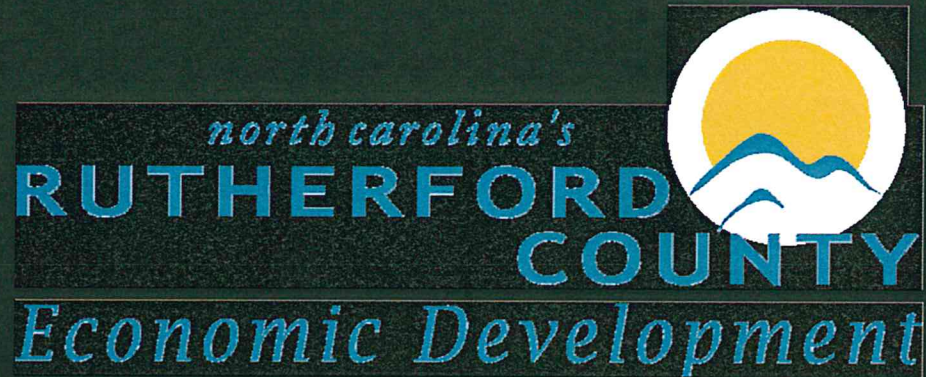




Community Overview



Ideal Location

- Along edge of I-85 Manufacturing and Distribution Corridor of SE US
- Equidistant between three MSA's; Charlotte and Asheville, NC and Greenville, SC
- Population: 67,810
- 50 mile labor draw: 319,232
- Within a 1-hour drive of two international airports (Charlotte, NC and Greenville-Spartanburg, SC) and one regional airport (Asheville, NC)
- Rutherford County Airport
 - 5000 LF runway
 - 44 aircraft based on field
- Within 1 day drive to 60% of the US manufacturing base



Convenient Access to Markets



Connecting You to the World



Charlotte Douglas International (CLT)

- Sixth-busiest airport in US
- 700+ daily non-stop flights and more than 140 non-stop destinations
- Daily non-stop service to domestic and international destinations including Frankfurt, London, Paris, Rome, Munich, Toronto, Mexico City and Rio de Janeiro

Greenville-Spartanburg International (GSP)

- Serves 1.8 million passengers per year
- Offers 49 non-stop daily departures to 15 major cities and 18 airports across the US
- A connection in one of those 15 cities makes access to the world easy from GSP International.

Asheville Regional (AVL)

- Non-stop service to 10 major cities: Atlanta, Charlotte, Chicago, Fort Lauderdale, Newark, New York, Orlando, Palm Beach Punta Gorda / Ft. Myers, and St. Pete / Clearwater
- Best connected non-hub airport in the world
- Over 625,500 passengers served in 2013

Rutherford County Airport (KFQD)

- General aviation
- 5,000 LF runway capable of accommodating most corporate travel
- Low fuel prices



Transportation Network



SC Inland Port - Greer, SC

- Opened October 2013
- Approximately 50 miles from Forest City via I85, Hwy 221, and Hwy 74
- Boosts efficiency for international freight movements between the Port of Charleston and companies located across the Southeast

Port of Charleston, SC

- General Cargo / Containerized Facilities
- Approximately 240 miles from Forest City via I26, I85 and Hwy 221
- Offers 478 acres of container handling areas with 25 acres dedicated to handling of refrigerated containers (1000 plugs)

