



COUNTY PROFILE

Catawba County is a mid-sized urban county of nearly 160,000 located in a valley just east of North Carolina's Ridge Mountains. The 18th largest county in the state, Catawba County is host to diverse cultural heritage and thriving industry. National and regional publications have recognized the County and its cities for quality of life and family friendly atmosphere.

Catawba County was formed in 1842 by an act of the North Carolina General Assembly that divided Lincoln County to make services more accessible for citizens. The County was named for the river and the Catawba Indians who foraged in the valley prior to European settlement. The development of the County and its 412 square miles is such that although it contains a large urban area, it also contains a sizable amount of agricultural, commercial, and industrial.

Located just north of bustling Charlotte, Catawba County's three lakes and its place in the foothills of the Blue Ridge exert a strong influence on the climate and ambiance. The County is sheltered by mountains that moderate winter temperatures and supply refreshing summer breezes. The native woodlands and shimmering lakes provide a striking backdrop to the growing cities and variety of recreational opportunities.

Catawba County has a total population of 155,056 with eight cities and towns: Hickory, Newton, Conover, Long View, Maiden, Claremont, Catawba, and Brookford. Citizens enjoy a high quality of life at the center of the region's retail shopping, entertainment, and cultural amenities. County residents take pride in the region's unique history of local craftsmanship, including furniture manufacturing, pottery, and art.

About County Government

The County adopted the Board-Manager form of government and organization in 1937. Under this form of government, the County is governed by a popularly elected five-member Board of Commissioners who serve staggered four-year terms in even-year elections. The major duties of the Board include: assessing the needs of the County and establishing programs and services to meet those needs, adopting an annual balanced budget, establishing the annual property tax rate, appointing members to County boards and commissions, regulating land use and zoning outside municipalities, enacting local ordinances, and adopting policies concerning County operations. A County Manager, appointed by the Board of Commissioners, serves as the County's chief executive officer. The County Manager is responsible for implementing policies set by the Board of Commissioners and for directing, coordinating, and supervising the daily activities of County government. The County provides a full range of governmental services including administration, human services, parks and recreation, education, community development, public works, and public safety.

Board of Commissioners



Randy Isenhower
Board Chair



Barbara Beatty
Board Vice-Chair



Kitty Barnes
Board Member



Sherry Butler
Board Member



Dan Hunsucker
Board Member

LAND AREA OF CATAWBA COUNTY

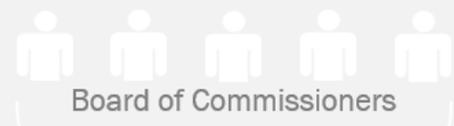


RANK IN SIZE STATE OF NC



BOARD-MANAGER

County Board of Commissioners consists of five elected members who choose a Board Chair and Vice Chair. The Board adopts and amends County laws, approves the County's budget, establishes policy, and appoints citizens to boards and commissions. The County's day to day operations are administered by the County Manager, who is appointed by the Board.



Community Comparisons

Catawba County is part of the greater Hickory-Lenoir-Morganton Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) which consists of four counties in the Catawba Valley region of western North Carolina: Catawba, Alexander, Burke, and Caldwell Counties. The following section provides a perspective on the relative populations of the other counties in the MSA and surrounding region as well as key comparative cost of service data:

Population (2016 Census Estimate)		Operating Budget (FY 2016/17) \$ Millions	
Alexander County	37,428	Alexander County	\$38.3
Lincoln County	81,168	Caldwell County	\$91.1
Caldwell County	81,449	Lincoln County	\$95.6
Burke County	88,851	Burk County	\$102.4
Catawba County	156,459	Union County	\$164.9
Iredell County	172,916	Iredell County	\$190.3
Cabarrus County	201,590	Cabarrus County	\$220.5
Gaston County	216,965	Catawba County	\$252.8
Union County	226,606	Gaston County	\$284.3
Mecklenburg County	1,054,835	Mecklenburg County	\$1,197.5
Property Tax Rate (07/2016)	Per \$100 assessed value	Land Area	Sq. Miles
Iredell County	\$0.5275	Alexander County	259.99
Catawba County	\$0.575	Lincoln County	297.94
Lincoln County	\$0.611	Gaston County	356.03
Caldwell County	\$0.63	Cabarrus County	361.75
Burke County	\$0.68	Catawba County	415.74
Cabarrus County	\$0.70	Caldwell County	471.57
Union County	\$0.7665	Burke County	507.10
Alexander County	\$0.79	Mecklenburg County	523.84
Mecklenburg County	\$0.8157	Iredell County	573.83
Gaston County	\$0.87	Union County	631.52



