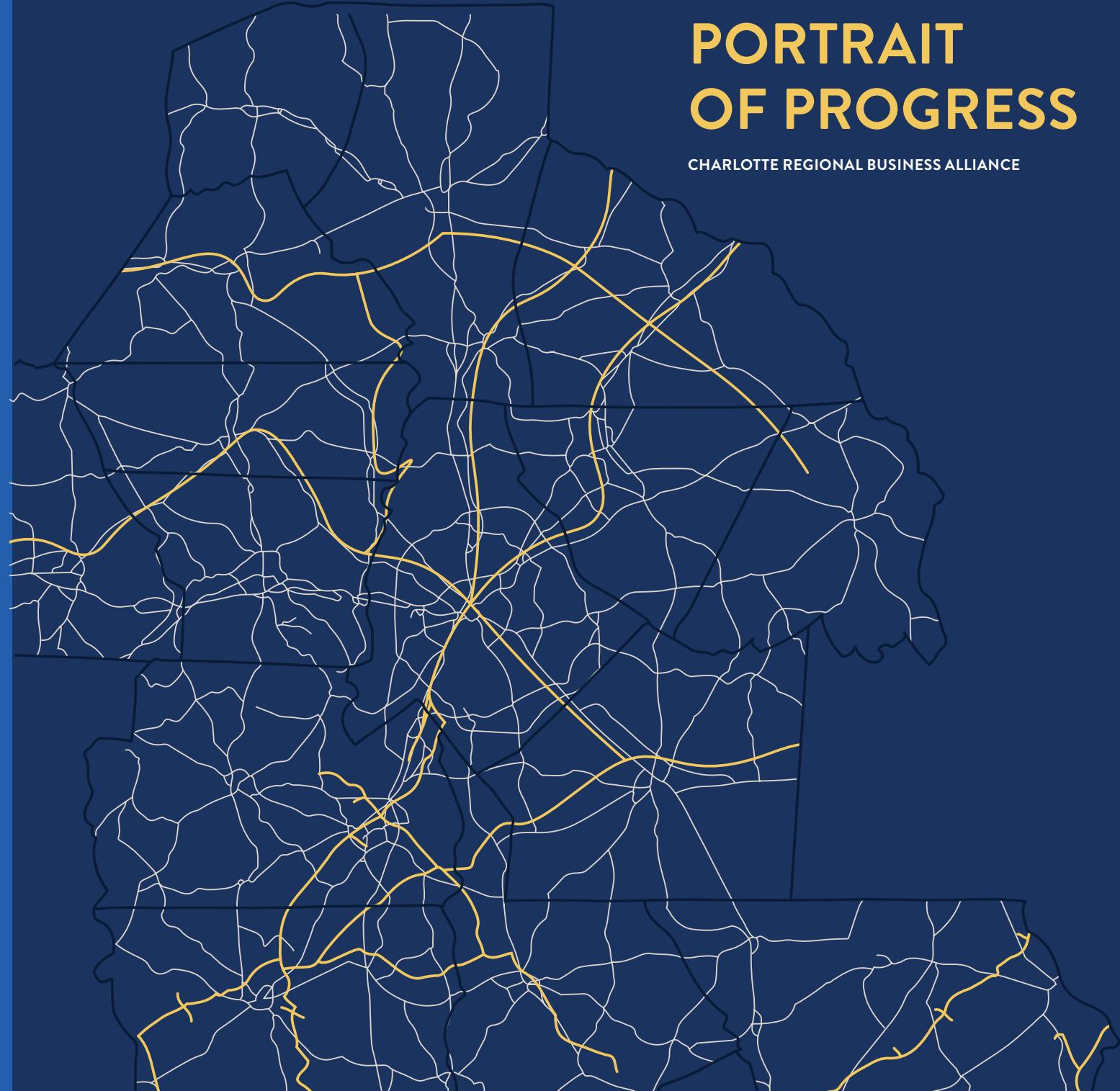




BUILT FOR
BUSINESS.
POWERED BY
PARTNERSHIPS.

PORTRAIT OF PROGRESS

CHARLOTTE REGIONAL BUSINESS ALLIANCE



Cover concept designed
by Little Diversified
Architectural Consulting



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38 COUNTIES IN THE REGION

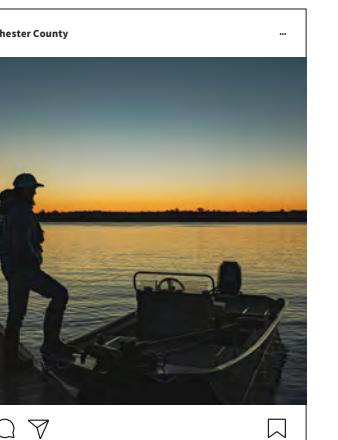
Dive deeper into the data.

70 APPENDIX





CHARLOTTE REGIONAL BUSINESS ALLIANCE®



A PORTRAIT OF PROGRESS

Progress in the Charlotte Region isn't a single story; it takes shape through bold ideas and long-term investments working together across communities. At its core is local leadership and regional collaboration, united around an economy that is thriving, competitive, and built for the future.

"Portrait of Progress" captures that shared momentum across our 14-county, bi-state region. Through a data-informed lens and real-world examples, it reflects the forces shaping the Charlotte Region today, from talent and infrastructure to innovation and quality of life.

Across the region, each county brings its own strength, character, and role in the larger story. Viewed together, these perspectives reveal how distinct places work in concert to build a dynamic regional economy. Taken as a whole, "Portrait of Progress" offers a clear picture of a region in motion, grounded locally, connected regionally, and focused on what's next.

We're glad you're here and invite you to explore what makes Charlotte rise to the top.

Robert McCutcheon
President & CEO

David Longo
2025 CLT Alliance Chair
Founder, Chairman & CEO



O1

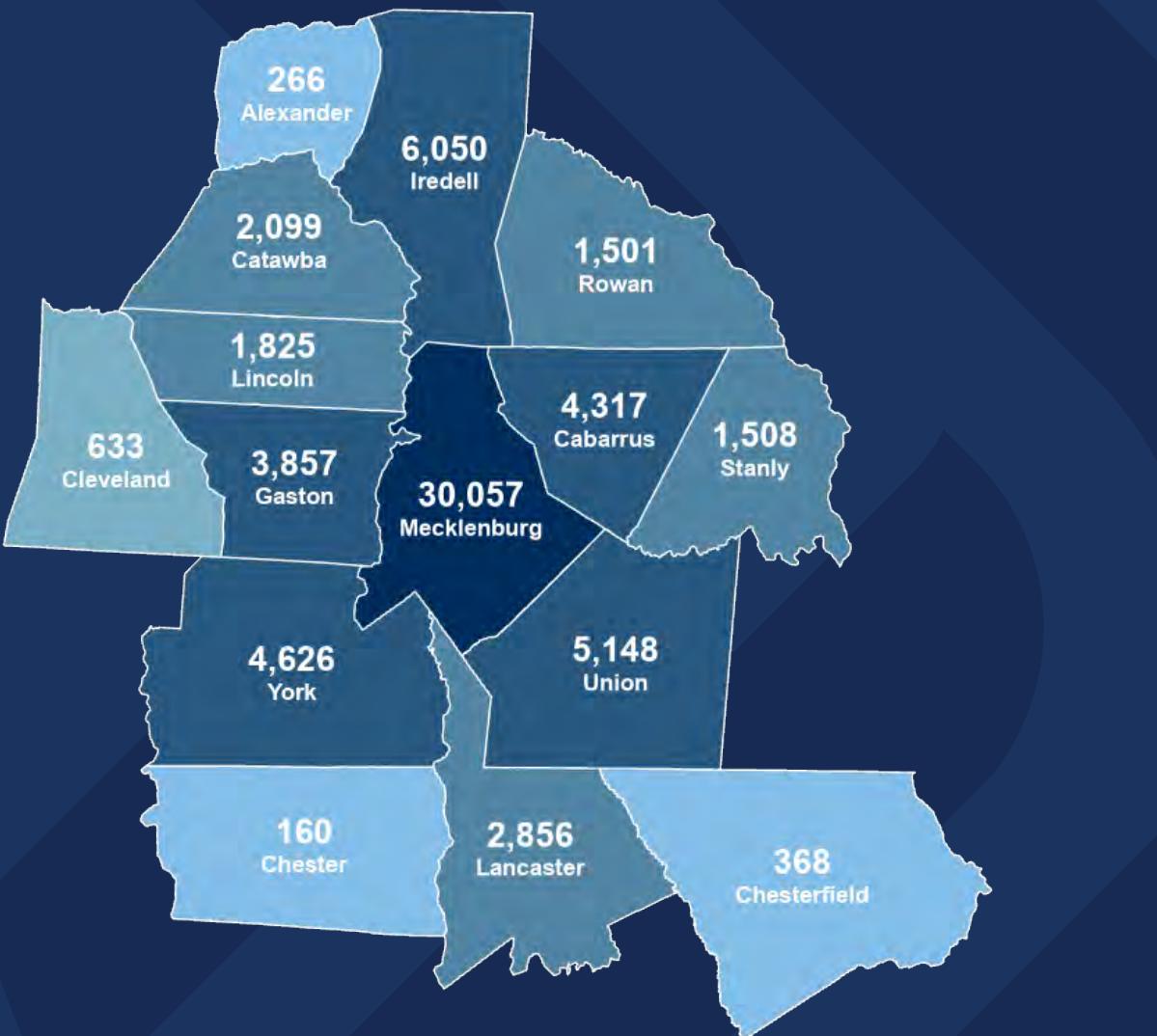
A VIBRANT REGION



SHELBY, NC

ANNUAL POPULATION GROWTH BY COUNTY

2023-2024



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2024

BIG CITY ENERGY SMALL TOWN PRICES

Every day, 157 people choose to call the Charlotte Region home—that's 57,300 people per year who seek a city that offers rich amenities, diverse neighborhoods, and an affordable quality of life.¹ Each new neighbor adds to the vibrancy of the Charlotte Region. They join the workforce, shop at small businesses, enroll their children in local schools, and become part of the region's story.

The Charlotte Region's cost of living remains below the national average, a key factor driving its status as one of the fastest-growing metros in the country.² An increasing mix of housing options, combined with affordable health care, utilities, and transportation, allows residents to enjoy a high quality of life, offering more living for less.

CHARLOTTE'S COST OF LIVING INDEX³

Using an indexed scale where the national average cost of living is 100, major expenses in Charlotte are more affordable than those in other U.S. cities:

Home 85.2 Car 94.2 Health Care 99



A PLACE TO CALL HOME FOR EVERYONE

Whether choosing between an apartment or single-family home, bustling crowds or wide expanses, the Charlotte Region offers distinctive home options for college graduates, growing families, retirees, and everyone in between. Mid-career professionals find community in the region's many neighborhoods and suburbs, **where a 2,000-square-foot home ranges from \$250,000 in suburban communities to \$600,000 in the urban core on average.**⁴ Young professionals flock to the urban core where the average apartment rents for \$1,600 per month.⁵ Executives can choose from an array of neighborhood options, from golf courses to lakefront properties.

KEEPING PACE WITH RISING DEMAND

The Charlotte Region is confronting housing affordability head on, building over 18,400 multifamily housing units in the last year. This nearly 8% increase in housing stock represents the second-highest inventory boost among the largest U.S. markets.⁶

26,700

NEW HOUSING UNITS UNDER CONSTRUCTION IN THE CHARLOTTE REGION IN 2024.⁷



EDUCATION OPTIONS FOR EVERY FAMILY

Families moving to the Charlotte Region benefit from the highly ranked school systems and wide array of K-12 options available. **Across 21 school districts, more than 600 public schools and 55 charter schools serve 389,800 students annually.**⁸ Parents can choose from specialized curriculums, ranging from STEM pathways to foreign language immersion programs. And more than 150 private schools offer families alternative options, from faith-based academics to Montessori-style education.

CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG SCHOOLS: ROOM TO LEARN

How is North Carolina's second-largest school district keeping up with growth? By leaning into it. North Carolina is accelerating its investment in public school education, building new classrooms and improving school infrastructure.

Investments in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools have resulted in:

\$3.5 B

SCHOOL UPGRADES MADE BETWEEN 2017-2024⁹

12.08%

GROWTH IN EXPENDITURES PER STUDENT IN NC RANKING 2ND IN THE U.S.¹¹

CHILD CARE, YOUR WAY

The Charlotte Region offers a variety of child care options that fit any family's needs. A robust network of child care solutions, from traditional day cares, to specialized centers, to in-home care, ensures that parents and parents-to-be can maintain and grow in their careers. **Traditional day cares throughout the region range in price from \$500-\$1,600 a month for infant care, and a promising public-private partnership is helping bring even more affordable solutions to families.**¹²



CLEVELAND COUNTY TRI-SHARE PROGRAM MAKES CHILD CARE MORE AFFORDABLE

An innovative solution to providing quality child care in North Carolina, the Cleveland County Tri-Share program, launched as a pilot program that shares child care expenses equally between an employer, employee, and the State of North Carolina. This early-stage program is now offered across all counties in the state.

UNRIValed LIVABILITY

In the Charlotte Region, there's always something to discover. Locals spend their days biking greenway trails, boating on lakes, visiting museums, or packing arenas on game day. Fans cheer on the Carolina Panthers, Charlotte Hornets, Charlotte FC, Anthem Rugby Carolina, or any of Charlotte's four minor league teams.