Charlotte Intermodal Terminal

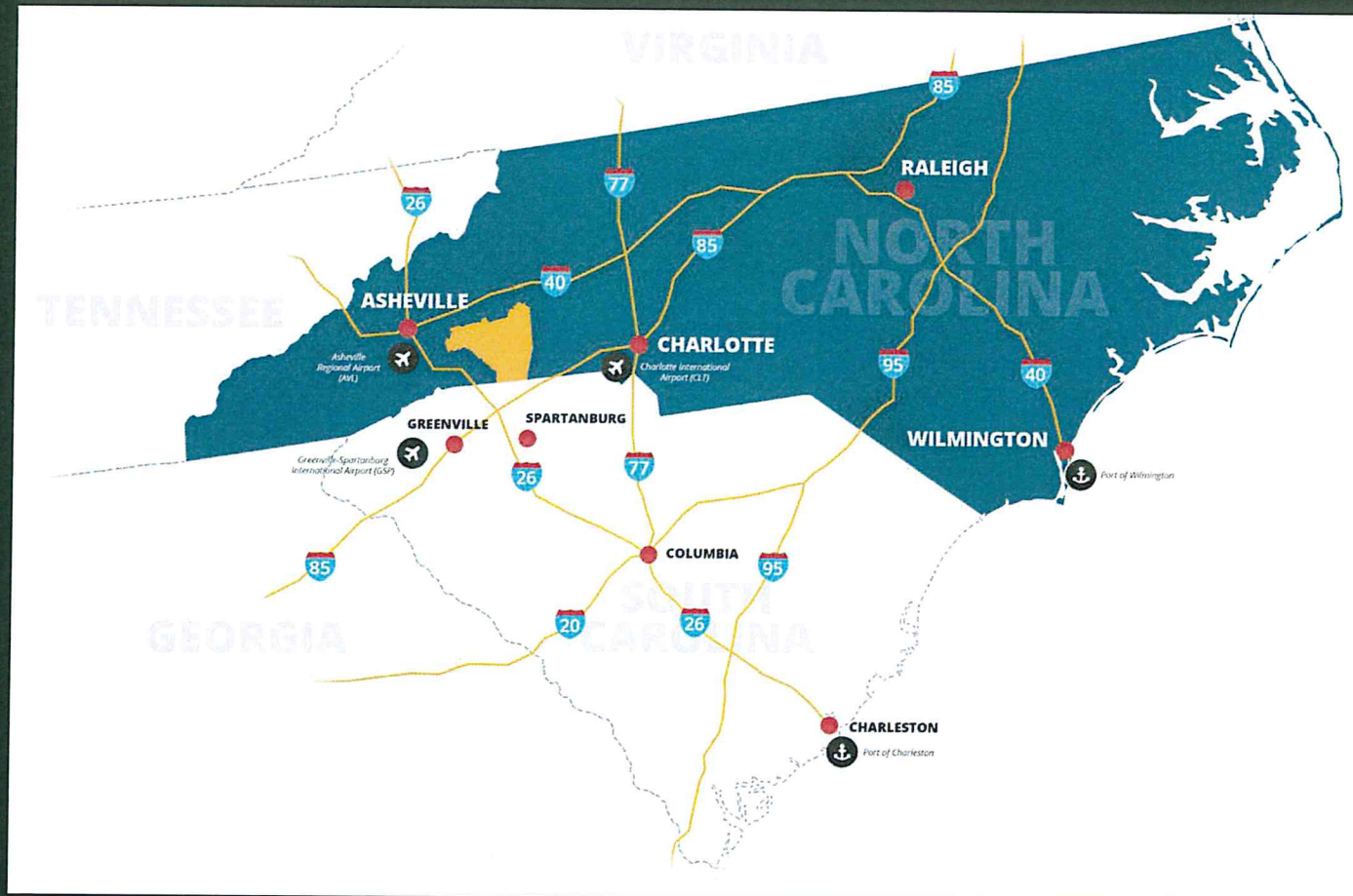
- Strategically located in the SE serving the I-85 and I-77 manufacturing and distribution corridors.
- Bonded by U.S. Customs and Border Protection.
- Grounding and mounting service is available for loaded and empty containers.

Port of Wilmington, NC

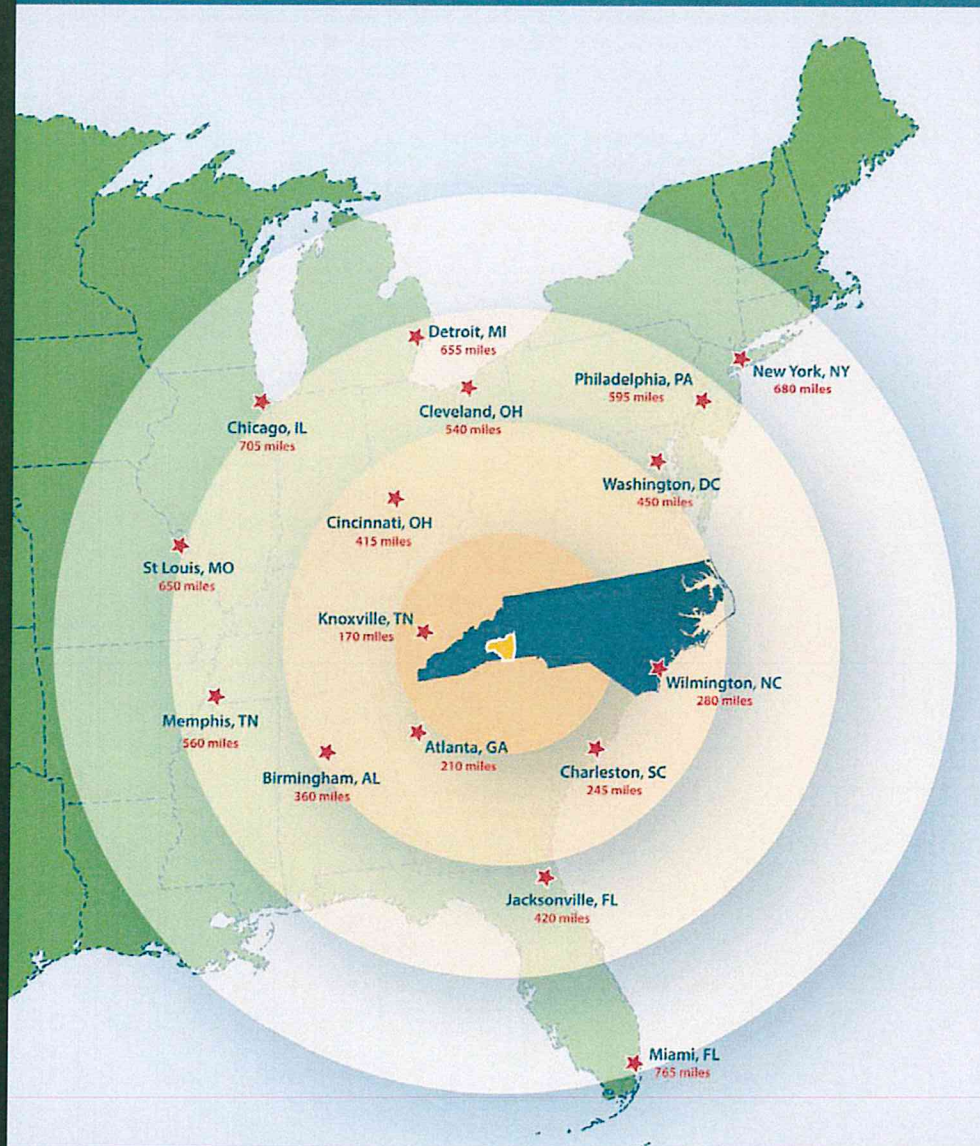
- General Cargo / Containerized Facilities
- Approximately 260 miles from Forest City via US Hwy 74
- Businesses and individuals who pay North Carolina state income tax and use North Carolina State Ports can qualify for tax credits on inbound and outbound cargo



