



Catawba County Economic Development Corporation

Catawba County

Hickory-Lenoir-Morganton MSA

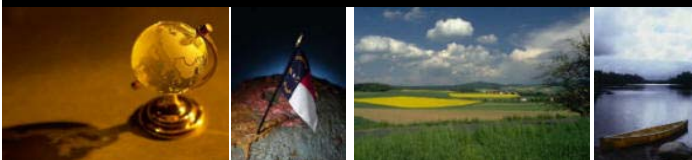


Catawba County possesses a diverse economy with a strong manufacturing climate coupled with extensive retail and residential developments. Some of the diversified manufacturing sectors located in the county include machining and metal working, plastics, automotive suppliers, cable and furniture.

The Hickory Metro area has been named the 10th Best Place to Live and Raise a Family in the United States by *Reader's Digest*. The Hickory-Lenoir-Morganton M.S.A. has also been named the 2nd best M.S.A. in the country for Business Costs by Forbes Magazine. *Business North Carolina* reported that Catawba County's largest city, Hickory, was the 8th best city in the state for its quality of life. Catawba County was also listed by *Southern Development & Business* as the top mid-market in NC in their "Top 250 Best Places in the South to Locate Your Company."

Catawba County is renowned as the center of the region's retail shopping, entertainment and cultural life. A leading retail mall, furniture mart, convention center, movie theaters, retail shopping centers and hundreds of restaurants are also major attractions for visitors from throughout the region.

Location and Geography



Catawba County is located in the western part of the State of North Carolina in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains and covers 405 square miles (656.10 Km). The central county of North Carolina's fourth largest MSA (estimated 2009 population – 365,364), Catawba County's estimated 2009 population of 157,002 includes the inhabitants of its eight municipalities. These municipalities include Brookford, Catawba, Claremont, Conover, Hickory, Long View, Maiden, and Newton.

Catawba County's proximity to interstate access makes it a prime location for business. Interstate-40 runs east to west through Catawba County. Accessible via US Highway 321, Interstate-85 is reachable in approximately 30 minutes. Interstate-77 is also reachable in 30 minutes via Interstate-40.



Catawba County is located within one hour of the City of Charlotte and the Charlotte-Douglas International Airport. The Appalachian resort areas of Boone and Blowing Rock are within an hours drive. The City of Asheville lies within an hour and a half to the West. Winston-Salem, Greensboro and the Greensboro International Airport lie within an hour and a half to the East.

Annual Year Round Temperature	68.8F
Average High Temp. (July)	84.6F
Average Low Temp. (January)	51.1F
Average Annual Precipitation	4.49 inches/month

Population, Income, Retail Sales



	Catawba County	Hky-Len-Morg MSA
Population (2009 Estimated)	157,002	365,364
Total Households (2009 Estimated)	58,040	135,609
Median Household Income (2009)	\$41,116	\$37,351
Per Capita Income (2009)	\$21,288	\$19,515

Retail Sales (FY 2009-2010) \$1.6 billion \$2.6 billion

Age Range (% Population)	Catawba County	Hky-Len-Morg MSA
0-19 yrs	26.5	25.9
20-24 yrs	5.8	6.2
25-34 yrs	12.2	11.2
35-44 yrs	14.4	14.4
45-54 yrs	14.7	14.9
55-64	12.6	12.7
65+ yrs	13.8	14.7

Workforce, Industry



	Catawba County	Hky-Len-Morg MSA
Labor Force (May 2011)	73,012	163,948
Employed (May 2011)	64,606	144,496
Unemployed (May 2011)	8,406	19,453
Unemployment Rate (May 2011)	11.5%	11.9%
Avg. Manufacturing Wage (May 2011)	\$15.00/hr	

Education Attainment (% Population)

Less than High School	21.1	23.3
High School Graduate	30.6	32.0
Some College	22.3	20.8
Associate Degree	8.3	9.2
Bachelor's Degree	12.8	10.1
Master's Degree	4.9	4.4