TOTAL NUMBER OF HOUSING UNITS

67,820

PROPERTY TAX



Total Tax Rate (per \$100 assessed value)

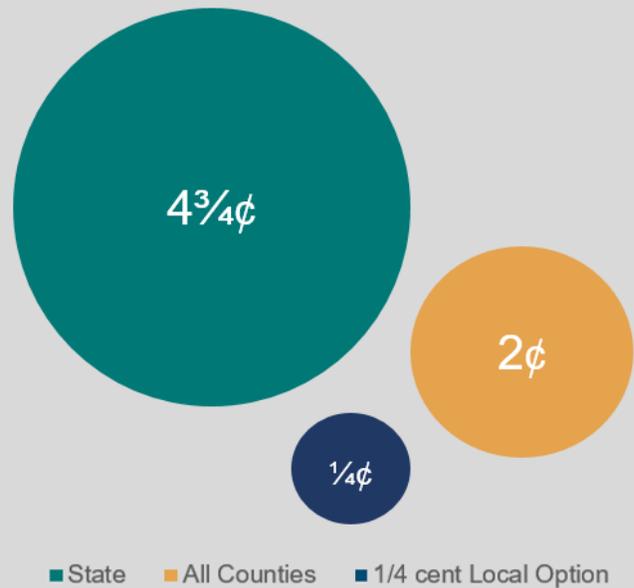
\$0.5750

Average Assessed Value of County Single-Family Home

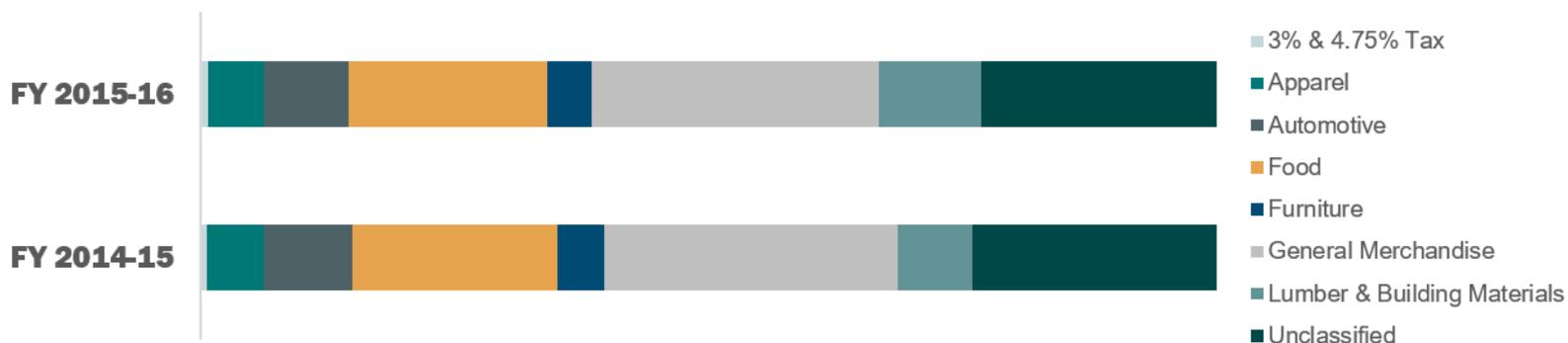
\$128,132

SALES TAX RATES

Catawba County receives 2¼ cents of the total sales tax rate of 7 cents. It shares proceeds from the first 2 cents with municipalities on a per capita basis, and the remaining ¼ cent, approved by County voters in 2007, is primarily dedicated to supporting the Justice/Public Safety Center expansion, public school operations, economic development, and water & sewer infrastructure.



SALES TAX BY SECTOR



Population

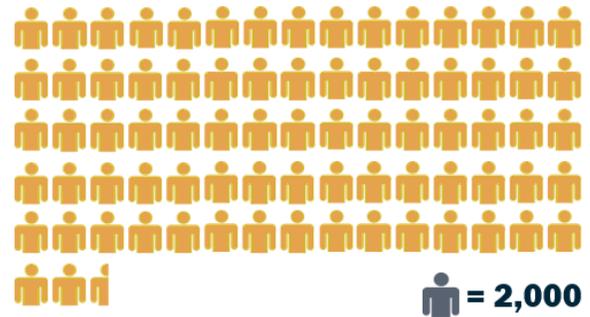
With a median age of 40.5 years, the County is facing the challenges that arise from an aging population in conjunction with little to no population growth over the last several years. At the same time the County's median household income was \$44,376 in 2015, which was \$2,492 and \$9,513 less than the respective state and national medians. Just over 15 percent of the County's population is at or below the poverty line. There is also less diversity than the national average with approximately 15 percent of the community identifying themselves as an ethnicity other than white.

