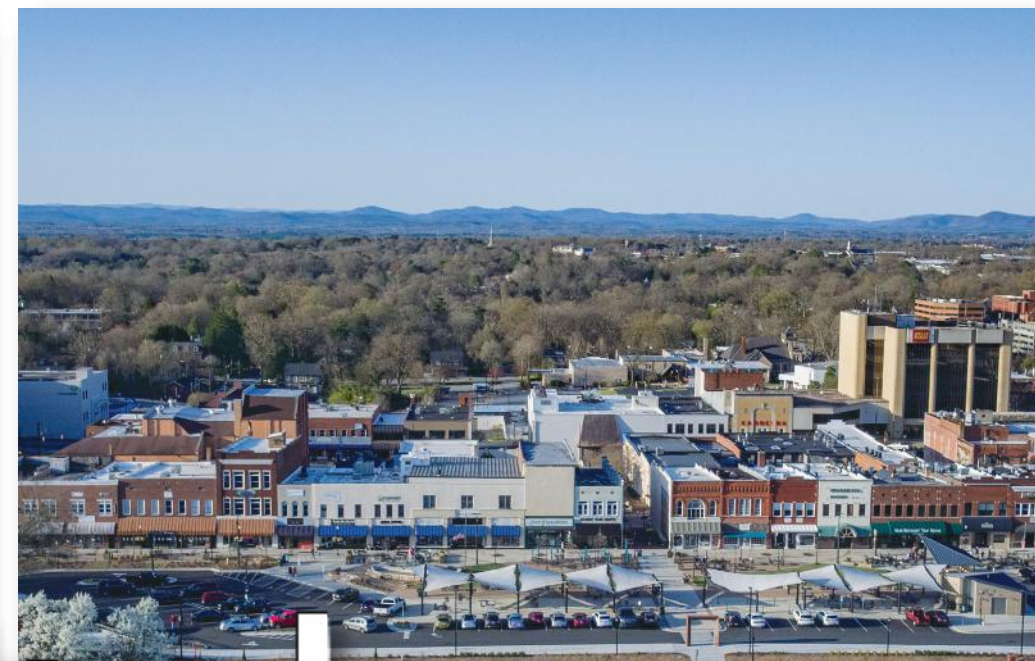
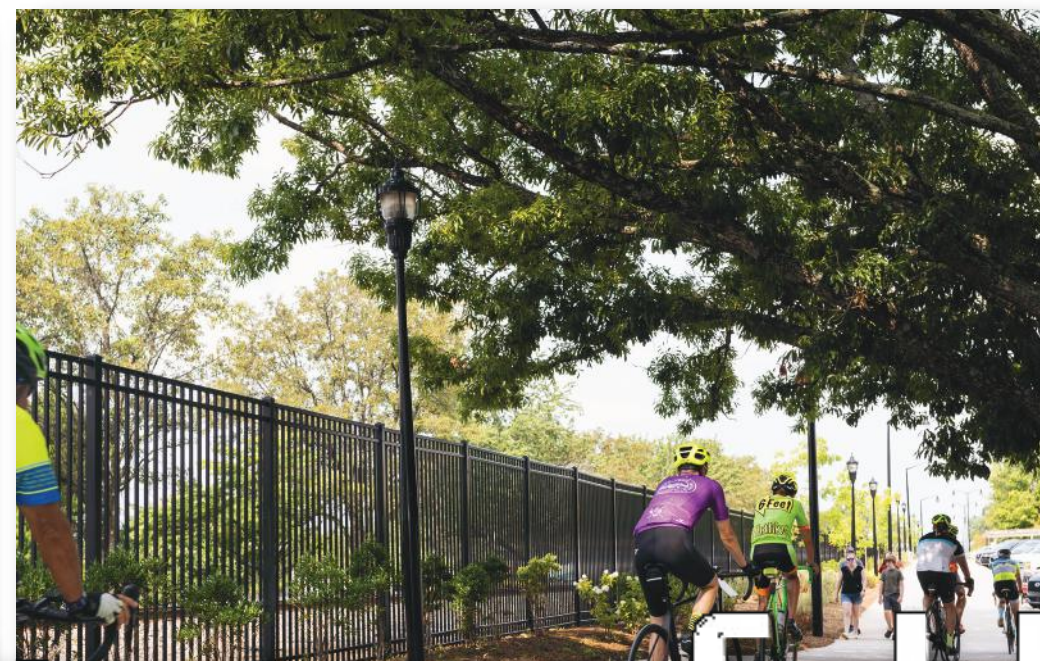




EXPERIENCE BUSINESS. WELL CRAFTED.