5-year Industry Employment Transition: 2005-2010

Industry	2005	2010	Chg	% Chg
Agr. Forestry Fishing & Hunting	127	107	-20	-15.75%
Utilities	433	334	-99	-22.86%
Construction	2,785	2,517	-268	-9.62%
Manufacturing	28,519	21,276	-7,243	-25.40%
Wholesale Trade	3,963	3,684	-279	-7.04%
Retail Trade	10,239	9,230	-1,009	-9.85%
Trans. And Warehousing	3,847	3,609	-238	-6.19%
Information	567	572	5	0.88%
Finance and Insurance	1,456	1,272	-184	-12.64%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	562	504	-58	-10.32%
Professional and Technical Services	1,396	1,543	147	10.53%
Mgmt of Companies and Enterprises	1,774	1,918	144	8.12%
Administrative and Waste Services	4,763	4,195	-568	-11.93%
Educational Services	4,809	4,973	164	3.41%
Health Care and Social Assistance	9,050	9,548	498	5.50%
Arts Entertainment and Recreation	856	823	-33	-3.86%
Accommodation and Food Services	6,424	6,174	-250	-3.89%
Other Services Ex. Public Admin	1,670	1,497	-173	-10.36%
Public Admin	2,990	3,263	273	9.13%



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Government & Taxes

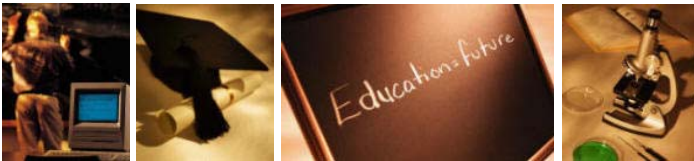


Property Tax/\$100 valuation

Catawba County	\$0.53
Town of Brookford	\$0.52
Town of Catawba	\$0.48
City of Claremont	\$0.46
City of Conover	\$0.40
City of Hickory	\$0.50
Town of Longview	\$0.40
Town of Maiden	\$0.39
City of Newton	\$0.48
Rural Fire District rates range from \$0.0517 to \$0.0700	

Sales Tax—State	4.75%
Sales Tax—County	2.25%
Combined Sales Tax for Catawba County	7.00%
NC Corporate Income Tax	6.9%
NC Personal Income Tax (filing as single)	6% on 1st \$12,750 7% on next \$47,250 7.75% on remainder

Education and Training

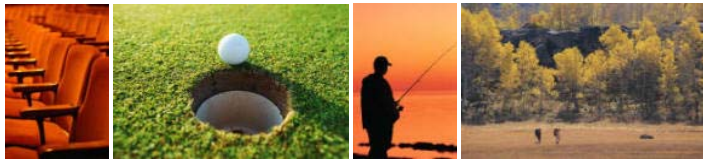


Public Schools	43
Private Schools	13
School Districts	3
Colleges & Universities	4
Catawba Valley Community College 2008-09 Enrollment	6,947
Appalachian State Univ. Center at Hickory 2008-09 Enrollment	887
Lenoir Rhyne University 2008-09 Enrollment	1,447
NC Center for Engineering Technologies 2008-09 Enrollment	96

Education and technical training continue to be high priorities for Catawba County. Catawba Valley Community College provides Focused Industrial Training and New and Expanding Industry Training. Catawba County is also home to Lenoir Rhyne University, a four-year liberal arts school. The Appalachian State University Center at Hickory is a joint education center offering graduate and undergraduate degrees, non-credit certificate courses, research, and specialized workforce training through such universities as Appalachian State University, NC State University, and the University of North Carolina. The new NC 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.

New and Expanding Industry Training Program—The North Carolina Community College System was first in the nation to offer customized training to new and expanding industry. New and Expanding Industry Training (NEIT) is available to companies that create 12 or more jobs in one community in one year. The level of assistance is determined by the total number of new jobs created, their skill and wage levels, and the total amount of capital investment. As a partner in North Carolina's Joblink Career Centers, the Employment Security Commission will assist with employee recruitment efforts. We have a specific process for developing a customized training program for your company. It's one of the many ways we say, "Welcome to North Carolina."

