

MISSION COMMANDER

Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina has driven the state's business recruitment efforts for a decade. A public-private effort, its regional and local partnerships have found success from the coast to the mountains.

Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina was created in 2014, launching a public-private effort to lead the state's business recruitment and development efforts. It has celebrated plenty of successes since, from Toyota's \$14 billion electric vehicle battery factory in Randolph County, which will create 5,100 jobs, to Pratt & Whitney's \$935 million turbine airfoil factory in Buncombe County that will employ 1,200 people. Count all the others, and EDPNC has had a hand in \$67 billion in capital investment, 178,000 jobs and \$10 billion in exports.

EDPNC Executive Director Chris Chung arrived in 2015 to helm the new organization, which was spun from N.C.

Department of Commerce. He was no stranger to EDPNC's mission, previously serving a similar role in Missouri. But these waters were uncharted. "I think some people were doubtful that this new model would bring the purported advantages, and I'm proud that we've given them confidence that this was the right approach," he says.

EDPNC's funding has mostly come from the state. Chung says the private sector, including utilities, businesses, industries and staffing agencies, has contributed about \$14 million. "All these private sector companies have provided money, because they believe not just in our mission of improving economic well-being for the state but in the way we are

approaching that mission," he says. "And to me that's a big vote of confidence."

Support has come in other forms. Chung says EDPNC's many partners include economic developers, communities, chambers of commerce and tourism boosters. All help push the partnership's mission forward. "While the results are great, success also means how you hold yourself out as an organization and as a partner and as a resource to the different groups, whether that's our local communities, elected officials or the business community," he says. Together they're creating and promoting economic opportunities across the state, from the mountains to the coast.



*"It's hard to predict the future,
and that's what makes economic
development a fascinating
business at times,"*

– EDPNC Executive Director Christopher Chung

WILSON COUNTY LOGS SUCCESSES

Last year was big for Wilson County. Five economic development projects were announced, and their investments totaled more than \$2.7 billion, says Jennifer Lantz, Wilson Economic Development Council executive director. Topping the list was Johnson & Johnson, which is investing \$2 billion in a factory that will make biologic medicines for oncology, immunology and neuroscience. Construction has started at Wilson County Corporate Park, she says.

Joining Johnson & Johnson is Reckitt Benckiser Health, which will make the over-the-counter drug Mucinex in Wilson. And Idexx Laboratories announced it will make veterinary test kits, SCHOTT Pharma will produce syringes and Neopac will expand its production of tubes, which have medical and cosmetic applications. The five announcements pledge to create more than 1,400 jobs.

The announcements are the fruits from years of labor by city and county officials. "We've been working for decades to provide the right infrastructure, not just roads and electricity and water and sewer but also fiber with our Greenlight system," Lantz says. "Both the city and county have developed their own versions of rideshare programs called Ride and Arrive."

Lantz says Wilson County counts more than 100 manufacturers. They represent a variety of industry sectors, though last year's announcements were all within life sciences. "We already had a life sciences cluster here, and that helped attract these five companies to locate here or expand their footprint," she says.

Wilson County



Proposed Reckitt Benckiser Health site



INDUSTRIAL SPACE

»» AVAILABLE ««

IN

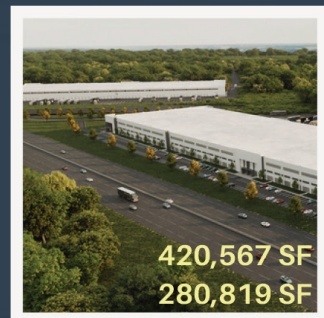
Gaston County



Kings Mountain
Corp. Center



Gateway 85



Gaston Commerce
Center



INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS AVAILABLE FROM
10,000 SF TO 1.3 MILLION SF



APPLE CREEK CORPORATE CENTER

- County-owned and developed industrial park
- 3 pre-graded sites available for large to mid-sized manufacturing operations
- All utilities in place along Apple Creek Parkway
- Conveniently located 4.5 miles north of I-85 and 20 miles west of Charlotte Douglas International Airport