An emerging foodie destination and home to North Carolina's only Michelin-star restaurant, Charlotte offers flavors for every palate. With a diversity of cultures, traditions, and community institutions, everyone can find their place, whether that's at one of the many cultural festivals celebrating heritage from Greek to Hispanic to Asian or one of the nearly 3,900 religious congregations in the Charlotte Region.¹³



#5

Best place to live
U.S. News & World Report, 2024



#8

Best quality of life
Business Facilities, 2025, Large Cities

21,000

Acres of park land

10

Lakes

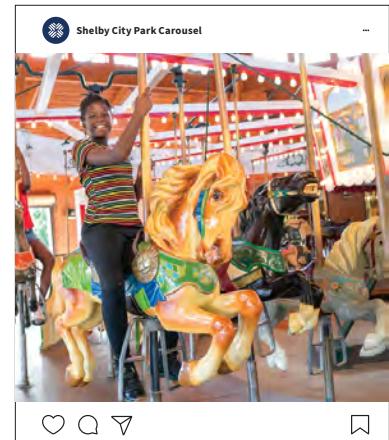
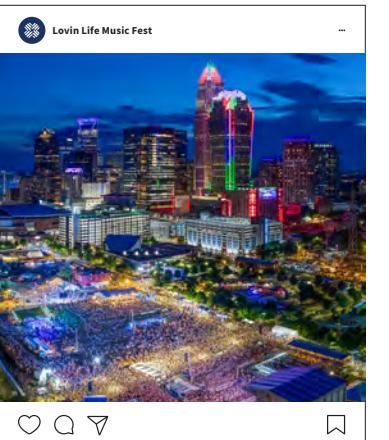
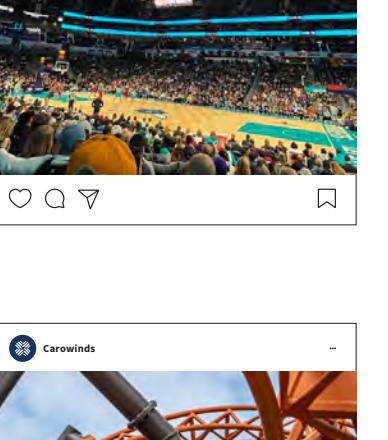
19

Music venues

11

Major & minor league
sports teams

OUT of OFFICE



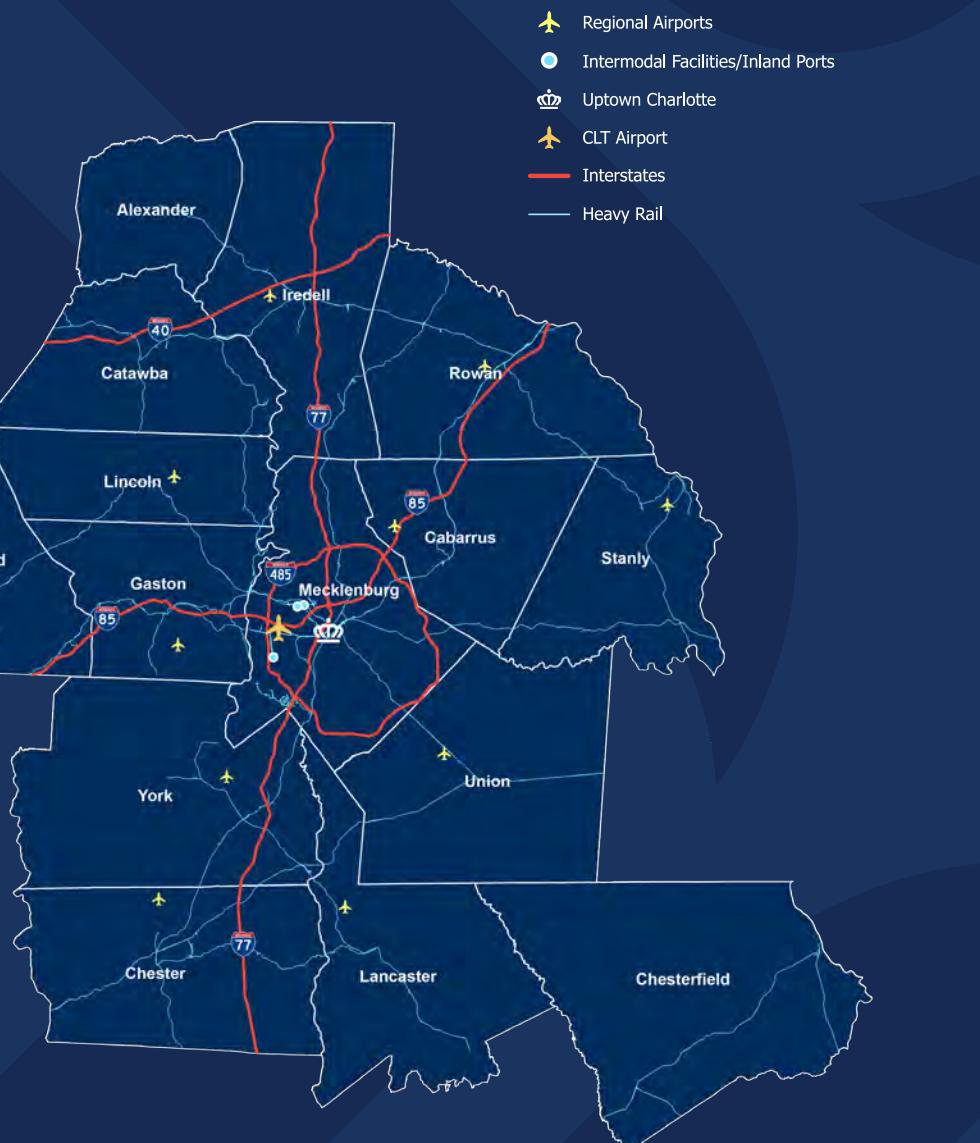
O2 | A CONNECTED REGION





EASILY ACCESSIBLE BY ROAD, AIR & RAIL

Charlotte sits at the center of the East Coast, making it easy to reach major markets both domestically and globally. More than 1,000 miles of interstate connect the region, providing accessibility to the Eastern Seaboard via Interstates 77 and 85 and to the West Coast via Interstate 40.¹⁴ One-third of the U.S. population can be reached within a day's trucking drive, making Charlotte an ideal hub for logistics and distribution.¹⁵



A GLOBAL GATEWAY

Fortifying the region's connectivity are two passenger-service airports: Concord-Padgett Regional Airport (JQF) and Charlotte Douglas International Airport (CLT). JQF services 16 nonstop destinations along the East Coast. CLT services over 58 million passengers annually, with nonstop flights to all major domestic markets and several international markets in Europe, Canada, and Latin America.¹⁶ **CLT's connectivity and central location provide unrivaled convenience and reliability for businesses throughout the region.**

The Charlotte Region also offers multi-channel options for shipping freight, with convenient connectivity to the ports of Wilmington, Charleston, and Savannah. Charlotte's inland port strategically connects customers to distribution corridors along Interstates 77 and 85, with one-day turnaround service to the Port of Wilmington. Further easing freight transit are Charlotte's two intermodal resources, CSX's intermodal terminal and Norfolk Southern's 300-acre intermodal facility located at the Charlotte airport. Located between two active runways, the facilities move freight efficiently, shipping it to the next destination with ease.

CHARLOTTE DOUGLAS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

6TH

BUSIEST AIRPORT
WORLDWIDE¹⁷

2ND

LARGEST

HUB FOR

American
Airlines

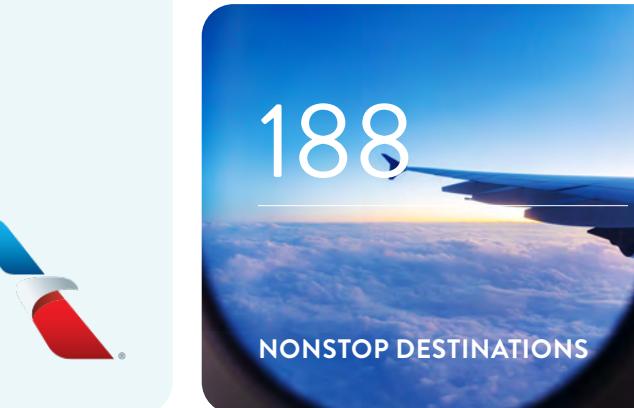
42

INTERNATIONAL
DESTINATIONS
INCLUDING:

- FRANKFURT, GERMANY
- LONDON, ENGLAND
- MADRID, SPAIN
- MEXICO CITY, MEXICO
- MUNICH, GERMANY
- PARIS, FRANCE
- TORONTO, CANADA

188

NONSTOP DESTINATIONS



PREPARING FOR FUTURE GROWTH

Charlotte's transportation network is a result of planning and forward thinking. Nearly three decades ago, Charlotte launched its first volunteer-run trolley service. Since then, multiple investments have resulted in a 19-mile light rail system known as the Lynx Blue Line. The only light rail system in the Carolinas, the Blue Line connects Charlotte from north to south.

Fast-growing regions must invest in transportation to keep people moving and commerce flowing, and Charlotte is doing just that. With dozens of planned infrastructure improvements, the region is strengthening its efficiency and planning ahead for expected population growth.

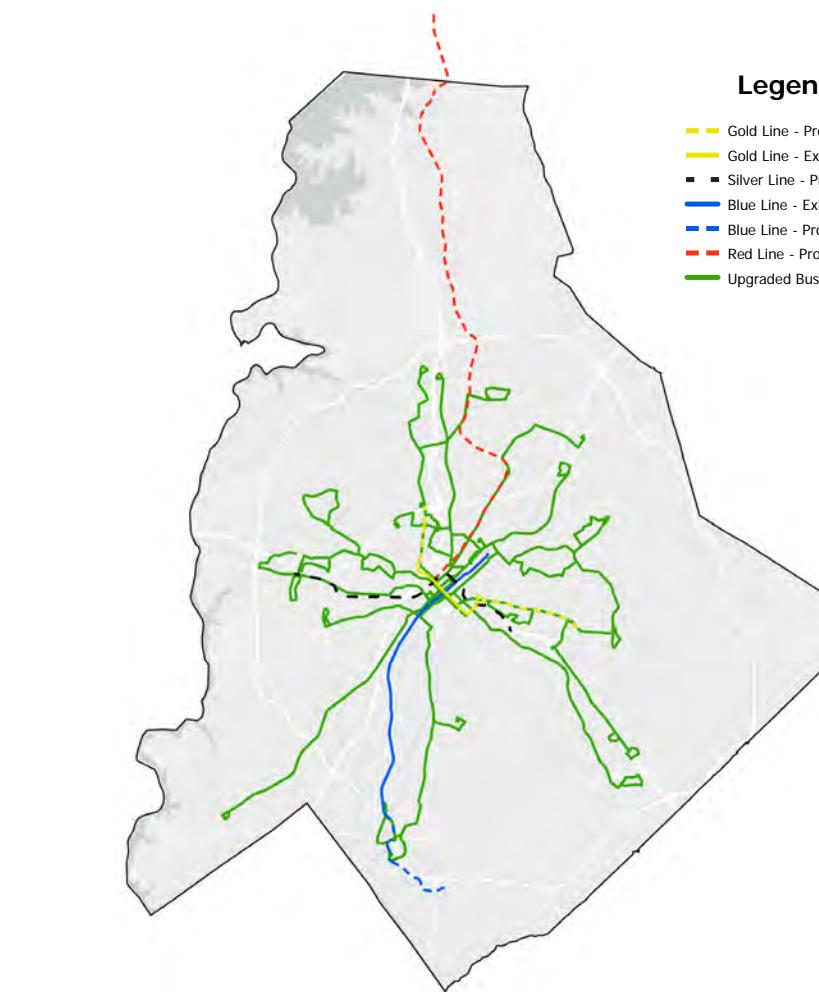


YES FOR PUBLIC TRANSIT

In November 2025, voters in Mecklenburg County approved a 1% sales tax increase to fund investments in local roads, rail, and the bus system. **The plan is projected to generate \$19.4 billion in sales tax revenue.** The proposed investments include significant upgrades to bus infrastructure, roads and highway additions, and light rail expansion.



Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Charlotte Area Transit System



03

A THRIVING BUSINESS ECOSYSTEM



AVERAGE BUSINESS COSTS

The Carolinas have some of the lowest business costs in the country.

\$0.08

Industrial Electricity Cost per KWH¹⁸

18% below the national average

\$21.48

Production Worker Average Hourly Wage¹⁹

16% below the national average

\$65,000

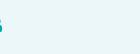
Office Worker Average Annual Salary²⁰

2% above the national average



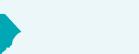
2.25%

2025 NC CORPORATE TAX RATE
(PHASING TO 0% BY 2030)



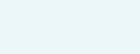
4.25%

NC FLAT INCOME TAX RATE
(PHASING TO 3.99% BY 2026)



5%

2025 SC CORPORATE TAX RATE



0%-6%

SC GRADUATED INCOME
TAX RATE RANGE

0.4%-0.8%

EFFECTIVE PROPERTY TAX RATE RANGE

NC IS THE TOP STATE FOR BUSINESS IN THE COUNTRY

For the third time in four years, the Tar Heel State has claimed the top spot, with the Charlotte Region leading the way. With a GDP of approximately \$255 billion, it's no surprise that Charlotte is one of the Southeast's largest economies.²¹ **The region boasts a diversified economy with financial services, business services, and manufacturing making up a significant portion of economic output.** A labor force of 1.6 million people fuels innovation and productivity across the region's 100,000 businesses. And nearly 200,000 new jobs have been added to the regional economy since 2020, with every industry category experiencing growth.²²

\$255B

Gross Domestic Product

1.6M

In the labor force

9%

Labor force growth
(2019-2024)

#1

State for business
(N.C.)(CNBC, 2025)

#2

State for business
(S.C.)(Area Development, 2025)



THE REGION'S TOP INDUSTRIES BY GDP²³



LEGACY MANUFACTURING. GROUND-BREAKING TECHNOLOGY.

Manufacturing is the foundation of the Charlotte Region's economy. Rooted in agriculture, mining, and textiles, these legacy industries have evolved into cutting-edge sectors that drive modern innovation. **Today, the region produces everything from lithium batteries that power electric vehicles to innovations in food science and chemicals to advanced materials used in aerospace, energy, and automotive technologies.**

Manufacturers thrive in the Charlotte Region because of its skilled and affordable labor, a business-friendly and cost-effective economy, and a variety of real estate options.