Transportation Network



APPROXIMATE DISTANCE TO KEY LOCATIONS:



Competitive Business Cost

- **Competitively priced utilities** for high-volume commercial and industrial users.
- **County tax rate** of \$0.607 per \$100 valuation.
- **Expedited Permitting** process available locally to meet project schedule.
- **Local Incentives** for eligible projects to promote the growth and diversity of business and industry in the county.



Readily Available Workforce

- Primary Existing Industry Sectors:
 - Textiles
 - Wood Products
 - Plastics
 - Fabricated Metals
- Other Existing Industry Sectors:
 - Technology
 - Chemical Operations
 - Food Production
- Workforce Development
 - Customized Training Programs for incumbent workers and new hires



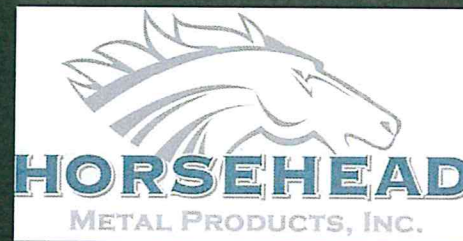
Target Markets

- While we are committed to exploring new market opportunities that fit within the topography, labor, and demographics of our area, Rutherford County is currently pursuing the following target markets:

- Automotive Suppliers
- Advanced Materials
- Data Centers
- Call Centers



Existing Industries



Education

ISOTHERMAL
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

- Customized training opportunities for business and industry
- Applied Sciences and Technology
- Arts and Sciences AA/AS Transfer Degrees
- Business Sciences
 - *AS Degrees*
 - *1 year Certification programs*
 - *Licensing and Certification Courses*
- Diverse continuing education classes



The North Carolina Community College System

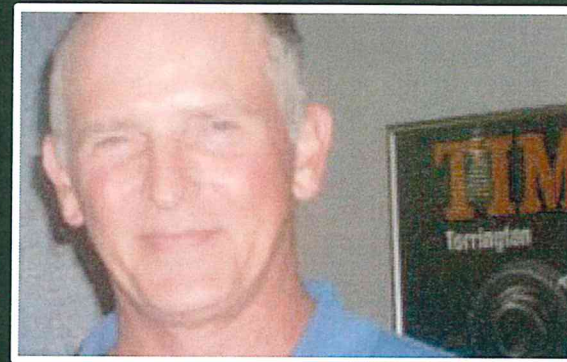
- First in the nation to offer customized training to new and expanding industry
- Program is designed to react quickly to the needs of businesses and to respect the confidential nature of proprietary processes and information within those businesses
- The Customized Training Program provides customized training assistance to:
 - enhance the growth potential of companies
 - prepares North Carolina's workforce with the skills essential for successful employment in emerging industries.



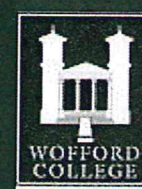
Education

Universities and Colleges

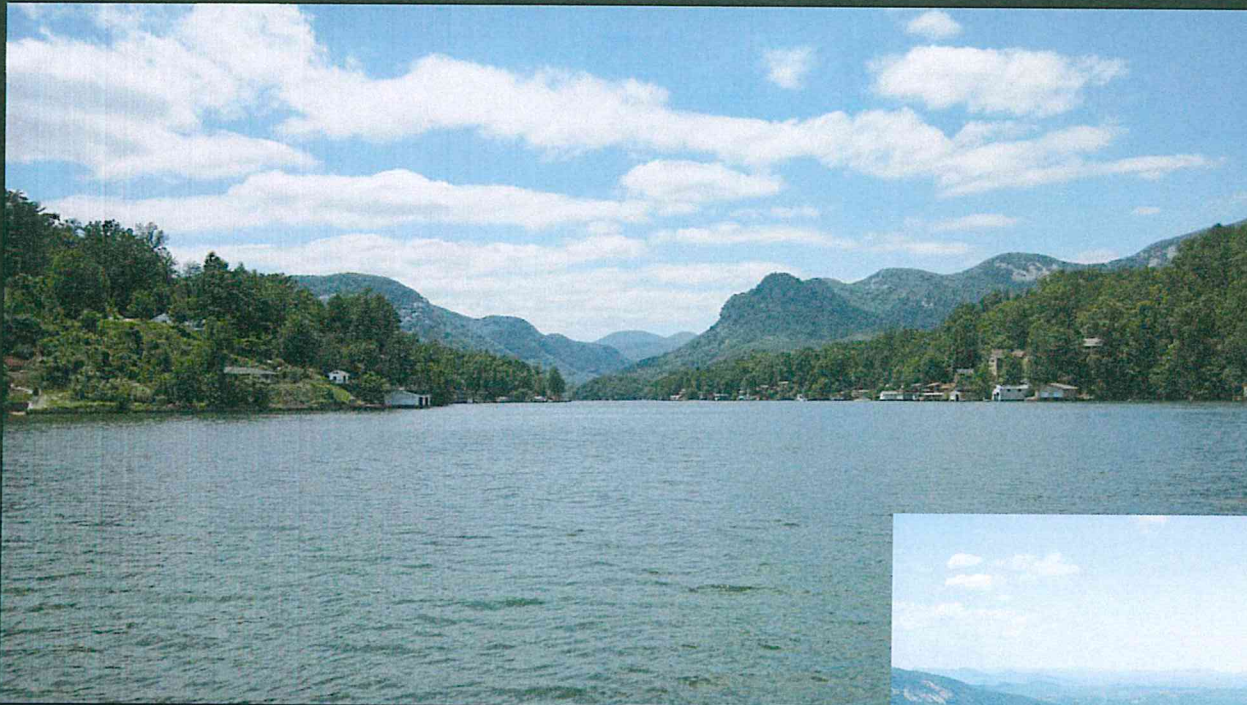
- Isothermal Community College
- Western Carolina University
- Appalachian State University
- Gardner-Webb University
- UNC Charlotte & UNC Asheville
- University of South Carolina - Upstate
- Wofford College
- Furman University
- *100 + college & university campuses within a 70 mile radius and many have distance learning opportunities*