TO VIEW ALL AVAILABLE
SITES AND BUILDINGS SCAN THE
QR CODE OR VISIT

www.gaston.org



IT'S TIME TO BUILD TOGETHER



• Construction Update:

- Lots 1-4 available for purchase
- Lots 5 & 6 under contract with a developer to build 20,000 SF to 40,000 SF shell buildings

• For Lease – Craven County Industrial Park:

201 Industrial Drive, New Bern, NC 28562

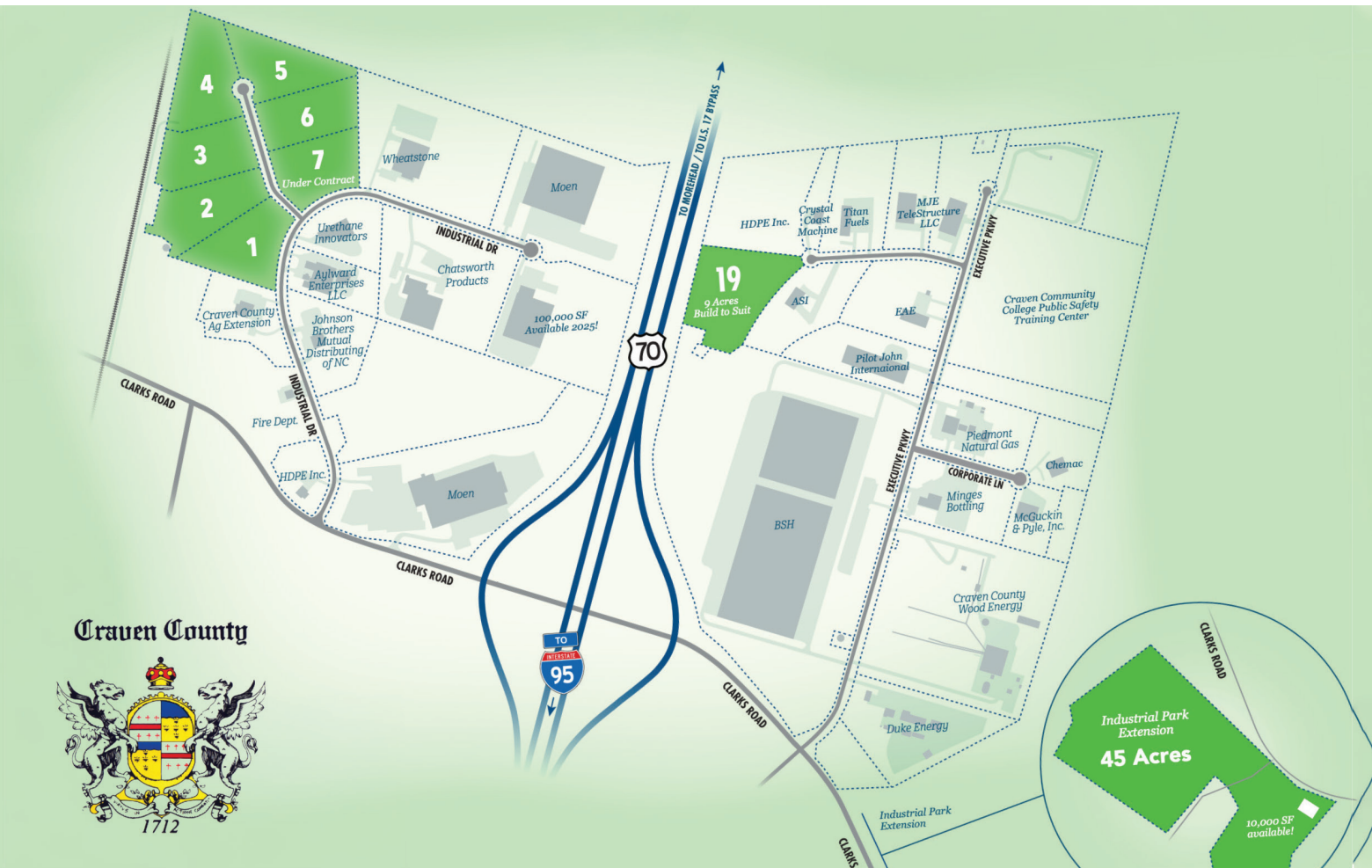
- Heated & cooled flex warehouses
- Spaces available from 10,000 SF to 80,000 SF