TARGET SECTORS

 Aerospace & Aviation
26,300 EMPLOYEES

 Advanced Materials
20,000 EMPLOYEES

 Automotive & EV
16,000 EMPLOYEES

 Food & Beverage
15,000 EMPLOYEES

 Energy
11,000 EMPLOYEES



POWERING INNOVATION

Research centers are fueling discovery across the Charlotte Region. Students have a robust network of community colleges, universities, and workforce development organizations, which offer training in industry-developed curriculums, certifications, and apprenticeship programs. A range of leading research institutes partner with companies across the region to test and advance new technologies.

UNC CHARLOTTE EPIC

The Energy Production and Infrastructure Center (EPIC) is a highly collaborative industry/education partnership that produces an adeptly skilled workforce through the expansion of energy engineering studies.

NC FOOD INNOVATION LAB

A collaboration between North Carolina State University and the North Carolina Department of Agriculture, the NC Food Innovation Lab is a state-of-the-art research facility that helps food and ag-tech companies test and scale new products.

UNC CHARLOTTE BATT CAVE

The North Carolina Battery Complexity, Autonomous Vehicle and Electrification Research Center (BATT CAVE) drives research and innovation in battery technology for applications in autonomous vehicles, infrastructure, and intelligence systems.

THE POLYMERS CENTER

The Polymers Center works with businesses in the plastics industry. The center provides subject matter experts in a state-of-the-art testing facility with modern injection molding and extrusion compounding equipment.



A HUB FOR FINANCE

As the second-largest financial center in the U.S., Charlotte's financial sector is the region's leading driver of GDP. With Bank of America, Truist, and BrightHouse Financial headquartered here, the region's financial services industry rivals global hubs, offering a world-class workforce at a far more competitive cost.

TARGET SECTORS

 Commercial & Investment Banking
64,000 EMPLOYEES

 Wealth Management
15,000 EMPLOYEES

 Insurance
22,700 EMPLOYEES

 Fintech
12,700 EMPLOYEES



102,000

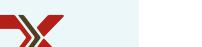
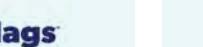
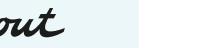
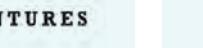
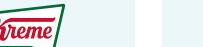
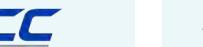
FINANCIAL SERVICES
WORKFORCE²⁷

46%

SECTOR GROWTH
SINCE 2015²⁸

#2

LARGEST FINANCIAL
CENTER IN THE U.S.



A HOME BASE FOR CORPORATE HQS

Financial services isn't the only industry that calls Charlotte home. The region is home to 19 Fortune 1000 headquarters across industries like retail, food services, manufacturing, aerospace, and technology. Companies anchor in the Charlotte Region because of its strong talent base and quality of life that retains top workers. Whether a prospective company is considering a regional, U.S., or global headquarters, the Charlotte Region checks all the boxes.

TOP TALENT

With a concentration of talent 75% higher than the national average, Charlotte attracts talent from all over to work for some of the world's largest companies.

BUSINESS-FRIENDLY

A low overall tax burden and low regulatory environment ensures a higher bottom line.

CONNECTIVITY

Executives are a short flight away from all company locations with nonstop destinations to all major domestic markets and regional markets across the Southeast.

CLIMATE

The Charlotte Region experiences a mild climate and has a low risk of natural disasters, providing peace of mind and stability for operations.

A NEW DESTINATION FOR HEALTH TECH

North Carolina is one of the nation's leading life sciences hubs. **The Charlotte Region is executing a strategy focusing on health and surgical technologies and medical device innovations to build even further upon the state's success.** Anchored by Advocate Health's campus at The Pearl, Charlotte is already pioneering new medical breakthroughs. Other health care research centers in the region, like the MUSC Lancaster Regional Health Network Research Center, are accelerating medical progress through focused investigation, hands-on clinical collaboration, and partnerships that bring new ideas into practice.

SUCCESS STORY: ELI LILLY

Eli Lilly invested \$2 billion in a new manufacturing campus in Concord, dedicated to producing injectable medications and devices. Originally announced as a \$1 billion project, Lilly doubled its investment to \$2 billion while the site was still under construction. The facility, the company's second manufacturing site established in North Carolina, was chosen for its **proximity to top universities with strong STEM programs**, convenient access to major transportation infrastructure, and a highly skilled local workforce with expertise in advanced manufacturing technology. Since the announcement in 2022, the company has well exceeded its hiring target of **600 jobs**.

SUCCESS STORY: THE PEARL

Opened in June 2025, The Pearl is a transformational public-private partnership advancing top-tier medical training and cutting-edge research. Designed to spark collaboration, fuel economic growth, and deliver real-world solutions for Charlotte and beyond, The Pearl is already home to some of the most innovative names in medicine and health tech:

IRCAD NORTH AMERICA, the world's most advanced surgical training institute, opened its North American headquarters at The Pearl where it will train more than 8,000 surgeons in its first year.

STRYKER will help equip IRCAD's training center with its advanced medical devices and robotic technologies, aiming to elevate the skill levels of physicians and technicians.

SIEMENS HEALTHINEERS has launched its first U.S.-based experience center at The Pearl where it will showcase the latest technologies in imaging, diagnostics, cancer care, and advanced therapies.

A HEALTHY TALENT PIPELINE

Health care is the Charlotte Region's largest industry by employment, with giants like Advocate Health, Novant Health, the Medical University of South Carolina, and CaroMont Health providing services throughout the region and beyond. The region's 145,000 health care and life sciences workers are skilled practitioners, nurses, clinicians, and administrative support workers who offer transferable skills in health technology, corporate office, and manufacturing jobs.

145,000

HEALTH & LIFE SCIENCES WORKFORCE²⁹

24%

SECTOR GROWTH SINCE 2015³⁰

NEARLY 7,500

HEALTH-RELATED GRADUATES ANNUALLY³¹



WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

The first four-year medical school in Charlotte, Wake Forest's Charlotte campus offers students a unique problem-based learning model, fostering hands-on experiences in diverse clinical settings.



BIOWORK CERTIFICATE, ROWAN-CABARRUS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

BioWork is a certificate program preparing students for careers as process technicians for biotechnology, pharmaceutical, and chemical manufacturing companies.



MASTER OF SCIENCE IN PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES, PFEIFFER UNIVERSITY

This program prepares students to become servant leaders ready to address health disparities and social justice issues in medically-underserved communities.



MASTER OF SCIENCE IN HEALTH INFORMATICS, UNC CHARLOTTE

This graduate program teaches students how to improve the quality and efficiency of health care through data.



WINGATE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF PHARMACY

Wingate's pharmacy school is among the top pharmacy programs in NC. It offers extensive hands-on learning as well as dual degree options for a Masters in Business Administration or Public Health.

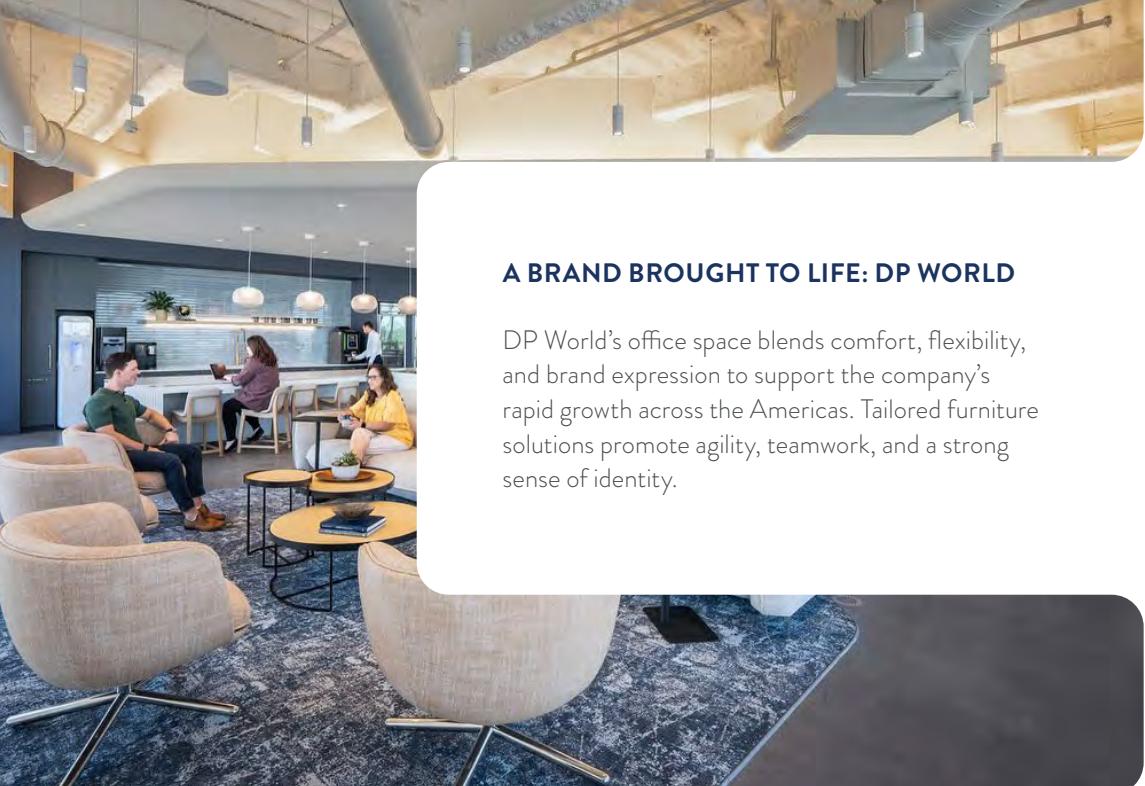
WORKING IN THE CHARLOTTE REGION

Page sponsored by:



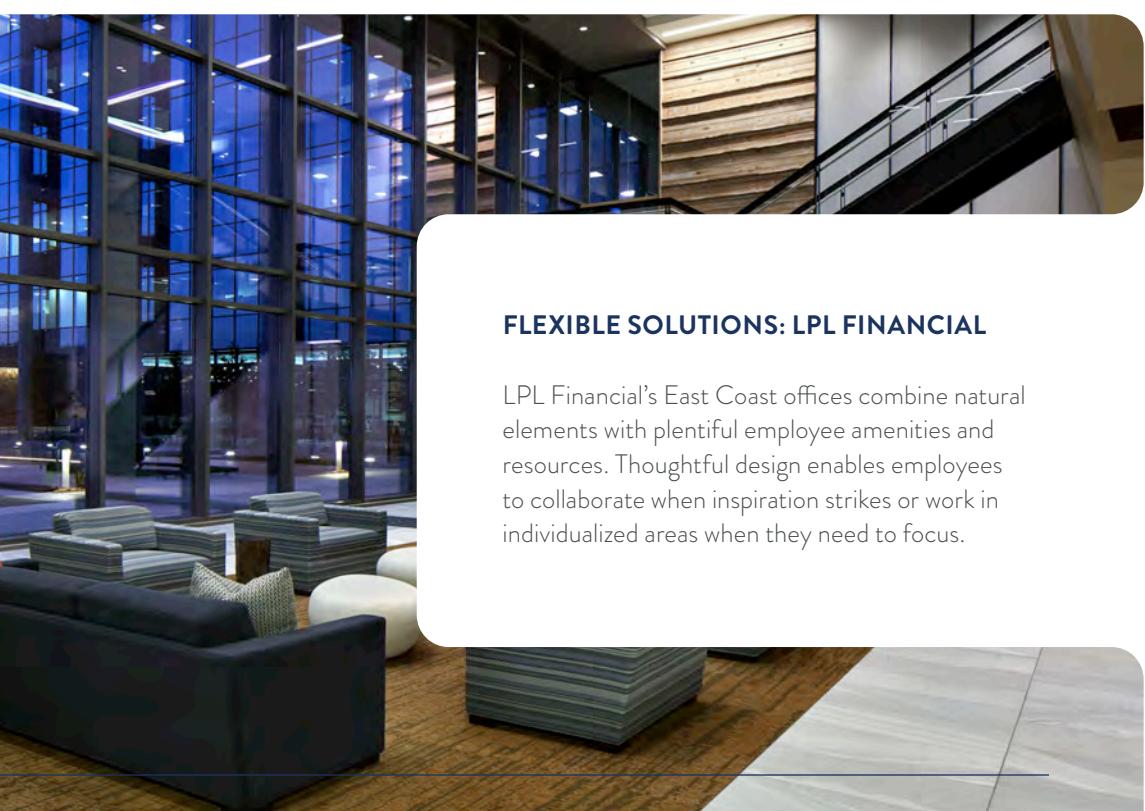
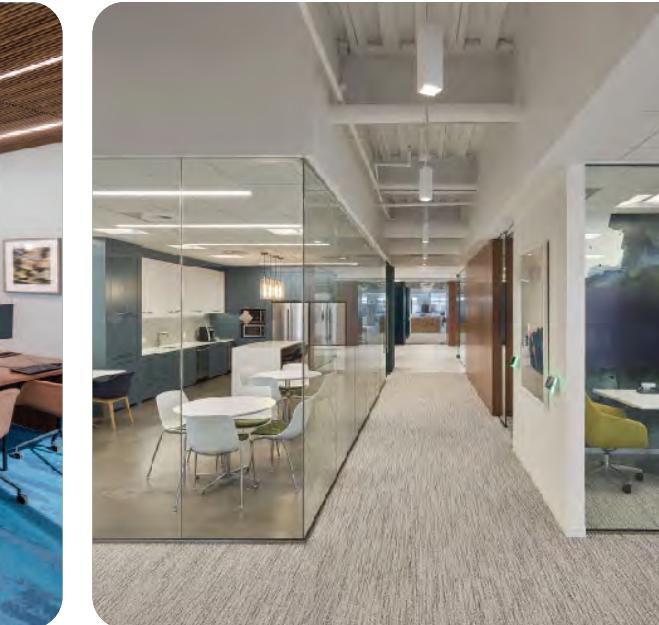
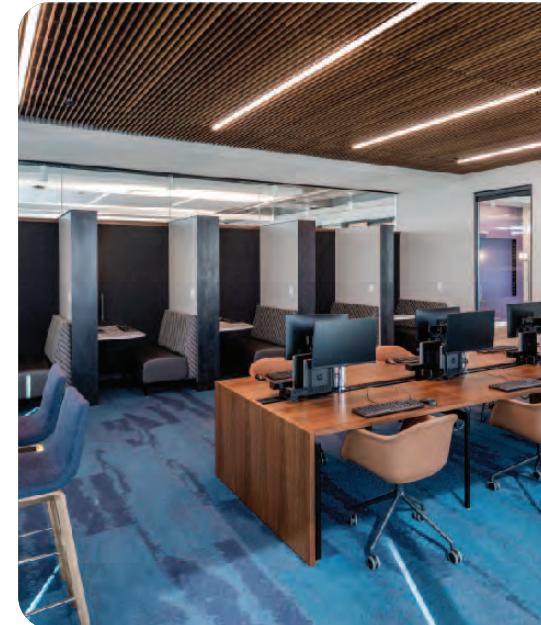
The workplace is a strategic tool to drive people and business performance. The 157 people moving to the Charlotte Region each day desire office spaces that inspire creativity and innovation. Leaders across the region's target sectors – manufacturing and logistics, financial services, and health and life sciences – need human-centered workplaces that inspire engagement and performance.