Education

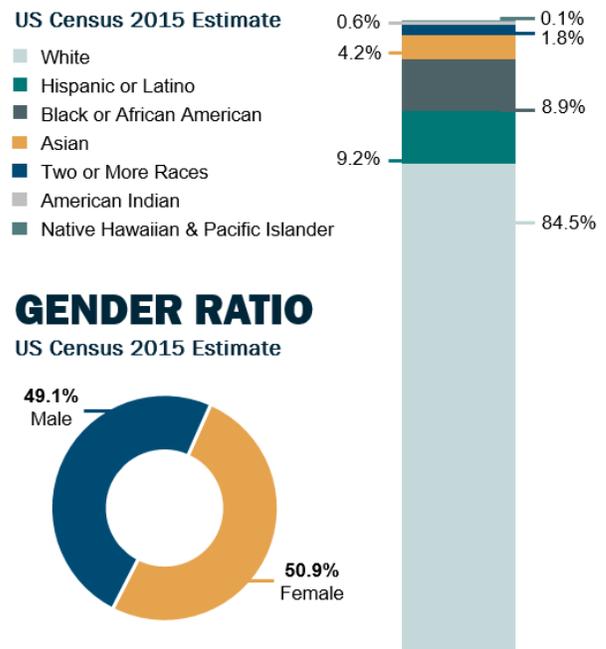
Catawba County has 44 public schools across three school systems with approximately 24,000 combined students. The largest system, Catawba County Schools, is also the County's largest employer. Over the past 10 years, the number of enrolled students in Catawba County's public schools has decreased 5.3 percent from 25,245 in 2007 to 23,893 in 2017. During this same period, the average 4-year graduation rate for the three systems combined increased from 80.4 percent to 89.4 percent, exceeding the statewide rate of 85.8 percent. Individually, Newton-Conover City Schools had the highest graduation rate in the State for the second consecutive year at 93.5 percent, Catawba County Schools' rate was 89.7 percent, and Hickory Public Schools' was 84.7 percent—the highest in the history of the school system for the third year in a row. All three public districts were above the State average in achieving measurable objectives.

POPULATION 155,056

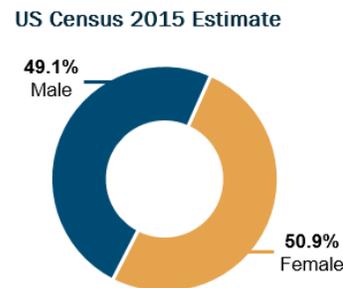
US Census 2015 Estimate



POPULATION DIVERSITY



GENDER RATIO



* Percentages add to over 100% because Hispanic individuals may be of any race and are reported in multiple categories where applicable.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

US Census 2015 Estimate

82.6%

High School Graduate or Higher



21.7%

Bachelor's Degree Or Higher

Catawba Valley Community College (CVCC), which offers over 60 programs of study with one- and two-year degree programs, a two-year college transfer program, and continuing education classes is located in the County. CVCC was recognized as 1 of only 4 of the 58 community colleges in the State to achieve Excellence Level on 4 or more of the 8 performance measures for student success.

The County is also home to Lenoir-Rhyne University, a 126-year-old liberal arts institution offering students over 50 undergraduate majors and 25 graduate programs in five schools of study: Arts and Sciences, Health Sciences, Education and Human Services, Professional and Mathematical Studies, and Theology.

PARTNERING TO SUPPORT EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

While funding public schools is primarily a State responsibility, approximately 44 cents of every local property and sales tax dollar is dedicated to current expense (operating), capital, and debt service needs of the three public school systems and CVCC. Recognizing the fundamental importance of K-12 education and the need for lifelong learning and skills development, Catawba County in collaboration with the three public school systems, Catawba Valley Community College (CVCC), the Economic Development Corporation (EDC), and Chamber of Commerce, recently conceived of and formalized a partnership agreement around a joint educational – economic development initiative named K-64, which aims to prepare students of all ages with the skills needed to compete in the global economy with a focus on six priority areas: 1- to-world technology, character development,

tech-savvy educators, work-based learning, employer engagement, and career adaptability. The initiative builds on what's already working in Catawba County by expanding and implementing model programs throughout the local education system in collaboration with local employers and community partners. K-64 is governed by a 12-member board of directors comprised of both private and public sector representatives and managed by CVCC. Catawba County has committed \$1.3 million for each of the next two years in investment capital for the K-64 initiative. Additionally, the budget increases investment in current expense by 3 percent or \$47 per pupil for public schools and 4.4% or \$178,596 for CVCC.

