

# More than 400 jobs coming to Hickory

By [John Dayberry](#) | Hickory Daily Record

A financial technology company plans to open a new location here in February, creating more than 419 customer service jobs over the next three years.

Wisconsin-based Fiserv Inc., a Fortune 500 company, will occupy all of the new Adevco facility in the McDonald Crossings Business Park at the intersection of Tate Boulevard and McDonald Parkway.

Fiserv will invest \$4.9 million in Hickory during the three years, state officials said Tuesday.

The new customer care center, which will provide technical support, customer management and data processing for the financial services industry, is expected to employ 300 people by late 2010. Jobs will pay an average annual wage of \$25,368, excluding benefits.

"We are looking forward to working with the people of Catawba County," said Jardon Bouska, division president with Fiserv.

"With an existing office in Charlotte, we welcome this opportunity to expand our presence in the state.

"The good fortune afforded us by both the state and county have been the driving forces for our expansion in this region, and we expect the customer care center we establish with the people of Hickory will accommodate our needs now and in the future."

North Carolina is providing an \$800,000 grant from the One North Carolina Fund for the expansion.

Any local incentives will be based on job creation and investment performance standards and will be considered in public session at a later date, said officials with the Catawba County Economic Development Corp.

Catawba County's unemployment rate in September was 13.6 percent.

The 60,000-square-foot building in which Fiserv will locate its customer care center was developed by Atlanta-based real estate company Adevco.

Covation LLC, an Atlanta-based start-up, announced last December that it would use the facility as a customer support center for business telecommunications services, creating 913 technical support, billing and customer service jobs.

Covation was to open its customer support center last April.

In July, Covation officials said that while they were still hopeful about the project, the U.S. economic upheaval had derailed their plans.

Julie Pruett, director of recruitment for the Catawba County Economic Development Corp., said the organization is thrilled to have found a strong company for the Adevco facility.

"We've been working to further diversify our economy with quality service jobs that can help smooth some of the turbulence our economy is facing," Pruett said.

"Judging by the strength of the company and its benefits packages, Fiserv will be a great employer and community partner."

Fiserv, a 25-year-old company, has 20,000 employees worldwide.

"I am delighted that 400 of our good families in the Hickory area will reap the benefits of this decision by Fiserv and from the efforts of the state of North Carolina, Catawba County and the city of Hickory," said Hickory Mayor Rudy Wright.

"We are certain that Fiserv will find Hickory to be a wonderful location for their newest venture."