

# Program Focus Area

Existing Business Activity — Business Recruitment — Real Estate Development

## Project Averages

Active and Missed

75 Missed Project Over 12 Months



**27**

**JOBS**  
261



**47**

**THOUSAND SQUARE FEET**  
207K



**14**

**ACRES**  
95



**\$3.2**

**MILLION INVESTMENT**  
\$198M

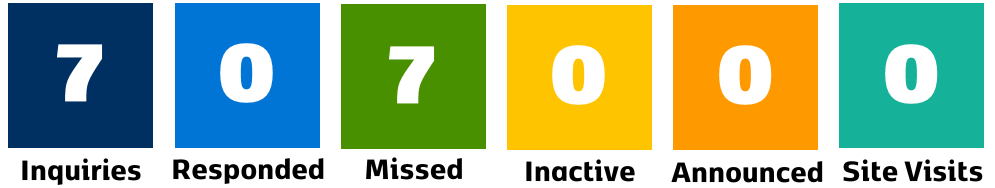
### February Unemployment Rate

**3.6%** ↓ from 4.1% in January  
Regional February Rate is 3.9%  
State February Rate is 3.7%

To learn more, visit the link below.

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

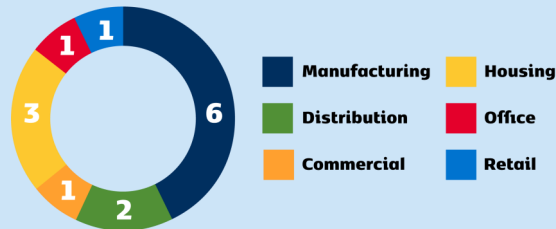
## Project Activity Stats



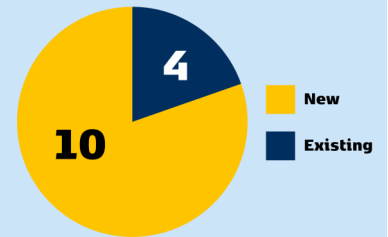
## Active Projects

**14**

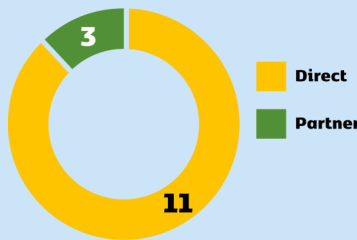
### Project Industries



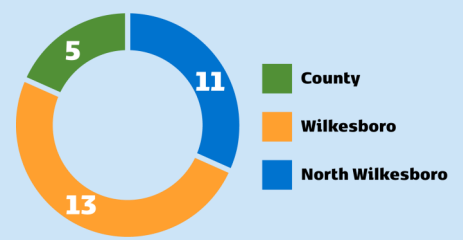
### Projects by Type



### Projects by Source



### Projects by Location



## Existing Business

Current and YTD Total  
Activity since July 1, 2024



**34**

**UNIQUE VISITS**  
92



**8**

**FOLLOW UP VISITS**  
15

**107 YTD**  
YTD Visit Goal: 130

## Program Stats



**7**

**PARTNER MEETINGS**  
78



**4**

**REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT**  
47



**44**

**SOLUTIONS PROVIDED**  
339

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.

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.

## Thank you to our Investors!

### Visionary Investor



### Strategic Investors



Cam Finley



Scott Nafe

Anonymous Donor

### Community Investors

**BUMGARNER SERVICES**

**Champion TOWING**



Jim Smoak

**MECI**  
— & Associates, Inc. —



**ECMD**  
Building Stronger.  
Together.

**NUMBERS 14:8**

**PIP**  
formerly known as World Wide Protective



### 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
- Prism Medical Products
- 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
- Energy United
- Holly Minton
- James River Equipment Company
- Joe and Debbie Johnston
- Ron Wilcox
- Select Steel Buildings
- WCC – Small Business Center

See the full list at [WilkesEDC.com](http://WilkesEDC.com)

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.



## Spring 2025 Entrepreneur Grant Program

**North Wilkesboro, N.C.** — Six local businesses were awarded grants through the Spring 2025 Entrepreneur Grant Program during the Wilkes Economic Development Corporation’s (EDC) Board Meeting on Thursday, April 17, 2025. Operated by Wilkes EDC, this program supports small business growth and development across Wilkes County. This grant cycle was made possible thanks to our sponsors: LEAP Forward Investors, Wilkes Community College Small Business Center, and Select Steel Buildings.