Building upon the core strengths of the local economy, Catawba County has made significant strides in preparing its workforce with the skills to meet current and future labor needs of local employers. With employment continuing to rise, cross-sector partnerships between local governments, the business community, public educational institutions, and industry specific resources have institutionalized a full-spectrum approach to aligning local talent with available jobs. Programs have been designed to target high-school students as well as college-aged students and adult learners to ensure the County's workforce is poised to help local businesses thrive. Several key initiatives that have emerged from these partnerships are highlighted below:

The ACT Career Readiness Certificate allows job seekers to show prospective employers that they possess basic skills required for today's workplace. This certification is recognized by 101 employers in the MSA, and the number is growing. Every public high school within Catawba

County offers the certification. The Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board has worked to certify Catawba County as a Work Ready Community, which positions the County to quantify the skill levels of its workforce, identify gaps, and develop plans to address those gaps. Based on this information, educators, local businesses, and governments build career pathways aligned to the needs of business and industry. The County has achieved 99 percent of ACT's National Career Readiness Certificate goals.

The Catawba Valley Furniture Academy, housed within CVCC, is an industry-driven training program. Designed in partnership with 5 major local furniture manufacturers, it prepares students for high-demand skilled positions, in a proactive strategy to anticipate and meet private businesses' workforce needs. The program varies from 9 to 18 months in length, depending on the area of specialization (Pattern Making, Manual Cutting, Inside Upholstery, Sewing, etc.). Since January 2014, 100 people have earned furniture manufacturing certificates and secured jobs at participating companies—Century Furniture, LEE Industries, Lexington Home Brands, Sherrill Furniture, and Vanguard Furniture—upon completing the program. In acknowledgement of this program's success, the Furniture Academy earned a 2015 Governor's Award for Excellence.

The Furniture Academy has been such a success that CVCC moved the program to a 38,000 square foot building in Newton in December 2016 with the help of a \$200,000 commitment from local furniture companies and \$675,000 from the County. The expanded location allows the Academy to serve up to 66 students per session, more than doubling its previous capacity. On



average, there were 100 people on the waiting list at any given time, demonstrating the strong employment demand for these skilled industry positions. As employment opportunities continue to grow and long-tenured skilled workers approach retirement, job training programs like the Furniture Academy prepare future employees to meet businesses' competency needs, enabling them to maintain continuity, high productivity and product quality.

The Catawba Valley Manufacturing Academy, modeled after the Furniture Academy, is an industry-driven training course designed with input and expertise from 29 local manufacturers. It prepares students for high-demand manufacturing positions with the region's largest employers. Graduates are fast-tracked for open positions with sponsoring companies, earning Career Readiness Certificates to signify competence in required skill areas and ensuring manufacturers have ready access to the critical labor force they require. The inaugural session began in October 2015, to date there are 109 graduates with a 98% employment rate in highly skilled jobs such as machinists and maintenance technicians.

The Manufacturing Solutions Center (MSC) is a branch of CVCC which focuses on helping manufacturers in all 50 states and around the world increase sales, improve product quality and production, and create and retain jobs. To help manufacturers increase sales, MSC develops marketing materials and works to identify new or

expanded export and marketing opportunities. To improve product quality, the MSC has an accredited ISO/IEC 17025 testing laboratory at its 10,000 square foot manufacturing incubator where microbiological, thermal, and mechanical testing for textiles is performed. The Center aids entrepreneurs in transforming concepts into finished marketable products, connecting the dots for entrepreneurs by bringing together under one umbrella all of the resources needed to successfully launch a product.



MSC has facilitated development of such innovative projects as wearable technology that regulates blood circulation, delivers active ingredients to the skin through fabric, and integrates QR codes into the material so it can be scanned and tracked through the production process. Future product possibilities are staggering, with the potential for everything from caffeine-infused driving gloves to sleeves that deliver heart medicine in the prescribed dose. MSC has established itself as a regional expert in prototype development using 3D printing.

