



The Chamber
OF CATAWBA COUNTY

Working for business

CONNECTIONS

TALENT

@work

EMPOWERMENT

ADVOCACY

Valued Partner,

There are many aspects of your business that you can control – things such as product innovation and quality, customer service, internal processes and procedures, your company's brand and marketing messaging and who you hire to join your team. There are aspects of business, however, that are outside of your control, yet directly impact your ability to grow, be competitive and thrive. Critical business success factors that reside in this space are typically your greatest concerns; the things that keep you up at night. They are the critical community issues that are impacting your ability to do business efficiently and effectively. They often inhibit your growth and impact your ability to maximize your profit. This space between what you can and can't control is the space that your Chamber occupies.

What are the most critical issues impacting business in Catawba County? Furthermore, which issues are we leading or playing a significant role in addressing? Which issues should we be leading and/or exerting more influence? What issues should we be actively engaged to address, yet not lead? Finally, which issues are important to us, but other partners are best equipped to address? I asked these questions during our Strategic Leadership Retreat with a

room filled with our Board leadership, Chamber Shareholders and Investors and other strategic partners. The matrix included on page 2 of this report was the result and the impact of these strategic priorities, specifically in 2019 is detailed in the pages to follow.

Your Chamber pursues value and relevance every day. It's our priority to ask the right questions to uncover your needs and pain points, to listen and then to act. It's only because of your continued investment, engagement and leadership that we can continue to fund and successfully execute critical economic & community development initiatives that **get things done** on behalf of business.

Thank you for your commitment to YOUR Chamber. On behalf of our team, we humbly thank you for allowing us the honor and privilege to work alongside of you and for you every day.

Sincerely,



Lindsay M. Keisler, IOM, CCEC
President/CEO

Meet The Chamber of Catawba County Team

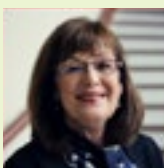
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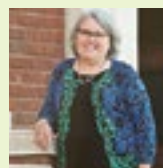
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Strategic Priorities Summary

Which Issues Are We Leading or Playing A Significant Role?

- Talent Recruitment, Retention & Development
 - K-64 – Work-Based Learning; Career Adaptability; Employer Engagement
- Entrepreneur/ Small Business Support
- Business Networking & Connectivity
- Leadership Development
- The Voice for Business Interests

Which Issues Should We Be Leading or Exerting More Influence?

- Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Development
- Government Affairs / Pro-Business Advocacy

Which Issues Should We Be Actively Engaged In, Yet Not Lead?

- Community Marketing and Branding
- Regional Collaboration
- Market Rate Housing
- Diversity & Inclusion
- Workforce Skills Development / Certification Programs
- Business Support Infrastructure – Utilities, Broadband, Roads, Etc.
- Economic Development
 - Industry Recruitment
 - Site Inventory

Which Issues Should Other Partners or Entities Lead?

- Social Issues
- Community Health and Wellness
 - Substance Use Crisis
 - Educational Change
 - Public Safety



2019 By the Numbers

835

Total Shareholders & Investors

99

New Shareholders & Investors in 2019

94%

Retention Rate – Value of Accounts

16%

increase in our audience on social media

30%

increase in partner engagement growth since 2018*

*Based on signature event attendance

3,241 = \$74,510⁻⁵⁹



Volunteer Hours

*# of hours volunteers have contributed towards advancing the Chamber's mission on behalf of business in 2019

27

Chamber Ambassadors made

2,076

calls or visits to fellow Chamber partners to say 'Thank You' on our behalf in 2019

Keisler was named one of **Top 10 Under 40** the "National Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives"

Embarked on an organizational rebranding process in May 2019 – **2** focus groups; **642** survey responses; **10** one-on-one interviews with "disengaged." Our new brand positioning statement, logo, style guide, website and communication strategy will be activated starting at our 2020 Annual Meeting.

