

Program Focus Area

Existing Business Activity — Business Recruitment — Real Estate Development

Project Averages

Active and Missed

69 Missed Project Over 12 Months



72

JOBS
260



70

THOUSAND SQUARE FEET
260K



84

ACRES
92



\$1.9

MILLION INVESTMENT
\$247M

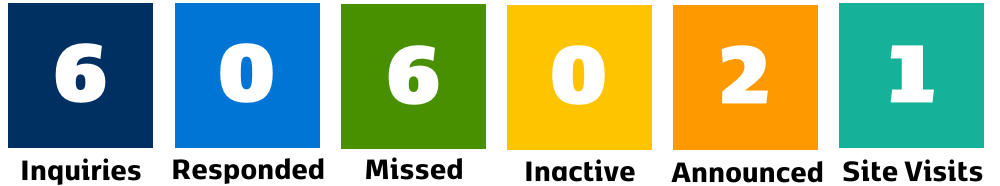
October Unemployment Rate

3.8% ↑ from 3.5% in September
Regional October Rate is 4.4%
State October Rate is 3.7%

To learn more, visit the link below.

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

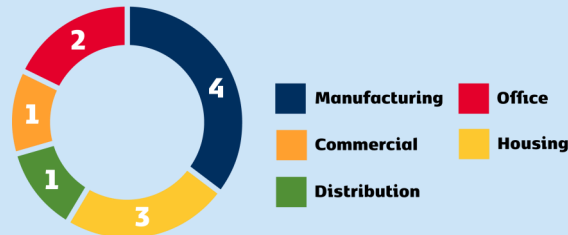
Project Activity Stats



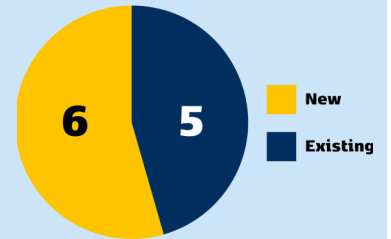
Active Projects

11

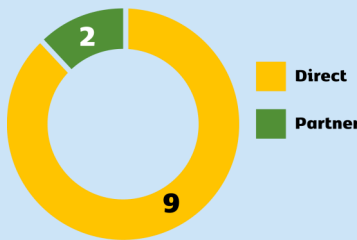
Project Industries



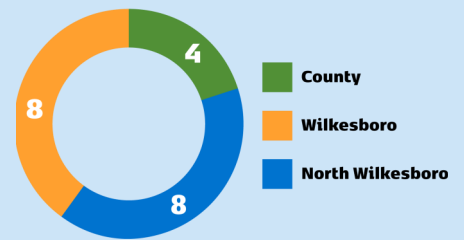
Projects by Type



Projects by Source



Projects by Location



Existing Business

Current and YTD Total
Activity since July 1, 2024



10

UNIQUE VISITS
38



2

FOLLOW UP VISITS
5

43 YTD
YTD Visit Goal: 130

Program Stats



11

PARTNER MEETINGS
48



7

REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT
25



36

SOLUTIONS PROVIDED
193

Thank you to our Investors!