The region's steady job growth and billions in capital investment show that growth is not just about buildings; companies thrive in Charlotte because their buildings help people do their best work.



A BRAND BROUGHT TO LIFE: DP WORLD

DP World's office space blends comfort, flexibility, and brand expression to support the company's rapid growth across the Americas. Tailored furniture solutions promote agility, teamwork, and a strong sense of identity.



FLEXIBLE SOLUTIONS: LPL FINANCIAL

LPL Financial's East Coast offices combine natural elements with plentiful employee amenities and resources. Thoughtful design enables employees to collaborate when inspiration strikes or work in individualized areas when they need to focus.

FINANCIAL SERVICES

Charlotte is one of the country's strongest banking hubs and a place that thousands of finance, insurance, and tech professionals call home. The real advantage is how people experience work, not just where the tower sits.

64% of banking leaders say hybrid work improves talent retention

45% of financial workers report that poor office design reduces focus

20% lift in knowledge-sharing from offices with small team rooms

70% of industry workers say proximity of lab and office improves speed

22% more satisfaction with upgraded research spaces

48% say unclear zoning increases stress

30% faster problem solving in digitally-enabled parts

40% of engineers prefer hands-on prototyping space

47% say better planning rooms strengthen decision making

A FORCE FOR INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

From global brands expanding their footprints to small businesses shaping neighborhood identities, the Charlotte Region is built by companies of every size. Together, they create jobs, spark innovation, and strengthen the Charlotte Region.

The Charlotte Region has become a major hub for foreign direct investment (FDI), attracting more than \$2 billion in investment and creating more than 5,000 jobs since 2022. A large workforce supported by European-style apprenticeship programs, direct flight connectivity to international markets, and a welcoming ex-pat community are key advantages that attract foreign companies to the Charlotte Region.

 Germany
215 COMPANIES

 United Kingdom
121 COMPANIES

 Japan
86 COMPANIES

 Canada
97 COMPANIES

 Italy
60 COMPANIES



THRIVING SMALL BUSINESS ECOSYSTEM



Scan for info on the CLT Alliance Foundation

The Charlotte Region is a hub where small businesses flourish. **With a vibrant community of over 40,000 small businesses, our region is a testament to the entrepreneurial spirit and innovation that drives economic growth.** The CLT Alliance Foundation supports entrepreneurs and employers with the goal of growing businesses and business leaders.

The region offers many resources for entrepreneurs, including startup accelerator and small business programs:

COUNTY SMALL BUSINESS CENTERS

Every county in the Charlotte Region has a small business resource center, each of which provides training, guidance, and business counseling for the small business and entrepreneur communities.

UNC CHARLOTTE CO-LAB

CO-LAB at UNC Charlotte Center City is an innovation and entrepreneurship hub. Serving as an academic and research center for the city's North Tryon Tech Hub, CO-LAB incubates entrepreneurs and small businesses and drives economic growth.

REVTECH LABS

An accelerator program for fintech and insurtech companies, RevTech Labs has contributed to creating 1,000+ jobs and raising \$2 billion in capital for participating startups.

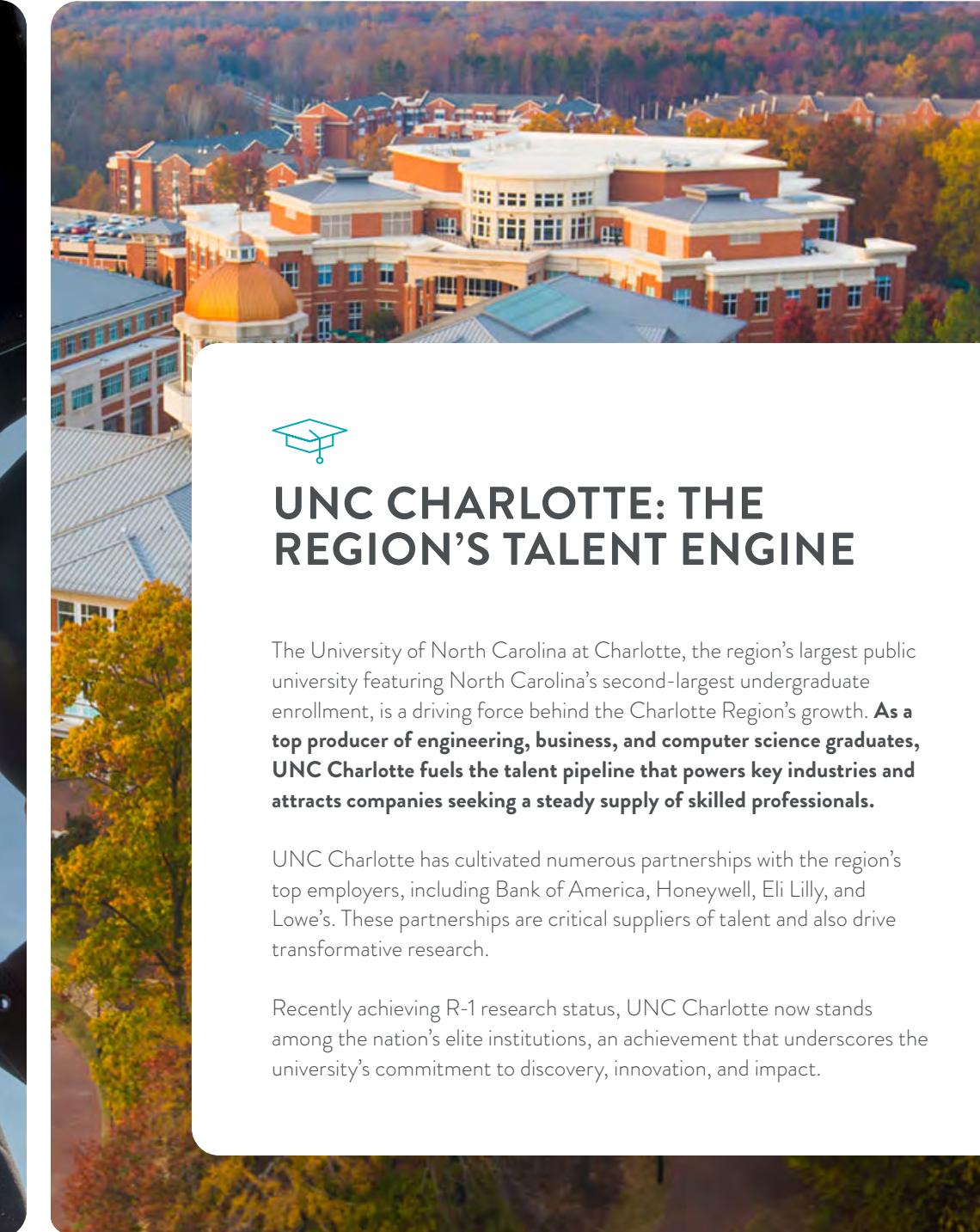
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA PALMETTO COLLEGE AI INNOVATION LAB NETWORK

Located in Lancaster County, the AI Innovation Lab Network provides free training in generative AI and certification programs to local residents.



BUILT ON TALENT

In the Charlotte Region, a strong workforce fuels innovation, drives expansion, and keeps the economy moving at full speed. Because of the region's diversified economy, companies can find a range of workers with advanced skillsets from production to engineering to business administration to data science and artificial intelligence. **Much of the workforce is shaped by the region's top colleges and universities, which partner closely with local companies to build curriculums that prepare students to meet industry needs.**



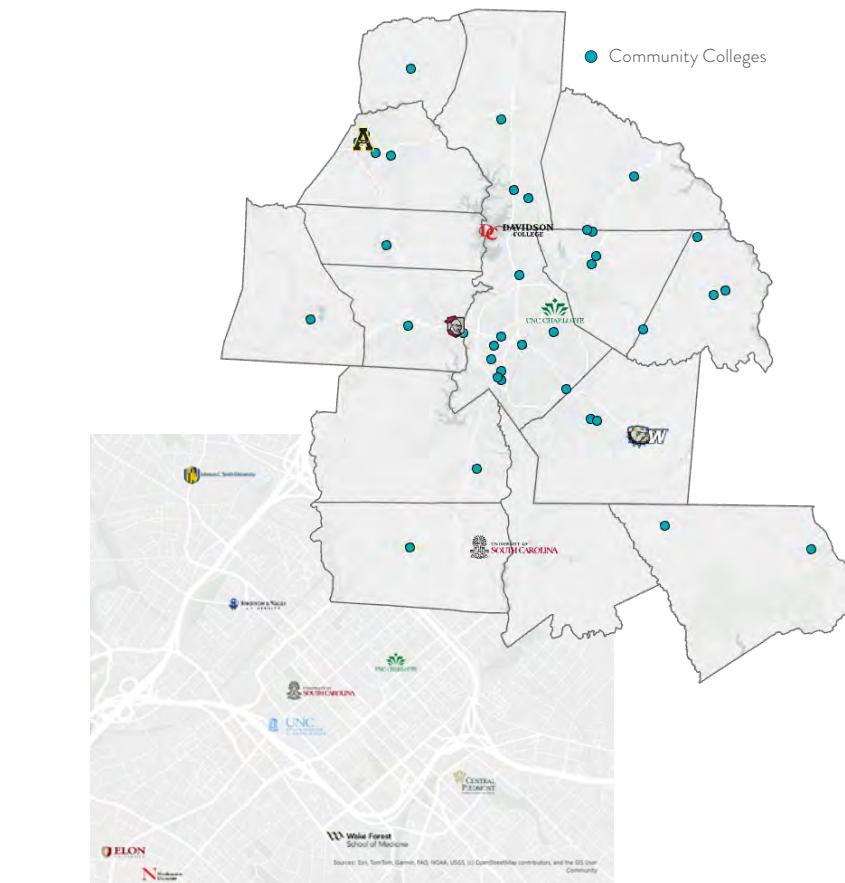
UNC CHARLOTTE: THE REGION'S TALENT ENGINE

The University of North Carolina at Charlotte, the region's largest public university featuring North Carolina's second-largest undergraduate enrollment, is a driving force behind the Charlotte Region's growth. **As a top producer of engineering, business, and computer science graduates, UNC Charlotte fuels the talent pipeline that powers key industries and attracts companies seeking a steady supply of skilled professionals.**

UNC Charlotte has cultivated numerous partnerships with the region's top employers, including Bank of America, Honeywell, Eli Lilly, and Lowe's. These partnerships are critical suppliers of talent and also drive transformative research.

Recently achieving R-1 research status, UNC Charlotte now stands among the nation's elite institutions, an achievement that underscores the university's commitment to discovery, innovation, and impact.

COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES IN THE CHARLOTTE REGION



Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors and the US User Community

NEW TO MARKET

Across the Charlotte Region, companies of all sizes are planting roots and expanding their footprints.

Scan for the Charlotte Regional Business Alliance's Quarterly Growth Report



70 JOBS

AEROSPACE MATERIALS
MANUFACTURING

CHESTERFIELD COUNTY

CORNING

FIT PRECAST™
an NIH COMPANY

125 JOBS

CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS MANUFACTURING

GASTON COUNTY



510 JOBS

FINANCIAL SERVICES

MECKLENBURG COUNTY

132 JOBS

FIBER OPTIC CABLE
MANUFACTURING

CATAWBA COUNTY



DAIMLER TRUCK
Financial Services

276 JOBS

FINANCIAL SERVICES

MECKLENBURG COUNTY

Scout

1,200 JOBS

GLOBAL HEADQUARTERS
MECKLENBURG COUNTY



JABIL

PRATT INDUSTRIES™

116 JOBS

PACKAGING PRODUCT MANUFACTURING

YORK COUNTY



110 JOBS

AEROSPACE MATERIALS
MANUFACTURING

CLEVELAND COUNTY

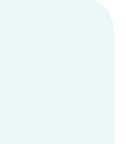


MAERSK

520 JOBS

GLOBAL HEADQUARTERS

MECKLENBURG COUNTY



301 JOBS

FINANCIAL SERVICES

MECKLENBURG COUNTY



04

COUNTIES IN THE REGION



© LAKE NORMAN, RIEDELL COUNTY, NC



Scan for the county's economic development department



ALEXANDER COUNTY



CITIES/TOWNS

Taylorsville, Hiddenite, Bethlehem, Stony Point

MAKE ALEXANDER COUNTY HOME

Nestled in the foothills of western North Carolina, Alexander County offers the perfect balance of small-town charm and strategic access. Just a few hours from the Eastern Seaboard and positioned near Interstates 77, 40, and 85, the county is less than an hour from North Carolina's largest international airport. With an average one-way commute of only 27.7 minutes, residents enjoy both convenience and quality of life.

