

Program Focus Area

Existing Business Activity — Business Recruitment — Real Estate Development

Project Averages

Active and Missed

61 Missed Project Over 12 Months



39

JOBS
246



36

THOUSAND SQUARE FEET
185K



103

ACRES
65



\$8

MILLION INVESTMENT
\$208M

April Unemployment Rate

3.5% ↓ from 3.9% in March
Regional April Rate is 3.1%
State April Rate is 3.5%

To learn more, visit the link below.

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

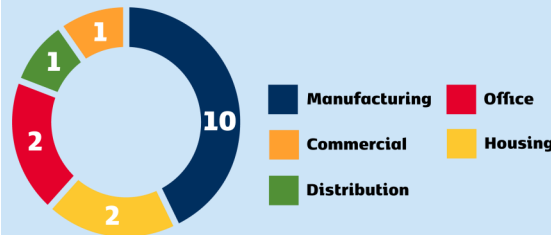
Project Activity Stats



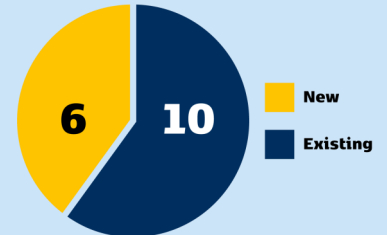
Active Projects

16

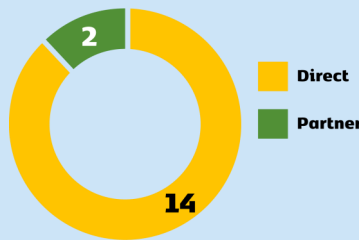
Project Industries



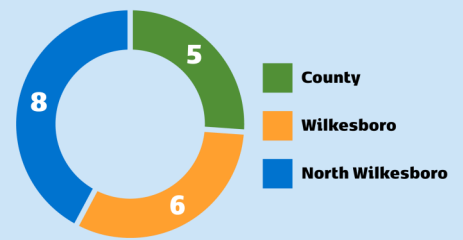
Projects by Type



Projects by Source



Projects by Location



Existing Business

Current and YTD Total
Activity since July 1, 2023



4

UNIQUE VISITS
72



9

FOLLOW UP VISITS
54

127 YTD

Program Stats



12

PARTNER MEETINGS
133



7

REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT
72



37

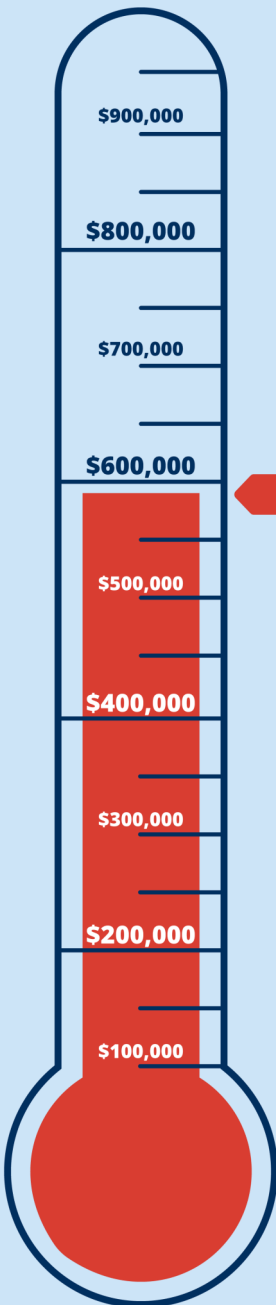
SOLUTIONS PROVIDED
336

LEAP Forward

Local Expansion & Attraction Program

Together We Can Grow!

\$1,000,000
 Over 5-Years



The Wilkes Economic Development Corporation works closely with businesses and the community to find unique solutions to economic challenges. Since 2010, Private LEAP funds have been instrumental to ensure this mission is possible. It is time to request your help replenishing the funds to continue moving Wilkes forward.

The need for investment builds upon the traditional program of work of the EDC: existing business retention and expansion, marketing and new business recruitment, and real estate development. Special Projects focus on Wilkes Commercial Business Center(s), Housing, Childcare, Outdoor Economy, and Talent Retention and Attraction, which are critical for ensuring a strong economy and building Wilkes County capacity.