Talent Recruitment & Development



- Keisler serves as the Ex-Officio Lead, actively working with the private sector co-chairs of the **K-64 Workforce Solutions Committee** which focuses on three of the six priority areas: Work-Based Learning; Career Adaptability; Employer Engagement. Committee is focusing on the development of a "portal" website that will connect students, parents, educators and employers for career exposure, career exploration and career experience. company who hires them.
- Continuing to partner with CVCC and local employers to grow the **Construction Careers Academy** – to pre-match high school juniors and seniors with local employers in construction/skilled trades for the Ride & Decide Pre-Apprenticeship Program during the summer of 2019. 27 future workers successfully graduated from the program.
- The 2nd edition of the **MADE Magazine** was released to our advertorial partners and special contributors in March.
 - The Made Curriculum Taskforce composed one week of lesson plans for 6th and 8th grade students to complement the guide. These lessons can be assessable on the K-64 website (k-64learning.com).
 - Successfully delivered 5,100 MADE Magazines to all middle and elementary schools in Catawba County to be used with the customized curriculum which was developed by representatives from each school system in partnership with K-64 for the 2019-2020 school year.
 - An additional 2,000 copies were delivered to high-traffic businesses across Catawba County.
- Published and released our community's first "**Talent Attraction Guide**"; a digital flipbook version is also available.
- Hosted two opportunities for human resources professionals, business leaders and realtors to discover the newly-produced "Community Marketing Tools."
 - Collaborated with K-64, Catawba EDC, CVCC and LRU to host the "**Tapping Into Talent Symposium**" on Oct 21st focused on work-based learning, building organizational culture and generation Z in the workplace. This year we extended registration to educators across the county at no charge. Later that evening, we held a follow-up presentation by Meghan Grace, specifically for educators that was titled, "**Gen Z Learners**" that was hosted and sponsored by Lenoir Rhyne University.
 - **HKY4Vets Talent Connect**, a real-time careers website for transitioning military & spouse talent --- we went LIVE on Oct. 1st (www.HKY4vets.com). Over 350 active job listings from our 16 employer partners and are actively onboarding candidates.
 - Working to launch an HKY4Vets Corporate Fellowship Program, targeted at filling mid-senior level positions in roles including, but not limited to, project management, HR, IT, operations management, supply chain, engineering, finance, general management and business development.
 - Dahlsten serving on the **CVCC Manufacturing Academy Advisory Board**.
 - Keisler serving on the Executive Committee for **Apprenticeship Catawba**.
 - Keisler was selected for the **Fellowship for Education & Talent Development by the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives**. Over the next year, she, along with 20 of her colleagues across the country, will delve into cutting-edge theories, approaches and best practices in talent development in communities across the US.
 - Chamber Board Member, Dedra Flournoy, was selected for the **NC Chamber's Talent Pipeline Academy**. She represented MDI and our organization, along with representatives from other local chambers, business associations, economic development agency leaders, and employers to be trained in the framework's six strategies to drive partnerships with education and training providers.
 - Recognized **National Manufacturers Week (Sept 30 – Oct 4)** with a social media campaign that included statistics about manufacturing in Catawba County.
 - Began hosting regular "**CEO Listening Lunches**" to foster deeper relationships and ensure we, as their Chamber and local government leaders, are meeting their needs. Attendees include a local CEO, County Manager, City Manager, EDC President and Chamber President/CEO.