“Many people don't realize how technically gifted the associates are in this plant and 95% of them grew up and were educated here in Rutherford County.” - Mike Martin, Timken



Recreation in Rutherford County



Spend a day on Lake Lure...

or enjoy the view from Chimney Rock.



Recreation in Rutherford County



Take in a baseball game...

catch a show at The Foundation...

or enjoy the beauty of our trail system.

Recreation in Rutherford County



Relive the past with classic cars...

Celebrate the holiday's downtown...

or explore one of the County's many
Main Streets.

Explore the Surrounding Areas



One hour drive to Charlotte, NC

Carolina Panthers (NFL)
Charlotte Hornets (NBA)
Charlotte Knights (MiLB)
Charlotte Hounds (MLL)
Charlotte Checkers (AHL)

Charlotte Motor Speedway
NASCAR Hall of Fame

NC Blumenthal Performing Arts
Center

Belk Theater



Explore the Surrounding Areas



One hour drive to Greenville, SC

Greenville Swamp Rabbits (MiLB)
Greenville Road Warriors (ECHL)

BMW Zentrum
Greenville Zoo

The Peace Center for Performing
Arts

Art Crossing at River Place

Explore the Surrounding Areas



One hour drive to Asheville, NC

Biltmore Estate
Asheville Art Museum
NC Arboretum

Numerous art and music festivals
“Beer City USA” – home to 21 craft breweries

Asheville Tourist – Class A MiLB

RUTHERFORD COUNTY AWAITS YOU!

Life in Rutherford County and the Surrounding Areas

EDUCATION

K-12:

Quality education is a top priority in Rutherford County and is readily accessible through public, charter and private schools, as well as the home school network. Rutherford County Schools are comprised of four high schools, three middle schools, ten elementary schools, one pre-school center, and one alternative school. Two charter schools provide a rigorous classical curriculum preparing students for college and beyond. Additionally, a number of private schools and the home school network provide an atmosphere of academic excellence centered around faith and family.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE:

Isothermal Community College is a comprehensive, two-year, public institution that serves the individuals in Rutherford and Polk counties. As a member of the North Carolina Community College System, ICC has over 3,000 students attending classes at its two campuses. In addition to individual courses, Isothermal offers certificate, diploma, and degree programs enabling students to either transfer to a four-year institution, or acquire skills for new or current employment, as well as function effectively as responsible citizens. Isothermal also provides training for area business and industry, personal enrichment courses, remedial and developmental courses, and community service activities. In 2014, Isothermal entered into a partnership with Western Carolina University to offer 56 pathways for students to transfer to WCU and earn a bachelor degree. The same year, Isothermal and North Carolina State University initiated a partnership to establish an engineering summer camp in Rutherford County, and formed a joint committee to develop a 2+2 program and pathway that will allow local students to begin working at Isothermal toward an engineering degree from NCSU. In 2015,

Isothermal announced a partnership with Gardner-Webb University that will further ease the transfer process for students who complete degrees in certain programs with coursework at both institutions.

UNIVERSITIES:

With over 100 college and university campuses within 70 miles, access to a higher education is within reach.

RESIDENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES

From mountain homes to lakefront life, in-town subdivisions to rural rolling hills, Rutherford County has you covered. Looking for a townhouse or family style home? A quaint farm house, traditional or colonial designed home? Rutherford County has housing options to meet everyone's needs.

RECREATION

Nature is the foremost attraction in the county. Located in the foothills of western North Carolina, Rutherford County is home to Chimney Rock State Park, Lake Lure, and numerous other scenic locations. Camping, kayaking, boating, fishing world-class trout streams, gem mining, or picnicking near a rushing waterfall are all great pastimes for residents and visitors alike.