A MANUFACTURING HUB

In Alexander County, innovation meets craftsmanship. As a robust manufacturing center, the county offers businesses low taxes and a dedicated workforce. Industry and education work hand in hand to close skills gaps and prepare talent for the region's evolving economy. The Alexander Applied Technologies Industrial Training Center ensures workers are trained for the latest advancements across manufacturing and related sectors. Here, if it can be made—it can be made in Alexander County.

ON THE WEEKENDS

Alexander County blends a peaceful rural setting with quick access to urban amenities, set against some of the most beautiful landscapes in North Carolina. Weekend adventures include the Rocky Face Mountain Recreational Area, a destination for hiking, rock climbing, and sweeping views, and the Brushy Mountain Motorsports Park, which has more than 1,700 acres with over 100 miles of dirt bike trails nestled in the mountains.

PICTURED: ROCKY FACE MOUNTAIN



POPULATION

36,440



LABOR FORCE

16,003



MEDIAN HH INCOME

\$65,268



TARGET INDUSTRIES

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Furniture Manufacturing
- Textiles Manufacturing
- Plastics & Metal Fabrication



DISTANCE FROM CLT AIRPORT

51 mi



DID YOU KNOW?

Every fall, the annual Taylorsville Apple Festival attracts **35,000 attendees** and features 400 booths, rides, food vendors and more.

MAJOR EMPLOYERS

Bethlehem

SCHNEIDER

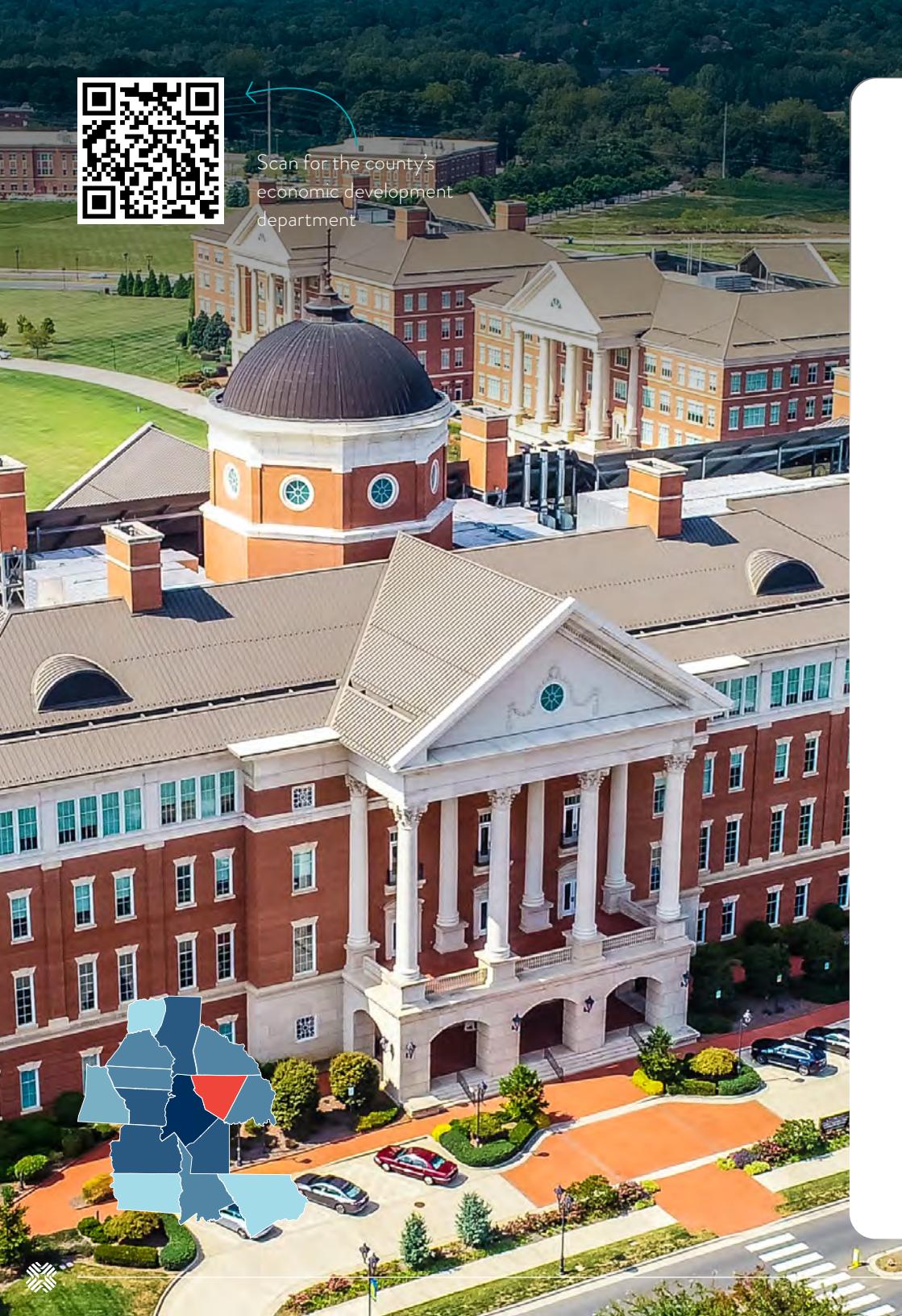
CAROLINA SPECIALTY FABRICS

BOREALIS

CRAFTMASTER FURNITURE



Scan for the county's
economic development
department



CABARRUS COUNTY



CITIES/TOWNS

Concord, Harrisburg, Kannapolis, Mount Pleasant, Midland

NORTH CAROLINA RESEARCH CAMPUS

This 350-acre, world-class research campus has representation from eight different North Carolina universities. Dedicated to advancing human health and nutrition through cutting-edge research and collaboration, the campus is home to the North Carolina Food Innovation Lab (NCFIL). NCFIL supports entrepreneurs, researchers, and industry leaders in driving innovation in nutrition, health, and biotechnology.

CONCORD-PADGETT REGIONAL AIRPORT

Ranking as the fifth busiest airport in North Carolina, Concord-Padgett is serviced by two commercial airlines offering direct flights to destinations in Florida and the northeastern U.S.

A MOTOSPORTS HUB

Due to the concentration of racing infrastructure, teams, and supporting industry, Cabarrus has branded itself as a global motorsports destination. Major attractions like the Charlotte Motor Speedway host huge events and draw more than one million visitors annually. The local economy benefits from thousands of jobs in racing teams, engine/machining shops, and race-related manufacturing.

PICTURED: NORTH CAROLINA RESEARCH CAMPUS



POPULATION

244,925



LABOR FORCE

127,809



MEDIAN HH INCOME

\$87,499



DISTANCE FROM CLT AIRPORT

19 mi



DID YOU KNOW?

Cabarrus County is home to the **first documented discovery of gold** in the United States in 1799, sparking the first gold rush in the U.S.

MAJOR EMPLOYERS





Scan for the county's economic development department

CATAWBA COUNTY



CITIES/TOWNS

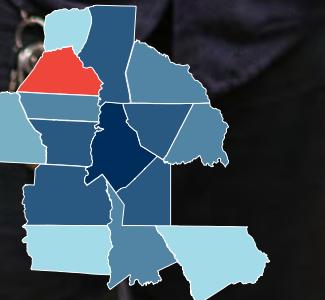
Catawba, Newton, Conover, Maiden, Hickory, Claremont

MANUFACTURING SOLUTIONS CENTER

A part of Catawba Valley Community College, the Manufacturing Solutions Center enables professionals to take ideas from napkin sketch to market ready. The space features prototyping labs, testing facilities, and an incubator space that's already home to some of the Charlotte Region's fastest growing companies.

LABOR FORCE STRENGTH

With a net in-commute of +13,500 workers, Catawba is one of only two counties in the Charlotte Region where more people go to work than leave, reflecting the county's strong employment base.



PICTURED: CATAWBA VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT CENTER



POPULATION

167,054



LABOR FORCE

77,335



MEDIAN HH INCOME

\$70,674

TARGET INDUSTRIES

- Life Sciences
- Plastics & Metal Fabrication
- Communications Technology
- Food Processing
- Advanced Materials & Textiles



DISTANCE FROM CLT AIRPORT

28 mi



DID YOU KNOW?

The Hickory Motor Speedway, also known widely as the **“birthplace of NASCAR stars,”** can be found in Catawba County.

MAJOR EMPLOYERS

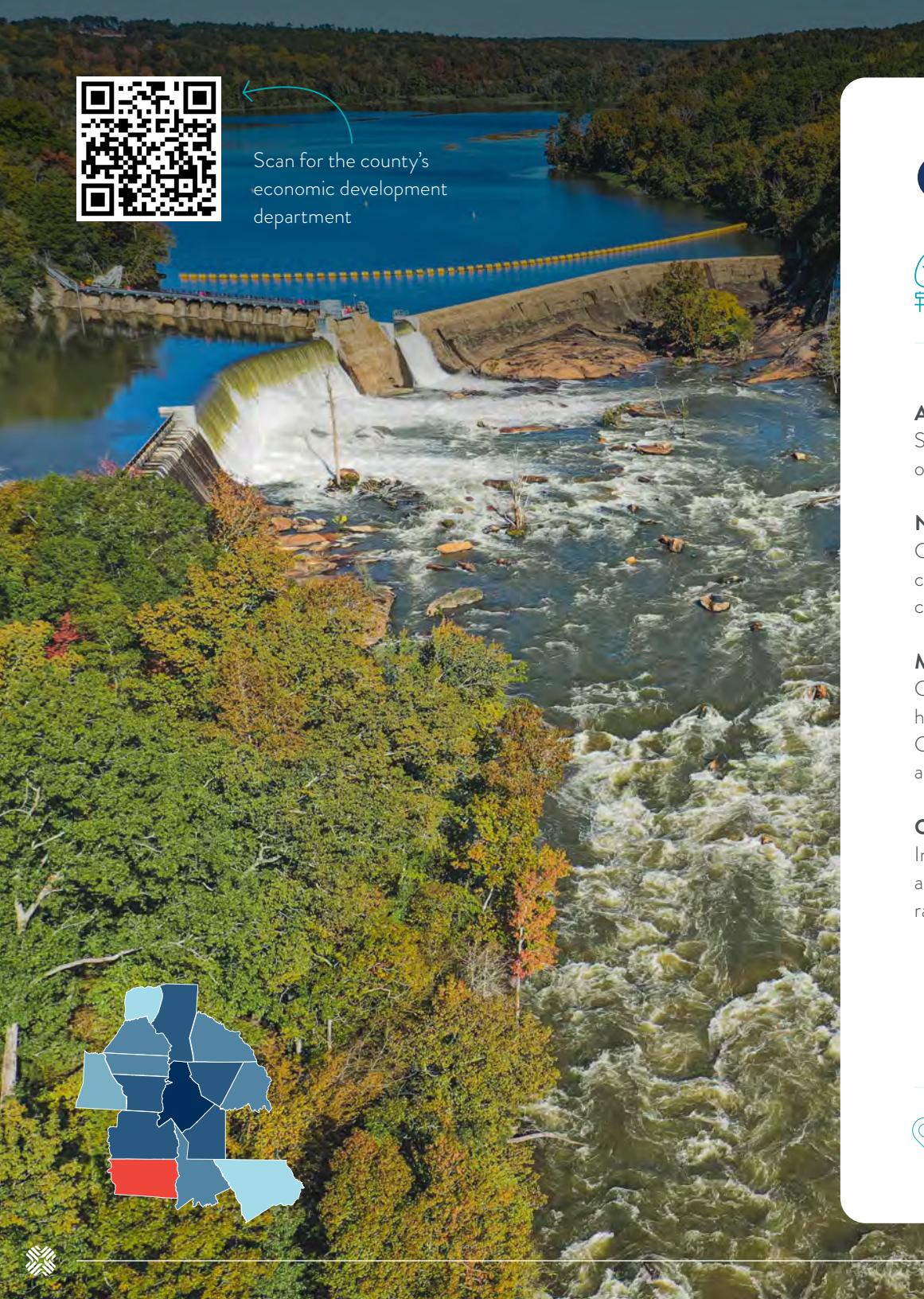
CENTURY

COMMSCOPE

CORNING

KIN AUTOMOTIVE

Tyson Foods



CHESTER COUNTY



CITIES/TOWNS

Chester, Richburg, Great Falls, Fort Lawn, Lowrys, Lando

A WIDE-REACHING WORKFORCE

Situated between the Charlotte and Columbia, SC metro areas, Chester County offers a workforce of 1.5 million people within a 45-minute radius.

NEED RAIL? CHOOSE CHESTER

Chester County has ample available rail-served sites and is one of the few counties in the southeastern U.S. that offers dual-rail service through short line carrier L&C Railways, which connects to both Norfolk Southern and CSX.

MORE HOUSES, MORE RETAIL ATTRACTION

Chester County has seen an uptick in residential growth with over 4,000 new home permits approved, leading to a new strategic retail initiative for the county. Chester County is looking to attract more retail options for its growing community and has partnered with Retail Strategies to help lay the groundwork.

OUTDOOR RECREATION

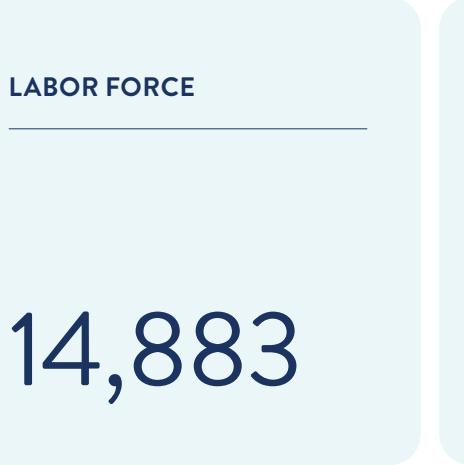
In addition to industry, Chester County boasts its thriving outdoor recreation activities; including a 2.25-mile stretch for whitewater rafting (both Class IV and V rapids) as well as three state parks.

