

Program Focus Area

Existing Business Activity — Business Recruitment — Real Estate Development

Project Averages

Active and Missed

60 Missed Project Over 12 Months



39

JOBS
271



36

THOUSAND
SQUARE FEET
209K



103

ACRES
76



\$7

MILLION
INVESTMENT
\$222M

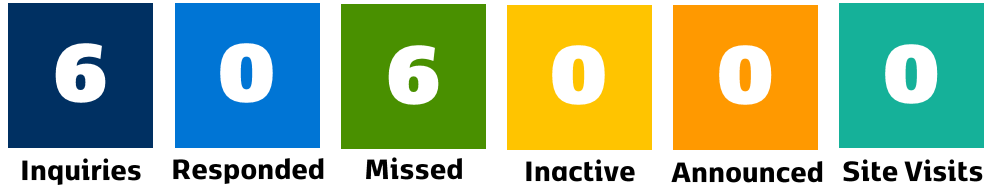
May Unemployment Rate

3.9% ↑ from 3.5% in April
Regional May Rate is 3.4%
State May Rate is 3.6%

To learn more, visit the link below.

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

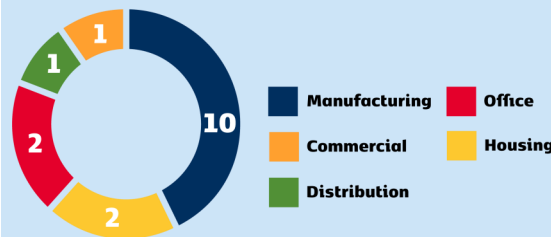
Project Activity Stats



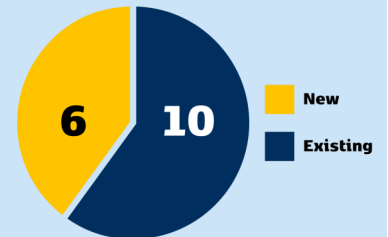
Active Projects

16

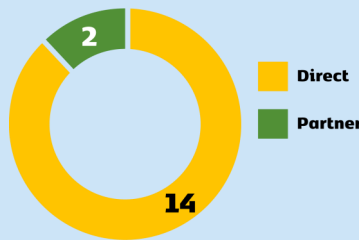
Project Industries



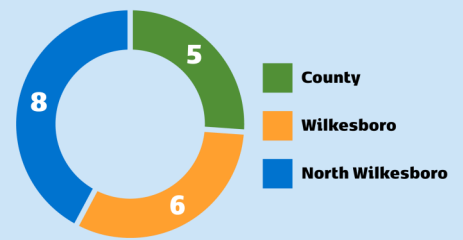
Projects by Type



Projects by Source



Projects by Location



Existing Business

Current and YTD Total
Activity since July 1, 2023



6

UNIQUE VISITS
77



7

FOLLOW UP VISITS
61

138 YTD

Program Stats



19

PARTNER
MEETINGS
152



7

REAL ESTATE
DEVELOPMENT
80



31

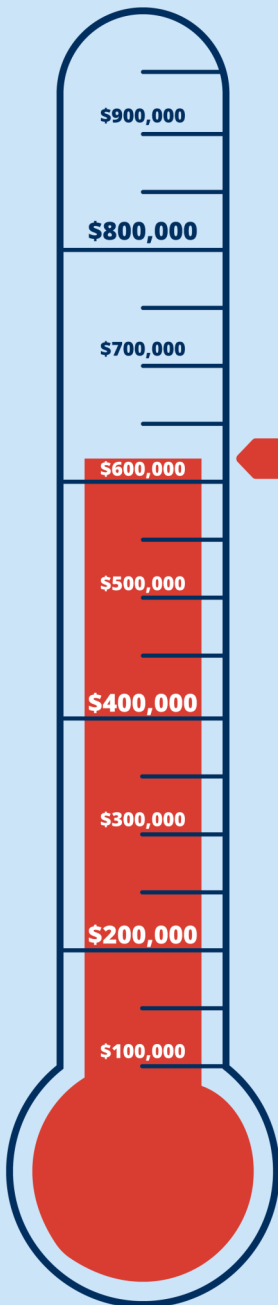
SOLUTIONS
PROVIDED
367

LEAP Forward

Local Expansion & Attraction Program

Together We Can Grow!