At America's Competitiveness Forum in 2014, the MSC was recognized by the US Department of Commerce as one of the top economic job creation programs. MSC has worked with such nationally known companies as Keen, Merrell, 3M, Nike, Hanes Brand, LL Bean, Lands End, Target, Polartec, Boeing, and Ralph Lauren. **Since 2012, MSC's direct economic impact has totaled \$43.7 million, assisting in the**

creation of 346 jobs and the retention of 268 jobs. Over the last 2 years, the MSC has helped over 1,200 entrepreneurs and worked with companies in all 50 states and 32 countries to conduct product testing or prototyping, or to find domestically-made production inputs.

Apprenticeship Catawba is a training pipeline for high school students. Based on the German apprenticeship model and accredited by the North Carolina Department of Commerce, this highly competitive 4-year program ensures students are career-ready at graduation by providing 8,000 hours of paid on-the-job training that counts towards an Associates' Degree in Mechatronics Engineering Technology or Computer Integrated Machining Technology from CVCC. Additionally, students earn Journeyman Certificates upon graduation, qualifying them for skilled trades such as Mechanical Maintenance Technician, Electrical Maintenance Technician, Mechatronics Technician, Tool & Die Maker, and Computer Numerically Controlled Machinist, among others. Not only do these high-performing students leave the program with degrees, but they do so without incurring any college debt and employed full-time by the sponsoring company, earning at least \$34,000 per year and opening up pathways to jobs with earning potential of \$65,000 to \$86,000. Last year 21 students from the County's three public school systems were



selected through a competitive process to participate in this program, along with seven area companies: Aptar, Continental, GKN, Sarstedt, Technibilt, Tenowo, and ZF.

The Lenoir-Rhyne University Health Sciences Center is a collaborative effort between the University, Catawba County, City of Hickory, Catawba County EDC, Catawba Valley Medical Center (CVMC), and Frye Regional Medical Center. The Center, which is open to 48 new students a year and employs 5 to 6 full-time faculty and staff, houses a new Physician Assistant program that began classes in January 2016. The Center is working to establish clinical training centers for program participants and provide high quality internship and student practitioner opportunities. Feasibility studies will be conducted on future expansions for Doctorate-degree programs for nurse practitioners, pharmacy, optometry, physical therapy and, ultimately, osteopathic medicine. Catawba County committed \$100,000 at a \$20,000 per year for 5 years toward the project, with the final payment scheduled for Fiscal Year 2018/19.



**LENOIR~RHYNE
UNIVERSITY**

Local Economy

Catawba County is part of the Hickory Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), which includes Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, and Catawba counties. Recent economic indicators show consistent improvement in Catawba County's economy, with positive gains in employment, unemployment, retail sales, and tourism.

The retail and employment hub of the Hickory-Lenoir-Morganton Metropolitan Statistical Area, Catawba County has successfully diversified and balanced its traditional manufacturing base of furniture, textiles, and communications through comprehensive economic development efforts to recruit new non-manufacturing sectors. Its prime location—just 60 minutes away from the City of Charlotte and the Appalachian resort areas of Boone and Blowing Rock—adds to Catawba County's desirability.

The County's primary employers are a result of the changing economic environment. As an employer, the County's three school systems along with the two medical centers showcase the strength of the local Educational and Health Services sectors. In regards to the County's effort to diversify the tax base, Apple, Inc. and Target, two relative newcomers to the County, have added significant heft to the tax base while also aiding the County's resiliency.

EMPLOYMENT REBOUNDS, WITH UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG THE LOWEST IN NORTH CAROLINA

Employment figures in the MSA are on the rise, showing 2,400 more jobs in March 2017 than the same period one year ago. Another bright spot for the economy is that job openings continue to be available, with 5,732 job opening advertised online through NCWorks in March 2017, according to the NC Department of Commerce Labor Market Overview.

The average monthly unemployment rate in calendar year 2016 was 4.8 percent, and dropped to 4.4 percent in of March 2017. This unemployment rate is among the 26

lowest in the State and lower than State's 4.7 and national 4.6 percent rates.

STRONG RETAIL SALES & TOURISM PERFORMANCE INDICATE SUSTAINED RECOVERY

Catawba County remains a retail magnet for the region, capturing 60.3 percent of the \$3.5 billion in retail sales from the four-county MSA, while accounting for only 42.7 percent of the population. Taxable sales are 10 percent higher to date than Fiscal Year 2015/16, on top of a healthy 8 percent last year. This is the eighth year in a row that revenues have increased.