Hickory, NC





The City of Hickory

The City of Hickory is located in the western portion of North Carolina in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, 50 miles northwest of Charlotte, 80 miles east of Asheville, and 35 miles from the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Hickory spans approximately 30 square miles and resides at the prime juncture of I-40 and U.S. 321, which makes it an excellent location for industrial, retail, and residential development.

Residents enjoy the advantages of a setting that allows easy access to the Blue Ridge Mountains; the Catawba River chain of lakes, including Hickory, James, Rhodhiss, Lookout Shoals, and Norman; a mild climate; and excellent interstate, rail, and air access. The City operates a top-rated library system, 26 city parks, and provides unparalleled cultural offerings for a city of its size.

"It's such a great place to live. We're so fortunate. We have the mountains. We have the coast not far away. We have so many things that are here."

*-Roger Young
David E. Looper & Company*



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The City and its departments focus on:

Growing and developing the economy

Attracting and retaining business and industry

Creating jobs

Promoting small business development

Enhancing the quality of life

Encouraging tourism and supporting community revitalization

BUSINESS. WELL CRAFTED.

The City of Hickory's Vision for Economic Vitality is to establish a diversified and sustainable economy through the growth of business opportunities, jobs, tax base, and population, and to improve the quality of life for its residents.

A Robust Business Environment

Hickory combines historical significance, strategic location, a diversified workforce, and a focus on innovation.



HISTORICAL ROOTS AND ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT

Hickory traces its roots back to the 1850s when Henry Robinson built a log tavern under a hickory tree in the area. The town was initially known as Hickory Tavern and officially became the City of Hickory in 1889.

Known for its entrepreneurial spirit, Hickory has a long history of homegrown businesses. Many of the businesses have been around for years. Hickory Springs Manufacturing (HSM), a leading supplier of diversified components for the bedding, furniture, and institutional industry, is a family-owned company that has been part of the community since 1944.

Other widely known companies located in Hickory include Alex Lee Inc, Corning Optical Communications, Century Furniture, MDI, and Sherrill Furniture, as a few examples.

Downtown Then



Downtown Now



STRATEGIC LOCATION



Hickory is for doers and makers seeking a well-rounded community, located between Charlotte and Asheville at the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains, along I-40, where a collective spirit of craftsmanship strengthens any endeavor with detail, artistry, and quality. Hickory is the perfect place to work, live, and raise a family.

<https://www.hickorync.gov/myhky/>

Trade Area Population

Nearly 500,000 people live within a 35-minute drive time of Hickory. Over 2 million people live within an hour drive.

(Source: Placer.ai, STI Popstats).

City of Hickory

60% of the United States population is within a one-day drive time.



500K

ESTIMATED POPULATION
(35-MINUTE DRIVE TIME)

2M

ESTIMATED POPULATION
(60-MINUTE DRIVE TIME)

141K

AVERAGE DAILY
POPULATION

DEMOGRAPHICS

Hickory is a regional center drawing visitors and workers from a broad trade area. An average of 141,000 visitors, employees, and residents spend time in Hickory on a daily basis, according to estimates from Placer.ai, a service that estimates foot traffic and migration patterns. Over 60% of employees commute to Hickory every day from outside the City Limits.



78.3%
POPULATION 18 YEARS
AND OVER



35.9%
BACHELOR'S DEGREE
OR HIGHER



MEDIAN AGE
38



\$63,361
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD
INCOME



\$89,772
AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD
INCOME



(Source: 2023 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, US Census Bureau)

NUMBER
6

RANKED
5TH

NUMBER
26

IN THE NATION

Most affordable place to live in the United States.

U.S. News & World Report 2024

IN NORTH CAROLINA

Best place to live in North Carolina.