\$1,000,000
 Over 5-Years



61.2%
 (\$611,950)

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
- BGE, inc.
- Blair Properties LLC/Allen Tate
- Blue Ridge Ranch
- Bumgarner Services
- 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's President Participates in SelectUSA

Wilkes EDC's president, LeeAnn Nixon, was invited by the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina (EDPNC) to attend the 2024 SelectUSA Investment Summit. The event occurred from June 23 to 26 at the Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center in National Harbor, Maryland.

The SelectUSA Investment Summit is the highest-profile event promoting foreign direct investment (FDI) in the United States. This year drew over 5,000 attendees, 96 international markets, and all 50 U.S. states and six territories. The Summit facilitates connections between investors, economic developers, and industry experts to seek opportunities available through U.S. investment. Attendees and speakers include senior government officials, C-Suite business executives, and industry leaders.

LeeAnn participated at EDPNC's booth, which was one of the largest, to interact with attendees, business, and global market representatives. Conversations provided the opportunity to make a direct case about North Carolina and Wilkes County's business-climate advantages to stimulate recruitment efforts.

EDPNC's mission closely aligns with Wilkes EDC's, which is to improve the economic well-being and quality of life for all North Carolinians by recruiting new businesses to the state, supporting existing employers, assisting companies with international trade, counseling small businesses and startups, and promoting North Carolina as a tourism destination. Wilkes EDC enjoys continuously working with this team, specifically alongside our EDPNC International Business Developers, including Regional and County ED leaders, during the SelectUSA Investment Summit.

Learn more about EDPNC by visiting their website. [Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina | EDPNC](https://www.edpnc.com)



NC Carolina Core Presentation at North Wilkesboro Speedway

LeeAnn Nixon was invited by Ron Wilcox, Executive Advisor to the CEO and COO of Samaritan's Purse and Wilkes EDC Board Director, to tour the Samaritan's Purse campus in Boone alongside NCDOT. Edward Graham, Chief Operating Officer of Samaritan's Purse, gave an overview and updates on the organization's various missions and global impact. Leadership provided additional presentations on aviation, transportation, and followed by campus tours.

The next day, Carolina Core Regional Economic Development Director Loren Hill presented to the North Carolina Department of Transportation Board, transportation staff, and leadership from Wilkes, Yadkin, and Surry at the North Wilkesboro Speedway Turn 4 Building in early June. Loren discussed NC Carolina Core's ongoing efforts to designate U.S. 421 from Wilkesboro through Yadkinville and onto I-40 in Winston-Salem as the potential Interstate 777.

Regional economic and government leaders were present at the gathering including Bobby Todd of Yadkin EDP/Chamber of Commerce and Blake Moyer of Surry County Economic Development Partnership. Collaborative efforts continue to support the NC Carolina Core initiative, leveraging the business community to promote prosperity and help drive economic and job growth.

Visit the link to learn more about NC Carolina Core: A corridor between Winston-Salem and Fayetteville at the heart of North Carolina with four new megasites of 7,200 acres of certified land that offer advanced manufacturers room to grow, as well as many other industrial sites, urban research parks and mixed-use developments. [More About NC Carolina Core](#)



Loren Hill, LeeAnn Nixon, Bobby Todd, and Blake Moyer

Golden LEAF Grant

The Golden LEAF Foundation awarded \$1,500,000 from the SITE Program (Phase 3) for Development to Wilkes Economic Development Corporation. The funding provides grubbing, clearing, and rough grading to benefit eligible sites that have completed the due diligence necessary to demonstrate that they are suitable for the next steps of development.