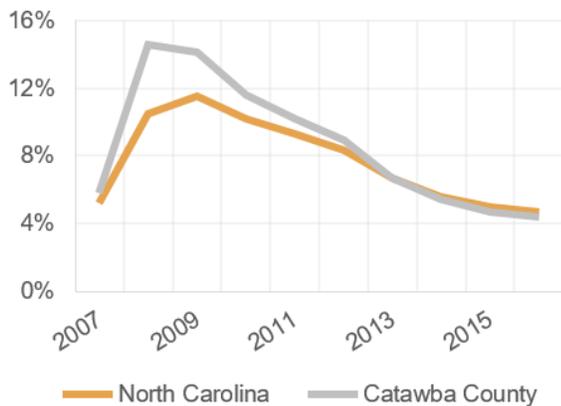


Retail Sales
NC Dept. of Revenue 2015-16
\$4.0
BILLION



Unemployment
NC Commerce March 2017
4.4%

Unemployment in Catawba County is at an eleven year low.



TOP 10 EMPLOYERS

Source: Catawba County 2016 CAFR

	Catawba County School Systems	2,043
	Catawba Valley Medical Center	1,986
	Commscope, inc.	1,609
	Frye Regional Medical Ctr.	1,600
	Catawba County Government	1,120
	Corning Cable Systems	1,000
	HSM Solutions	925
	Heritage Home Group LLC	861
	Pierre Foods	827
	Sherrill Furniture Company	775

Statewide, the County ranks 18th in population but 12th highest in taxable sales. These figures cement Catawba County's position as a regional retail magnet, with furniture, automotive, restaurants, and shopping options that draw visitors from surrounding communities and generate taxable sales within the County. The State's recent extension of sales tax to certain services including tickets for entertainment events has positively impacted the County's taxable sales activity.



Catawba County ranks 16th in the State for tourism revenue. This increase was the second highest percent gain of the top 25 tourism counties in North Carolina in 2015. This economic sector is buttressed by the presence of a wide range of cultural amenities that appeal to all audiences:

- Catawba Science Center
- Green Room Community Theatre
- Hickory Choral Society
- Hickory Community Theatre
- Hickory Crawdads Baseball Team
- Hickory Metro Convention Center
- Hickory Motor Speedway
- Hickory Museum of Art
- Newton-Conover Auditorium
- Newton Foothills Folk Art Festival
- Oktoberfest in Downtown Hickory
- Western Piedmont Symphony

Economic Development

Recently, Catawba County has taken a proactive, aggressive approach in charting its economic future through targeted expansion. In the past few years, job gains have been made as a result of significant expansion projects – funded both privately and in partnership with the public sector - occurring in a wide range of industries from traditional manufacturing to high-tech. This mix of public-private partnership and private investment underscores the County's balanced economic health and resiliency.

To further bolster these efforts, the County continues to actively recruit and attract targeted national and international companies with a focus on higher-wage industries like Information, Emerging & Alternative Energy, and Advanced Manufacturing, the latter which leverages the County's skilled workforce.

Thanks to the efforts of the EDC, over \$2 billion in investment were announced over the past 10 years and 6,645 jobs.

Calendar Year	Business Investment	Jobs
2016	\$199,575,188	490
2015	\$488,755,982	420
2014	\$137,374,352	320
2013	\$22,704,651	498
2012	\$46,055,129	312
2011	\$54,604,000	710
2010	\$25,267,000	808
2009	\$1,013,790,000	984
2008	\$34,301,843	1,410
2007	\$9,126,965	693
10-Year Total	\$2,031,555,110	6,645

Of 10-year total, \$200 million 490 jobs were announced this year, expected to manifest over the next 5 years. A sampling of the companies committing to deepening investments or adding jobs in Catawba County include

PARTNERING TO STIMULATE GROWTH

Catawba County is committed to working with the private sector, municipalities, and the EDC to attract new businesses, development, and jobs and to supporting existing business and industry through the delivery of high quality government services supported by a low and stable property tax rate. Recognizing the need to be proactive and take actions to stimulate economic growth, Catawba County invests in the following partnerships and strategies:

2nd Claremont Spec Building

In 2014, Catawba County, the City of Claremont, the EDC's Committee of 100 and Matthews Construction combined efforts to construct and market a spec building aimed at attracting value-added industry to Catawba County by addressing the deficit of move-in ready industrial space. The first spec building was sold earlier this year to DAE Systems resulting in \$7.255 million in investment and 53 new jobs. Based on the success of the program, the Board of Commissioners approved a second spec building in cooperation with the City of Claremont with an annual carrying cost of \$45,000 for three years at the March 27, 2017 meeting.