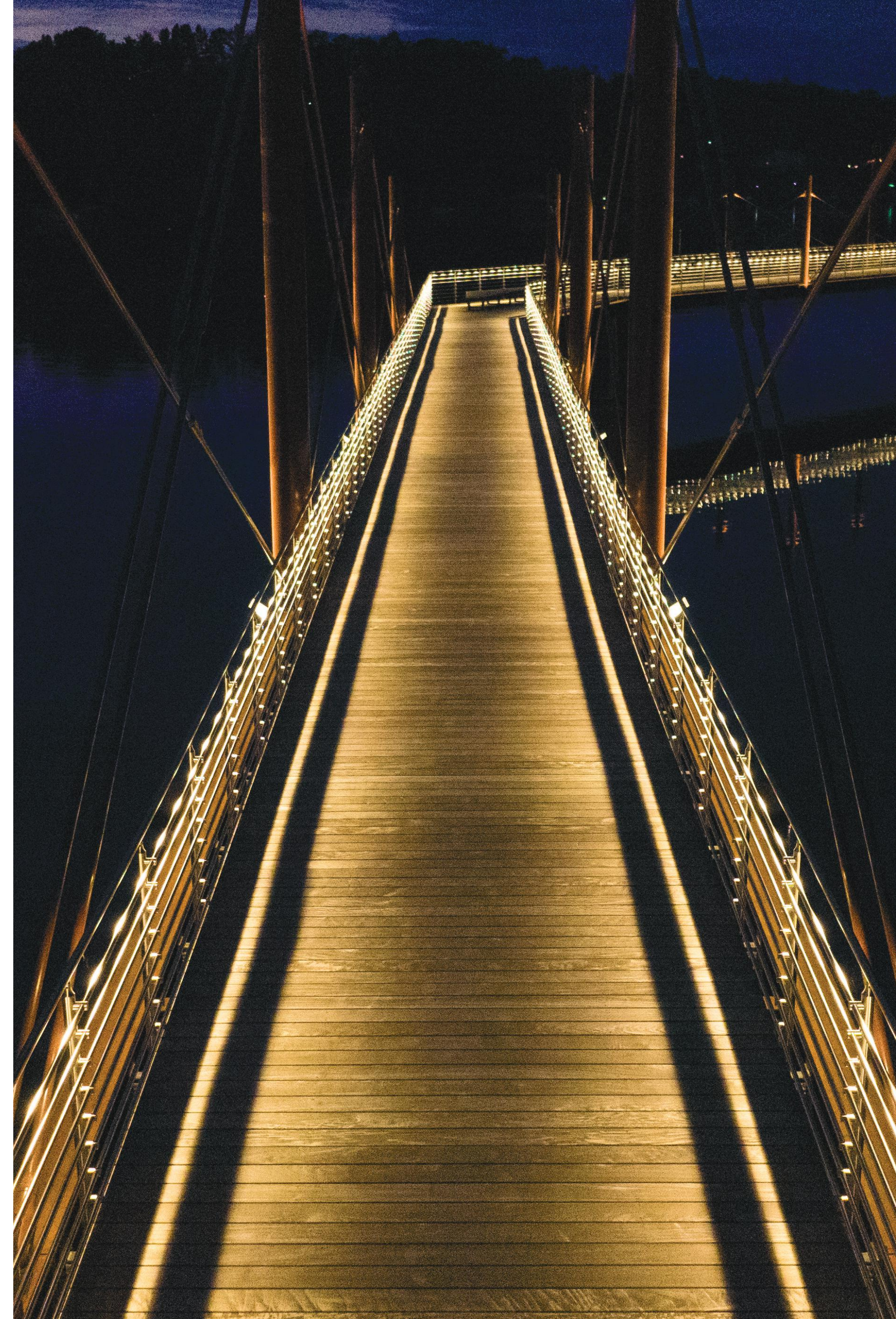
U.S. News & World Report 2024

IN THE U.S.

Best place to live.

U.S. News & World Report 2024





Quality of Life



Hickory offers picturesque views with parks, trails, lakes, and mountain vistas throughout all four seasons. The community's tagline - Life. Well Crafted. - reflects its commitment to quality living and business opportunities.



THE HICKORY TRAIL



The Hickory Trail is an 11+ mile bicycle and pedestrian pathway that showcases the diverse landscapes of the Hickory community and connects destinations across the city. From the Trail, Hickory residents and visitors have access to some of Hickory’s greatest assets – a beautiful lake, renovated downtown, educational centers, sporting and entertainment venues, and the airport. The Trail serves as a critical link in placemaking, local business development, and workforce attraction. The Hickory Trail encompasses the City Walk, Riverwalk, Aviation Walk, Historic Ridgeview Walk, and OLLE Art Walk. For more information visit www.HKYtrail.com.

Activities around the Trail

Visits in the 1/2 mile area surrounding the Hickory Trail are increasing.
(Data source: Placer.ai)

The Hickory Trail is one of the Crafting Hickory projects transforming our community. Spanning over 10 miles across the city, the Hickory Trail provides bicycle and pedestrian safety while connecting popular destinations and amenities.