Visionary Investor



Strategic Investors



Cam Finley



Scott Nafe

Anonymous Donor

Community Investors

BUMGARNER SERVICES

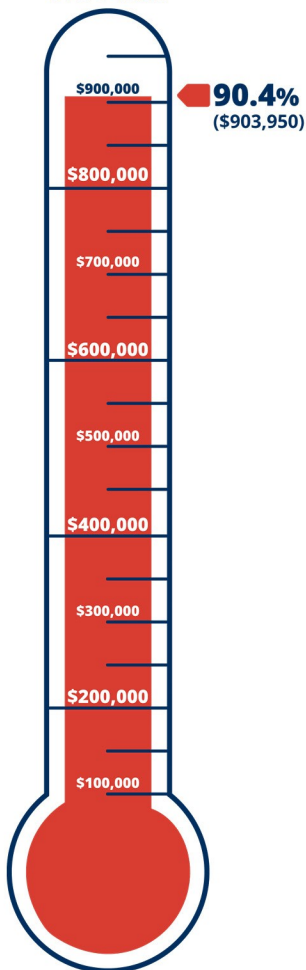


Jim Smoak



formerly known as World Wide Protective

\$1,000,000
Over 5-Years



Advocate Investors

- Anonymous Donor
- Arnold and Becky Lakey
- Blair Properties LLC/Allen Tate
- Brushy Mountain Powersports
- Carolina West Wireless
- Church & Church Lumber Co.
- Contentment
- CS Forester Benefits Group
- Dale and Michelle Isom
- Duke Energy
- ECS Southeast, LLC
- Faw Insurance
- 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
- EnergyUnited
- Holly Minton
- Joe and Debbie Johnston
- Ron Wilcox
- Select Steel Buildings
- WCC – Small Business Center

Patron Investors

- Andrew Palmer
- Civil & Environmental Consultants, Inc.
- Craftmaster Furniture
- Ken Noland
- Laurie Brintle-Jarvis
- Lesa Hensley
- Luke Mathis
- Mountain View Hardware, LLC
- Shelmer Blackburn

Will you invest in Wilkes County's future?

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



Wilkes County Housing Summit

The Wilkes County Housing Summit, held on November 15th, 2024, at The Stone Center, provided a vital platform for discussing the pressing housing challenges and opportunities facing our community. This event, hosted by Wilkes EDC in partnership with the sponsors listed below, covered a release of the in-depth Wilkes County Housing Study. The study builds on findings from the Carolina Core's 21-County Housing Study, illuminating critical gaps in local housing availability and outlined potential solutions for future growth.

The summit brought together a diverse group of stakeholders, including local government officials, developers, real estate professionals, and community leaders. Throughout the event, attendees gained valuable insights. Keynote presentations were provided by Patrick Bowen of Bowen National Research, Eric Maribojoc, Professor of the Practice & Affordable Housing Initiative Lead at UNC Chapel Hill, and Neil Gurney of the Gateway Wellness Foundation highlighted successful case studies and shared strategies for overcoming common barriers in housing development.

One of the summit's most significant outcomes was the collaborative discussions that took place around potential properties and sites for future development in Wilkes County. By bringing together so many passionate and engaged stakeholders, the event fostered dialogue that will lead to actionable solutions in the months and years ahead.

The success of this summit is a testament to the commitment of Wilkes EDC and our event sponsors: [Blair Properties, LLC/Allen Tate](#), [Callie Stone | eXp Realty](#), [Angela Reins - The Mission Group | Brokered by eXp Realty](#), and [Greene's Site Development](#). Their support ensured that this important conversation was not only possible but also impactful for our community.



Visit the link to view the Wilkes County Housing Needs Assessment: [Housing Needs Assessment - Wilkes County, NC | Wilkes EDC](#)



Strategic Sponsor



Strategic Sponsor



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NC Carolina Core—November Events

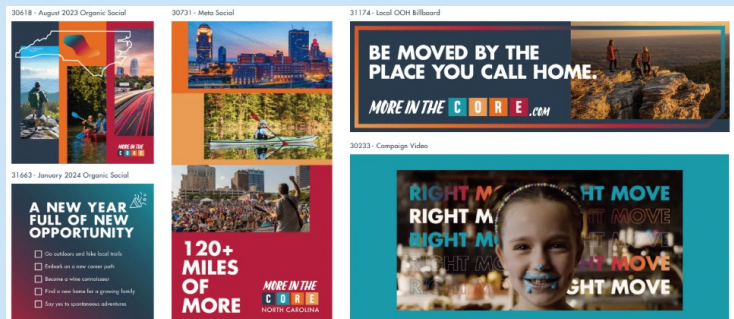
As a partner in the NC Carolina Core marketing effort, Wilkes County continues to benefit from valuable opportunities to enhance its economic prosperity. On November 6th, Wilkes EDC joined economic developers from Yadkin and Surry counties to a meeting with staff from the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina (EDPNC). Facilitated by Loren Hill, this meeting aimed to familiarize newer EDPNC staff members with local economic developers. It provided an opportunity to showcase the region's assets while strengthening relationships with EDPNC's most recent team members.



