



Northeastern South Carolina

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

North Eastern Strategic Alliance

EXPLORE • EXPAND • EXCEL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The North Eastern Strategic Alliance (NESA) is a regional, non-profit, economic development organization that serves nine counties in northeastern South Carolina.

Our mission is to work with partnering county and state economic development organizations to create new jobs and increase the per capita wage of the citizens of the North Eastern region of South Carolina at a rate faster than per capita growth rates for the state and the nation.



02	MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN
03	NESA LEADERSHIP
05	FINANCIAL POSITION
06	STAFF & SERVICES
08	REGIONAL ECONOMY
10	REGIONAL WINS
12	BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
14	MARKETING
15	PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT
16	INVESTOR RELATIONS & OUR SUPPORTERS



Yancey McGill
Former South Carolina
Lieutenant Governor

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

During 2025, we participated in more mission trips, hosted visits to the region, and engaged in more in-person meetings which resulted in a successful year of announcements and developing projects.

We had 13 announcements this past year, which represented the creation of over 400 new jobs and over \$426 million in capital investment.

Employment in the NESAs region increased about 3.7% year-over-year as of November. The unemployment rate in the NESAs region was at 6.0% as of November.

Over the course of the year, we were able to generate 71 new projects that represent substantial economic growth opportunities for the region.

We appreciate each of our member counties and investors who collaborated to develop great opportunities for our region and communities over the past year. We are excited to continue working with you and seeing another wonderful year in 2026.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Yancey McGill". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



NESA Chairman &
Former S.C. Lieutenant Governor

Yancey McGill



Former Florence
County Councilman

Frank J. "Buddy" Brand

Francis Marion
University President

Dr. Fred Carter



Horry County Council Chairman

Johnny Gardner



S.C. State Representative

Roger K. Kirby



President Lazarus Entertainment Group
Former Horry County Council Chairman

Mark Lazarus

Broker-in-Charge,
ERA Leatherman

Jean Leatherman



Former S.C. State Senator

Gerald Malloy, Esq.



S.C. State Senator

Luke Rankin,



S.C. State Senator

Kent Williams



Coastal Carolina
University President

Dr. James Winebrake



Former City of Florence Mayor

Stephen Wukela, Esq.