Will you invest in Wilkes County's future?

Wilkes EDC expresses our gratitude to those who have already committed to the LEAP Forward Campaign and mission of the EDC! Below is a list of our investors to date.

- Alex and Amy Blair
- Andrew Palmer
- Arnold and Becky Lakey
- Blair Properties
- Blue Ridge Ranch
- BGE, inc.
- Cam Finley
- Champion Towing
- Dale and Michelle Isom
- Duke Energy
- ECS Southeast, LLC
- Eddie and Anna Holland
- Fortress Management Group, Inc.
- Hampton Inn
- Holiday Inn Express
- Holly Minton
- Jim Smoak
- Joe and Debbie Johnston
- Ken Noland
- Laurie Brintle-Jarvis
- Leonard G. Herring Family Foundation
- Lesa Hensley
- Luke Mathis
- McNeill Chevrolet & Nissan of Wilkesboro
- MECI & Associates, Inc.
- Mountain View Hardware, LLC
- Omega Construction
- Riverstone Land and Equipment, LLC
- Ron Wilcox
- Scott Nafe
- Shelmer Blackburn
- WCC, Small Business Center
- Wilkie Construction Company SE
- *And Additional Anonymous Donors*

Ready to make a pledge? Visit the [link](#) or scan the QR code to invest or call (336) 838-1501.

Investors of our LEAP Forward Campaign will be recognized on our website, monthly Activity Reports, Newsletters, and at our Annual Meeting.



Wilkes EDC Celebrates Successful All-Star Weekend

Wilkes County, NC—The Wilkes Economic Development Corporation (EDC) reports a successful conclusion of the All-Star Race Weekend. Wilkes EDC hosted business partners, resource partners, government officials, and visitors to Wilkes County at the Wilkes EDC's Hospitality Area. Special thanks to Jessica Fickenscher for this opportune moment and Haley Hood for coordinating our setup. This event was a testament to our region's thriving community spirit and collaborative efforts.

The All-Star Weekend was made possible through the generous support of our sponsors:

- North Wilkesboro Speedway/SMI
- Blair Properties, LLC/Allen Tate
- Dooley's Tavern and Grill
- JELD-WEN Windows & Doors
- Midtown Market and Garden
- The Print Shop
- Town of Wilkesboro

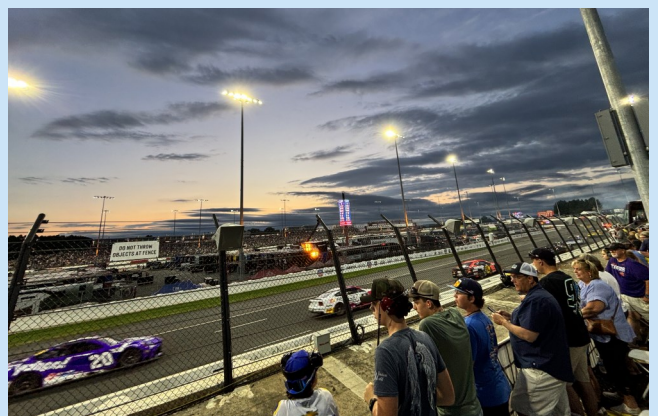
The Wilkes EDC extends its sincere gratitude to these sponsors, whose contributions were instrumental in the success of the event. **Wilkes EDC hosted more than 244 visitors at the Wilkes EDC Hospitality Area during the All-Star Race Week.**

We are especially thankful to everyone who helped recover equipment, maintain the event area, and ensure the safety of all attendees under our tent during Saturday's unexpected storm. Your efforts exemplify the resilience and dedication of our community.

The welcome area at the Wilkes County Airport was a significant highlight of the weekend. Visitors were greeted with Wilkes EDC gift bags containing snacks, drinks, and information about Wilkes County's amenities. The airport proudly displayed a "Welcome Race Fans" banner and an All-Star race flag and showcased several promotional materials, including "Why Wilkes" slides and the "Great State of Wilkes" video on the Wilkes EDC Airport TV. Wilkes EDC also partnered with Wilkes TDA on a sponsor package for the All-Star Race weekend, including a "Great State of Wilkes" video display and daily public announcement advertising.