Park 1764 is a 170-acre Class A Business Park being developed jointly by Catawba County and the City of Hickory. The Park is being developed incrementally over time in an effort to create job opportunities in

INVESTMENT HIGHLIGHTS



Automotive parts manufacturer **GKN Driveline** announced plans to expand its Maiden manufacturing facility creating 143 new jobs by the end of 2019 and invest more than \$110 million in this location.

DAE Systems agreed to lease the Claremont Spec Building and relocated all aspects of operations, investing a minimum of \$7,255,000 and creating 53 new jobs over 5 years.



Corning Incorporated committed to expanding its optical cable production plant in Hickory, investing \$30 million and creating 105 new jobs over the next five years.

US Conec creating 26 new production and 16 new engineering and HQ-support jobs, investing \$20M over the next five years.



Prysmian Group, a global cable producer serving the energy and telecom industries, investing \$20 million and creating 50 new jobs over three years.

Dalco Nonwovens added a new manufacturing line at their facility in Conover investing \$4 million and creating 8 jobs.



Minelli Group S.p.A., an international leader in developing and producing specialty wood products, will be investing more than \$2M in new equipment and creating 12 new jobs.

Peoples Bank will expand its headquarters investing at least \$3.5 million and creating 25 new jobs and retaining 75 jobs.



Temprano Techvestors supports tech sales, marketing, support, and engineering jobs. Plans to invest \$520,000 and create 21 jobs over 3 years with an additional 54 jobs likely within five.

advanced light manufacturing facilities, technical operations, and corporate headquarters. The City of Hickory and Catawba County have each committed \$547,385 towards installation of a sewer line, the development of a signature entrance along Startown Road, relocation of the entrance southward onto the property, and installation of landscape berms and fencing. The City has applied for a grant to help fund the project and the County has authorized its funding to be used toward the required match. The vision is to have amenities such as community walking/cycling trails, community gardens, silos, and open green space to accentuate the site's character, and to appeal to business prospects in a corporate, up-scale environment where light manufacturing, engineering, and innovation co-exist and augment the greater community.



NC Data Center Corridor

Building on Catawba County's existing asset base related to fiber optic cable production and emerging technology, the County – in partnership with neighboring local governments and the Economic Development Corporation – has had success in attracting data centers to the community. (This strategy leverages the presence of other major data centers in surrounding communities – both Facebook and Google have data centers in the Piedmont region.) Most significantly, in 2009 the County enticed Apple, Inc. to commit to construct a data center facility on a 183-acre site within the County. This site, located in the town of Maiden, is Apple's only



east coast operations facility and its data center headquarters that houses its iCloud suite of services (storage, word processing, presentation software, Find My iPhone, etc.). With an investment of \$1 billion, 150 new jobs and 250 additional contract workers to operate the facility, this was the largest economic development project in the history of the County and the State. Apple is currently building another 114,300 sq. ft. data center in Maiden. Apple, Inc., now the County's largest taxpayer, has expanded its presence into the solar industry with a 170-acre site adjacent to the data center, a 200-acre site nearby in Conover, and a 105-acre site in Claremont. Solar energy from the first site is used to power the data center, making it the largest end-user solar farm in the country.

In 2012, Bed Bath & Beyond, Inc. built a \$36.8 million data center in the County, located in a 48,000 square foot facility in the Claremont Industrial Park. The company committed to creating a minimum of 7 jobs by the end of 2018, and they are half-way to that goal.

Catawba County, the Cities of Conover and Hickory, and the Towns of Maiden and Catawba partnered to build the NC Data Campus, a 70-acre multi-jurisdictional business park. The partnership secured a \$2.6 million Community Development Block Grant from the NC Department of Commerce to build up to three shovel-ready sites marketed primarily for data center recruitment. Catawba County's share of the project stands at 57 percent. These efforts will also further enhance the region's efforts to create a cluster of data centers known as the NC Data Center Corridor, leveraging the presence of

existing nearby regional data centers to solidify the region's reputation as one that embraces innovation and high-tech industry.

OTHER SUPPORT

Catawba County contributes funding for the Chamber of Commerce's Edison Project, designed to identify, support, and reward new startup small businesses in the County. Entrepreneurs with viable business ideas and associated plans submit them for consideration and review by judges, competing with other entrepreneurs for economic incentives and startup assistance.