PICTURED: CANAL STREET WHITE WATER



POPULATION

33,000



LABOR FORCE

14,883



MEDIAN HH INCOME

\$51,216



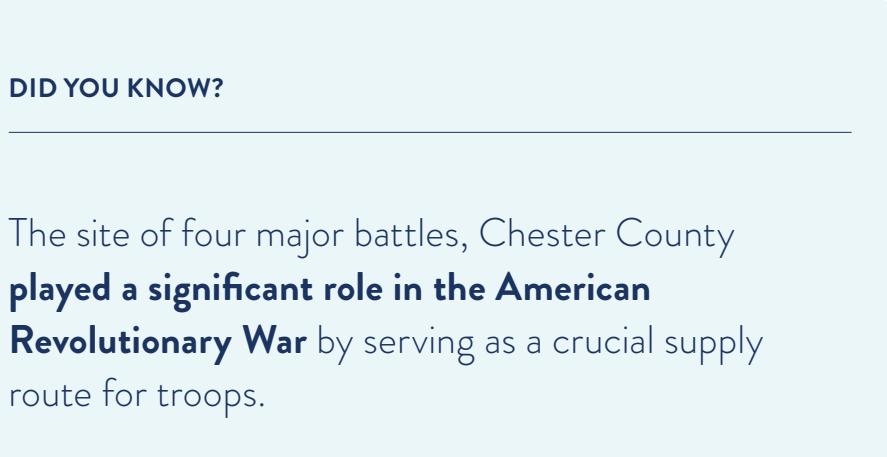
TARGET INDUSTRIES

- Advanced Materials Manufacturing
- Food & Beverage Manufacturing
- Chemical Manufacturing
- Wood Products Manufacturing
- Logistics & Distribution
- Construction



DISTANCE FROM CLT AIRPORT

34 mi



DID YOU KNOW?

The site of four major battles, Chester County **played a significant role in the American Revolutionary War** by serving as a crucial supply route for troops.

MAJOR EMPLOYERS



Carolina Poly

GALLO

Giti

JKO

thyssenkrupp



Scan for the county's economic development department

CHESTERFIELD COUNTY



CITIES/TOWNS

Chesterfield, Cheraw, Pageland, McBee, Jefferson, Patrick, Ruby, Mt. Croghan

NATURE AT YOUR DOORSTEP

A fifth of Chesterfield County's total land area is devoted to national or state parks, each providing a variety of activities from trails and camping options to equestrian shows and activities. The Carolina Sandhills National Wildlife Refuge is an expansive longleaf pine/wiregrass ecosystem and serves as a protected area for migratory birds.

A NATIONAL LEADER IN METALWORK

Chesterfield County is home to more metal workers per capita than any other county in South Carolina, and the sixth most of any county in the nation.

PICTURED: CLUBMX



POPULATION

43,575

LABOR FORCE

19,074

MEDIAN HH INCOME

\$47,620



TARGET INDUSTRIES

- Logistics & Distribution
- Metal Manufacturing
- Electrical Manufacturing
- Construction
- Food & Beverage Manufacturing



DISTANCE FROM CLT AIRPORT

56 mi



DID YOU KNOW?

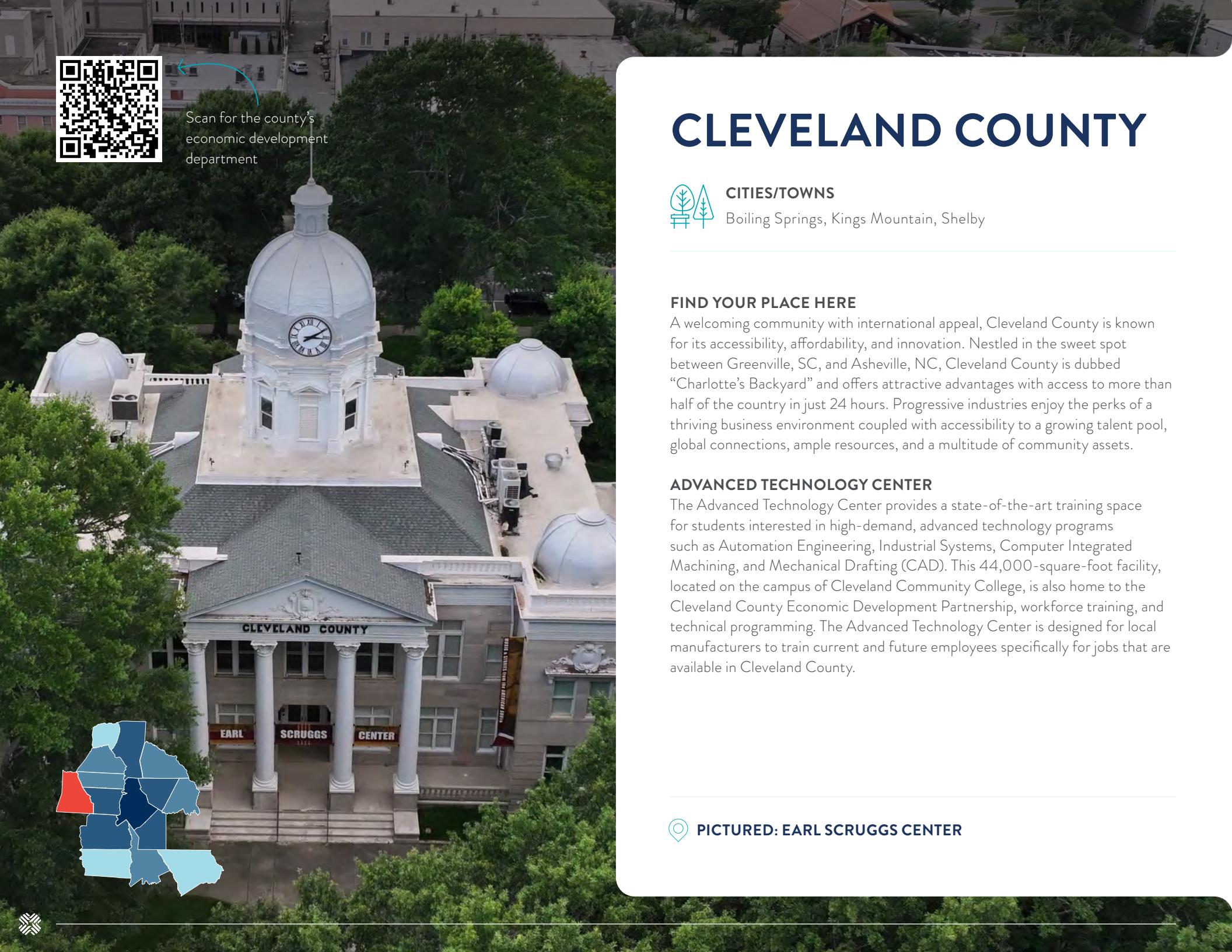
Chesterfield County is **the birthplace of Dizzy Gillespie**, one of the best jazz musicians of his time. To honor his memory, the town of Cheraw hosts the annual South Carolina Jazz Festival.



SCHEFFLER



MAJOR EMPLOYERS



CLEVELAND COUNTY



CITIES/TOWNS

Boiling Springs, Kings Mountain, Shelby

FIND YOUR PLACE HERE

A welcoming community with international appeal, Cleveland County is known for its accessibility, affordability, and innovation. Nestled in the sweet spot between Greenville, SC, and Asheville, NC, Cleveland County is dubbed “Charlotte’s Backyard” and offers attractive advantages with access to more than half of the country in just 24 hours. Progressive industries enjoy the perks of a thriving business environment coupled with accessibility to a growing talent pool, global connections, ample resources, and a multitude of community assets.

ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY CENTER

The Advanced Technology Center provides a state-of-the-art training space for students interested in high-demand, advanced technology programs such as Automation Engineering, Industrial Systems, Computer Integrated Machining, and Mechanical Drafting (CAD). This 44,000-square-foot facility, located on the campus of Cleveland Community College, is also home to the Cleveland County Economic Development Partnership, workforce training, and technical programming. The Advanced Technology Center is designed for local manufacturers to train current and future employees specifically for jobs that are available in Cleveland County.

PICTURED: EARL SCRUGGS CENTER



POPULATION

102,194



LABOR FORCE

44,970



MEDIAN HH INCOME

\$60,966



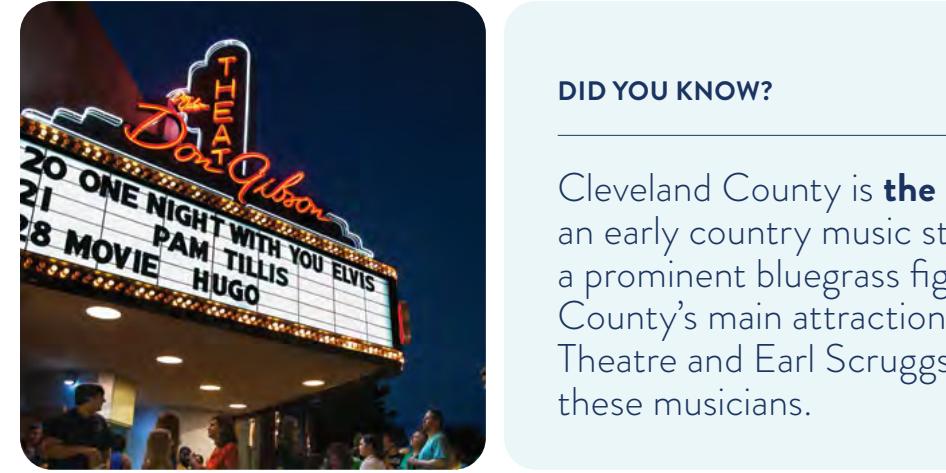
TARGET INDUSTRIES

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Aerospace & Defense
- Automotive
- Textiles Manufacturing
- Consumer Products
- Energy
- Precision Machining
- Data Centers



DISTANCE FROM CLT AIRPORT

24 mi



DID YOU KNOW?

Cleveland County is **the birthplace of Don Gibson**, an early country music star, as well as **Earl Scruggs**, a prominent bluegrass figure. Two of Cleveland County’s main attractions, the Don Gibson Theatre and Earl Scruggs Center, exist to honor these musicians.

MAJOR EMPLOYERS

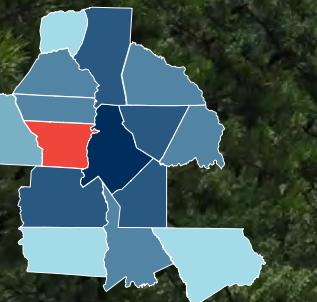


HANES *brands inc*





Scan for the county's economic development department



GASTON COUNTY



CITIES/TOWNS

Gastonia, Belmont, Dallas, Mount Holly, Cherryville

MADE IN GASTON

Gaston College's Kimbrell Campus in Belmont is home to both the Fiber Innovation Center and Textile Technology Center, which support the global textile industry with hands-on prototyping, testing, and training. These facilities develop and test advanced fibers and products for the advanced textile industry, including crucial personal protective equipment, smart textiles for the defense sector, and many other proprietary products developed by national and international clients.

ENJOY THE OUTDOORS

Situated along the Catawba River, Gaston County has many outdoor recreational activities available for its residents and visitors. With over 40 hiking and biking trails, river access for flat water paddling, and 80 parks within the county, access to the outdoors is abundant. Crowders Mountain State Park and Kings Mountain State Park are popular camping and climbing spots for avid outdoor enthusiasts, while the Daniel Stowe Conservancy offers a relaxed and scenic stroll through over 400 acres of beautifully maintained gardens.

STORIED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

Gaston County's long heritage as a hard-working manufacturing center has been enhanced in recent years with a steady growth in high-tech manufacturing, service-related firms, and expansion of retail and commercial businesses. The county replenishes its workforce through programs like Apprenticeship 321 at Gaston College, which just celebrated its 10th year in 2025. One of the first colleges to offer an apprenticeship program, Gaston College supports apprenticeships for approximately 80 students each year in partnership with 25 local employers.

PICTURED: CROWDERS MOUNTAIN



POPULATION

242,010



LABOR FORCE

119,720



MEDIAN HH INCOME

\$70,182



TARGET INDUSTRIES

- Textiles & Advanced Materials Manufacturing
- Automotive Manufacturing
- Food & Beverage Manufacturing



DISTANCE FROM CLT AIRPORT

5 mi



DID YOU KNOW?

Gaston County was once known as the **"combed yarn capital of the world"** and had more than 150 textile mills established between 1848 and 1950, more than any other county in the nation.

MAJOR EMPLOYERS



DIMLER TRUCK





Scan for the county's
economic development
department

IREDELL COUNTY



CITIES/TOWNS

Mooresville, Statesville, Troutman, Union Grove, Harmony, Love Valley

BOOMING GROWTH

Iredell County is the fastest growing county in the Charlotte Region, with 10.5% population growth from 2020-2025. During that same time the labor force grew by 23%.

WORKFORCE READY

Iredell County is focused on building career pathways aligned with its local business needs. The county's workforce collaborative consortium, Iredell Ready, has been recognized by MyFutureNC as 1 of 9 "Attainment Ready" counties (out of 100).

INSTITUTE FOR DIGITAL ENGINEERING

The IDE is North Carolina's hub for digital engineering talent, powering a collaborative cluster committed to aerospace, defense, and advanced manufacturing growth. With roots in motorsports, several of the companies have skilled talent, credentials, and certifications to offer R&D, design, and manufacturing for these sectors.

PICTURED: MITCHELL COMMUNITY COLLEGE



POPULATION

206,361



LABOR FORCE

105,666



MEDIAN HH INCOME

\$85,002



DISTANCE FROM CLT AIRPORT

26 mi



DID YOU KNOW?

Iredell County is home to man-made **Lake Norman**, often called North Carolina's "inland sea." It is the largest artificial lake in North Carolina, stretching 34 miles across with a 520-mile-long shoreline.