NESA BOARD MEMBERS

Mary Anderson
Representing Chesterfield County

John Q. Atkinson
Representing Marion County

John Bloom
Blue Cross Blue Shield of SC

Ronald Carter
Santee Electric Cooperative

Angela Christian
Representing Georgetown County

Mike Cool
Santee Cooper

William Fleming
MPD Electric Cooperative

Johnny Gardner
Representing Horry County

Benjy Hardee
Grand Strand Water and Sewer Authority

Dr. Linda Hayes
Representing Dillon County

Former S.C. State Senator Gerald Malloy
Representing Darlington County

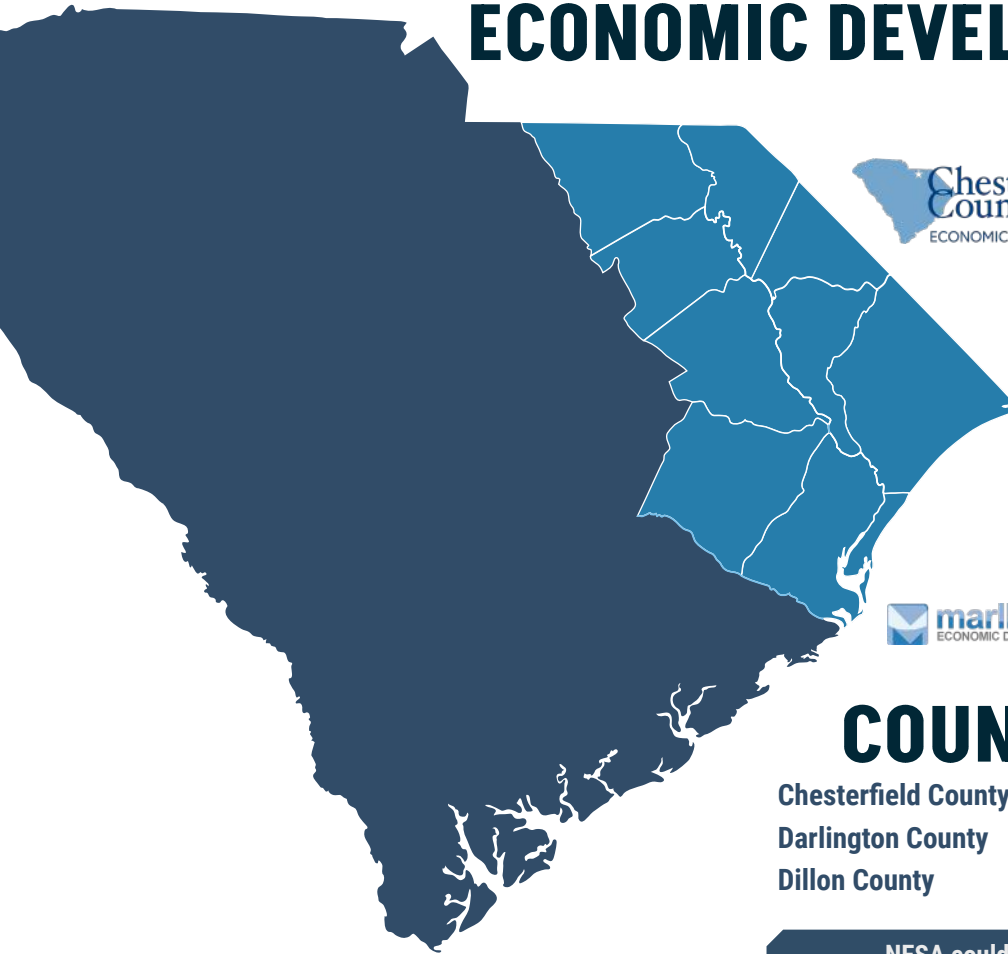
Jason Speake
Duke Energy Progress

Jason Steen
Representing Marlboro County

Kelvin Washington
Representing Williamsburg County

Kevin Yokim
Representing Florence County

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS



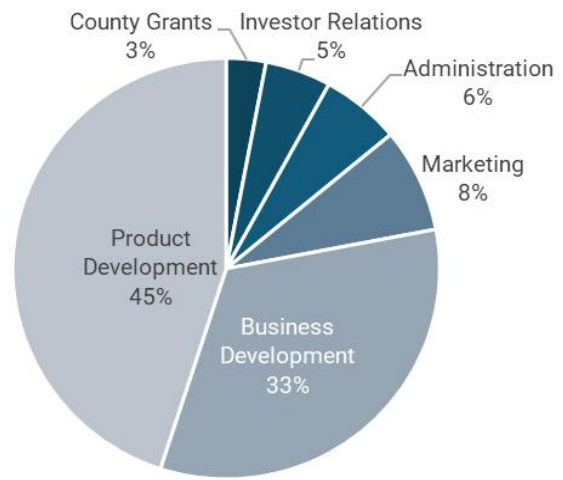
COUNTY PARTNERS

- | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Chesterfield County | Florence County | Marion County |
| Darlington County | Georgetown County | Marlboro County |
| Dillon County | Horry County | Williamsburg County |

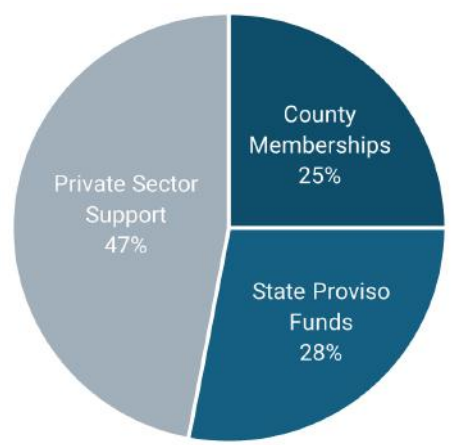
NESA could not do what we do as a regional alliance without the financial support of our county partners.

FINANCIAL POSITION

NESA's funding for fiscal year 2025 was distributed as follows:



NESA's funding for fiscal year 2025 was provided through the following sources:



STAFF & SERVICES

NESA works with our public partners to support their efforts recruiting new industry and facilitating existing industry expansions throughout our nine-county region. We achieve this by providing the expertise of our staff through business development, marketing, research, and more.

The NESA team supports our public and private allies throughout the economic development process—assisting their product development endeavors to recruit new companies and help existing industry expansion efforts.



ATTRACTING INDUSTRY

NESA conducts domestic and international business development missions to recruit new industries to the region. These missions are planned, organized, and executed by NESA staff with opportunities for our local economic developers to participate.

In addition, NESA showcases the region through direct marketing efforts to inform companies and site selection consultants about the region.



PREPARING PRODUCT

NESA supports our county partners and allies with our expertise when it comes to identifying new industrial sites and improving upon existing sites to make them more attractive to prospective buyers. NESA's County Grants and High Impact Grant programs—which are geared specifically towards improving product across our region—are available to our county partners and allies.