• Build-to-Suit Opportunity: Lot 19

• Craven County LaunchPoint – 1140 Clarks Rd.

- 11,340 SF of industrial space
- Ideal for businesses needing temporary accommodations while constructing a permanent facility in the industrial park

CravenBusiness.com • 252.633.5300



CROSSPOINT

LOGISTICS CENTER



- **Raleigh-Durham** | Benson, North Carolina
- **501,215 SF** industrial facility expandable up to 1,064,880 SF
- **Direct access** to I-95 and I-40, as well as I-85, the industrial “backbone” of the Southeast
- **30 Megawatts** available power
- **Available** immediately



CROSSROADS OF AMERICA ADVANCED MANUFACTURING TRAINING CENTER



- **Designed** to meet new and expanding industry training needs
- **Staffed** by Johnston Community College industry training experts
- **68K SF** including 8K of high bay space and 6K of classroom space
- **Directly on I-95** at exit 87, adjacent to the Four Oaks Business Park

To learn more, please contact:

Chris Johnson
919.205.1232
GrowWithJoCo.com

Reid Williams
919.963.3112 x 125
i95i40alliance.com



CATAWBA COUNTY REBOUNDS

Head west from Wilson County, and you'll find Catawba County. Scott Millar is president of the county's economic development corporation, and he's seen ups and downs over the last three decades. While furniture and textile manufacturing has contracted since their heyday in the 1990s, some companies continue, including Hickory-based Sherrill's Furniture, a family-owned manufacturer since 1945. "We had lost 45,000 jobs by 2002, when we thought our manufacturing base was rock solid," he says. "We had to look toward diversification."

Catawba has rebounded, with nearly 425 manufacturers, including auto-part makers and food processors.

Manufacturers employ more than 30% of the county's workforce. Corning Optical and CommScope together employ more than 2,000 workers. Corning is the county's second-largest employer, trailing only Catawba Valley Medical Center.

A growing concentration of data centers adds diversification, too. Apple started the movement in 2009, when it built one in Maiden. It has grown from a single server building to a 500,000-square-foot compound during the past 15 years. It brings more than jobs and notoriety. There's tax dollars, too. "Apple has helped Maiden bring in money to build a new community center, new police and fire stations, and a new City Hall," Millar says.

Apple announced it was investing \$1 billion in North Carolina – including \$448 million at its Maiden data center – in 2021. It announced \$500 billion worth of expansions in nine states, including North Carolina data centers, in February. Those will roll out over the next four years and focus on artificial intelligence, silicon engineering and workforce skills development. Analysts predict Apple's total investment in North Carolina could exceed \$5 billion over the next decade.

Microsoft entered the scene in 2022, when it announced it was investing at least \$1 billion in Catawba County over 10 years for the phased development of four data centers, Millar says.

"We believe Microsoft's investment will have a similar, if not more, impact on our county than Apple," he says.

