Hickory MSA has the highest percentage of employees in the manufacturing sector in NC and SC; 3 times as specialized in manufacturing as the national average.

- Hickory Metro ranks 6th in the nation for concentration of manufacturing—425 manufacturers & 24,547 employees in Catawba County alone
- 28% of the workforce is employed in manufacturing compared to the NC average of 11% and the national average of 9% (2018)
- Average manufacturing wage in the Hickory Metro is below the US average wage for all jobs and below the national manufacturing wage
Other Competitive Advantages

- Low Cost, Reliable and Redundant Electricity
- Low Cost/Abundant Water (up to 12mgd available capacity)
- Low Cost and Reliable Fiber and Network Infrastructure by multiple providers (AT&T/CenturyLink/Charter Business/others)
- Low property tax rates
- Lowest Unionization Rate in NC—Less than 1% unionization rate with only 1 of over 425 manufacturers unionized
- Insulated from Natural or Manmade Disasters
- Fast Track Local Permitting
- Extensive Training Assistance from the NC Community College System
- Manufacturing Assistance through the Manufacturing Solutions Center
- Manufacturing Assistance and Training by NC Center for Engineering Technologies
- Laborforce totals over 395,000 within a 45-minute drive
- Within 45 minutes of the Charlotte Douglas International Airport

Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Catawba County</th>
<th>Greater Hickory MSA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population Growth (2013-2018):</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Household Income (2018):</td>
<td>$53,454</td>
<td>$47,544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per Capita Income (2018):</td>
<td>$26,528</td>
<td>$26,416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment Rate (Nov. 2019):</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed (Nov. 2019):</td>
<td>2,558</td>
<td>5,731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Sales: (*12th Highest in NC)</td>
<td>$2.47B*</td>
<td>$4.10B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank Deposits: (*10th Highest in NC)</td>
<td>$2.87B*</td>
<td>$4.64B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Catawba County Ethnicity (ACS 2018)

- White, non Hispanic: 75.2%
- Black, non Hispanic: 8.2%
- Asian*, non Hispanic: 4.2%
- Other, non Hispanic: 2.5%
- Hispanic: 9.9%

*C-6th largest Asian population in NC, 2017

Catawba County Educational Attainment (ACS 2018)

- High School Diploma or Higher: 87.2%
- High School Graduate: 31.3%
- Some College: 19.1%
- Associate Degree: 12.5%
- Bachelor’s Degree: 17.3%
- Master’s Degree & above: 7.0%
Bringing manufacturing into the NEW ERA of changing technologies, global marketing and production innovations. The mission of the Manufacturing Solutions Center (MSC) is to help US manufacturers increase sales, improve quality and improve efficiency to create or retain jobs.

This is accomplished by:

- Enhancing and improving products through research and development
- Assisting in creating prototypes for new, innovative offerings
- Analyzing new materials to enhance structure and programs
- Testing products for reliable content and quality
- Training personnel for lean manufacturing processes and supply chain efficiencies
- Providing a forum for rollout of new 21st century technologies
- Providing hands-on guidance for international marketing, sales and military procurement
- Providing photo-realistic renderings and visualizations
- Creating 3D rapid prototypes in a variety of materials
- Industry advocacy

Our services include testing services, training, product development, marketing, engineering, assisting inventors & entrepreneurs.

Workforce Solutions Complex

Catawba County is a community committed to the future of manufacturing and ensuring our manufacturers have a workforce pipeline for the future. This is evident by the county’s investment in a new state-of-the-art Workforce Solutions Complex on the campus of CVCC. A culmination of many years of planning and collaboration with the three public school systems, this $23 million dollar, 86,000 square foot facility houses technology and engineering programs for college students, and junior & senior high school students from all schools in Catawba County. Business-driven programs will include: Computer Engineering Technology, Electrical Engineering Technology, Computer Integrated Machining, Electronics Engineering Technology, Welding, Mechanical Engineering Technology, Mechatronics, and Robotics.

NC Center for Engineering Technologies

The North Carolina Center for Engineering Technologies provides facilities for applied research in engineering related fields and serves as a conduit to baccalaureate education delivered by the University of North Carolina system schools. Conceived as a community supported higher education effort in technical and engineering disciplines, this Center was established through a collaboration of business, government and higher education organized as the Future Forward Economic Alliance. The Center may collaborate with other schools in bringing the best programs to the region to meet employment needs.

Labs include:
- Rapid Product Realization Laboratory
- Engineering Design Laboratory
- Metrology & Reverse Engineering Laboratory
- Distance Education Lab
- Polymers Lab
- Patternmaking Laboratory

Degree programs include:
- Building Sciences (Appalachian State University)
- Engineering Technology (Western Carolina University)
- Industrial Technology (East Carolina University)
- Electrical Engineering Technology (UNC-Charlotte)
- Fire Safety Engineering Technology (UNC-Charlotte)
- Engineering Management (UNC-Charlotte)
Selected Recent Expansions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Investment</th>
<th>Jobs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shurtape Technologies</td>
<td>Tape manufacturing &amp; distribution</td>
<td>$31,400,000</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corning Optical Communications LLC</td>
<td>Fiber optic cable</td>
<td>$60,000,000</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prysmian Group</td>
<td>Cables for energy and telecom industries</td>
<td>$53,800,000</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GKN Driveline</td>
<td>Automotive driveline components</td>
<td>$110,000,000</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corning Optical Communications LLC</td>
<td>Fiber optic cable</td>
<td>$67,000,000</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Selected Recent Announcements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Investment</th>
<th>Jobs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Design Foundry</td>
<td>Retail furniture manufacturing</td>
<td>$3,133,000</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITM Medical Isotopes</td>
<td>Pharmaceutical manufacturing</td>
<td>$17,000,000</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room &amp; Board</td>
<td>Warehouse &amp; distribution (Artisan-made home furniture)</td>
<td>$12,870,000</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamic Air Engineering</td>
<td>Specialty components and systems for aerospace</td>
<td>$7,255,000</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some Catawba County Manufacturers

425 manufacturers · < 1% unionization rate · Only 1 unionized

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