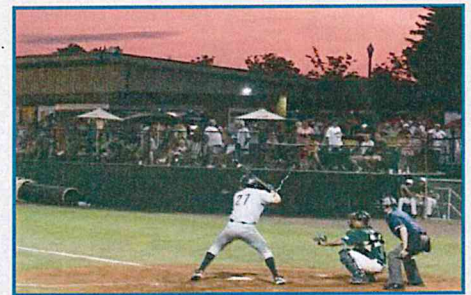


Chimney Rock State Park and Lake Lure

Ideal for hiking, biking, walking or running, the Thermal Belt Rail Trail extends nearly 8 miles from Oakland Road in Spindale west and north to the community of Gilkey. The trail is approximately 6 feet wide with mile markers and benches along the route; some portions are paved.

Interested in equestrian activities? Tryon International Equestrian Center, one of the largest equestrian show and training facilities in the country, is located a short four miles from the Rutherford County border in Polk County.

Into sports? Cheer on the local Forest City Owls, a wood-bat collegiate summer league, at McNair Field. Seeking more excitement? Within one hour of Rutherford County you will find the NFL Carolina Panthers, NBA Charlotte Hornets, MiLB Charlotte Knights, MLL Charlotte Hounds, AHL Charlotte Checkers, MiLB Greenville Drive (SC), ECHL Greenville Swamp Rabbits (SC), and the Class A MiLB Asheville Tourists; you can also experience NASCAR's Charlotte Motor Speedway.



Forest City Owls Baseball

Rutherford County features eight challenging golf courses, including Forest City Municipal Golf Course, Cleghorn Plantation Golf & Country Club, Bald Mountain and Apple Valley Golf Courses at Rumbling Bald Resort, and Lake Lure Municipal Golf Course, to name a few; many more golf courses can be found in our neighboring communities.

SHOPPING

With four large metro areas within one hour's drive, regional shopping ranges from modern malls to quaint antique and craft stores. Tanner Companies, the makers of fine women's apparel, are also headquartered in the heart of Rutherford County.



The Foundation Performing Arts Center

ARTS & CULTURE

The heritage of Rutherford County and the surrounding areas range from Revolutionary War sites to film locations for movies such as *Dirty Dancing*, *The Last of the Mohicans*, and *The Hunger Games*. Quaint villages around the area offer everything from antiques to fine local crafts. Here is a sample of what you'll find:

- The Foundation Performing Arts Center at Isothermal Community College
- KidSenses Children's InterACTIVE Museum
- Bennett Classics Auto Museum
- The Bostic Lincoln Center
- Rutherford Community Theater
- Rutherford County Arts Council
- Rutherford County Historical Society
- Genealogical Society of Old Tryon County
- Biltmore House in Asheville
- December Holiday Activities in Downtown Forest City include over one million lights, carriage rides, Santa's house, and more.



Christmas in Downtown Forest City

TRANSPORTATION

Interstate quality US Highway 74 connects I-26 and I-85, serving as a corridor between three regional centers of commerce. US Highways 64 and 221 each provide access to I-40 and I-85. (See map at bottom right)

Rutherford County Airport at Marchman Field has a 5,000 linear foot runway. On average, 70 aircraft operations are handled weekly, and 27 aircraft are based at the Field, including single and multi-engine aircraft, jets, and helicopters. Charlotte-Douglas International Airport, Greenville-Spartanburg International Airport, and Asheville Regional Airport are within a 60 mile drive connecting you to the world.



Rutherford County Airport

HEALTHCARE

As part of the Rutherford Regional Healthcare System (RRHS), Rutherford Regional Medical Center offers excellent hospital and outpatient care. RRHS has a large network of distinguished physicians and many programs to support and educate the community. In 2014, RRHS entered into a joint venture with Duke LifePoint to strengthen RRHS for the future and give the system new resources to enhance the health care services offered. As part of the joint venture, RRHS shifted from nonprofit to for-profit status.

The County Health Department provides a myriad of programs to assist, educate and support the community, ensuring total well-being. Numerous independent healthcare facilities complete the circle, ensuring head-to-toe care for all Rutherford County citizens.

STATISTICS

AREA:

Rutherford County is 563 square miles and composed of eight municipalities: Bostic, Chimney Rock, Ellenboro, Forest City, Rutherfordton, Ruth, Spindale, and Lake Lure. Connected by US Hwy 74-Business, Spindale, Rutherfordton, and Forest City form the Tri-City area. The towns of Lake Lure and Chimney Rock are located approximately 20 miles west of Rutherfordton. Lake Lure is a 1,500 acre municipal lake with 27 miles of shoreline and offers public beach access.

ELEVATION:

Rutherfordton 1,075 feet; Spindale 960 feet; Forest City 860 feet. At 806 feet, Caroleen is the County's lowest elevation. Sugar Loaf is the County's highest elevation at 3,967 feet.

CLIMATE:

The average annual temperature is 61.5 F and the average rainfall is 49.2 inches. Rainfall is concentrated in Spring and Fall. The average level of humidity is approximately 65%. Located in the Isothermal Belt, there are 195 frost-free days in the growing season and the average snowfall is 7.9 inches.



GEOGRAPHY:

Rutherford County is situated in the foothills of Western North Carolina, and is centered one hour between Asheville, Charlotte and Greenville-Spartanburg (SC). Atlanta is 3 hours to the South and Charleston is located 4 hours to the East.