SITE SELECTION

Once NESA and our county partners draw the interest of a company, we provide a wealth of services to support our counties and their efforts to ultimately land that company. Our business development, marketing, and research teams respond to requests for information (RFI) by providing economic data, site information, marketing materials, and more. We also help facilitate meetings with all interested parties and organize regional, county, and site tours as needed.



RETAINING & EXPANDING

Existing industries are the backbone of our region and we provide them with the support they need to continue excelling. We work with our county partners to identify additional workforce solutions, research, and additional incentives they can utilize. Additionally, we have an economic data resource tool on our website that provides area demographics, labor force characteristics, wages, and spending data. NESA is also here to assist our existing industry with analyzing that data as needed.

OUR TEAM



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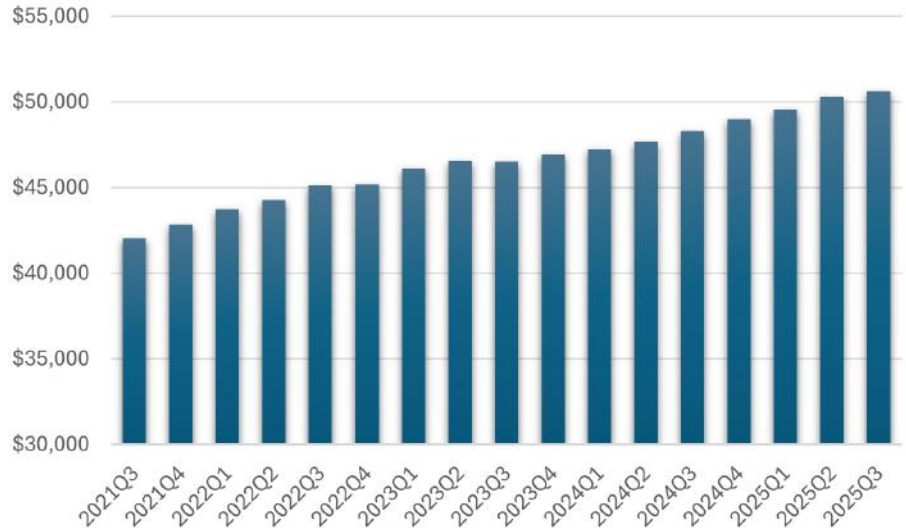
 843.319.8842

REGIONAL ECONOMY

The regional economy proved to be resilient again in 2025. The sustained low unemployment rate, coupled with stable employment figures, modest GDP growth, and increasing wage levels, suggests the region as a whole is poised for continued prosperity. The research team at NESA will continue to monitor the regional economy and keep our partners informed on key economic data and trends as we move into 2026.

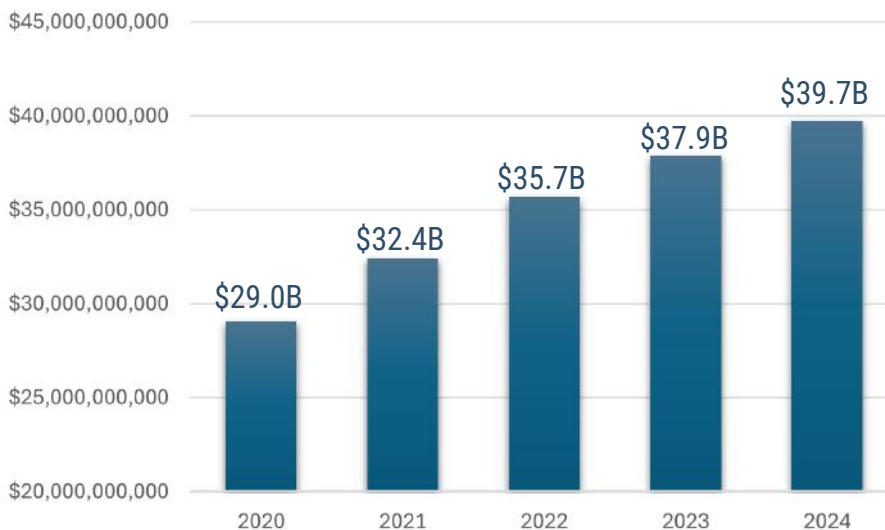
Average Annual Wages

Average annual wages in the NESA region was \$50,606 per worker in 2025 as of the third quarter. This was a 4.8% increase from the same quarter a year prior, and a 20.4% increase since 2021Q3.