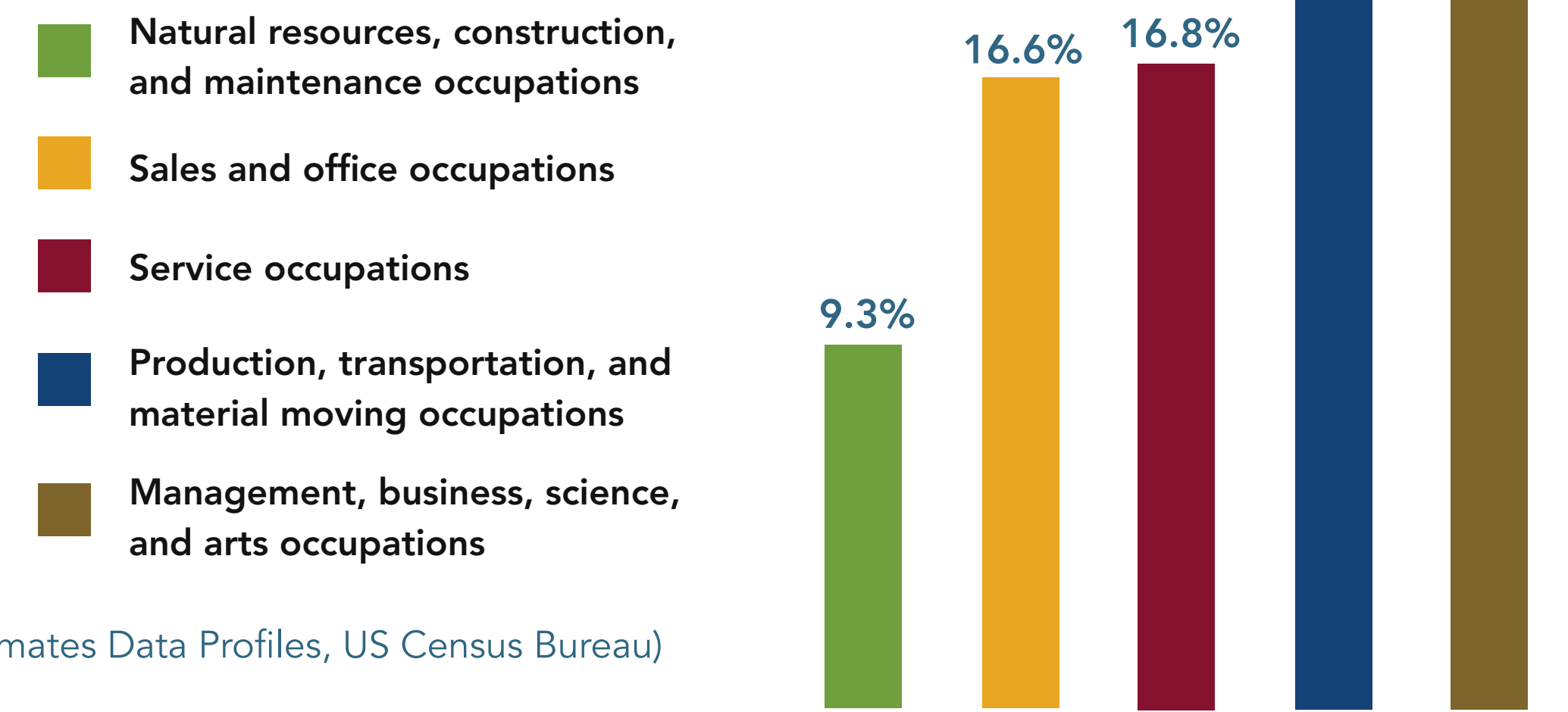




While manufacturing historically dominated the Hickory region's employment base (making up 40% of jobs), intentional efforts have diversified today's industries. The manufacturing sector still contributes significantly, accounting for 23.6% of employment (2023 ACS Data), which is more than double the national average.

A skilled labor force is vital for economic development and the success of any community. Bolstered by a strong work ethic, Hickory's workforce has proven to be adaptable to the requirements of our most demanding companies. As the revitalization of Hickory continues with investments in public infrastructure, housing, and business, Hickory's educational partners are working together to transform lives by investing in the people of the region. The region's employees now work in a variety of occupations as shown in the following table:

Occupations of civilian employed population 16 years and over – Hickory MSA



Hickory MSA Regional
Labor Force

169k

Hickory MSA Regional
Unemployment Rate

3.7%

(Data source: 2023: ACS 1-year Estimates Data Profiles, US Census Bureau)



EDUCATION

3

Top ranked higher education institutions

25+

The Catawba Valley Community College Skills USA Chapter have won over 25 medals in the past 6 years.