MAJOR EMPLOYERS





Scan for the county's
economic development
department

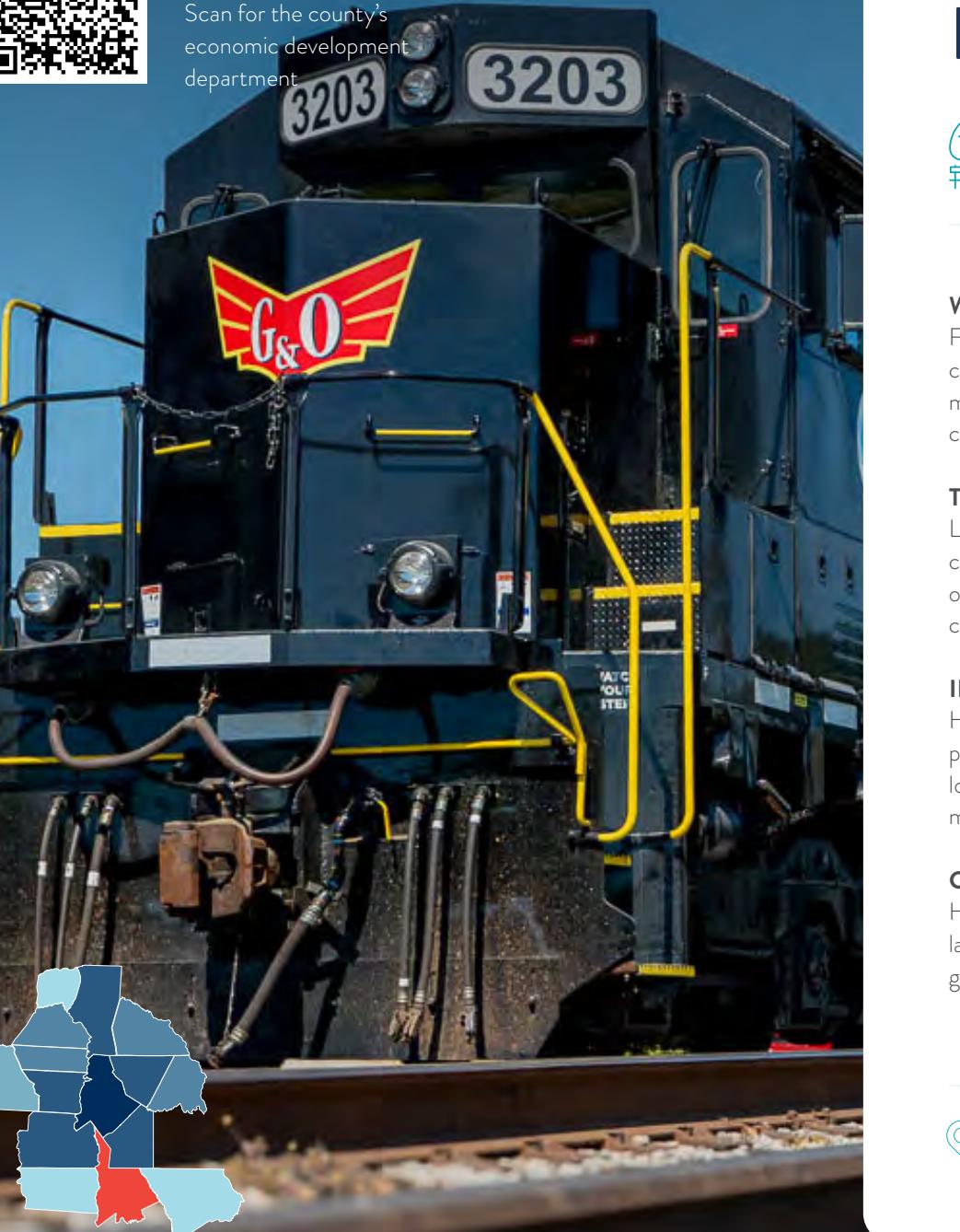
3203

LANCASTER COUNTY



CITIES/TOWNS

Heath Springs, Kershaw, Lancaster, Van Wyck



WHERE INDUSTRY HAS ALWAYS BELONGED

For generations, Lancaster County, SC, has been a place where industry and community grow together. From its historic textile roots to today's advanced manufacturing leaders, the county has always been a home for those who build, create, and move the world forward.

TIMELESS CHARM, EVERYDAY EASE

Lancaster County offers the best of both worlds: small-town charm and modern convenience. With welcoming neighborhoods, top-rated schools, and scenic outdoor spaces, residents enjoy a quality of life that's rooted in community and connection.

INDUSTRY STRENGTH

Home to a thriving mix of industries and major employers, Lancaster County provides abundant opportunities for career growth and innovation. Its strategic location near Charlotte, strong workforce pipeline, and pro-business environment make it the ideal place to invest, grow, and succeed.

COMMUNITY INNOVATION

Here, progress and possibility go hand in hand. Whether it's entrepreneurs launching new ventures or families putting down roots, Lancaster County fosters growth that's both sustainable and people-centered.

PICTURED: LANCASTER & CHESTER (L&C) RAILROAD



POPULATION

111,652

LABOR FORCE

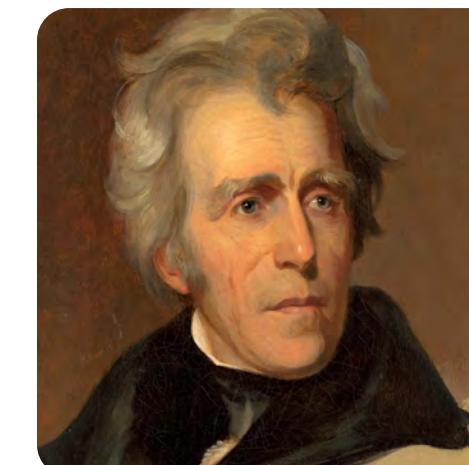
50,917

MEDIAN HH INCOME

\$84,037

TARGET INDUSTRIES

- Health Care & Life Sciences
- Financial & Professional Services
- Agriculture
- Forestry & Mining
- Alternative Energy & EVs
- Emerging Technology



DID YOU KNOW?

Lancaster County is the birthplace of Andrew Jackson, the nation's seventh president.

DISTANCE FROM CLT AIRPORT

19 mi

MAJOR EMPLOYERS

Continental

KEGER

MOVEMENT MORTGAGE

NUTRAMAX LABORATORIES

RED VENTURES



LINCOLN COUNTY



CITIES/TOWNS

Lincolnton, Denver

WHY LINCOLN COUNTY LEADS

Lincoln County is North Carolina's sixth fastest-growing county and one of the most tax-advantaged in the region. Its strategic location, collaborative leadership, and skilled workforce make it a premier destination for business growth and success.

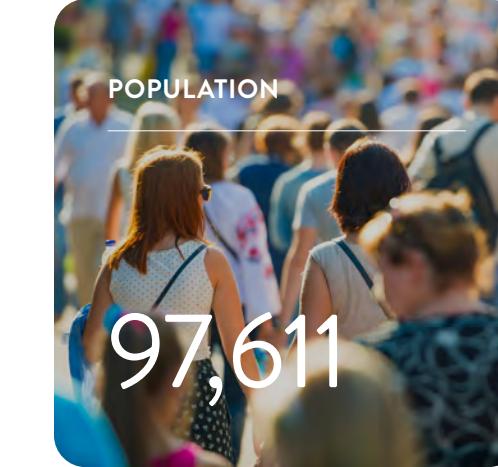
BUILDING TOMORROW'S WORKFORCE TODAY

Lincoln County offers a seamless, employer-driven talent pipeline where education and industry work hand-in-hand to prepare students for real careers. Businesses don't just hire talent, they help shape it from day one.

MANUFACTURING ADVANTAGES IN LINCOLN COUNTY

With a 1.6 million-strong labor force, strategic location near major airports and interstates, and abundant industrial space with low utilities, Lincoln County offers unmatched accessibility and affordability. A seamless workforce pipeline and the active Industrial Managers Association ensure manufacturers have the talent and support to thrive.

PICTURED: BOSCH PLANT



POPULATION

97,611



LABOR FORCE

48,873



MEDIAN HH INCOME

\$82,358

TARGET INDUSTRIES

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Distribution



DID YOU KNOW?

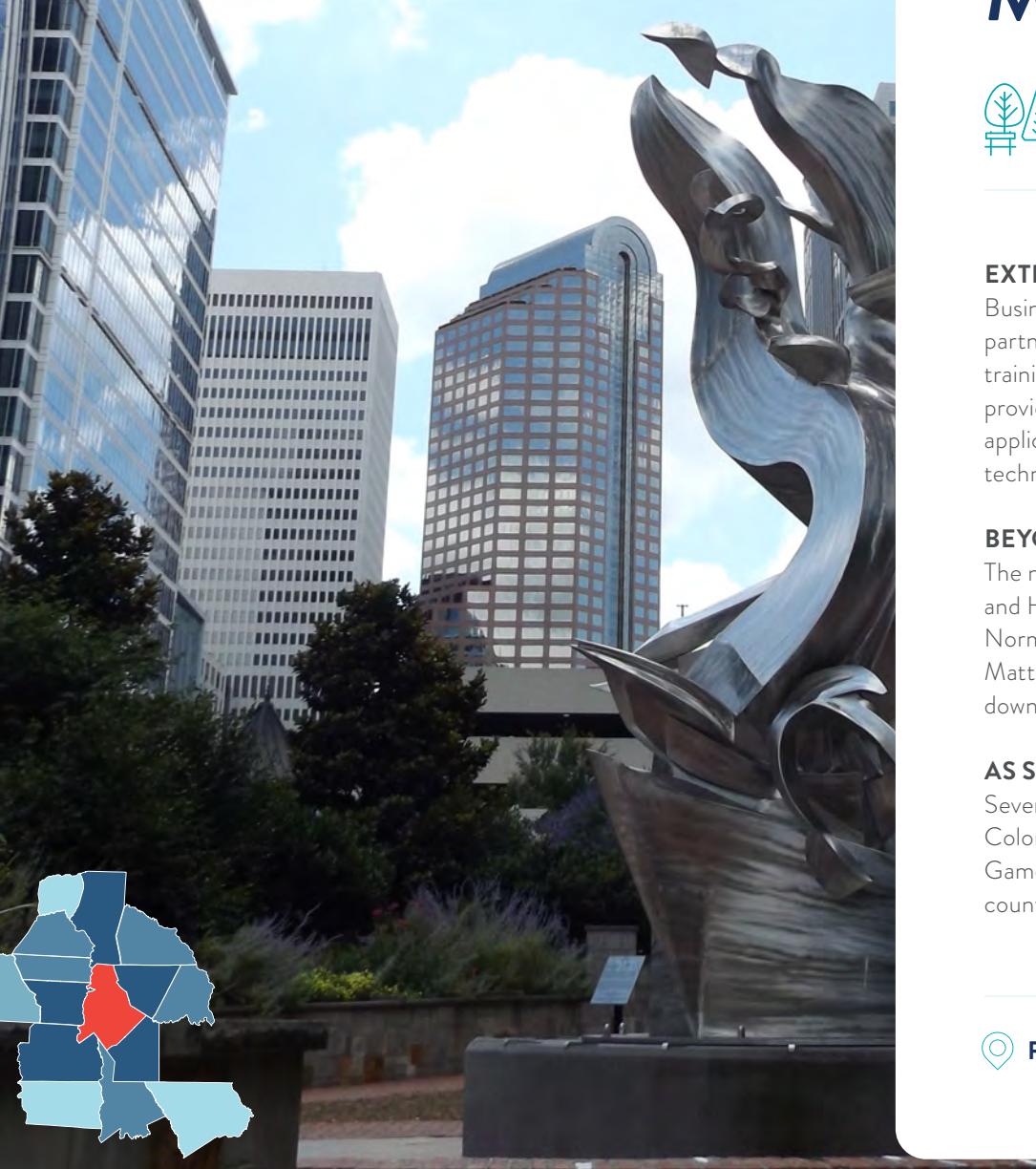
The first textile mill in the Southeast was established in Lincoln County next to the Catawba River in 1813.

MAJOR EMPLOYERS





Scan for the county's
economic development
department



CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG



CITIES/TOWNS

Charlotte, Huntersville, Matthews, Cornelius, Mint Hill, Pineville

EXTENSIVE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

Businesses can connect with one of more than 35 workforce and education partners in Mecklenburg County to source talent or receive resources for training and upskilling current workers. Many organizations work together to provide a comprehensive suite of wraparound services for jobseekers including job application and interview prep, soft-skills training, and scholarships for career and technical certifications.

BEYOND CHARLOTTE

The northernmost towns of Mecklenburg County, including Cornelius, Davidson, and Huntersville, are characterized by an abundance of water activities on Lake Norman and quaint, bustling downtowns. In the southernmost towns of Pineville, Matthews, and Mint Hill, residents find small town identities with historic downtowns, boutique shopping, local festivals, and high-quality parks.

AS SEEN IN

Several iconic movies were filmed in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, including *The Color Purple*, *Talladega Nights: The Ballad of Ricky Bobby*, and *The Hunger Games*. More than 20 feature films and television series have filmed in the county since 2022.