Small Business & Entrepreneurship

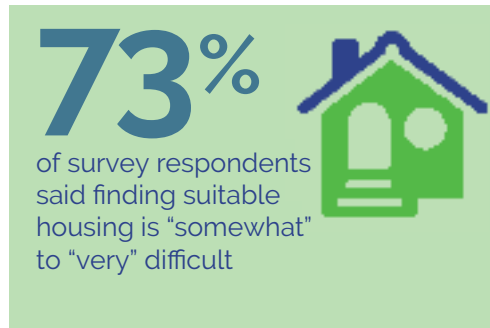
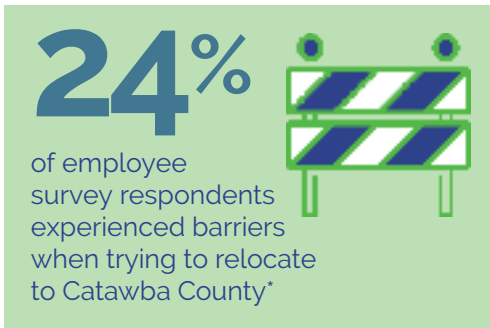
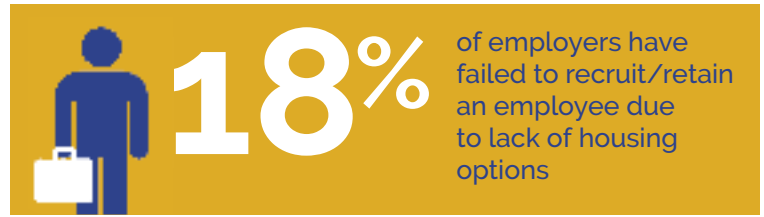
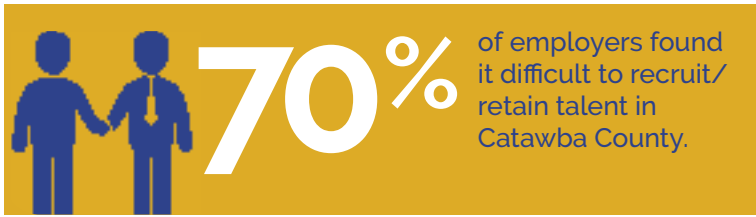
- Led the launch of “**The Catalyst: Entrepreneurs Supporting Entrepreneurs**”. This collaborative of local founders, mentors and entrepreneurial support representatives (Chamber, SBTDC, the CVCC Small Business Center, SCORE, LRU Center for Social & Commercial Entrepreneurship) are growing Catawba County’s start-up community and providing support to high-growth ventures and lifestyle businesses through mentors and unique programming.
- Launched a monthly “**Founders Meet-Up**” that takes place on the first Wednesday of the month from 5:30PM – 7:30PM. Invitation is limited to local Founders, potential mentors for local start-ups and/or scalable ventures, or entrepreneurial support organizations. The purpose is to provide more regular entrepreneurial programming to build a community of entrepreneurs who are starting or growing an enterprise in the Hickory Metro region.
- The Catalyst Organizers are crafting a suite of programming to launch in 2020 that will provide support to Lifestyle/ Main Street businesses and high-growth ventures to steepen and lengthen their business growth curves.
- Collaborating with CVCC and Supportedly for the successful launch of **StartUpCatawba.com**, a dynamic digital portal which will help fill the gap between entrepreneurs and the resources to help them succeed in our community.
- Co-hosted the “**Being an Investor-Ready Entrepreneur Conference**” in partnership with the SBTDC in April.
- Continue to partner with the Small Business Center at CVCC to promote all of their small business workshops and served as the host for five workshops in 2019.
- The Catawba County Board of Commissioners presented Keisler with a proclamation at their Monday, May 6th meeting designating **May 5th – 11th Small Business Week** in Catawba County, alongside of National Small Business Week.
- Conducted a social media campaign to celebrate “Small Business Week.”
- Keisler served as a judge for **CVCC’s High School & College Shark Tank Competitions**.
- Partnered with Catawba Valley Community College and the NCIDEA Foundation to be the host community for the Kauffman Foundations’ **Ice House Entrepreneurship Program Facilitator Training**, Dec 10– 12.
 - Saunders and Keisler were trained as facilitators, along with 8 other representatives from Catawba County. We plan to craft a strategy to deploy these concepts in 2020 across various audiences.
- Ran a “**Support Local**” **social media campaign** that started the week leading up to Small Business Saturday and concluded on Christmas Day.
- Continue to have a strategic partnership with the **Small Business Technology & Development Center** to prioritize their time to provide complimentary business counseling services to our Chamber Shareholders & Investors.