Quality of Life



Sports & Recreation—Catawba County offers a wide range of Sports and Recreation for enthusiasts. Rock Barn Golf & Spa is home to the Greater Hickory Classic, a PGA TOUR Champions Tour Event. Other golf courses include the Catawba Country Club, the Lake Hickory County Club, Hampton Heights Golf Club, and Catawba Springs Golf Club. The Hickory Motor Speedway hosts the NASCAR Dodge Weekly Series and is known as the "Birthplace of the NASCAR Stars". 2004 South Atlantic League Champion Hickory Crawdads (Class A Affiliate-Pittsburgh Pirates) offer minor league baseball at it's best. The YMCA of Catawba Valley offers numerous athletic, daycare and health and fitness opportunities for all ages at several facilities in the county. Additionally, the Catawba River provides many opportunities for boating and other recreations. Catawba County also has numerous parks providing opportunities from family picnics to hiking and fishing.

Arts & Culture—Home to two community theatres, a university theatre, a symphony, a choral society, and a first class art museum, Catawba County provides an array of artistic and cultural entertainment. Catawba County also offers a Science Museum, a History Museum, concert associations, a youth symphony and a variety of musical groups from Barbershop to Bluegrass.

Religion—There are over 200 congregations in Catawba County representing a variety of Jewish, Protestant, Catholic and other beliefs. All major protestant religions are represented with the largest number of adherents belonging to the Southern Baptist Convention, the United Methodist Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Retail & Shopping—Hickory is the shopping hub for the Hickory-Lenoir-Morganton MSA. Enjoy great one-stop shopping and a family-friendly environment at Valley Hills Mall with over 90 specialty stores and carts, 11 food court retailers, a sit-down restaurant, and four department stores, Belk, Dillard's, JC Penney, and Sears. The Hickory Furniture Mart presents a complete selection of domestic and imported furniture and furnishings. Largest of its kind in the nation, the Mart complex features 100 factory outlets, stores and galleries selling more than 1000 well-known manufacturing lines such as Broyhill, Thomasville, Lane, Henredon, La-Z-Boy and others. The Catawba Furniture Mall has over 8-acres of discount furniture, 100's of manufacturers, High Point furniture showroom floor samples, home furnishings, free decorating ideas, specialty shops, and an online furniture search. Other major retailers in the Greater Hickory Metro include Barnes & Noble, Best Buy, Dicks Sporting Goods, Home Depot, K Mart, Lowe's Home Improvement Warehouse, Target and Wal Mart.

Restaurants—Catawba County's more than 100 restaurants represent an extremely wide variety available to suit any taste and budget. Fast Food restaurants include McDonalds, Bojangles, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Taco Bell, Jack in the Box, Backyard Burgers, Subway, Chik-fil-a, Quiznos, Burger King, Checkers, Wendy's, Panda Express and Sonic. Other restaurant styles include Steak, Seafood, Cafeteria-style, Chinese, Mexican, Thai, Italian, Greek, Jamaican, and Vietnamese.

Housing Availability & Costs—Catawba County offers a wide range of housing choices. From newly constructed subdivisions, townhomes, and condos to historic homes and a variety of apartment choices, there are numerous available housing options. According to Sperling's bestplaces.net, the average cost of a single-family home in 2010 was \$109,400. 75.36% of the population owned their homes, while 24.64% of the population were renters. Home appreciation costs in 2008 was -5.31%.

Accommodations—With 20 hotels and 3 Bed and Breakfasts, Catawba County has a variety of accommodations to meet any taste and budget. Over 1800 rooms are available at hotels including the Choice Hotels Family, the Marriott Family, Jameson Inn, Hampton Inn, Days Inn, Red Roof Inn, and La Quinta Inn & Suites among others.