Source: JobsEQ

Gross Domestic Product



Source: JobsEQ

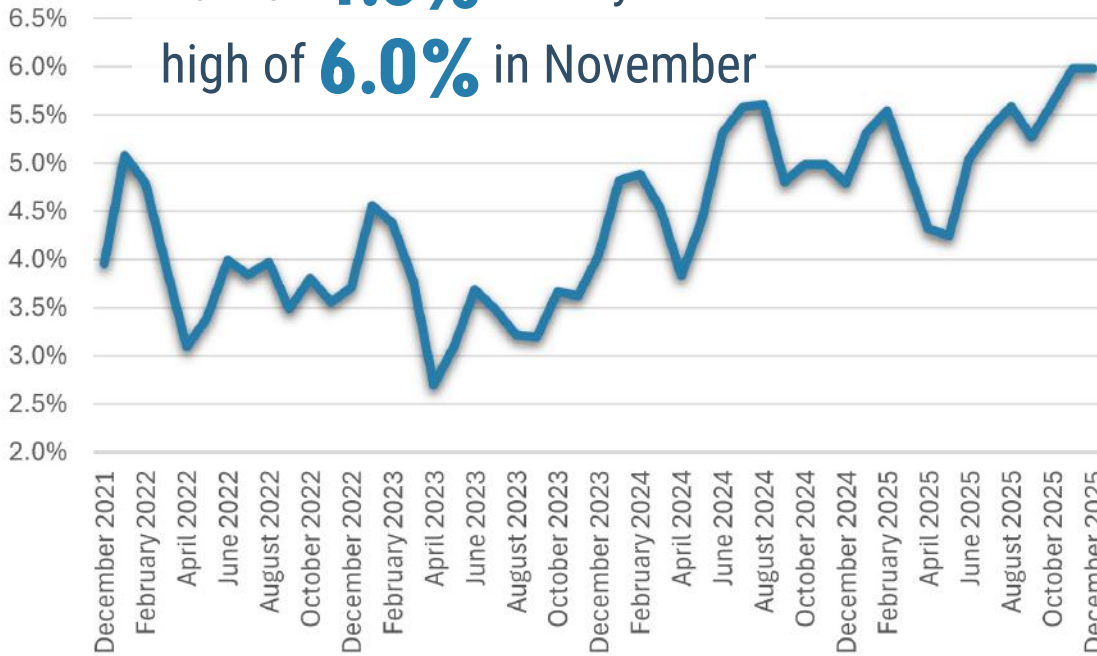
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) represents the value of all final goods and services produced within an economy, serving as a key indicator of economic productivity.

Chmura estimates the regional GDP to be \$39.7 billion as of 2024, a 5% increase over the previous year.

6.0% in December

low of **4.3%** in May

high of **6.0%** in November



Source: JobsEQ, SCDEW

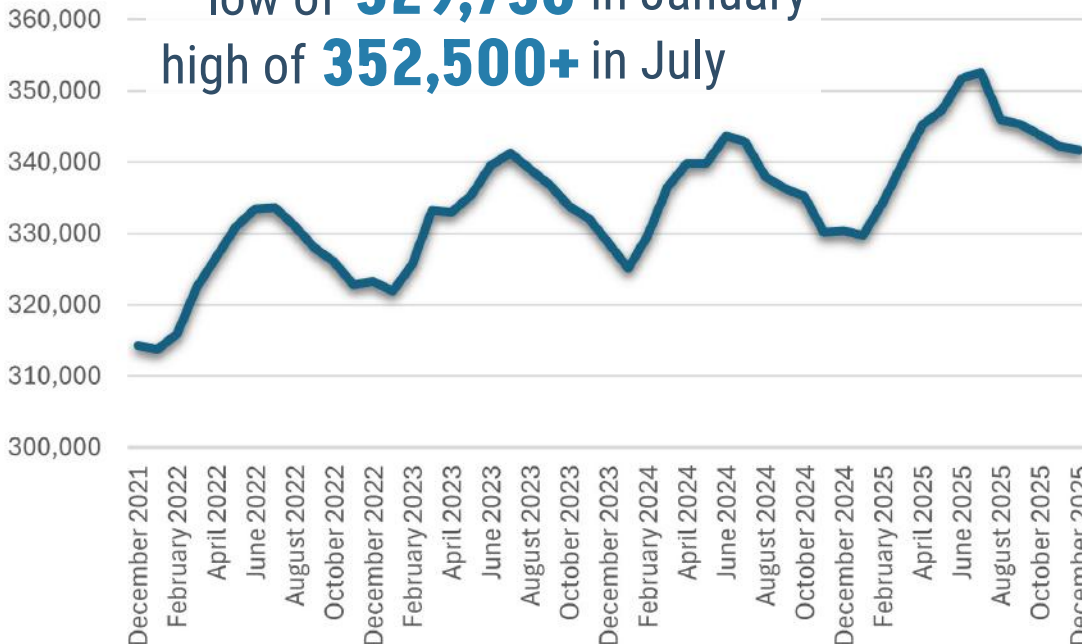
Regional Unemployment Rate

As of December 2025, the Regional Unemployment Rate was at 6.0%.