7

Lenoir-Rhyne University is ranked #7 in Undergraduate Teaching - Regional Universities South by U.S. News & World Report 2022-2023.

1

Appalachian State University tops the list of Most Innovative Schools among Southern universities according to U.S. News & World Report 2022-2023.



INDUSTRY AND INNOVATION



The Hickory region has spent years diversifying its industrial base. Just some of the manufacturing sectors that call Catawba County home include machining and metal working, plastics, fiber optic and coaxial cable, and furniture. Local business parks and industrial areas are being upgraded to support advanced technology needs. Aligning with today's industries, Trivium Corporate Center is an advanced manufacturing business park in the city with global companies like American Fuji Seal, Cataler, Corning Incorporated, and Gusmer.



Companies come to the Hickory region to benefit from the area's manufacturing expertise. Catawba Valley Community College's Manufacturing Solutions Center offers an onsite business incubator program, specializing in applied research and development, prototyping, testing, domestic sourcing, and training for 21st-century manufacturing. The mission is to help US manufacturers increase sales, improve quality, and improve efficiency to create or retain jobs.

INNOVATION DISTRICT



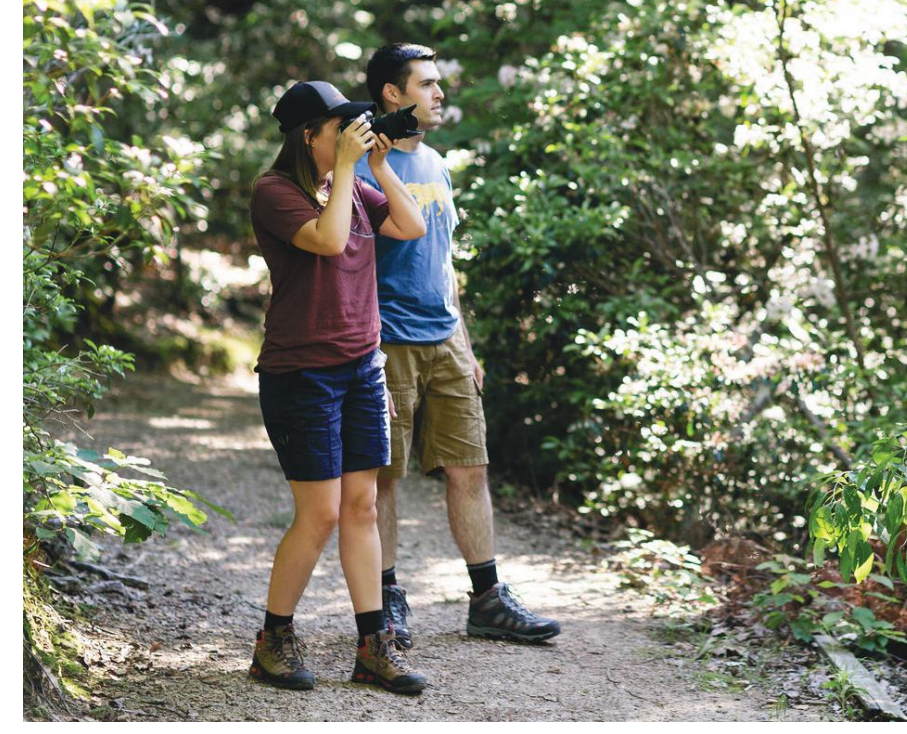
With ample water capacity and low cost of doing business, the Hickory MSA is quickly becoming known as a data corridor, attracting companies like Apple, Microsoft, and Google. Catawba County led North Carolina's data center recruitment efforts with a focused approach to targeting data centers through the development and marketing of the NC Data Center Corridor.

Hickory leaders continue to capitalize on the region's unique advantages and are strategically investing in public infrastructure and amenities to cultivate a future innovation district. Hickory's recently announced Innovation District will leverage higher education, the airport, transportation improvements, and other investments to promote growth and revitalization of the US 321 corridor area. The area includes App State Hickory and Catawba Valley Community College's Workforce Innovation Center, along with the Hickory Crawdads Stadium, the Hickory Regional Airport, the renovation of Rotary-Geitner Park (new Deidra Lackey Memorial Park), the Hickory Trail connections, and the widening of US 321. The City and its partners plan to leverage these resources and investments to make the district a regional draw to live, work, learn, and play.



