

Program Focus Area

Existing Business Activity — Business Recruitment — Real Estate Development

Project Averages

Active and Missed

64 Missed Project Over 12 Months



43

JOBS
283



36

THOUSAND
SQUARE FEET
207K



103

ACRES
83



\$7

MILLION
INVESTMENT
\$220M

July Unemployment Rate

4.7% ↑ from 4.5% in June
Regional June Rate is 4.0%
State June Rate is 4.3%

To learn more, visit the link below.

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

Project Activity Stats

10

Inquiries

1

Responded

9

Missed

1

Inactive

1

Announced

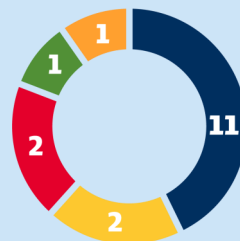
2

Site Visits

Active Projects

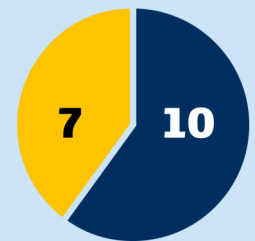
17

Project Industries



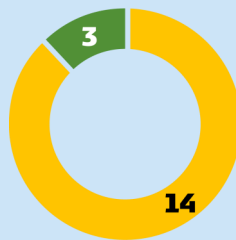
■ Manufacturing
■ Office
■ Commercial
■ Distribution

Projects by Type



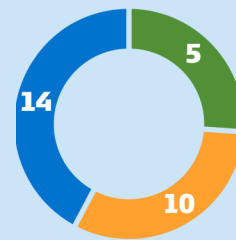
■ New
■ Existing

Projects by Source



■ Direct
■ Partner

Projects by Location



■ County
■ Wilkesboro
■ North Wilkesboro

Existing Business

Current and YTD Total
Activity since July 1, 2024



5

UNIQUE VISITS
9



0

FOLLOW UP VISITS
0

14 YTD

Program Stats



5

PARTNER
MEETINGS
14



5

REAL ESTATE
DEVELOPMENT
10



48

SOLUTIONS
PROVIDED
83

LEAP Forward
Local Expansion & Attraction Program

Together We Can Grow!

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.

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.

Thank you to our Investors!

Visionary Investor



Strategic Investors

Cam Finley

Scott Nafe

Anonymous Donor

Community Investors

Champion TOWING

BUMGARNER SERVICES

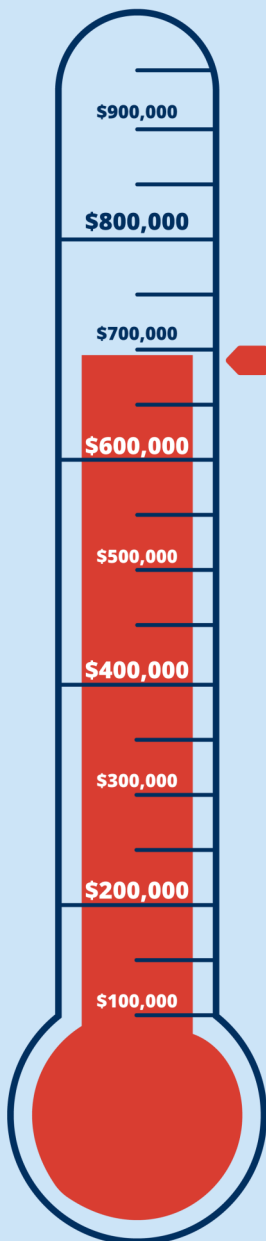
MECI & Associates, Inc.

Jim Smoak



\$1,000,000

Over 5-Years



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.

Advocate Investors

- Arnold and Becky Lakey
- Blair Properties LLC/Allen Tate
- Carolina West Wireless
- Church & Church Lumber Co.
- Contentment
- CS Forester Benefits Group
- Dale and Michelle Isom
- Duke Energy
- ECS Southeast, LLC
- Fortress Management Group, Inc.
- Frontier Natural Gas
- Hampton Inn Wilkesboro
- Holiday Inn Express Wilkesboro
- McNeill Chevrolet & Nissan of Wilkesboro
- North Wilkesboro Speedway
- Omega Construction
- Riverstone Land and Equipment, LLC
- Steve C. Davis, Inc.
- T&J Produce
- Transource Truck Leasing
- Wilkie Construction Company SE

Associate Investors

- Alex and Amy Blair
- BGE, inc.
- Blue Ridge Ranch
- Charlie Sink
- Eddie and Anna Holland
- Holly Minton
- Joe and Debbie Johnston
- Ron Wilcox
- WCC – Small Business Center

Patron Investors

- Andrew Palmer
- Ken Noland
- Laurie Brintle-Jarvis
- Lesa Hensley
- Luke Mathis
- Mountain View Hardware, LLC
- Shelmer Blackburn

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 2024 Annual Meeting

Wilkes EDC held its Annual Meeting at the View 2395 venue at Fussell Estate on August 27th, 2024, with over 190 guests registered. We thank our generous sponsors for helping make this event possible: Frontier Natural Gas, Surry Yadkin Electric Membership Corporation, ECS (Engineering Consulting Services), Spectrum Hospitality LLC, Wilkes TDA, and NC Carolina Core. We also thank The Scarlet Hen for serving and catering our event, Raffaldini Vineyards & Winery, TwoBoros Brewery for beverages, and Just One More Mobile Bartending for serving our guests. We thank Buds & Bows Floral at Midtown Garden Market for the flower arrangements and City Florist of Wilkes for the accessories. We thank Kardia Sounds for setting up our sound system and Hannah Crow Photography for capturing photos. Creative LaZer Designs designed and assembled our awards for our recognized businesses and entrepreneurs.



