

This immersive and transformative event is not just for tech ideas. We invite ideas for products, food and beverage, outdoor economy, and service businesses as well. Anyone age 18 or older can participate.

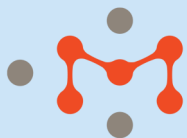
For more details and to register, click the link below!

startupweekendnorthwilkesboro.com

Don't miss out on this chance to meet the very best mentors, investors, co-founders, and sponsors to show you how to get more done faster -- and maybe even start that business!

techstars_ Startup Weekend North Wilkesboro

March 15-17
Masthead Coworking
711 Main Street



masthead

Flywheel™



In partnership with [NC Tech Paths](#)

Hosting Venue: [Masthead Coworking](#)

Registration link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/techstars-startup-weekend-at-masthead-coworking-north-wilkesboro-tickets-792573989137?aff=oddtcreator>