Government Affairs/Community Development

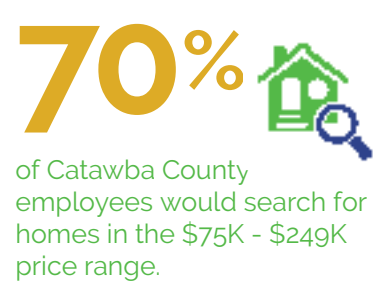
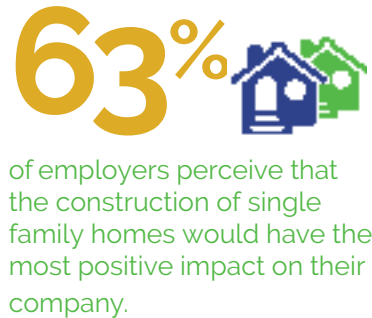
- The Legislative Agenda Taskforce was convened to compose our **2019 Legislative Agenda** that was approved and released in February 2019.
- In April, we hosted a **Legislative Breakfast** with the members of our Legislative Agenda Taskforce and two of our local legislative delegates, Rep. Adams and Sen. Wells to discuss our pro-business policy priorities.
- Keisler serves on the **Charlotte Regional Business Alliance Regional Public Policy Council**.
- Collaborated with the Catawba Valley Realtors Association, Catawba County EDC & Habitat for Humanity on a **Housing Survey** (*full results are on page 6*) as it relates to attracting and retaining talent and received 650 responses. The Western Piedmont Council of Governments analyzed the data and created a final report.
 - This data has been presented to Rotary Clubs, the WPCOG Housing Summit, the Newton Business Advisory Committee, Leadership Catawba and the Habitat for Humanity Board of Directors.
 - The data has been provided to local government entities to utilize to recruit residential developers.
- Saunders is serving on the Leadership Team for the Community Health Assessment and is serving on the **LiveWell Catawba Business Committee**.
- Dahlsten is serving on the **2020 Catawba County Census Count Committee**.

Talent Retention & Attraction: Housing Survey

Key Takeaways 662 Respondents - 130 Employers | 532 Employees
September 2019



*Roughly 2/3's of these individuals experienced barriers finding suitable housing that was of the desired quality (65%) or the desired affordability (60%)



The 48% of employers that did offer assistance; 31% provided resources for housing options, and 27% offered partial or full relocation expense reimbursement.

There are more than 3,500 housing units* in some phase of development across Catawba County.

Townhome/Condos (42%)
Apartments (39%)
Downtown Lofts/Studios (25%)

489 houses have been sold between 100k and 200k January 2019-September 2019

According to the latest MLS data, there are only **99** homes on the market for **\$100K-\$200K** price range.

There is currently a **2.7** month supply of housing inventory on the market; **1.3** months' supply for Townhomes/Condos.

In 2014 the average sales price in Catawba County was right around **\$125,000** as of now it is **\$183,000** (a 37% increase).

There are currently only **50** new construction homes for sale in all of Catawba County. Only **28** are less than **\$300,000**

Supporting Partners



Leadership Development



- Graduated 33 participants on March 14th from the **2018-2019 Leadership Catawba** program.
- The Leadership Catawba Advisory Board launched a Leadership Catawba Alumni group that held its first event on Oct. 15.
- The **2019-2020 Class of Leadership Catawba** kicked off their program year with a retreat on in August. We have 37 class members.
- Served as a Co-Sponsor for the 8th Annual TEDxHickory
- We have had a designated staff member to serve as the Chamber Liaison for the **Hickory Young Professionals** on their Leadership Council.

• Surveyed nearly 200 Leadership Catawba alumni regarding their community leadership interests and now have a database of community leaders willing to serve. We have fulfilled several non-profit and local government requests for volunteer leaders.

Connection Events



First Friday Morning Brew is hosting an average of 120 attendees every month.



Women's Leadership Mixer & More, Aug. 29 – SOLD OUT with 175 attendees.



Annual Shareholders & Investors Luncheon, Feb. 13, with over 500 in attendance



Annual Golf Classic, Sept. 20 – SOLD OUT with 250 golfers



Future of Catawba County Summit, March 21 – SOLD OUT with 300 in attendance.



Women's Leadership Conference, Nov. 13 – SOLD OUT with record attendance – 515 women



Business at the Ballpark, May 9, with 375 in attendance.

in business from across our region, which is the largest event of kind in NC.