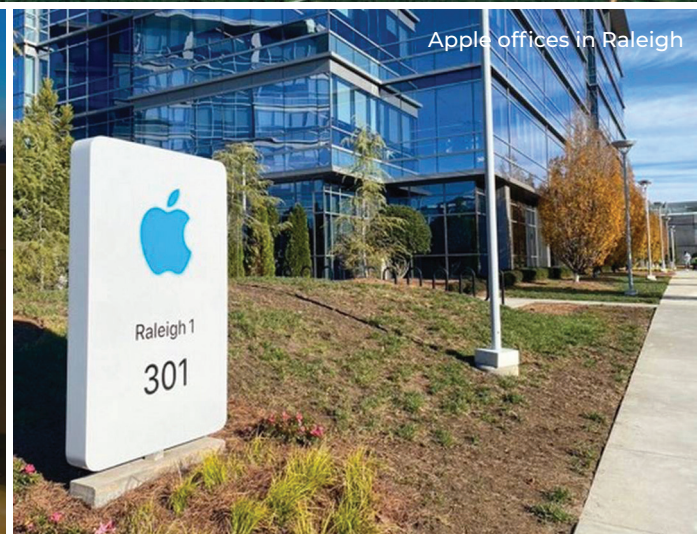
Microsoft acquired the Person County Mega Park in Woodsdale Township in November.



Apple data center in Maiden



Apple offices in Raleigh





COME TO HICKORY. YOU'LL BE IN GOOD COMPANY.



Population of over 2 million within a 60-minute drive time, including a labor force of over 1 million.



Convenient access to interstates, Carolina ports, Charlotte Douglas International Airport, and major transportation networks.



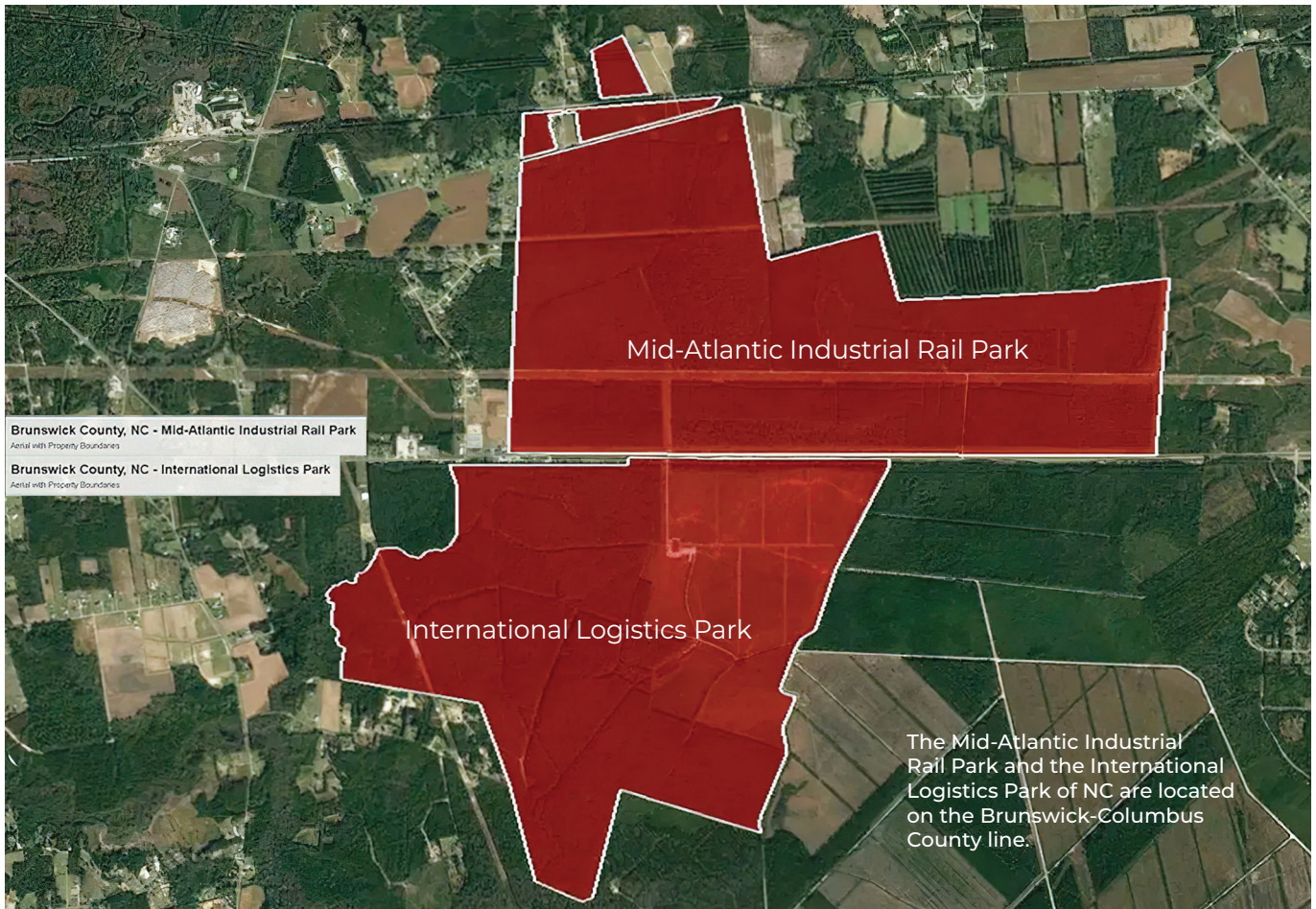
Skilled workforce, along with Catawba Valley Community College, Lenoir-Rhyne University, and Appalachian State University Hickory Campus.