341,625 in December

low of **329,730** in January

high of **352,500+** in July



Source: JobsEQ, SCDEW, BLS

Regional Employment Level

As of December 2025, the Regional Employment Level was at 341,625

REGIONAL WINS 2025

Date	Company	Jobs	Capital Investment	County
3/14/25	Bennettsville Printing	24	\$ 8,400,000	Marlboro
3/14/25	SoPakCo	0	\$ 22,800,000	Marlboro
3/18/25	Universal Industrial Gases, LLC	6	\$ 100,000,000	Darlington
7/8/25	SoPakCo	0	\$ 8,885,000	Marion
7/8/25	Andrews Fabricators of Kingstree, Inc.	40	\$ 3,000,000	Williamsburg
7/9/25	Birch Creek Energy	0	\$ 154,000,000	Marlboro
8/11/25	Arclin	30	\$ 60,000,000	Dillon
8/13/25	ATI	70	\$ <i>Not Disclosed</i>	Chesterfield
8/27/25	Georgia Pacific	35	\$ 25,000,000	Darlington
9/17/25	Galivants Ferry Sawmill	18	\$ 10,000,000	Horry
12/4/25	Ocean Craft Marine (Asis Boats USA)	93	\$ 10,850,000	Horry
12/11/25	PRET Advanced Materials, LLC	74	\$ 18,500,000	Florence
12/11/25	Coastal Ready Mix	19	\$ 4,600,000	Horry

13

ANNOUNCEMENTS

JOBS 409

\$

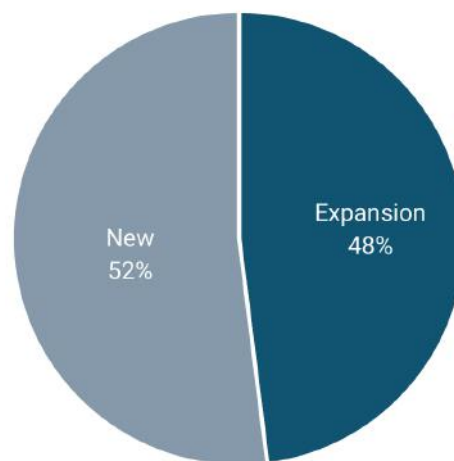
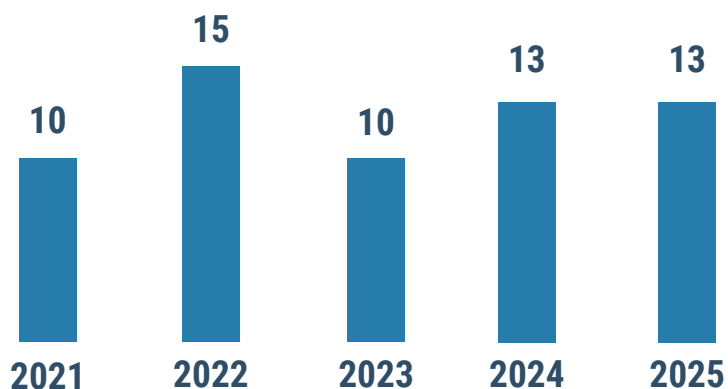
426,035,000



ANNOUNCED JOBS & CAPITAL INVESTMENT BY YEAR



TOTAL ANNOUNCEMENTS BY YEAR



NEW VS. EXPANSION
2021 - 2025

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

NESA’s business development initiatives are designed to promote job creation and attract significant capital investment to our nine-county region. These efforts focus on building strong relationships with companies, consultants, brokers, the South Carolina Department of Commerce, and other key allies. In 2025, our business development team engaged with hundreds of company executives, brokers, and consultants through multiple targeted marketing missions.

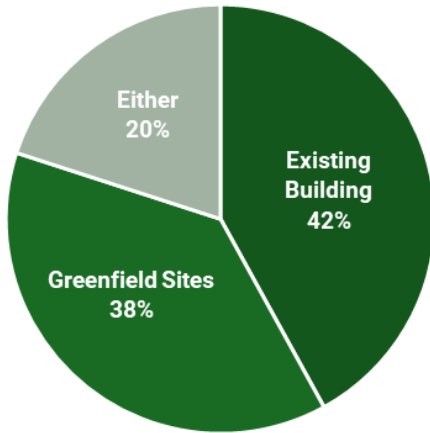
Over the course of the year, NESA added 71 projects to its pipeline. The total number of verified projects in the pipeline was higher than the previous year, and the average scale of each project remained impressively robust.