This cycle drew 21 applicants, each submitting a video pitch along with a business plan and financial summary—giving judges a well-rounded view of their vision and growth strategy. Six recipients were selected based on the potential impact of funding for their business and the sustainability of their proposed plans. A total of \$18,000 was awarded, supporting the growth and development of these local businesses. Applicants represented a range of industries, including Retail, Outdoor Recreation, Entertainment, and Health & Wellness.

**LEAP Forward**  
Local Expansion & Attraction Program



Spring 2025 Program Sponsors

**C’est La Vin, Wine & Provisions** — Owned by Paula Horton and Alyce Ratchford, C’est La Vin is a new wine bar and bottle shop offering a curated selection of wines, small bites, and locally sourced artisanal provisions in a sophisticated yet welcoming setting. They opened April 11th and are located at 718 Main Street in North Wilkesboro. C’est La Vin received \$2,500 toward signage, outdoor seating, and resin table tops. To learn more, email: [info@cestlavin.com](mailto:info@cestlavin.com)



**Hidden Brook Sporting Club** — Owned and operated by Kelly and Tracey Dickson, Hidden Brook Sporting Club is a semi-private outdoor destination focused on conservation, outdoor education, and inclusive sporting events. Visitors can enjoy sporting clays, Five Stand, archery, hiking, and biking. They are located at 2627 River Road in North Wilkesboro. The club is set to open on May 11th. \$3,000 was awarded for a point-of-sale (POS) hardware and software. Learn more: [HiddenBrookSportingClub.com](http://HiddenBrookSportingClub.com)



**Intuitive Eating and Bodywork** — Owned and operated by Taylor Moree, Intuitive Eating and Bodywork is a massage and nutrition practice that helps clients reduce pain, reset their nervous system, and support long-term healing through personalized care. The business was awarded \$2,500 toward a new point-of-sale (POS) system and waiting area improvements. Learn more: [IntuitiveEatingAndBodywork.com](http://IntuitiveEatingAndBodywork.com)



**Sprout + Play Indoor Playground** — Owned by Tyler Bauguess, Sprout + Play is a safe indoor play facility for children 8 years old and under featuring a three-story soft play structure, imaginative and educational activities, party rooms, and a café-style area for parents to relax or work. The facility will open late summer 2025, at 1410 Willow Lane, North Wilkesboro. The business was awarded \$2,100 for its POS system. To learn more, email: [tylerbauguess4@icloud.com](mailto:tylerbauguess4@icloud.com)



**The Charm Bar Company** — Located at 818 Main Street in downtown North Wilkesboro, The Charm Bar Company is run by Beth Vannoy, Ashley Frazier, and Christie Younger. The business offers custom charm necklaces, bracelets, bag charms, and hat accessories for both retail and wholesale customers. They received \$2,500 to support the development of an interactive online feature that allows customers to design and preview personalized jewelry, which will also streamline the company’s production process. Discover more: [TheCharmBarCompany.com](http://TheCharmBarCompany.com)



**Wilkes ProHealth** — Operated by Stephanie Walker and Jessica Steelman, Wilkes ProHealth is a primary healthcare provider dedicated to delivering accessible, high-quality, patient-centered care to the residents of Wilkes County. The practice was awarded \$5,400 to help upfit 12 exam rooms with new cabinets and sinks for their new location at 1534 West D Street in North Wilkesboro. Learn more: [WilkesProHealth.org](http://WilkesProHealth.org)



Learn more about the Spring 2025 Entrepreneur Grant Program winners, the judges who served, and how you or your organization can support future grant cycles by visiting [WilkesEDC.com](http://WilkesEDC.com).

## Wilkes EDC Visits STEAM Expo

On Wednesday, March 19th, Wilkes County Schools, in partnership with Charlotte Motor Speedway, hosted the annual STEAM Expo at North Wilkesboro Speedway—an event designed to inspire the next generation through hands-on activities in Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM).

This year's Expo welcomed over 1,000 students from Wilkes County's four middle schools. More than 43 local and regional exhibitors—nearly doubling last year's total—offered interactive booths that connected real-world industry applications to STEAM concepts. Students engaged in activities highlighting robotics, mechanical engineering, 3D design, aerodynamics, physics, and more—all while getting a close-up look at how STEAM drives innovation across industries.

Wilkes EDC was proud to assist in marketing this event to Wilkes County industries, helping connect schools with businesses interested in participating as exhibitors. This collaboration ensured students experienced a wide range of career pathways and technologies right here in Wilkes.