Additionally, on November 19th, Wilkes County stakeholders participated in the "More in the Core" Talent Attraction Workshop. This interactive workshop focused on attracting and retaining top talent within the region, providing valuable insights into workforce strategies. It highlighted the importance of collaboration among business leaders, HR professionals, and economic development organizations to drive sustainable growth and ensure the Carolina Core is a competitive and compelling destination for talent.

Both events demonstrate the value of Wilkes County's partnership in the NC Carolina Core, offering platforms to collaborate, attract investment, and ultimately strengthen our workforce and economy.

To learn more about the NC Carolina Core and its impact on our region, visit [More in the Core | Move to North Carolina](#).



Snapshot of the More in the Core campaign showcasing talent attraction marketing efforts beyond North Carolina.

Downtown Boro's Small Business Grant Program Awarded by Wilkes EDC

North Wilkesboro, N.C. — Wilkes Economic Development Corporation (Wilkes EDC) received a \$25,000 grant from the Duke Energy Foundation to launch the Downtown Boro's Small Business Grant Program, designed to support businesses in the downtown areas of Wilkesboro and North



Wilkesboro. Replacing the Fall 2024 Entrepreneur Grant Program, this

initiative empowers existing and expanding businesses that have been operating for over a year. The program offers grants of up to \$5,000 to fund operational enhancements such as equipment upgrades, space improvements, and e-commerce expansion. With the selection process now complete, Wilkes EDC is proud to announce the grant recipients and their plans to strengthen their businesses, marking a significant step in fostering local economic growth.



3 Pink Flamingos Boutique, owned and operated by Christy and Cameron Jones, is a clothing retail store with appeals to both men and women, reflecting the "style in the foothills." They are located at 107 W Main Street, Wilkesboro. Christy and Cameron Jones plan to update and rebrand 3 Pink Flamingos' marketing. They received \$1,500 toward their marketing plan and branding. Follow 3 Pink Flamingos Boutique's [Facebook page](#) or visit their [online store](#) today to learn more and see their selection!



Blue Ridge Reflexology, a previous entrepreneur grant recipient, is operated by Nicole Wagoner at 807 B Street, North Wilkesboro. The business specializes in a whole-body approach to wellness using micro-movement techniques to facilitate relaxation and healing, relieving clients of stress, everyday pain, and ailments. The business was awarded \$3,800 toward an electric lift table, which allows her to offer her services to a broader target audience. Visit [BlueRidgeReflexology.com](#) today to learn more and to book your appointment today!



High Country Seafood Co LLC, owned by Timothy Espinoza and supported by his family, has been serving Western North Carolina with fresh, sustainably sourced seafood since 2014. Over a year ago, the business relocated to North Wilkesboro to expand operations and serve a growing customer base, including individuals, chefs, and wholesalers. High Country Seafood Co LLC was awarded \$2,500 to purchase a refrigerator, enabling them to store more products and ensure the highest level of freshness for their clients. To learn more, visit [HighCountrySeafoodCo.com](#).



Liberty Theatre, now owned by Mark and Lani Cook, and Mick and Aynsley Zulpo, has been a beloved part of Wilkes County for over 90 years. The new owners, who assumed leadership in early 2023, are dedicated to preserving the theater's legacy while enhancing its offerings. With a \$5,000 grant from the program, they plan to upgrade the sound and speaker systems in both theaters, elevating the moviegoing experience for the community. To learn more or to check out upcoming shows, visit [LibertyTheatreNC.com](#).



Tonya's Academy of Dance, owned and led by Tonya Ferguson Wentz, provides dance education for children aged 2 to 18, fostering skill, confidence, and creativity. The academy received a \$5,000 grant to invest in a new laptop, iPad Minis, and portable ballet barres. These upgrades will streamline operations, enhance the class experience, and support the instructors in delivering top-quality lessons. To discover more about the academy or to enroll, visit [Tonya's Academy of Dance](#).



TwoBoros Brewery, owned by Seth Cohn, is a vibrant downtown Wilkesboro destination offering wood-fired pizzas and in-house brewed beers. The brewery is using the awarded \$5,000 grant to enhance its outdoor seating area, improving the overall ambiance. Funds will go toward upgrading tables, chairs, string lights, and decor to create a more inviting space, accommodating more customers and elevating the experience for families, friends, and tourists enjoying the brewery's unique offerings. For more information, visit [TwoBorosBrewery.com](#).