Less than one-day drive time to 60% of the US population.

Trivium Corporate Center is the home for world-class advanced manufacturing. Join companies such as Corning, Cataler North America Corporation, American Fuji Seal, Inc., and Gusmer Enterprises, Inc.





OPPORTUNITY GROWS IN NORTH CAROLINA'S SOUTHEAST

North Carolina's Southeast Regional Economic Development Partnership represents 20 counties. "We cover a fifth of the state," says Joe Melvin, its vice president. "Each county has its own economic development commission, and we work on their behalf." The group celebrated its 30th anniversary last year. "In 1994, we were one of the original regional economic development commissions the General Assembly set up," he says. "And 10 years ago, we transitioned to a public-private nonprofit organization."

Small projects can make a big impact for North Carolina's Southeast, whose focus is small cities and towns scattered

across a largely rural region. More than half of the region is economically distressed; N.C. Department of Commerce counts 11 Tier One counties. "For some of our communities, quite honestly, a 40-job, \$8 million project moves the needle pretty significantly," Melvin says.

Melvin says recent job announcements have brought opportunity to the region. Five companies announced investments in Lumberton, Fayetteville, Wilmington and Raeford in February. They'll create nearly 1,000 jobs. And more should be on the way. North Carolina's Southeast received an appropriation of \$5 million in 2021. It invited member counties to apply for project funding. He says each received \$262,000 to identify sites, develop shell buildings and infrastructure

and perform due diligence. The money has been put to good use. "We've worked with them on 22 projects," he says.

Two of North Carolina's five megasites — International Logistics Park and Mid-Atlantic Industrial Rail Park — are in the region. The state's Selectsite Readiness Program, completed about six months ago, identified other sites of 1,000 acres or less statewide. "As we're thinking about our product development initiatives, we are leveraging and layering additional funding set aside for megasite and Selectsite programs," Melvin says. "And our region is so diverse, we must be nimble in understanding the differences and the nuances of each of those communities and counties and help them achieve what is maximum value."

AT THE CENTER OF IT ALL


Chatham County, located in the center of North Carolina within the Research Triangle and the Carolina Core, offers robust business opportunities, including 1,350 acres at the Chatham-Siler City Advanced Manufacturing site (CAM), where Wolfspeed is located, and 360 shovel-ready acres at Triangle Innovation Point (TIP) West, adjacent to the 2,000 acres at the VinFast site in Moncure. Apex Gateway Park is currently under development with over one million square feet of industrial space, including one new shell building available later in 2025. Pittsboro's Chatham Park will offer over 20 million square feet of commercial space and 22,000 residential units, including Disney's Asteria community, while Mosaic at Chatham Park is a premier entertainment and lifestyle destination.