KEY WEBSITES:

www.rutherfordcoc.org
www.isothermal.edu

www.MyRutherfordRegional.com
www.rutherfordarts.com
foundationshows.org

www.rutherfordtourism.com
www.rutherfordnccdc.com
www.rutherfordcountync.gov

Developing the Tourism Strategic Plan for Rutherford County

Tourism Development Authority (TDA) Board

- Authorize Funding for Plan
- Approve Contracts
- Adopt Plan

Tourism Development Authority (TDA) Staff

- Logistical Support
- Communication with stakeholders

Consulting Firm (TBD)

- Facilitation of process & meetings
- Plan development

Duties

- Vendor selection
- Scope definition
- Contract negotiation
- Project oversight (plan development)
- Vendor point-of-contact
- Preliminary plan approval
- Advisory support to TDA board

Strategic Plan Advisory Committee

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TDA Board Chair (Richard Lundy) • TDA Board Vice Chair (Willard Whitson) • RC Chamber Director (Debbie Martin) • HNG Chamber Director (Kevin Cooley) • County Manager (Steve Garrison) • Town of Bostic (Mike Hollifield) • Town of Chimney Rock (Peter O' Leary) • Town of Forest City (John Condrey) • Town of Ellenboro (Allen "Bunt" Black) • Town of Lake Lure (Ron Nalley) • Town of Ruth (Chris Adkins) • Town of Rutherfordton (Doug Barrick) • Town of Spindale (Scott Weber) • County Commissioner (Eddie Hollifield) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chimney Rock State Park GM (Mary Jaegar-Gale) • Isothermal Community College (Walter Dalton) • County Sherriff (Chris Francis) • Realty Company (Brent Washburn) • Lodging Industry Leader East (Sid Maheshwar) • Lodging Industry Leader West (Steve Miller) • County EDC (Tom Helton) • Business and Industry Leader • Tourism Asset Foundation (Clint Calhoun) • Rutherford Regional Health System (John Domansky) • Rutherford Young Professionals (Sarah Morse) • IPDC (Scott Dadson) • Regional Tourism Leader (Sharon Decker) • Financial Institution (Andy Cobb) • Board of Education (Dr. Janet Mason) • Rutherford Outdoor Coalition (Jerry Stensland) • Agriculture (Bill Elliott)
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Tourism Stakeholders

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TDA Board and Staff • EDC Director & Board • RC Chamber • HNG Chamber • Interested Citizens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Manager • County Commissioners • County & Municipal Planners • Municipal Managers, Mayors, Council • Isothermal Community College 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chimney Rock Park • Tryon Int'l Equestrian Center • Rumbling Bald Resort • Tourism businesses (lodging, attractions, restaurants, retail) • Real Estate Brokers
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- Attend facilitated workshops and interviews
- Provide input (local tourism industry knowledge, experience, issues, needs, strategic recommendations)

Tourism Strategic Plan for Rutherford County Action Steps

- ✓ Meet with Town Mayors and Managers one on one site visit
- ✓ Meet with potential Advisory Board members one on one
- ✓ Tourism SP (TDA Board / Advisory Board) Workshop – Education Session
 - ✓ Trust Building / Team Building Session
 - ✓ Tourism Strategic Plan RFP
 - ✓ Facilitator Selection Process
 - Develop Timeline and Plan
 - Develop Capital Campaign to support Tourism Plan
 - Raise Capital for Tourism Implementation
 - Implement County Tourism Strategic Plan
 - Grow Rutherford County Tourism

Financial Report: By the Numbers

Occupancy Growth

The following spreadsheet shows the growth of occupancy tax collections for Rutherford County

Month Collected	For Month Of	FY 06-07	FY 07-08	FY 08-09	FY 09-10	FY 10-11	FY 11-12	FY 12-13	FY 13-14	FY 14-15	FY 15-16	FY 16-17	% of Year's Projected Collections 16-17	% of Year's Projected Collections 15-16	% Growth last 12 mos	% growth last 15-16
JULY	JUNE	70,098	75,455	71,407	58,682	62,021	72,516	77,798	73,796	82,025	97,068	107,500	12.60%	14.21%	10.75%	18.34%
AUG	JULY	99,586	101,420	96,055	88,743	99,712	115,068	105,814	106,739	116,455	138,812	160,582	18.83%	20.32%	15.68%	19.20%
SEPT	AUG	69,790	86,186	85,967	66,194	74,964	79,463	87,210	87,642	101,805	111,216	115,790	13.57%	16.28%	4.11%	9.24%
OCT	SEPT	46,361	52,675	40,435	44,737	50,817	54,132	53,022	53,118	58,018	69,363	86,192	10.10%	10.16%	24.26%	19.56%
NOV	OCT	54,620	58,982	55,593	55,065	57,927	57,994	63,864	65,408	79,834	89,055	102,929	12%	13.04%	15.58%	11.55%
DEC	NOV	37,091	35,914	30,330	28,571	33,724	35,610	35,033	36,190	45,775	49,561			7.26%		8.27%
JAN	DEC	25,203	25,830	19,389	20,358	22,369	25,218	25,653	26,741	34,536	39,017			5.71%		12.22%
FEB	JAN	18,058	16,414	15,467	15,266	16,422	14,874	18,452	19,026	23,188	29,702			4.35%		27.48%
MAR	FEB	19,253	18,324	15,957	17,589	19,141	20,575	20,501	20,220	24,252	29,237			4.28%		20.84%
APR	MAR	28,762	26,357	21,953	22,681	25,130	30,169	30,921	32,183	35,871	49,376			7.23%		38.01%
MAY	APR	40,309	32,826	27,998	33,447	39,684	36,830	38,107	40,384	48,291	55,237			8.09%		14.69%
JUN	MAY	48,875	47,522	39,242	39,641	47,035	45,447	48,883	53,961	65,024	73,012			10.69%		11.97%
Total Collected		558,006	577,905	519,793	490,974	548,946	587,896	605,258	615,408	715,074	830,656	572,993	67.17%	121.62%	5.87%	17.61%
Total projected for year		558,006	577,905	519,793	490,974	548,946	587,896	605,258	615,408	715,074	683,000	853,000	Of Projected Collections	Of Projected Collections	Average Growth	Average Growth