These efforts culminated in 13 announcements across the region in 2025, resulting in \$426 million in new capital investment and the creation of 409 new jobs. These achievements highlight the region’s ongoing commitment to fostering economic growth and opportunity.

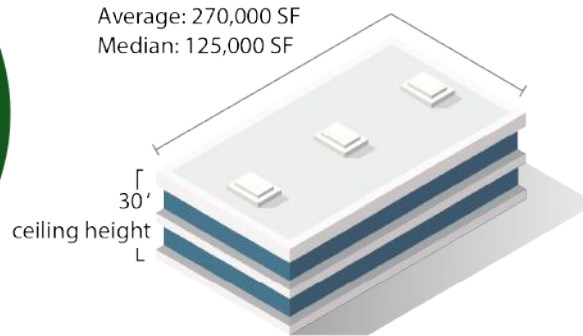
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CALENDAR

MONTH	EVENT	DESTINATION
February	SC Automotive Summit	Greenville
March	Consultant Luncheon	Washington DC
March	Marketing Mission	Wisconsin
April	SC Commerce Fam Tour	NESA Region
April	Marketing Mission	Virtual
May	SelectUSA Investment Summit	Washington DC
May	PGA Event	Myrtle Beach
June	Marketing Mission	Ohio & Michigan
August	Broker Meetings	Charleston
September	SC Commerce Consultant Event	Chicago
September	America’s Food & Beverage Show	Miami
October	Marketing Mission	Houston
November	LiveXchange	Phoenix
November	Marketing Mission	Los Angeles
December	Consultant Fam Tour	NESA Region
December	Area Development Consultants Forum	Fort Lauderdale

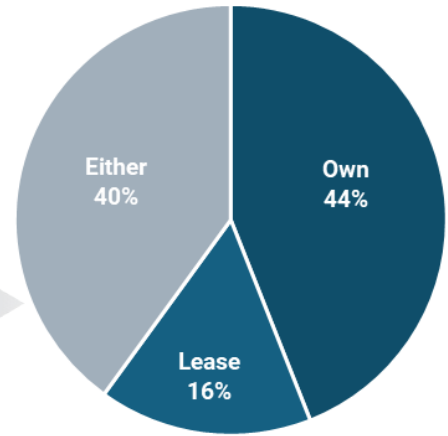
PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS



Real Estate Preferences

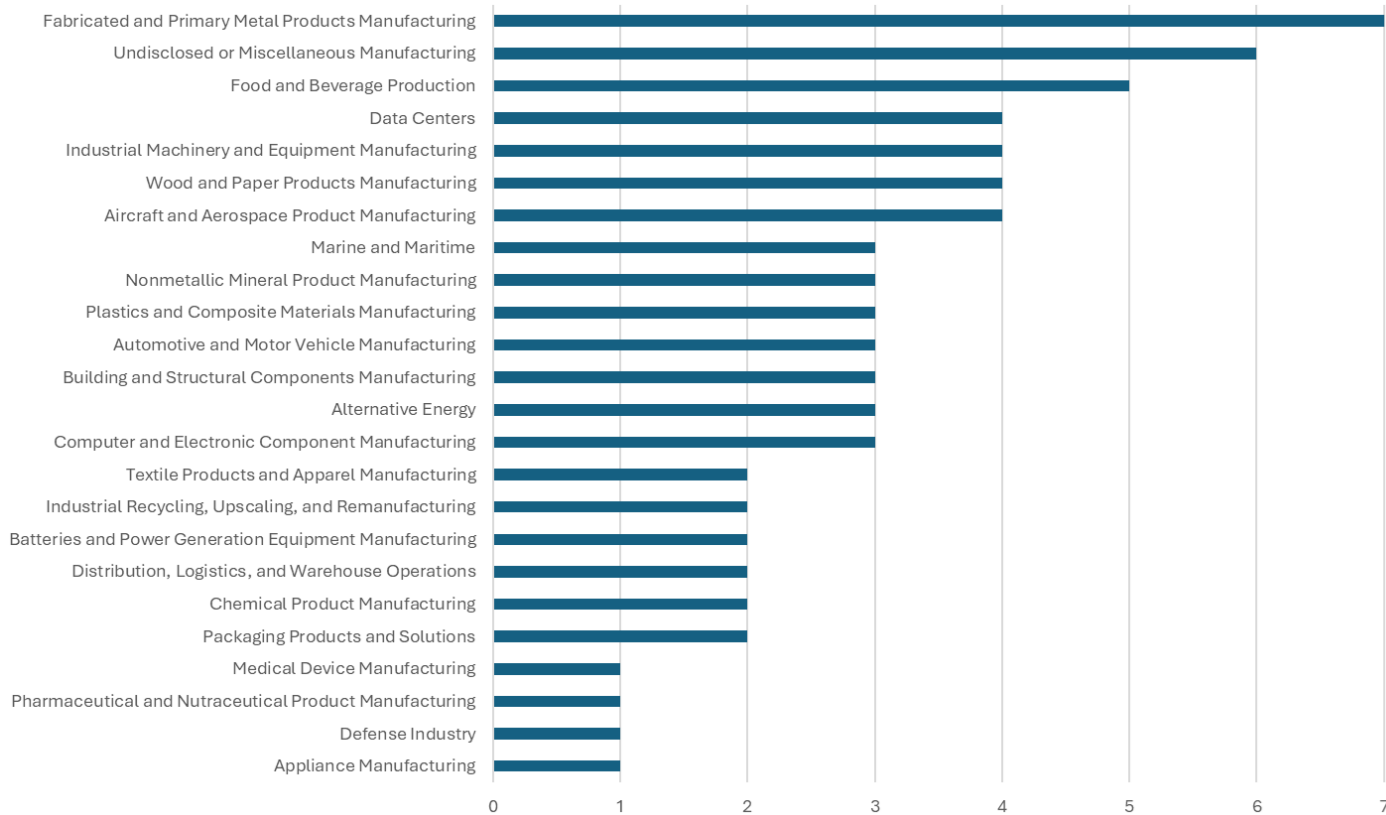


Building Size Preferences



Ownership Preferences

PROJECTS BY INDUSTRY CLUSTER FOR 2025



MARKETING

TOP REQUESTS



PROPERTY IMAGERY

We provide drone video, 360° imagery, still photography, and more for industrial properties.



MAP CREATION

Our team can generate and create enhanced maps that meet the requirements of an RFI or the marketing needs of our county partners.



GRAPHIC DESIGN

We create a variety of printed and digital marketing materials in-house as a service to all of our partners.



CONSULTING

Our partners rely on us for guidance and advice as they develop new marketing initiatives, individual marketing pieces, website upgrades, and more.

88

External Marketing Requests

► NESAs Apprentices



Josh McDaniel



Daiveon Glover

Josh McDaniel graduated from Francis Marion University with a degree in Economics and Supply Chain. Following his apprenticeship, he joined Florence County Economic Development Progress as the new project manager. In September, Daiveon Glover joined NESAs apprenticeship program. He is pursuing a degree in Economics and Political Science at Francis Marion University.

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

The NESAs Executive Committee annually awards competitive grants to our county partners and allies to maximize the regional impact of key projects which align with NESAs mission and that help to impact other economic development efforts throughout the region. Our county partners each have the opportunity to submit grant applications for both our County Grant and High Impact Grant programs each year. In 2025, the NESAs Grants Committee approved grants totaling \$412,000.

The following represents the grants that were awarded:



SANTEE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. / GEORGETOWN COUNTY

was awarded a NESAs High Impact Grant to assist with funding towards design, permit and complete site work for a 100,000 SF Building in Georgetown County.



HORRY COUNTY

was awarded a NESAs County Grant to assist with the overall cost of lead generation marketing efforts.

RESEARCH

NESA continues to position itself as a key data resource. NESA has access to numerous information sources providing demographic, workforce, and economic data, among others. The data NESA can provide is useful for a variety of applications: industry recruitment, industry expansion and retention, and community development. These efforts proved vital to our county allies in particular, as the research department completed over 100 activities in 2025 with the majority of efforts focused in data and business development.