NC CAROLINA
CORE
YOUR NEXT BIG MOVE



RESEARCH TRIANGLE
REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP



GUILFORD ALAMANCE ORANGE DURHAM
RANDOLPH WAKE
MOORE LEE HARNETT



Discover Business Potential in the Heart of NC

- **Business Friendly Environment:** Skilled workforce and strong momentum.
- **Strategic Location:** in Central North Carolina.
- **Sustainability Focus:** Eco-friendly developments like Chatham Park and Wolfspeed drive smart, sustainable growth.
- **Growing Workforce:** 40,000+ annual graduates, and 8,000 exiting military from Fort Bragg.
- **Quality of Life:** Where people dream of living.

WORKFORCE IS A FOCUS

The vibrant economy in North Carolina, which business news channel CNBC ranked the top state for business in 2022 and 2023, and second in 2024, is ripe for new relocating and expanding businesses. But all that potential creates challenges, including a workforce shortage. U.S. Chamber of Commerce says there were only 55 available workers for each 100 available jobs in the state in 2023.

Wilson Community College is building a \$30 million biologics training center. It's scheduled to open next summer and help meet the workforce needs of last year's announcements, including Johnson & Johnson. "That's one piece of our long-term workforce preparedness strategy," Lantz says. "A second piece is the BioWork program, developed by the North Carolina Biotechnology Center. And we partner with them on our life sciences projects." BioWork, which teaches the technical skills needed for a

career in biopharma manufacturing, was added to the Wilson County high school curriculum this year.

The addition of high-wage jobs in Wilson County is expected to catch the attention of workers hungry for an income boost. "If you draw a big circle around Wilson, a 45-mile radius would attract workers seeking higher salaries for jobs in the life science sector," Lantz says. "For other industries, that radius is probably about 30 miles."

Millar says Catawba County attracts people because of its quality of life and "cool factor." The county passed a \$45 million matching bond referendum in 2014, funding miles of pedestrian and cycling trails along with housing units throughout Hickory. The county's proximity to the mountains and big-city amenities in Charlotte attracts residents looking for a balanced lifestyle.

When it comes to workforce training, Catawba Valley Community College is leading the way. It has developed an academy approach to education

through its state-of-the-art Workforce Solutions Complex, where it teaches in demand advanced manufacturing and technology skills. Millar makes it the first stop on economic development tours of the county.

Melvin says filling job mandates in largely rural southeastern North Carolina can be challenging. "These mega projects sound great when you announce \$1.2 billion in investment and 1,200 jobs," he says. "But if we're going to be real, there are many communities that can't find 1,200 people to fill those jobs, and many can't find people to fill 500 jobs. Many communities in the region max out at 100 or 150 jobs."

Melvin cautions against attracting large projects that need so many employees that they cannibalize the local workforce. "It is a delicate dance for local economic developers to keep their current employment base staffed while furthering their mission of finding the next opportunity to add to the tax base," he says.



Catawba Valley Community College Workforce Solutions Complex in Hickory teaches in demand manufacturing and technology skills.

COME GROW WITH US

INDUSTRIAL SITES AVAILABLE IN ROCKINGHAM COUNTY, NC

LOT 11 REIDSVILLE INDUSTRIAL PARK

- 33-acre site with a 15-acre graded pad
- Less than a mile from US29/Future I-785
- A Duke Energy substation less than half a mile away
- Municipal water and sewer
- Piedmont Natural Gas
- The convenience of Piedmont Triad International Airport 30 minutes away and Raleigh-Durham International Airport less than 1.5 hours away



NEW STREET SITE EDEN



- 204-acre parcel with a 15-acre graded pad.
- Conveniently located within 10 miles of US220/Future I-73
- Duke Energy 100kv double-circuit transmission line on site
- Municipal water and sewer
- Piedmont Natural Gas
- The convenience of Piedmont Triad International Airport 45 minutes away and Raleigh Durham International Airport less than 1.5 hours away