As the STEAM Expo continues to grow, so does the need for sustainable support. With initial funding no longer available, Wilkes County Schools is actively exploring creative solutions and pursuing grants to help keep this experience free and impactful for students. Community and industry involvement will play a key role in making that possible. If you or your organization are interested in supporting future STEAM Expo events, we encourage you to contact [Mr. David Johnson](#) to learn how you can help keep this opportunity thriving for Wilkes County students.

Thank you to Mr. David Johnson (Director of Career and Technical Education), Emily Styers (Career Development Coordinator), Melissa Stirewalt, and Babette Huitt (STEAM Program Directors at Charlotte Motor Speedway) for organizing another incredible event focused on future-ready learning. View more from the event by visiting: [Middle School STEAM Expo | Wilkes County Schools](#)



## LeeAnn Nixon Presents at Wilkes Women in Leadership Brunch

On March 25th, LeeAnn Nixon, President of Wilkes EDC, was the featured speaker at the Wilkes Chamber of Commerce's Wilkes Women in Leadership brunch, held at the Holiday Inn in Wilkesboro.

LeeAnn spoke about the vital role Wilkes EDC plays in driving economic development through the retention and expansion of existing businesses, the recruitment of new companies, and real estate development to support Wilkes County's continued growth. She also highlighted the importance of collaboration between Wilkes EDC, the Wilkes Chamber of Commerce, and the Wilkes TDA in advancing shared goals for a thriving local economy.

Her presentation, "Do You Know Your Why?", drew inspiration from *The Path* by Laurie Beth Jones—a book focused on helping individuals define their mission statement for both work and life. LeeAnn encouraged attendees to reflect on their own "why" and the personal mission that fuels their impact.

Thank you to the Wilkes Chamber of Commerce for hosting this empowering event and to Amy Blair with Blair Properties, LLC / Allen Tate for sponsoring the gathering. It was a meaningful morning of connection, reflection, and inspiration for the growing community of women leaders in Wilkes County.

To attend events like this one, visit [Wilkes Chamber of Commerce](#) and consider becoming a member. Membership opens the door to valuable networking opportunities, workshops, and leadership programs throughout the year.



## Spring Job Fair at Wilkes Community College Sees Strong Attendance

On April 3rd, the 2025 Spring Job Fair—hosted at the Walker Center at Wilkes Community College—welcomed 273 attendees, exceeding last year’s turnout of 244 and marking one of the highest participation totals in recent memory. Wilkes EDC was proud to support this annual event by helping promote it to our local industries and the broader community.

This year’s fair attracted exhibitors from across the region, providing attendees with a wide range of career opportunities and industry insights. Thanks to the collective efforts of community resource partners, volunteers, and the continued support of the Walker Center staff, this event remains a valuable touchpoint for students, job seekers, and employers alike.

For those who were unable to attend this year’s event, Wilkes EDC encourages connecting with [NCWorks of Wilkes](#)—a year-round resource offering monthly on-site job fairs and support services. NCWorks continues to be a vital connection point for workforce development in our area.

Thank you to everyone who helped make this event a success—and to all who continue to invest in the growth and strength of Wilkes County’s workforce!



## CraftMaster Furniture Celebrates 10 Years in Wilkesboro

On March 27th, CraftMaster Furniture Inc. marked a major milestone—celebrating 10 years of operation at its Wilkesboro facility. The anniversary event honored a decade of craftsmanship, steady growth, and community partnership. Company leaders were joined by Wilkes County and Town of Wilkesboro officials—including County Chair Shirley Randleman and Wilkesboro Mayor Dale Isom—along with representatives from the Wilkes Chamber of Commerce and Wilkes EDC, all gathered to recognize the plant’s essential role in CraftMaster’s success and continued impact in the region.

CraftMaster President Alex Reeves and Senior Vice President Roy Bearden spoke at the celebration, emphasizing the value the Wilkesboro plant brings to the company.

The Wilkesboro facility currently employs 33 team members and is responsible for all sewing operations for sofas, loveseats, chairs, and sectionals produced both at this plant and at the company’s main manufacturing site in Taylorsville. Founded in Taylorsville in 1972, CraftMaster continues to be a key player in North Carolina’s furniture industry.

The company is hiring at the Wilkesboro plant. Those interested in joining the team can learn more and apply here: [CraftMaster Job Application](#).



# Why Wilkes?

We value our  
past and welcome  
our future



We Build a Strong  
Workforce

We Lead Rural  
Broadband in NC



We Travel  
With Ease



Learn more at  
[WilkesEDC.com](http://WilkesEDC.com)