DATA CENTER CORRIDOR

CORE CREATING OUTDOOR RECREATION ECONOMIES



Lake Hickory

Lake Hickory covers nearly 4,223 acres with 105 miles of shore line. From boating and jet skiing, to kayaking and fishing, Lake Hickory provides a natural playground for a number of water sports.

Trailblazer

Within 1-hour drive, Hickory residents can go hiking at Gateway Wilderness State Trail, Wilson Creek, Pisgah National Forest, Riverbend Trail, and Mountain Creek Park in Sherrills Ford to name a few.



Riverbend Park
(12 Miles)



Wilson Creek
(47 Miles)



Mountain Creek Park
(26 Miles)



Pisgah National Forest
(39 Miles)

TRANSPORTATION



CHARLOTTE AIRPORT (CLT)

- 53.4 Million passengers flying to, from and through CLT in 2023
- 186 destinations worldwide
- Home to 8 major carriers, 15 regional carriers and 3 foreign flag carriers

Reference: CLT Airport (2024) Newsroom. Available at: <https://cltairport.mediaroom.com/>



HICKORY REGIONAL AIRPORT

- Aviation leader in Western North Carolina
- A general aviation airport, provides the best aviation fuel service and storage of aircraft, free wireless internet access, exceptional facilities, advanced airfield maintenance, and timely service
- Conveniently located 10 minutes drive from downtown Hickory
- Hickory Aviation Museum, free admission



CRAFTING HICKORY

GROWTH IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

\$115M Projects

To date, the City of Hickory has leveraged the \$40 million bond referendum approved by Hickory Voters to secure over \$75 million in additional grant funding.

1,565 New Jobs

The economic activity at Trivium Corporate Center and along the Hickory Trail will support 1,565 jobs.

\$845M Private Investment

With Trivium and several residential and commercial projects along the Hickory Trail, the bond program has generated over \$845 million in private investment.

1,316 New Housing Units

The Hickory Trail and Trivium have spurred 1,316 new housing units within a half-mile of each project.



BUSINESS TESTIMONIALS

"The City of Hickory has been a great partner with my business. I have been able to secure very needed grants to improve my building to make it more usable and presentable. Any time I have an issue or question the staff has been super helpful in getting answers and solutions to problems. It's great to be in a City with such a business friendly environment."

-David Moore, Founder of Hickory Mechanical



"I think we're really investing into the heart of downtown, in the heart of the City Walk. I have seen a younger population moving in, and, I think it's an exciting time to be part of Hickory as it's changing. Instead of expanding beyond Hickory, we made a commitment several years ago that we wanted to invest in our community, because we believe in what's going on here. I think City Walk Brewing is our biggest investment yet. We're very excited about the opportunity, not just for us, but for everybody to be able to enjoy this and be able to provide for community, essentially."

- Zack Cranford, Partner of Cranford Hospitality



1

URBAN REVITALIZATION AREA PROGRAMS

Forgivable loan program for building owners looking to rehabilitate vacant buildings

2

SMALL BUSINESS LOAN PROGRAM

Loans of up to \$20,000 for business equipment for businesses that create jobs for low and moderate income people

3

MICROENTERPRISE GRANT PROGRAM

Grants of up to \$4,000 to low and moderate income microenterprise owners

BUSINESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

The City of Hickory is committed to promoting business and economic development and offers a wide range of incentives to new and expanding businesses of all sizes.

Business Assistance Programs

The Urban Revitalization Area Programs, the Small Business Loan Program, and the Microenterprise Grant Program provide funding to small businesses to take their businesses to the next level.



Here's the bottom line—we want your business to be part of our dynamic economic region. Hickory, NC offers a wide range of building and site options, and you'll definitely benefit from our adaptive and well-trained workforce. Whether you're engaged in retail, healthcare, entertainment, advanced manufacturing, distribution, or back of office functions, you'll be welcome here. We are a community of doers and makers, who enjoy a good quality of life while working together to make a difference. The Hickory region's economic prowess is supported and accentuated by a rich geography and diverse lifestyle that has brought the area national recognition.

Hickory is not just a great place to do business, it's a great place to live for people of all ages.

Our Future is Yours

Together, we're going places. Grow with us!

hickorync.gov/business-development

August 2025

These numbers are updated annually

We look forward to discussing Hickory as a potential location for your business.

For more information, please contact:

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Development Manager
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