Wilkes EDC, along with other representatives, joined the unveiling ceremony of the Petty's Hat saluting the family's 75-year history in NASCAR, a plaque honoring the Paul Call as the Gatekeeper of the North Wilkesboro Speedway, and the Moonshine Motorsports Trail marker. Click here to view the full press release: [North Wilkesboro Speedway Press Release](#).

The success of the All-Star Weekend underscores the vibrant economic and cultural landscape of Wilkes County. Wilkes EDC remains committed to fostering partnerships and creating opportunities that drive economic growth and enhance the quality of life in our community.



Vision NWNC Boone

Wilkes EDC's Marketing Manager, Francisco Martinez, attended the Vision Northwest North Carolina, hosted by Boone Chamber of Commerce. This annual summit brings together regional leaders to discuss economic development trends impacting businesses, agencies, and communities. This year's event focused on *AI and Technology Solutions for Northwest North Carolina*.

Keynote presentations by industry experts such as Zach Giglio of GCM and Cyrus Hurley, CEO of Zuryc, provided attendees with insights into essential skills for navigating an AI-native business landscape and the practical applications of AI in business operations, respectively. Breakout sessions delved deeper into workforce readiness, cybersecurity, and successful implementation strategies for AI technologies. Presenters included a couple of representatives from Wilkes County: Gary Daemer of Infusion Point, Chris Beckwith-Taylor and Caitlin Pitkin of GREENstick.

Networking opportunities throughout the day facilitated meaningful exchanges among attendees, fostering connections and collaboration. The event concluded with a networking reception, providing a platform for continued dialogue and relationship-building. Overall, the summit catalyzed innovation and collaboration among Northwest North Carolina's business community, equipping attendees with actionable insights to drive regional growth in an increasingly technology-driven economy.

Click the link to learn more about Vision Northwest North Carolina:
[Vision NWNC: - Boone Area Chamber of Commerce \(boonechamber.com\)](https://boonechamber.com)

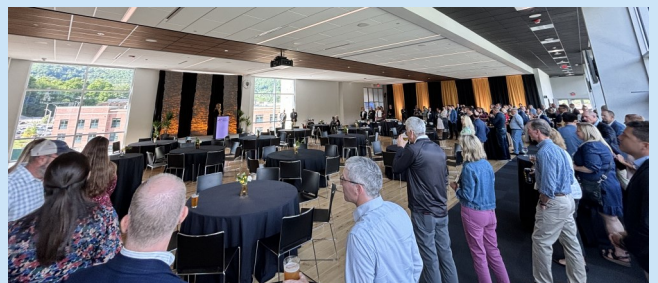


EDPNC 100

Wilkes EDC recently attended the EDPNC regional tour, NC100, a strategic event for showcasing potential development sites and buildings to new and existing Business Recruit team members. The tour began with a welcome from the Catawba County EDC, followed by a detailed presentation on the Regional Workforce Innovation Complex by Randy Burns. The team also toured the Workforce Solutions Complex, gaining insights into local training and educational facilities, guided by Jennifer Jones, Chief Development Officer.

In the afternoon, attendees participated in the "Community Speed Dating" session for rapid networking and knowledge sharing, interspersed with a networking break. It was an excellent opportunity for the Wilkes EDC team to share our industry clusters, recent events, and available sites. The day concluded with travel to Boone for the EDPNC Board

Reception, fostering further collaboration and engagement among economic development professionals, regional chamber organizations, and resource partners at the Kidd Brewer Stadium on App State campus.



EDC Receives Funding from Golden LEAF Foundation

ROCKY MOUNT, N.C., (June 6, 2024) – Today, the Golden LEAF Board of Directors awarded a total of \$14,267,573.59 in funding across five Golden LEAF Programs. The Board awarded \$4,403,985 to support 10 projects through the [SITE Program](#), \$680,000 to support two projects through the [Open Grants Program](#), \$400,000 to support an [Economic Catalyst](#) project, \$7,704,537 in funding for 10 projects through the [Flood Mitigation Program](#), and \$1,079,051.59 in funding for the Food Distribution Assistance Program.