PICTURED: ROMARE BEARDEN PARK



POPULATION

1,206,285



LABOR FORCE

671,853



MEDIAN HH INCOME

\$90,494



CLT AIRPORT DISTANCE FROM CENTER CITY

6 mi

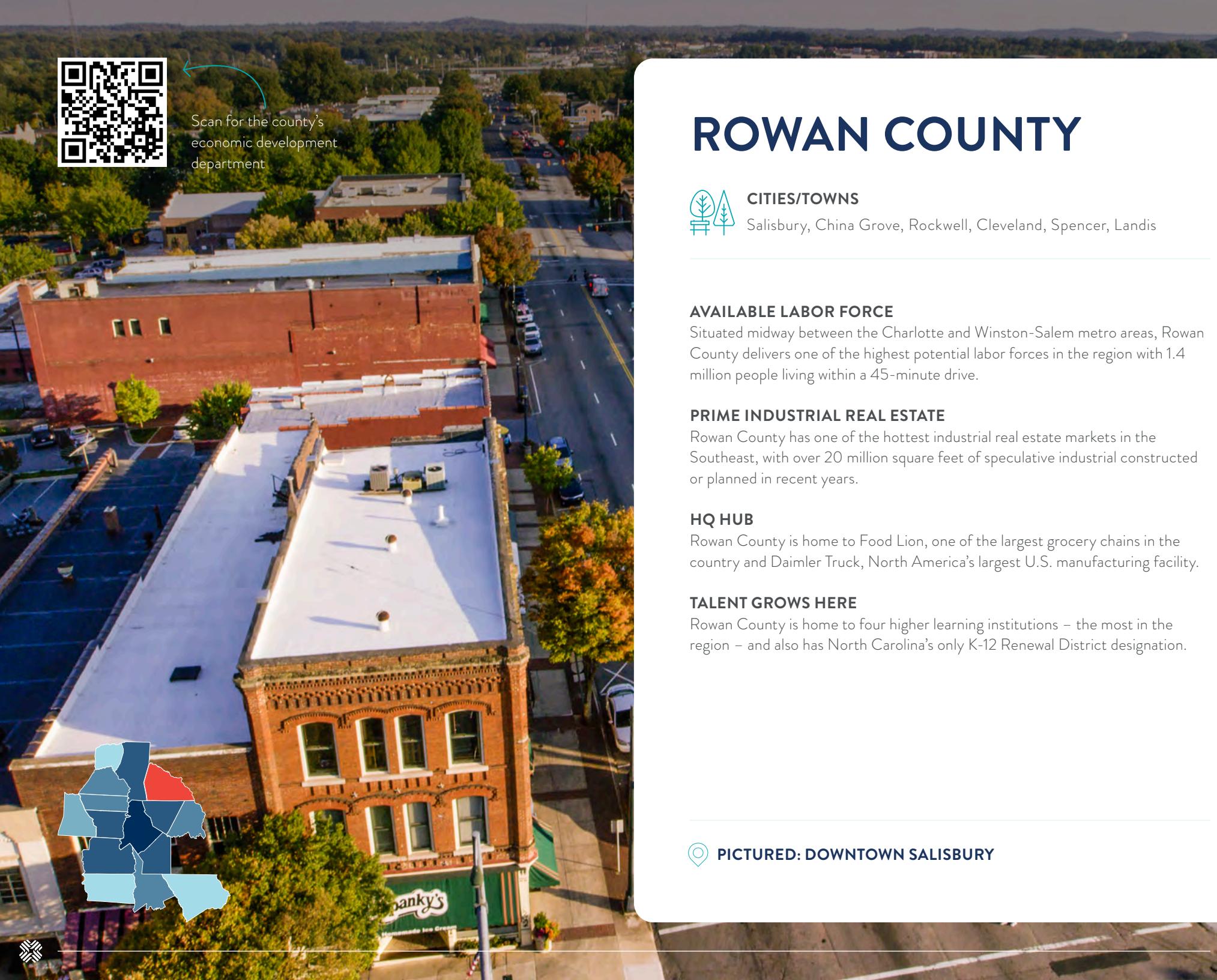


DID YOU KNOW?

Mecklenburg County declared independence from Britain on May 20, 1775, **a full year before the National Declaration of Independence** was signed. Local legend claims the "Meck Dec" was the inspiration for the nation's forefathers.

MAJOR EMPLOYERS





ROWAN COUNTY



CITIES/TOWNS

Salisbury, China Grove, Rockwell, Cleveland, Spencer, Landis

AVAILABLE LABOR FORCE

Situated midway between the Charlotte and Winston-Salem metro areas, Rowan County delivers one of the highest potential labor forces in the region with 1.4 million people living within a 45-minute drive.

PRIME INDUSTRIAL REAL ESTATE

Rowan County has one of the hottest industrial real estate markets in the Southeast, with over 20 million square feet of speculative industrial constructed or planned in recent years.

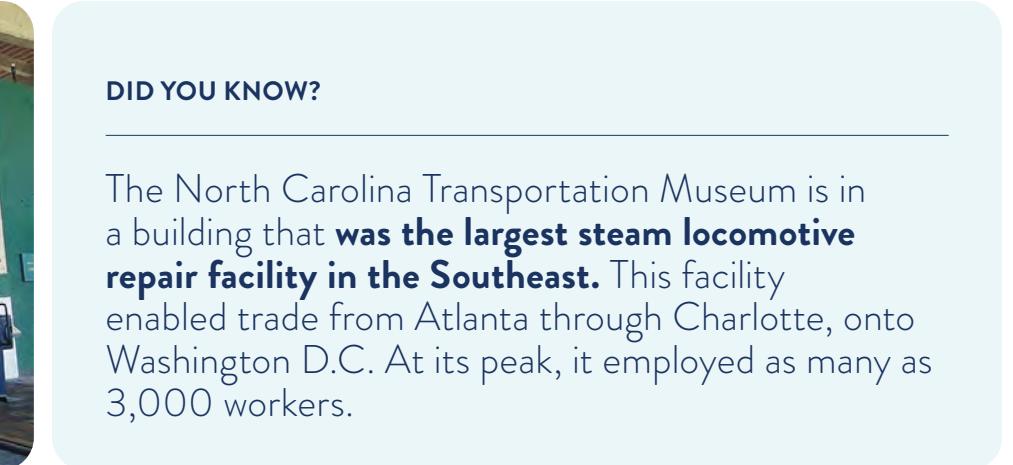
HQ HUB

Rowan County is home to Food Lion, one of the largest grocery chains in the country and Daimler Truck, North America's largest U.S. manufacturing facility.

TALENT GROWS HERE

Rowan County is home to four higher learning institutions – the most in the region – and also has North Carolina's only K-12 Renewal District designation.

PICTURED: DOWNTOWN SALISBURY



MAJOR EMPLOYERS

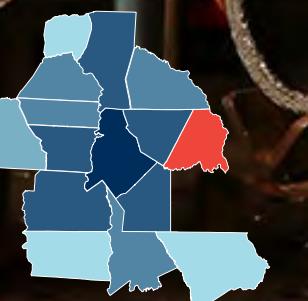


DAIMLER TRUCK





Scan for the county's
economic development
department



STANLY COUNTY



CITIES/TOWNS

Albemarle, Norwood, Oakboro, New London, Badin, Stanfield, Locust, Red Cross

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

The new Brown Trades Facility is a state-of-the-art training center revolutionizing workforce development and advanced manufacturing education. With comprehensive programs in trades such as welding, machining, HVAC, electrical, masonry, carpentry, and more, the Brown Building is developing Stanly County's workforce from the ground up and providing extensive opportunities for customized training. Nearby, Pfeiffer University's Center for Health Sciences anchors a new era of opportunity in downtown Albemarle, offering programs in physician assistant studies and occupational therapy that strengthen community health and fuel local revitalization.

GETTING OUTSIDE

Stanly County is a haven for outdoor recreation. From scenic vineyards and Morrow Mountain State Park to Badin Lake, Lake Tillery, and miles of trails and campgrounds, there's something for every outdoor enthusiast. No matter the season, residents and visitors alike can find endless ways to enjoy the fresh air.

SMART FOR BUSINESS

Stanly County offers one of the lowest overall tax liabilities in the Charlotte Region. With an abundance of available, ready-to-go sites, it's one of the most cost-effective places to do business in the Charlotte Region.

PICTURED: STANLY COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE



POPULATION

67,326



LABOR FORCE

33,267



MEDIAN HH INCOME

\$59,681



TARGET INDUSTRIES

- Advanced Materials
- Textiles
- Energy
- Health care
- Aerospace
- Food Processing
- Metalworking



DISTANCE FROM CLT AIRPORT

40 mi



DID YOU KNOW?

Known for its rich and fertile soil, Stanly County is **home to half a dozen vineyards**. Each year, the county hosts an annual festival highlighting wines from the area.

MAJOR EMPLOYERS





Scan for the county's economic development department

YORK COUNTY

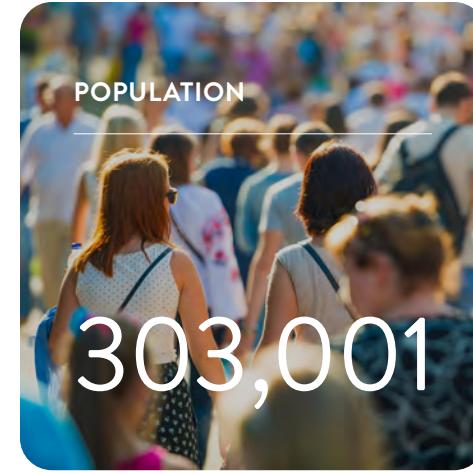
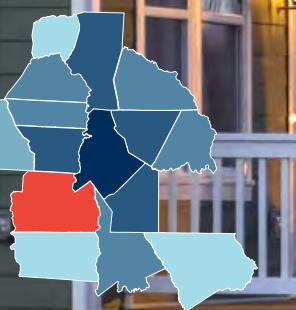
 CITIES/TOWNS
York, Rock Hill, Fort Mill, Clover, Lake Wylie, Hickory Grove

DESIGNED FOR LIVING WELL
York County offers a quality of life that people genuinely connect with. Families spend weekends on the trails at the 2,100-acre Anne Springs Close Greenway, enjoy the water on Lake Wylie, and gather in vibrant places like Kingsley and Riverwalk. The county is known for strong schools, safe neighborhoods, and communities that feel welcoming from day one. Employees can choose from urban, suburban, or waterfront living while staying close to Charlotte and major employment centers. It all adds up to a place where people want to build their careers and their lives, which makes recruitment and retention easier for companies.

INNOVATION + GROWTH MOMENTUM
York County is investing in mobility and connectivity that support both quality of life and long-term economic growth. Efforts to expand trail networks, improve access between key communities, and create safer, more walkable and bike-friendly corridors are strengthening how people move throughout the county. These improvements not only enhance daily life for residents but also make the area more attractive to companies looking for forward-thinking, livable communities where their employees can thrive.

TALENT & TOMORROW: HIGHER ED POWER IN YORK COUNTY
York County's higher education partners create a steady flow of talent for local employers. Winthrop University awards more than 1,200 degrees each year, and York Technical College adds another 1,200 completions with a 94% placement rate. Together, they supply over 2,500 graduates annually, giving companies a dependable pipeline of skilled, job-ready people who want to build their careers here.

 PICTURED: RIVERWALK CAROLINAS

**POPULATION****303,001****LABOR FORCE****158,942****MEDIAN HH INCOME****\$94,354****TARGET INDUSTRIES**

- Business & Financial Services
- Advanced Materials
- Distribution & Logistics
- Transportation
- Equipment
- Food Products
- Chemicals

**DISTANCE FROM CLT AIRPORT****13 mi****DID YOU KNOW?**

York County was a **primary filming location for The Patriot**, a Mel Gibson classic movie released in 2000.

MAJOR EMPLOYERS

CHAIRMAN'S CIRCLE

TRUIST

LOWE'S



Moore&VanAllen

BANK OF AMERICA

DUKE ENERGY

Atrium Health



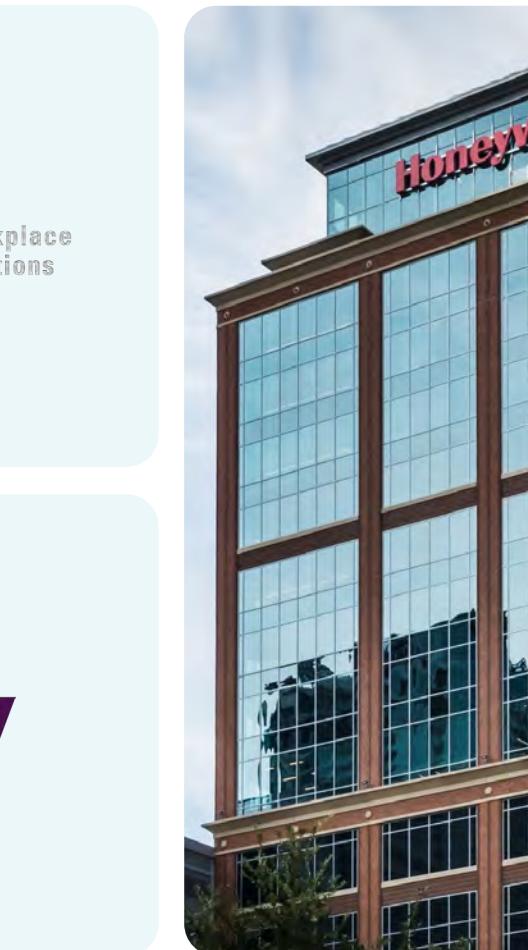
CORNERSTONE INVESTORS

Honeywell

CBI Workplace Solutions

ally

NUCOR



The Charlotte Regional Business Alliance is the only regional economic development organization that grows the economy through business recruitment, marketing, and lead generation, advocates for business so organizations can thrive, and convenes diverse stakeholders to solve difficult challenges. Thanks to our investors who support and advance success throughout the Charlotte Region

APPENDIX

1. U.S. Census Bureau, 2023-2024 Components of Resident Population Change
2. U.S. Census Bureau, Vintage 2024 Population Estimates
3. C2ER, Q2 2024-Q2 2025 COL Index
4. Canopy Realtor Association, September 2025
5. Avison Young, Q2 2025
6. Avison Young, Q2 2025
7. Federal Reserve Economic Data St. Louis, 2024
8. SC Dept of Education, NC Dept of Public Instruction
9. Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools, 2025
10. Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools, 2025
11. National Education Association, April 2025
12. National Database of Childcare Prices, 2022
13. U.S. Religion Census, 2020
14. USDOT Federal Highway Administration, 2023
15. U.S. Census Bureau, ESRI
16. Charlotte Douglas International Airport, 2024
17. ACI, 2025
18. U.S. Energy Information Administration, September 2025
19. Lightcast, 2025
20. Lightcast, 2025
21. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2023
22. Lightcast, 2025
23. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2023
24. Lightcast, 2025
25. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2024
26. Lightcast, 2025
27. Lightcast, 2025
28. Lightcast, 2025
29. Lightcast, 2025
30. Lightcast, 2025
31. Lightcast, 2025

All county pages feature data from the U.S. Census Bureau

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