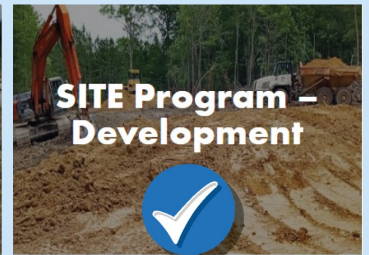
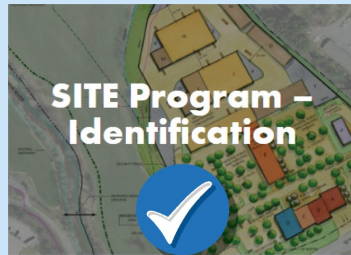
Wilkes EDC expects successful industry recruitment to create 40 new jobs, attract \$8 million in private investment, and involve \$1.8 million in public investment after the next steps, including infrastructure and later, creation of a building. North Wilkesboro Town Manager Holly Minton expressed that the Commissioners supported the development, endorsed the EDC's grant application, and are celebrating the grant award.

Timeline

- Golden LEAF Foundation's Community Based-Grants Initiative was awarded in 2021 towards Wilkes Commercial Business Center. This building was completed in Spring 2023 and is a 31,703-square-foot facility leased by JavaMaster and PRISM Medical. The grant was \$1.5 million, matched by Wilkes County, and aided by EDC LEAP funds. The project also included a \$150,000 water line extension from the town. Lease payments from the first building will fund future facilities.
- Golden LEAF Foundation SITE Identification Grant (Phase 1 of Golden LEAF SITE Program) was awarded in June 2022. This included site studies by a North Carolina site real estate selector and engineering team. The experienced Golden LEAF team selected Wilkes Industrial Park due to its public ownership, existing infrastructure, and prior work towards due diligence.
- In June 2023, Golden LEAF awarded \$50,000 for Due Diligence (Phase 2 of Golden LEAF SITE Program). This phase consisted of studies and environmental reports on the property. BGE inc. determined 300 of the 500 acres were buildable, recommending construction at the park's northern end.
- In December 2023, a master plan was presented to the North Wilkesboro Commissioners.
- In June 2024, The Golden LEAF Foundation awarded \$1,500,000 from the SITE Program (Phase 3) for Development to Wilkes Economic Development Corporation to grub, clear, and rough grade the site.

To learn more about the June 2024 Golden LEAF Foundation award for the SITE Program: Development phase, click here:

[Golden LEAF announces \\$14 million in funding at June meeting - Golden LEAF Foundation](#)



Solving and Moving Housing Forward Workshop

Wilkes EDC held a workshop for Solving and Moving Housing Forward on Tuesday, June 18th, at The 1915 in downtown Wilkesboro, NC. We thank our Board Director and Wilkesboro Mayor Dale Isom for allowing us to use this space for the workshop. Twenty members were present: staff, local government from the County and Towns, realtors, developers, and resource partners. Arianna Williamson, Director of Employer Engagement at Wilkes Community College, helped co-facilitate the workshop with Wilkes EDC President LeeAnn Nixon.

Our meeting started with breakfast and a review of reports on housing in Wilkes, including the High Country of Government's housing quick fact sheet. Discussion followed regarding recent accomplishments in housing with attendees sharing updates.

LeeAnn explained the format of the workshop, Strategic Doing, going over the questions and process of implementing this workshop style. Members of the room were broken into three tables by local government, realtors, and developers. The first activity was to frame a conversation around an appreciative question. Next, the groups identified assets that fell into the categories of Physical, Skills, Social, and Capital. Then they linked and leveraged the assets to create new opportunities.

These exercises led to forming a short-term action plan and setting a 30/30 meeting to review progress and set new goals in 30 days. The next meeting will be in August.

Wilkes EDC would also like to share that the Carolina Core Housing study will address many counties along the core, including Wilkes. It will be released in September, followed with Wilkes EDC hosting a Housing Summit later this year to focus on moving housing forward.