The Golden LEAF Foundation Board of Directors awarded \$4,403,985 million in funding for 10 projects through the Golden LEAF SITE Program in **Caldwell, Cherokee, Chowan, Columbus, Gaston, Harnett, Nash, Northampton, Warren, and Wilkes** counties.

“The need for industrial sites, especially in rural areas, is no longer a luxury but a necessity to meet demand,” said Ralph Strayhorn, Golden LEAF Board Chair. “We are excited to see how these projects will help prepare counties for new and expanding companies in North Carolina.”

The [SITE Program](#) offers resources to help communities identify potential sites for economic development, provides funding to complete due diligence on publicly controlled sites, and provides funding to extend public utilities to publicly controlled sites or to conduct clearing and rough grading of publicly owned sites. The three phases of the SITE Program are Identification, Due Diligence, and Development.

The Golden LEAF Board awarded \$266,100 in funding to support six [SITE Program – Due Diligence](#) projects. These projects will use funding to complete eligible due diligence activities such as environmental assessments, archaeological analyses, and mapping. Organizations receiving SITE Program – Due Diligence support include:

- \$50,000 to the County of Caldwell for the Foothills Regional Airport Industrial Park.
- \$50,000 to the Cherokee County Local Government for an Industrial Park on Highway 19/74.
- \$40,400 to the Edenton-Chowan Partnership, Inc. for the Edenton Chowan Airport Industrial Park.
- \$34,000 to the County of Nash for the Whitakers Business and Industry Center.
- \$49,200 to Northampton County for the Northampton County Commerce Park.
- \$42,500 to the County of Warren for the Hwy 1 Industrial Park.

For the [SITE Program – Development](#), the Golden LEAF Board awarded \$4,137,885 in funding for four projects that will provide public infrastructure and clearing and rough grading, to benefit eligible sites that have completed the due diligence necessary to demonstrate that the site is suitable for development. Organizations receiving SITE Program – Development support include:

- \$590,000 to the County of Columbus for clearing and grubbing of 15 acres, and wastewater extension to serve Lot 4 of the Southeast Regional Park. The county anticipates that successful industry recruitment to the site would create approximately 100 new full-time jobs, \$30 million in private capital investment, and \$590,000 in public investment.
- \$1,500,000 to the City of Gastonia to install a parallel sewer outfall to increase sewer capacity to serve the 30-acre Lot 12 in Apple Creek Corporate Park. The city anticipates that successful industry recruitment to the site would create approximately 180 new full-time jobs, \$200 million in private capital investment, and \$4,562,248 in public investment.
- \$547,885 to Harnett County Economic Development Partnership for clearing, grubbing, grading, erosion control, and other site preparation activities as well as a title opinion and utility capacity analysis for a 25-acre site in the Edgerton Industrial Park. The county anticipates that successful industry recruitment to the site would create approximately 80 new full-time jobs, \$10 million in private capital investment, and \$547,885 in public investment.
- \$1,500,000 to Wilkes Economic Development Corporation for clearing, grubbing, grading, and erosion control on 22 acres in the Wilkes Industrial Park. The county anticipates that successful industry recruitment to the site would create approximately 40 new full-time jobs, \$8 million in private capital investment, and \$1,803,450 in public investment.

The Golden LEAF Board awarded \$400,000 to the County of Randolph to support the location of [Ross Stores, Inc.](#), a major American retailer of off-price apparel and home fashion. The company will build a new 1.7 million-square-foot distribution center in Randleman. Golden LEAF will support public road improvements necessary for the project. The Golden LEAF Board awarded [\\$1 million in SITE Program](#) funding in 2022 that extended sewer to the site in Randleman.

“Today the Board awarded funding for job creation and economic investment, workforce preparedness, industrial site preparation, flood mitigation, and food distribution assistance,” said Scott T. Hamilton, Golden LEAF President, Chief Executive Officer. “These projects are part of larger strategies that will improve the long-term economic advancement of rural, tobacco-dependent, and economically distressed communities across our state. We look forward to the impact these projects will have for years to come.”

