

Program Focus Area

Existing Business Activity — Business Recruitment — Real Estate Development

Project Averages

Active and Missed

63 Missed Project Over 12 Months



72

JOBS
265



70

THOUSAND
SQUARE FEET
217K



84

ACRES
77



\$1.9

MILLION
INVESTMENT
\$238M

August Unemployment Rate

4.8% ↑ from 4.7% in July
Regional August Rate is 4.0%
State August Rate is 3.8%

To learn more, visit the link below.

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

Project Activity Stats

8

Inquiries

1

Responded

7

Missed

6

Inactive

0

Announced

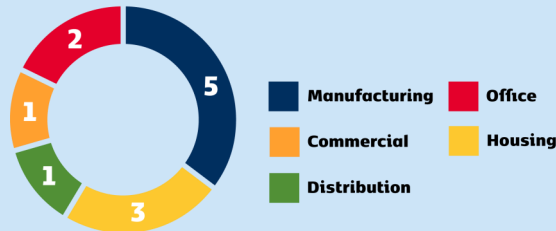
0

Site Visits

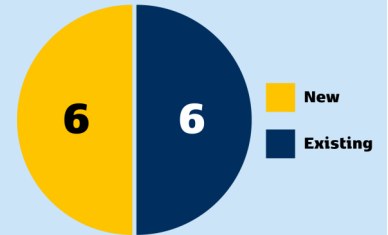
Active Projects

12

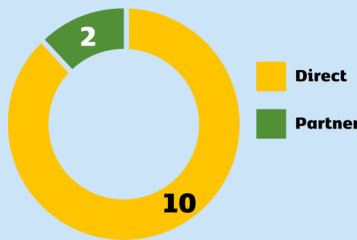
Project Industries



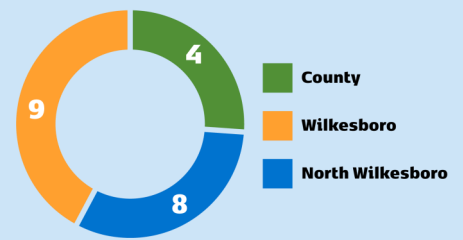
Projects by Type



Projects by Source



Projects by Location



Existing Business

Current and YTD Total
Activity since July 1, 2024



8

UNIQUE VISITS
22



2

FOLLOW UP VISITS
2

24 YTD
YTD Visit Goal: 130

Program Stats



12

PARTNER
MEETINGS
26



1

REAL ESTATE
DEVELOPMENT
11



44

SOLUTIONS
PROVIDED
127

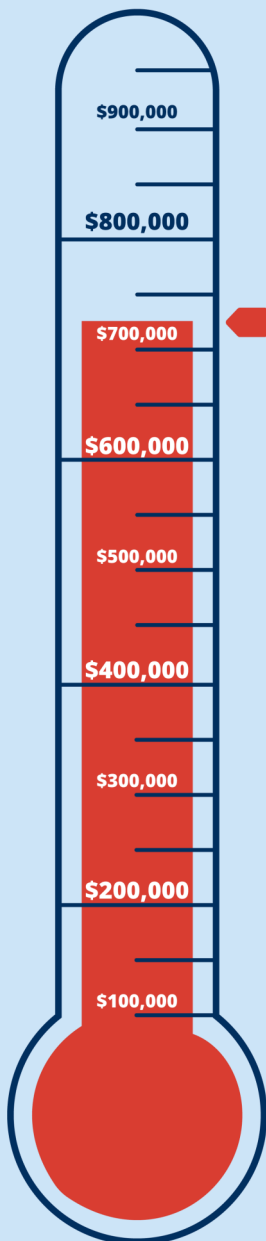
LEAP Forward
Local Expansion & Attraction Program

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.

\$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.

Thank you to our Investors!

Visionary Investor



Strategic Investors

Cam Finley

Scott Nafe

Anonymous Donor

Community Investors

BUMGARNER SERVICES

Jim Smoak

MECI

— & Associates, Inc. —

Champion TOWING

PIP

(Formerly known as Worldwide Protective Products)



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.



IEDC's Annual Conference & Excellence in Economic Development Award

Wilkes EDC President LeeAnn Nixon attended the IEDC Annual Conference. Wilkes EDC was invited to celebrate as a recipient of the Excellence in Economic Development Award in the General Purpose Website category.

The multi-day conference offered attendees opportunities to participate in workshops, presentations, and networking events. The activities were to help members explore broader themes of economic development, from case studies to hands-on learning sessions, to develop new strategies. Some of the topics covered at the conference included rural prosperity, AI, workforce, housing, climate change, marketing and storytelling, and entrepreneurship.

Recipients of an Excellence in Economic Development award had their pictures taken. They were recognized during the evening reception, during which winners could engage with judges and IEDC board members.

Wilkes EDC received gold in its category. North Carolina Economic Development Partnership also submitted their newly designed website for this category and received gold. LeeAnn expressed, "It was an honor to participate in this event with other prestigious organizations."

To learn more about the conference and winners of the 2024 Excellence in Economic Development Award, click the link or scan the QR code: [Home - International Economic Development Council](#)



September's Wilkes Entrepreneur Network Event

Wilkes EDC enjoyed facilitating September's Wilkes Entrepreneur Network event! Wilkes Small Business Center Director Laurie Brindle-Jarvis coordinated with Heather Cardwell of Times Treasured Studio to join us at Masthead Coworking to take members' professional headshots while networking and enjoying light refreshments provided by the EDC and Masthead Coworking.