Visit [WilkesEDC.com](#) to read the full Press Release of Wilkes EDC's Downtown Boro's Entrepreneur Small Business Grant Program.

Herbal Ingenuity Expands in Wilkesboro

Wilkesboro, NC — Herbal Ingenuity, a leading supplier of botanical raw materials, is expanding its operations with the help of an \$85,000 Building Reuse Grant from North Carolina's Rural Infrastructure Authority. The project includes renovating a 49,000-square-foot facility in Wilkesboro and adding a 10,000-square-foot expansion, supported by a \$1.08 million private investment. The expansion is expected to create 10 new jobs with wages above the county average.



Local support includes \$28,630 in economic incentives from Wilkes County and the Town of Wilkesboro, coordinated by Wilkes EDC. The project will also generate increased tax revenue for the area, further benefiting the community.

Since 2015, Herbal Ingenuity has been a trusted partner in the botanical industry, providing high-quality, ethically sourced ingredients for sectors like dietary supplements and cosmetics. This expansion reinforces the company's role as an economic driver in Wilkes County.

For more information or to explore employment opportunities, visit HerbalIngenuity.com.

Provalus Plans to Create 150 Jobs in North Wilkesboro

North Wilkesboro, N.C. — Provalus, an innovative IT company committed to transforming rural communities, is expanding to North Wilkesboro, bringing up to 150 new jobs to the region. The company provides paid training programs to help individuals build careers in technology, including roles in technical support, cybersecurity, and system engineering.



This expansion is made possible through an inter-local agreement between Wilkes County and the Town of North Wilkesboro, which allowed the Town to purchase 711 Main Street for \$2.2 million in order to secure a location for Provalus. Provalus has been awarded \$150,000 from the NC Department of Commerce's One NC grant to support job creation. Additionally, on December 5th, the Town of North Wilkesboro was awarded a \$150,000 [Building Reuse Grant](#), which will be used for upfits to the building in support of Provalus' commitment to creating jobs in the area. Wilkes EDC provided assistance throughout the project and aided in securing the grants.

"We are proud to deepen our roots in North Carolina and invest in the potential of this remarkable area," said Mike Keogh, President of Provalus.

Provalus will begin operations in early 2025, offering new job opportunities that are expected to significantly impact both the local workforce and economy. For more details on employment opportunities, visit Provalus' website. Read the full Press Release here: [Technology Company Announces Plans To Create 150 Jobs In North Wilkesboro, North Carolina | Wilkes EDC](#)

Wilkes EDC Participates in the Tory Oak Project

The Tory Oak Project provided Wilkes Early College High School students with an immersive experience exploring Wilkes County's career and leisure opportunities. This year, 60 10th-grade students participated, visiting 20+ destinations to learn about the county's history, heritage, industry, economy, tourism, and recreation. The program also highlighted career and entrepreneurial opportunities available locally.

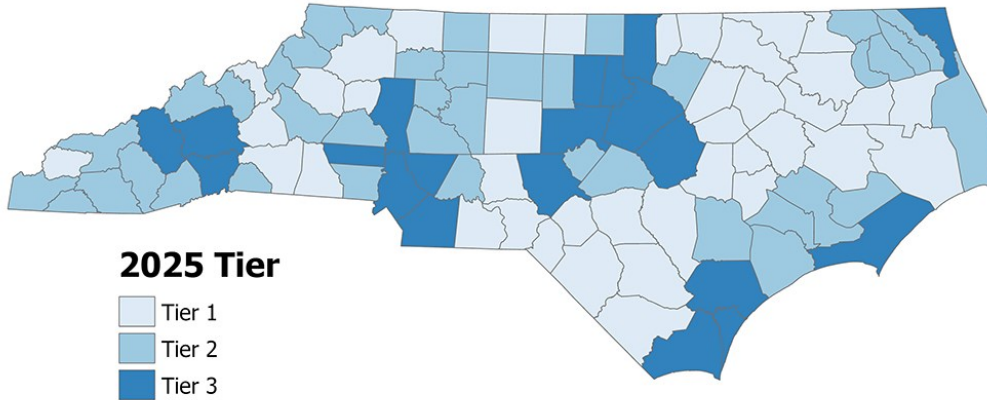
Throughout the project, students developed Wilkes-based business plans and pitched their ideas to a panel of judges. A total of 16 business concepts were presented, featuring tourism-related attractions, unique lodging options, outdoor recreational activities, social hangout spots, and other ventures aimed at engaging visitors and residents alike.