The Golden LEAF Board of Directors awarded two projects totaling \$680,000 in [Open Grants Program](#) funding. These projects will support workforce preparedness in **Cherokee, Edgecombe, and Nash** counties.

- \$200,000 to Strategic Twin Counties Education Partnership (STEP) in Nash and Edgecombe counties to support staff salary, program-related marketing and outreach, and participant support for a pilot local internship program that facilitates collaboration among school districts, community colleges, community-based organizations, and employers in Nash and Edgecombe counties. STEP will increase the number of participating students, with an expectation that the program will link 45 individuals to a work-based learning opportunity over the two-year grant period, in addition to providing ongoing support to participating students and businesses throughout the internship experience and into employment.
- \$480,000.00 to Tri-County Community College serving Cherokee, Clay, and Graham counties for construction of a new driving pad on the college’s main campus, dedicated solely to the CDL program and the recently launched Heavy Equipment Operator program in response to increased demand. The existing smaller driving pad is shared by the CDL program and the Public Safety program. TCCC expects to serve four times as many CDL students (an additional 126 students) and twice as many HEO students (an additional 35 students).

The State of North Carolina appropriated the Golden LEAF Foundation \$25 million for a Flood Mitigation Program. The Flood Mitigation Program will award funding up to \$2 million per project. Funds may only be awarded to units of local government. The Golden LEAF Board awarded \$7,704,537 in funding to support 10 projects through the Flood Mitigation Program in **Avery, Columbus, Craven, Cumberland, Duplin, Guilford, Harnett, and Wilson** counties. [Click here](#) for more information on the awards.

The Golden LEAF Board approved an award of \$141,500 for new project in the Food Distribution Assistance Program in Greene County and \$937,551.59 in additional Food Distribution Assistance Program funding to support 23 existing projects in **Alamance, Buncombe, Chatham, Cumberland, Durham, Edgecombe, Gaston, Harnett, Iredell, Macon, McDowell, Mecklenburg, Nash, Onslow, Rowan, Scotland, Transylvania, Union, Vance, Wayne, Wilkes, and Wilson** counties.

The State of North Carolina appropriated \$10 million to Golden LEAF for the Food Distribution Assistance Program. This program is funded by federal State Fiscal Recovery Funds through the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Funds may be used for grants to nonprofit organizations to assist organizations in becoming eligible to be partner agencies of a North Carolina food bank or enhancing or expanding the capacity of current partner agencies of North Carolina food banks. Funds may also be used for grants to nonprofit organizations to assist organizations in establishing a school-based weekend food assistance program or enhancing or expanding the capacity of current school-based weekend food assistance programs.

The following new award was made in the Food Distribution Assistance Program:

- \$141,500 to Bountiful Blessings House of Redemption in Greene County for a box truck, cargo van, two pallet jacks, refrigerated container, electrical upfit for refrigerated container, two commercial refrigerators, tables, shelving and carts.

[Click here](#) for information on the organizations that received increased Food Distribution Assistance Program funding.

Since 1999, Golden LEAF has funded 2,280 projects totaling \$1.3 billion supporting the mission of advancing economic opportunity in North Carolina’s rural, tobacco-dependent, and economically distressed communities.

About Golden LEAF

The Golden LEAF Foundation is a nonprofit organization established in 1999 to receive a portion of North Carolina’s funding from the 1998 Master Settlement Agreement with cigarette manufacturers. For 25 years, Golden LEAF has worked to increase economic opportunity in North Carolina’s rural and tobacco-dependent communities through leadership in grantmaking, collaboration, innovation, and stewardship as an independent and perpetual foundation.

The Foundation has provided lasting impact to tobacco-dependent, economically distressed, and rural areas of the state by helping create 68,000 jobs, more than \$780 million in new payrolls, and more than 98,000 workers trained or retrained for higher wages.

For more information about Golden LEAF and our programs, please visit our website at GoldenLEAF.org.