Wilkes EDC's Marketing Manager, Francisco Martinez, invited three former Entrepreneur Grant Recipients to present during the second part of the event. Members got to hear from April Ellsworth of April Flowers, Megan Barnett of Hive Fitness Studio, and Bryan Absher of Moonshine Leatherworks. All talked about their entrepreneurial journeys, shared advice, expanded on what they've learned, and answered questions from members of the room.

Ready to network? Join us October 30th at Masthead Coworking for the next [Wilkes Entrepreneur Network](#) event!



Reflecting on the Carolina Core Housing Summit: A Path Forward for Wilkes County

On September 27th, High Point University hosted the Carolina Core Housing Summit, a pivotal event organized by the North Carolina Association of REALTORS and 11 local REALTOR associations. At its heart, the summit focused on addressing current and future housing needs across the Carolina Core, an area poised for growth due to expanding economic opportunities.

The release of the "Carolina Core Housing Needs Assessment," conducted by Bowen National Research, provided crucial data and insights into the housing landscape within the 11 participating REALTOR associations. This comprehensive study serves as a critical starting point for collaboration between real estate professionals, elected officials, and community leaders, ensuring that housing needs are met today and in the future.

Speakers such as Patrick Bowen, Kirk deViere, Marvette Artis, Doug Copeland, and Loren Hill contributed valuable perspectives, emphasizing the importance of a coordinated approach to addressing housing challenges. The event saw broad participation from real estate professionals, government officials, and economic developers, all united by a common goal of improving housing outcomes for their communities.

Among the economic development leaders present was Wilkes EDC President LeeAnn Nixon, who represented Wilkes County's commitment to tackling local housing issues. Thanks to the Carolina Core's initiative in commissioning the Regional Housing Needs Assessment, Wilkes County was able to take the next step by engaging Bowen National Research for additional services to develop a Wilkes County-specific Housing Study. This strategic decision ensures that Wilkes County has tailored data and recommendations to address its unique housing challenges.

Building on the insights from the Carolina Core Housing Summit, Wilkes EDC will host its own Housing Summit on November 15th at the Stone Center, where the Wilkes County Housing Study will be officially released. This in-depth study, made possible through Wilkes EDC's request for additional services, will shed light on local housing needs and opportunities.

The November 15th summit will cover critical topics, including:

- Understanding the housing availability gap, based on Bowen National Research findings.
- Streamlining the approval process with local government insights to reduce barriers to development.
- Discovering financial tools to support housing solutions (speaker TBD).
- Exploring potential properties and sites for future development in Wilkes County.
- Engaging in conversations with stakeholders to foster collaboration and actionable solutions.

By requesting this additional service from Bowen National Research, Wilkes EDC has demonstrated its commitment to understanding and addressing our community's specific housing needs. We look forward to sharing these findings and continuing vital conversations that will shape the future of housing in Wilkes County.

Learn more about the Core by visiting [NC Carolina Core's website](#) or by scanning the QR code.



Meet Wilkes EDC's New Part-Time Business Development Program Manager



David Icenhour serves as the Business Development Program Manager for the Wilkes County Economic Development Corporation. His duties will include responsibility for building and maintaining strong relationships with the local business and industry community to ensure their continued growth, retention, and success in the community.

Visit Wilkes EDC's Staff Members page to learn more about our staff: [Meet The Team | Wilkes EDC](#)

Leadership Wilkes Visited Wilkes EDC

Wilkes Chamber of Commerce's Leadership Wilkes is a nine-session enhancement program designed to develop a group of informed, committed, and qualified individuals capable of providing visionary and progressive leadership for Wilkes County. The program runs from August through mid-November. Members walk away from this program with an in-depth study of management styles, personalities, and involved activities to illustrate positive leadership opportunities.

Wilkes EDC was one of the group's stops in September. The group referred to our 2023-24 Annual reports to learn about our organization, mission, past accomplishments, and future goals. We were grateful to be a part of this group's activity and look forward to seeing leaders succeed in Wilkes!

Stay up-to-date with activities at the Wilkes Chamber of Commerce's Facebook page. Click the link to visit today! [Lead - Wilkes Chamber of Commerce](#)



Downtown Boro's Small Business 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 Closes on Lanes Drive Property

Wilkes EDC completed [Golden LEAF's three-phase SITE Program in June 2024](#), which helps rural and economically distressed counties identify, complete due diligence, and develop industrial sites.

In September, Wilkes EDC closed on the Lanes Drive property, which moves the proposed development of a second Wilkes Commercial Business Center forward. Wilkes EDC looks to develop a 50,000 sqft. building space with expansion possibilities. See the map to view the purchased site.

Visit WilkesEDC.com to stay up-to-date with the progress of the second Wilkes Commercial Business Center by subscribing to our monthly newsletter.



November 15th Wilkes County Housing Summit

WILKES COUNTY HOUSING SUMMIT

Join us for the Wilkes County Housing Summit!

Friday, November 15th

The Stone Center

613 Cherry St, North Wilkesboro, NC 28659

[Click the link or scan the QR code to register!](#)



Who Should Attend?

Realtors, Developers, Builders, Property Owners, Interested Citizens, Local Government, and Resource Partners

Building on the insights from the Carolina Core's 21 County Housing Study, Wilkes EDC will host a Housing Summit on November 15th at the Stone Center, where Wilkes County's Housing Study will be officially released.

Topics will include:

- Understanding the housing availability gap, based on Bowen National Research findings.
- Streamlining the approval process with local government insights to reduce barriers to development.
- Discovering financial tools to support housing solutions (speaker TBD).
- Exploring potential properties and sites for future development in Wilkes County.
- Engaging in conversations with stakeholders to foster collaboration and actionable solutions.