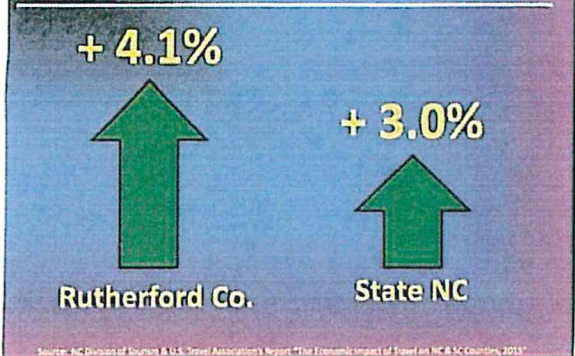


Tourism works for Rutherford Co. in 2015

Tourist Spending	\$164.1 million
Jobs Created	1,220 jobs
Worker Paychecks	\$23.8 million
State Taxes	\$9.9 million
Local County Taxes	\$4.9 million

Source: NC Division of Tourism & U.S. Travel Association's Report "The Economic Impact of Travel on North Carolina Counties, 2015"

Percent Change in Tourism Spending 2015 over 2014, Rutherford Co. vs. State NC



Source: NC Division of Tourism & U.S. Travel Association's Report "The Economic Impact of Travel on NC & SC Counties, 2015"

Rutherford Co. & Bordering Counties for Tourist Spending, 2015

✓ Buncombe Co.	\$1.0 Billion
✓ Henderson Co.	\$257 million
✓ Rutherford Co.	\$164 million
✓ Cleveland Co.	\$101 million
✓ Burke Co.	\$94 million
✓ McDowell Co.	\$54 million
✓ Polk Co.	\$26 million

Source: NC Division of Tourism & U.S. Travel Association's Report "The Economic Impact of Travel on NC & SC Counties, 2015"

Tourism Jobs in Rutherford Co. in 2015

Direct Jobs	1,220 Jobs
Indirect Jobs	610 jobs
Total Jobs from Tourism Spending	1,830 Jobs

Source: NC Division of Tourism & U.S. Travel Association's Report "The Economic Impact of Travel on North Carolina Counties, 2015" & Dr. Steve Moore, Western Carolina University

Tourism Tax Relief for Rutherford Co. Households

- Each of the 33,195 households in Rutherford Co. pay \$446 less in State and local taxes as a result of taxes generated by tourist spending

Source: NC Division of Tourism & U.S. Travel Association's Report "The Economic Impact of Travel on North Carolina Counties, 2015", U.S. Census Bureau, Dr. Steve Moore, Western Carolina University

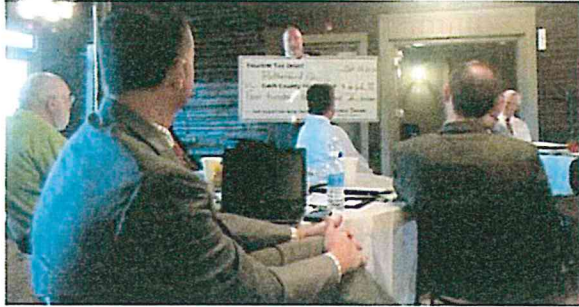


Tourism Development Authority

Rutherford County, North Carolina

Rutherford County Tourism Holds Inaugural Tourism Advisory Committee Meeting

Committee of 30+ members tasked with developing countywide strategic plan for Rutherford County's tourism industry.



Tourism economist Steve Morse presents at inaugural Tourism Advisory Committee meeting

Rutherfordton, N.C. (October 26, 2016): Rutherford County Tourism Development Authority (RCTDA) held its inaugural Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting on Wednesday, Oct. 12 from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. at the Rutherfordton Club House. The group of 39 leaders from across Rutherford County was assembled by RCTDA Executive Director Don Cason and included representatives from the county-level and municipalities to those from education, public service, key businesses and industries, regional tourism influencers, stakeholders and media.

The goal of the initial meeting was to establish group rapport, demonstrate how tourism is a leading economic driver for Rutherford County, and finalize a Request For Proposal (RFP) to seek a firm to develop the countywide Tourism Strategic Plan.

The meeting began with an update from Tryon International Equestrian Center (TIEC) Chief Operations Officer Sharon Decker. In addition to ongoing plans for development, Decker stated that TIEC remains an economic engine for both Rutherford and Polk Counties and is a contender for hosting the 2018 FEI World Equestrian Games. In terms of attracting visitors to the area, Decker encouraged attendees to "not lose sight of what brought the equestrian center here in the first place."