106
**Research
Requests**

INVESTOR RELATIONS

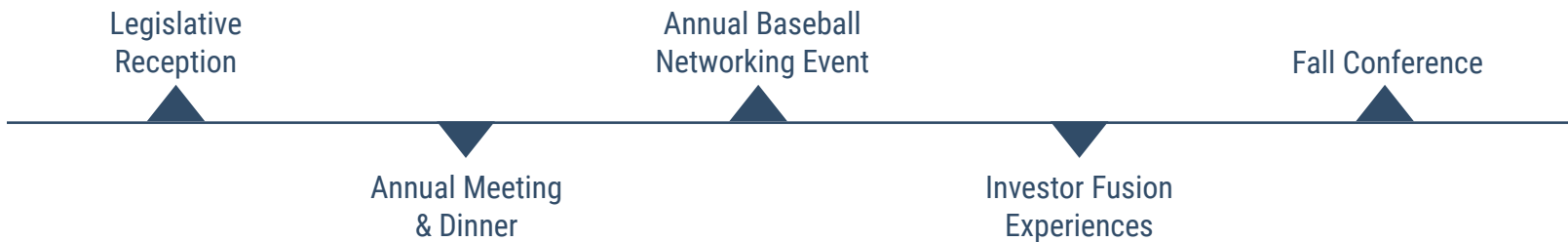
The support of our investors is critical to achieving our mission. Together we are working to improve the quality of life for residents throughout the northeastern region of South Carolina. Our investor relations activities are designed to keep our stakeholders informed, connected, and visible.

We were excited to host several events last year, starting with our Annual Meeting & Oyster Roast at Francis Marion University's University Place. Matthew Martin, Economist and Regional Executive with the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, provided an economic update. Our Networking and Family Night was held at the Flamingos Baseball Stadium. We held our Annual Fall Conference at Francis Marion University's Freshwater Ecology Center with presentations by Damon V. Pike, Principal Customs & Intl. Trade Services with BDO, and Harry Lightsey, Secretary of Commerce.

Our Fusion Lunch Experiences provided opportunities for investors and developers to connect in a more relaxed and conversational setting, as well as explore state and regional offerings. This year included Honda Manufacturing of SC, SC Ports Authority Charleston, Covered in Cotton, Robinson Nuclear Plant, and Inland Port Dillon.

We look forward to having a full calendar of events this year that will provide updates on current affairs and connect our county allies and investors.

Planned Events for 2026*



*Dates for these events are to be determined

INTERESTED IN JOINING OUR MISSION?

When you commit to NESAs, you're committing to furthering economic success and improving the quality of life for the citizens of our region. As a private sector investor, you not only accelerate capital investment, but aid in facilitating a sustainable strategy for job creation. You become a champion for a brighter future in our nine-county region.


Reach out to Jennifer Grigg, our Director of Investor Relations, to learn more about how you can make a difference in our region today.



JENNIFER GRIGG
Director of
Investor Relations

 jgrigg@nesasc.org

 843.661.1170

 843.616.8543

NESA EVENTS

Investor Fusion Experiences



We host a series of casual lunches where 8-10 investors, delegates, and county economic developers can connect with allies on a more personal level.

Legislative Reception



We start each year spending time with our legislators in Columbia. This grants our investors the opportunity to spend quality face-to-face time with our state's governing body. We also update our legislators and investors on the previous year's successes.

Annual Meeting



Each year at this event, we distribute and review our annual report highlighting the previous year and discussing opportunities for the coming year.

Site Selector Developer Dinners



As part of our Site Selection Showcase, these dinners provide opportunities for our county developers to meet with the experts who determine business location strategies.

NESA Family Night



This is a family favorite—we host a night of fun activities for our investors to bring their loved ones along. It is a wonderful time to enjoy a game, good food, and networking.

Fall Conference



At the region's economic development educational opportunity of the year, we host local, regional and national experts for a half-day of presentations followed by a fun evening of food and fellowship.

OUR SUPPORTERS

BOARD



PARTNERS



ASSOCIATES



UNDERWRITERS

AT&T Bistro Holdings Coastal Structures Corporation Davis & Floyd
 Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd M.B. Kahn Construction Moore & Van Allen
 Parker Poe Attorneys & Counselors at Law Pepsi of Florence S&ME
 Sandhill Telephone Cooperative South Carolina Power Team

DONORS

A.O. Smith First Reliance Bank Thomas & Hutton
 ARCO Design/Build Florence Concrete Products Thompson Turner Construction
 Alliance Consulting Engineers G3 Engineering THS Construction
 Baker Roofing Hussey Gay Bell Vulcraft SC
 Coastal Carolina National Bank Landmark Construction Wilcox Office Works
 DSM-firmenich McCrory Construction Womble Bond Dickinson
 ECS Nucor Wyman Gordon
 Edward Jones – Sharon Ackerman PLC Commercial Yahnis Corporation
 Elliott Davis Stifel
 First Citizens Bank The Brandon Agency



Our Supporters are Our Champions

Our corporate investors are integral to our continued success. They are industry leaders who want to see our region continue to succeed and grow. They believe in the mission of NESAs and work with our team day in and day out to make our region of South Carolina a better place to work and live.

NOTES



North Eastern Strategic Alliance

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