Wilkes EDC supported the project with a \$1,500 sponsorship and engaged with students through mentoring and judging. LeeAnn Nixon and Francisco Martinez of Wilkes EDC joined Mick Zulpo, owner of The Block; Laurie Brintle-Jarvis, director of the Small Business Center at Wilkes Community College; Thomas Salley, director of Wilkes County Tourism; and Kristan Dotson of the Wilkes Chamber of Commerce as judges.

If you or your organization would like to get involved or support next year's Tory Oak Project, please contact Olivia Walsh.

Wilkes Early College High School | walsho@wilkes.k12.nc.us | (336) 838-6247





Wilkes County Remains Tier 1 Status for 2025

Tiers are assigned to all 100 Counties to determine various state funding opportunities that assist with economic development. For 2025, Wilkes will remain a Tier 1 ‘Most Distressed.’ Being a Tier 1 gives us the ability to request the most assistance in relation to state incentives and grants. **Since we remained a Tier 1, the question is, did we improve or decline?** We declined rank in all categories compared to other counties. We improved in Adjusted Property Tax Base Per Capita, Population Growth, and Median Household Income. We still have a lot of work to do in relation to the North Carolina averages. Our overall Economic Distress rank significantly declined from #26 to #16 out of 100 counties, where one is the ‘most distressed’ and 100 is the ‘least distressed’.

Note: Wilkes County's Average Annual Wage is \$46,853

<p>Adjusted Property Tax Base Per Capita:</p> <p><i>Tax base increased 5.86% allowing more infrastructure and public service revenue. Ranking declined from 30 to 24.</i></p>	<p>2024 - 2025</p> <p>\$101,935 (#24)</p> <p><i>*NC average \$155,940</i></p>	<p>2023 - 2024</p> <p>\$96,295 (#30)</p>	<p>2022 - 2023</p> <p>\$91,928 (#28)</p>	<p>2021 - 2022</p> <p>\$90,091 (#35)</p>	<p>2020 - 2021</p> <p>\$83,712 (#35)</p>
<p>Population Growth:</p> <p><i>% of population growth improved. Ranking declined from 29 to 28.</i></p>	<p>7/2020 - 7/2023</p> <p>0.33% (#28)</p> <p><i>*NC average 3.59%</i></p>	<p>2019 - 2022</p> <p>-0.75% (#29)</p>	<p>2018 - 2021</p> <p>-0.85% (#27)</p>	<p>2017 - 2020</p> <p>-1.56% (#28)</p>	<p>2016 - 2019</p> <p>0.29% (#30)</p>
<p>Median Household Income:</p> <p><i>Income increased by .71%. Ranking declined from 31 to 15.</i></p>	<p>2021 - 2022</p> <p>\$48,229 (#15)</p> <p><i>*NC average \$67,516</i></p>	<p>2020 - 2021</p> <p>\$47,891 (#31)</p>	<p>2019 - 2020</p> <p>\$46,830 (#29)</p>	<p>2018 - 2019</p> <p>\$45,250 (#27)</p>	<p>2017 - 2018</p> <p>\$44,080 (#40)</p>
<p>Unemployment Rate, 12 Month Avg:</p> <p><i>Unemployment percentage increased. Ranking declined from 41 to 37.</i></p>	<p>11/2023 - 10/2024</p> <p>3.94% (#37)</p> <p><i>*NC average is 3.65%</i></p>	<p>2022 - 2023</p> <p>3.68% (#41)</p>	<p>2021 - 2022</p> <p>3.70% (#47)</p>	<p>2020 - 2021</p> <p>4.90% (#56)</p>	<p>2019 - 2020</p> <p>5.99% (#64)</p>

Visit the NC Commerce website to learn more about the County Distress Rankings (Tiers)
[County Distress Rankings \(Tiers\) | NC Commerce](#)