Edison Project Wall of Fame

2016 First Place, PushNPutt: PushNPutt Golf Products, LLC, aims to change the way golfers practice putting through its patented, innovative flagsticks that automatically raise golf balls out of the cut and back onto the putting surface. The products are 100% made in the USA at Image Industries in Newton, NC.



2015 First Place, BlingBook: Blingbook is a unique modular jewelry binder system to organize, store and transport your jewelry collection in a tangle free and customizable way. It simplifies and de-clutters. Basic at its Best!

2014 First Place, Collegiate Kids Books: Collegiate Kids Books brings you interactive, touch and feel children's books featuring school mascots, beloved school traditions and well-known school landmarks. Using moveable parts, a variety of textured materials, scratch and sniff experiences, custom colorful artwork, and a simple rhyming cadence, these books are

sure to turn your children into enthusiastic fans.

2013 First Place, The MESH: The MESH is a new media online network, designed to produce and deliver unique content to computers, mobile phones, iPods, iPads, and any other device connected to the Internet. Just like a traditional television network, The MESH has a series of programs and "shows" on a variety of topics... everything ranging from business to education, music to movies, sports to gossip. The difference is you can watch or listen to what you want, when you want, and where you want.

2012 First Place, Tileware Products: David and his business partner Mike Freedel with Tileware Products have developed a new fastening system for shower accessories installed in the tile mortar. They have manufacturing and distribution in progress and are looking to expand on their already working business model with investor assistance.

2011 First Place, GoPriceDrive.com: GoPriceDrive.com is a confidential website service for car buyers that eliminates car purchase negotiations and makes dealers compete and openly bid for business, ensuring customers receive the absolute best price.

Catawba County sponsors the Chamber of Commerce's "Leadership Catawba" program, which brings together upcoming local leaders from a variety of organizations for a 6-month leadership training program, providing participants with information about the social, economic, and political dynamics of the community, and encouraging them to



get involved meaningfully as an element of community leadership succession planning.

Catawba County continues to support the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) and the Chamber of Commerce Visitor Information Center. Both organizations bring attention and money to the local economy through the promotion of conventions, conferences, local heritage events, and tourism.

Medical & Healthcare

Well positioned to meet the future medical and health care needs of its citizens, the County is home to a prospering medical and healthcare community and two large medical centers. Catawba Valley Medical Center (CVMC) is the largest not-for-profit community hospital in the region and the County's second largest employer. While technically owned by Catawba County, CVMC is completely self-supporting. Based on the quality and consistency of medical care provided by the facility, CVMC has recently received multiple awards, including:

- Women's Choice Award - Best 100 Hospitals for Patient Experience (each year from 2012 through 2016)
- Women's Choice Award – one of America's Best Hospitals for Orthopedics (each year from 2013 to 2016)
- Women's Choice Award - one of America's Best Hospitals in Obstetrics (2013 to 2016) Women's Choice Award - one of America's Best Hospitals for Bariatric Surgery (2016)
- Women's Choice Award - one of American's Best Hospitals in Cancer Care (2014 and 2016)
- First hospital in the State to receive four Magnet designations from

American NursCredentiaing Center (2014)

- A 2016 Premier QUEST award winner for high-value healthcare • Comprehensive Center for Metabolic & Bariatric Surgery from the American College of Surgeons (2016)

Frye Regional Medical Center, the County's third largest employer and seventh largest taxpayer, is a private hospital that has served the community for over 100 years. The Heart Center at Frye is home to the most extensive array of cardiology services in the region, and was the only regional facility offering 24/7 full-service cardiology and on-site heart surgery until 2014. In 2015, Frye Regional Medical Center was acquired by Duke LifePoint. Duke LifePoint combines Duke University Health System's unparalleled expertise, quality and patient safety with LifePoint Health's financial resource and operational experience. Like CVMC, this hospital has also received numerous awards for the quality of its services.

- Women's Choice Award for Excellence in Obstetrics (2014 and 2015) • Women's Choice Award for Excellence in Heart Care (2015)
- Women's Choice Award for Excellence in Breast Centers (2015)
- American Heart Association/American Stroke Association's recipient of Get With the Guidelines-Stroke Gold Plus Quality Achievement Award (2015)
- Ranked #1 in North Carolina and in top 5% of US hospitals for cardiac surgery and patient safety by Health Grades, a leading independent healthcare ratings organization