WHY CHOSE ROCKINGHAM COUNTY, NC

DIVERSE
LABOR POOL OF
1.7 MILLION
WITHIN A
50-MINUTE DRIVE

REACH
2/3
OF THE US
POPULATION
WITHIN A DAY'S DRIVE

16
HIGHER
EDUCATION
INSTITUTIONS
WITHIN 60-MILES



Rockingham
County NC

YOU'RE IN A GOOD PLACE

Leigh Cockram, Economic Development Director
425 NC Hwy 65, Reidsville, NC 27320
336-342-8139 | lcockram@rockinghamcountync.gov
WWW.GOROCKINGHAMCOUNTYNC.COM

PROUD MEMBER OF:



MOVING FORWARD

Chung has served under three governors – Pat McCrory, Roy Cooper and Josh Stein – and three presidents – Barack Obama, Donald Trump and Joe Biden. He says it’s still too early to tell which direction Trump’s second term industrial policies will take. But any company that comes out of those industrial policies will need new locations, giving North Carolina targets to woo. “It’s hard to predict the future, and that’s what makes economic development a fascinating business at times,” he says. “There is no guarantee that tomorrow will look like today, and that’s what keeps us on our toes.”

While Chung acknowledges federal policy changes may create some

headwinds, he’s learned that North Carolina can adjust by localizing production and changing directions. “Does creating a tailwind balance or cancel the headwinds?” he says. “It’s hard to say, but as a rule, we have seen some of that upside potential in the past.”

Chung says the country focused on electric vehicles and clean energy through the Inflation Reduction Act over the last five years, and factories for the former and federal efforts for the latter happened in North Carolina. And he says there was a big bipartisan push for semiconductor funding, research and development through the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022. “That legislation drove a lot of activity by companies that needed to have a manufacturing

or production presence in the United States,” he says.

North Carolina’s future is bright, Chung says. While the new federal administration brings some uncertainty, the state is well-positioned to adjust in a changing environment. The state’s reputation boosts economic development efforts. “And I don’t take for granted a single dollar of what we have raised over the past 10 years, but at the same time, I know that those dollars represent a vote of confidence,” he says. “If we weren’t getting results or doing it in a way that fostered goodwill and a strong reputation, I don’t think we would be receiving that kind of financial support.” ■

— Teri Saylor is a freelance writer in Raleigh.

BUILDING TRUST *since* 1975



\$1 billion

of industrial & distribution projects in the last 4 years

15 million

square feet of industrial & distribution projects in the last 4 years



www.omegaconstruction.com
Winston-Salem, NC | Savannah, GA | Greenville, SC



OMEGA
CONSTRUCTION
we build trust

IT'S Fair Housing MONTH



WE'RE CELEBRATING FAIR HOUSING MONTH

This April, join the 50,000 North Carolina REALTORS® in celebrating Fair Housing Month.

Fair Housing means everyone deserves a place to call home, regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, or disability.

North Carolina REALTORS® are committed to Fair Housing for all North Carolinians ensuring that everyone has access to safe and affordable housing.

North Carolina REALTORS® receive specialized training to avoid discrimination and any practices that may foster it. The ethics and standards advocated by North Carolina REALTORS® ensure buyers and sellers are offered a marketplace that is free from discrimination and is based on the principles of private property rights – nothing else.

As REALTORS®, we believe that fairness is worth fighting for. Let's work together to create communities where everyone can thrive.



We Open Doors **TO EVERYONE**

> ncrealtors.org



**CONGRATULATIONS,
UNC CHARLOTTE,
ON ACHIEVING**



**R1
RESEARCH
STATUS!**



**THIS MILESTONE
STRENGTHENS
OUR COMMUNITY,
FUELS INNOVATION
AND DRIVES
ECONOMIC GROWTH.**



**A WIN FOR
UNC CHARLOTTE**



**IS A WIN FOR
NORTH CAROLINA.**