"As you define the brand, you have to tell the story of our area's great quality of life," said Decker.

Next, the group listened to a presentation from Visit North Carolina Marketing Director Mark Shore. Visit North Carolina is the tourism marketing department for the State of North Carolina and part of the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina (EDPNC).

Shore presented tourism industry statistics for North Carolina stating that "tourism is an investment." He reported that the tourism industry ranked fourth in the state for economic impact. Rutherford County ranked twenty-eighth in visitor spending out of the 100 counties in North Carolina. Shore emphasized that tourism is a great way for economically challenged counties, like Rutherford, to generate revenue.

Shore also highlighted that the region "is now on a global stage" because of TIEC's bid for the 2018 FEI World Equestrian Games. TIEC is competing with Slovakia for the bid.

The final presentation was given by Western Carolina University Director of Hospitality and Tourism Program Steve Morse, an economist who specializes in tracking business trends in the hotel, restaurant and tourism sectors of the Southeast and U.S. economies. Morse shared compelling economic data on Rutherford County's growing tourism industry including the fact that visitors spent \$164.1 million in the county in 2015, thus saving each taxpayer \$446 that year, which is a \$242 increase from 2014. He also reported that the percentage of people working in Rutherford County's tourism industry grew from 7.3 percent in 2001 to 12.4 percent in 2015.

Morse stressed the need to place proper value on the tourism industry's contribution to economic impact and to not depreciate the variety of jobs created.

"If you say everyone in the tourism industry is doing a minimum wage job, it's like saying everyone working in a hospital is an orderly," said Morse.

Morse also urged attendees to realize the indirect jobs resulting from tourism. According to Morse, for every two direct jobs created in the tourism industry, there is one indirect job created. In 2015, Rutherford County's tourism industry created 1,220 direct tourism jobs and 610 indirect jobs for a total of 1,830.

Morse reinforced his report by stating that "Rutherford County tourism jobs will never be outsourced to another country."

Cason concluded the meeting and expressed his readiness to move into the next phase of the TAC plan.

"Our next step is to submit the RFP and choose a company to spearhead the development of this important plan for Rutherford County Tourism," said Cason. "I am eager to work with this impressive team of leaders and deliver a plan that can help our county capitalize on and maximize the next 15 years of our growing tourism industry."

The TAC will reconvene on Wednesday, Nov. 16 to hear presentations from firms who submit responses to the RFP.

"The ultimate goal is to have a final Rutherford County Tourism Strategic Plan endorsed by the county, every town and stakeholders from across the county by the end of the fiscal year or early fall at the latest," said Cason.

For media inquiries, please contact Taylor Hardin at 828-287-6013 or taylor.hardin@rutherfordcountync.gov. To learn more about tourism in Rutherford County, go online to www.VisitBlueRidgeNC.com.

About Rutherford County Tourism Development Authority (RCTDA)
Rutherford County Tourism Development Authority is funded solely by occupancy taxes paid by visitors to Rutherford County and collected by lodging properties. According to the U.S. Travel Association, visitor taxes paid to Rutherford County in 2014 resulted in more than 1,170 jobs and a tax savings of more than \$204.47 per resident.

Without the revenue collected from visitors, Rutherford County's governments would be left with a financial deficit of more than four and-a-half million dollars. The occupancy taxes visitors pay, and which fund RCTDA, make up only about a half million of that total. The rest of the more than four and-a-half million tax dollars generated by tourists – people whom Rutherford County taxes do not support – goes directly into Rutherford County's governments' funds, thus paying for projects and services for residents. To learn more about Rutherford County Tourism Development Authority, please visit www.rutherfordcountync.gov/tourismdevelopmentauthority or call 828-287-6013.



THE DAILY COURIER

Friday, December 16, 2016 • \$1.00 • Serving Rutherford County • www.thedigitalcourier.com • Local Matters

TDA OKs company for strategic plan

BY JED BLACKWELL

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RUTHERFORDTON — The Rutherford County Tourism Development Authority (TDA) board approved a recommendation by the Tourism Advisory Committee for a company to draft a strategic plan that will move tourism in the area forward at Thursday's regular meeting.

"We felt the time was right for a strategic plan," TDA Board Chair Richard Lundy. "We wanted community and county leaders involved in order for it to be successful, and we think a larger group of people involved in the decision will result in a larger group of people who will help drive and support this county-wide plan."

Acting on the recommendation of the committee after a meeting last week, the board selected Destination By Design from a group of five companies who responded to a request for proposals.

"Two applicants stood out, one of them especially" said board member Willard Whitson. "It wasn't a unanimous selection, but it was virtually

unanimous. We had a very good discussion and feel good about the decision.

The key, in Lundy's mind, was Destination By Design's approach to tourism and tourism assets in the county.

"Their suggestion is the need for more tourism products in the county and the need to revitalize what we already have," Lundy said. "I

think they'll give us a good roadmap of how to get there."

In other action, the board heard reports from a number of committees, including an aggressive marketing plan which will launch in time for spring as the Hickory Nut Gorge recovers from the recent Party Rock fire.

SEE TDA/PAGE A8

TDA

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

"We think we're going to have a good

spring." Executive Director Don Cason said. "This is a massive marketing effort to let everyone know things are going to be back to where they

were before."

In the only matter of business other than approving the strategic plan company, the board cancelled the meeting scheduled for Dec. 29.