Our Chair, Amy Blair, opened our program, welcoming guests and recognizing Local Government, Board Members, Event Sponsors, and Wilkes EDC Investors. Ron Wilcox, Wilkes EDC Board Director and Executive Advisor to the CEO and COO of Samaritan's Purse, offered the invocation. LeeAnn Nixon, President of Wilkes EDC, began the program by reviewing our core areas in our Annual Report, now available on our website. LeeAnn shared our five announced projects: T&J Produce, Select Steel Buildings, Retails Solutions Group, TwoBoros Brewery, and Elkin Senior Living (in Wilkes). Representatives from each company had an opportunity to come up and share their experiences working with Wilkes EDC and received a plaque from Amy Blair and Past Chair Terry Bumgarner.

Vice President Robin Hamby and Marketing Manager Francisco Martinez and recognized the Fall 2023 and Spring 2024 Entrepreneur Grant winners. A few winners had an opportunity to share their success with the program and plans for their continued growth. Following the recognition, Jimmy Flythe, Director of Central Region Government and Community Relations for Duke Energy, talked about the Duke Energy Foundation and introduced a **\$25,000 grant awarded to the EDC** to implement the Downtown Boro's Small Business Grant Program, which is open now! Jimmy shared the positive impact of the Duke Energy Foundation's small business grant initiative for small businesses across North Carolina. Wilkes EDC is thankful to have received their support.

LeeAnn continued the program on Workforce Retention and Attraction, efforts in Marketing Wilkes, and Real Estate & Amenities Development. Loren Hill, Regional Economic Development Director of NC Carolina Core, gave an update on the Carolina Core and upcoming activities in relation to Wilkes County.

Jennifer Blackburn Bracey, Chair of the Wilkes County Childcare Expansion Working Group, gave an update on the progress in solving childcare challenges in Wilkes. The group includes Co-Chair Katie Reynolds, Michelle Shepherd, Executive Director of Wilkes Partnership for Children, and Arianna Williamson, Director of Employment Engagement. Amy Blair closed the program, recognizing our Board of Directors, sponsors, and thanking the attendees once again.

Wilkes EDC's 2024 Annual Report is available now on our website. Visit WilkesEDC.com or scan the QR code to view our digital flip book.



Retain/Expand Existing & New Businesses



Missing Opportunities Due To:
 29 available buildings 2 rail service
 17 available sites 3 other
 12 building or site

5 Announced Project Impact:

138 Jobs	\$54,790,000 Investment
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Exceeding last year's 133 jobs, & \$41.8M investments.

Sectors:
 3 Manufacturer 1 Healthcare 1 Agriculture

Downtown Boro's Energy Grant Program

In August 15, 2024, Wilkes EDC proudly received a **\$25,000 grant from the Duke Energy Foundation** to support local small businesses in downtown Wilkesboro and North Wilkesboro. This funding launched the Downtown Boro's Small Business Grant Program, replacing the Fall 2024 Entrepreneur Grant Program cycle. With grants up to \$5,000, eligible businesses can improve operations through equipment upgrades, enhancing e-commerce, and expanding service capacity.

Applications are now open, and the program will close on October 25, 2024. By partnering with Wilkes Community College's Small Business Center and a panel of judges, this program aims to drive long-term growth and success for local businesses in downtown Wilkesboro and North Wilkesboro.

Visit WilkesEDC.com or scan the QR code to learn more about the Downtown Boro's Small Business Grant Program.



Wilkes EDC Meets with Regional EDs and Resource Partners

The Wilkes EDC team and Wilkes Community College Small Business Center Director Laurie Brintle-Jarvis met with Surry County resource partners and economic developers on August 8th. It was an excellent opportunity to discuss ongoing programs and exchange resources and ideas that help our organizations operate. We thank Lesa Hensley, former Wilkes EDC Board Director and now Director of Surry Community College's Small Business Center, and Surry Economic Development Partnership for organizing this luncheon.

Wilkes EDC also met with regional economic development organizations in Hickory on August 14th for a lunch meeting. We thank Caldwell County Economic Development for organizing this meeting, which included Burke Development, Alexander County Economic Development, Lincoln Economic Development Association, and Rutherford County Economic Development.

The group discussed common challenges across the region and exchanged experiences and advice. Opportunities like this strengthen communications between organizations. We look forward to continuing our relationship with our regional economic development organizations.



Housing Summit Planning

Wilkes EDC plans to host its third housing workgroup meeting during the month of September to continue working on progress and to plan the Housing Summit, which is scheduled for November 15th at the Stone Center.

A housing study will be released at the Summit with a focus on resources and available real estate.

More details for the Housing Summit are coming soon.



Award Winning Website

At our Annual Meeting, we proudly shared that our updated website received a Gold Award in International Economic Development Council's (IEDC) Excellence in Economic Development competition! The website won this award in the General Purpose Website Category. Wilkes EDC's President, LeeAnn Nixon, will be attending the September IEDC Conference to accept this award on behalf of the team.

We thank Katie Logan of Logan Provisions for helping redesign our website. It was officially launched in October 2023.