Catawba County Chamber Executive Board

Gar Atchison, Chairman, *Frye Regional Medical Center*
Stephen Patton, Immediate Past Chair, *Hickory Printing Solutions*
Philip Moore, Vice Chairman, *PNC Bank*
JP Jones, Treasurer, *Davidson, Holland, Whitesell & Co., PLLC, CPAs*
Dedra Flournoy, *Merchants Distributors, Inc.*
Laurie Hoover, *Vanguard Furniture*

Lee Syria, *United Church Homes and Services*
Karen Tonks, *Time Genies*
Malla Vue, *Goodwill Industries of NWNC*
Lindsay Keisler, *Catawba County Chamber of Commerce*
Kim Dahlsten, *Catawba County Chamber of Commerce*

Catawba County Chamber Board of Directors

Lori Alala, *Broome Associates*
Eddie Beard, *Catawba Valley Health Systems*
Clay Gentry, *Transportation Insight*
Jim Hawes, *Young, Morphis, Bach & Taylor, LLP*
Mike Kelly, *Hickory Real Estate Group*
Leslie Knapp, *Mellow Mushroom*
Andrew Matthews, *Matthews Construction Co.*
Deborah Miller, *ProStaffing*
Peter Rumswinkel, *Sarstedt, Inc.*
Jennifer Stiver, *2 Pink Magnolias*
Sheree Watson, *Graystone Eye*
Darryl Webster, *Sutter Street Manufacturing*
- a division of *Williams-Sonoma*

Kirk Wentz, *Amphenol Antenna Solutions, Inc.*
Pamela Williamson, *Corning Optical Communications*
Virginia Wright M.D., *Carolina Caring*

Ex-Officio

Cameron Bixby, *Hickory Young Professionals*
Mandy Pitts Hildebrand, *Hickory Metro Convention Center & Visitors Bureau*
Michael McNally, *NC Center for Engineering Technologies*
Scott Millar, *Catawba County Economic Development Corp.*
Gary Muller, *Catawba Valley Community College*
Rachel Nichols, *Lenoir-Rhyne University*

Thank You to Our Chamber Investors! (Annual Investment Greater than \$1,500) (As of 02/14/2020)

These organizations are our premier partners that make a vital commitment to driving economic prosperity & business competitiveness success through their voluntarily enhanced annual investment.

Titanium Level: Catawba Valley Health System, CommScope, Inc., Frye Regional Medical Center

Platinum Level: Corning Optical Communications, LLC, Davidson, Holland, Whitesell & Co., PLLC, CPAs, HSM Solutions, Imagine One Companies / Café Rule and Wine Bar / The Crossing at Hollar Mill / Highland Avenue Restaurant / Peppervine / Protect Plus, Martin Starnes & Associates, CPAs PA, Peoples Bank, Pepsi-Cola Bottling Company, Inc., Sutter Street Manufacturing - a division of Williams-Sonoma

Gold Level: BB&T, Catawba Valley Community College, Duke Energy, First Citizens Bank, First Horizon Bank, Foothills Radio Group, LLC, Hickory Daily Record, Hickory Living Magazine, HK Research Corporation, Pat Appleson Studios, Piedmont Natural Gas Company, Inc., Republic Services of NC, von Drehle Corporation, Wells Fargo Bank, NA, WHKY 1290AM / 102.3FM

Silver Level: Benco Steel, Inc., Cargo Integrated Logistics, Cargo Transporters, Inc., Carolina West Wireless, Catawba County, FOCUS Newspaper, Graystone Eye, My Work Choice, PNC Bank, Sherrill Furniture Company, Shurtape Technologies, LLC, Tyson Foods, Vanguard Furniture, Inc., ZF Chassis Components, LLC

Bronze Level: 74 South, Abernethy Laurels, AccuForce, Adams Commercial Real Estate Services (ACRES), Alex Lee, Inc., Baker Furniture, Barnhill Contracting Company, Belk, Black's Tire & Auto Service, Inc., BPope Productions, Broome Associates, Canteen Vending Service, Capital Concepts Financial Group, Carolina Caring, Carolina Container Company Inc., Carpenter Company, Catawba Valley Living at Rock Barn, City of Hickory, Cloninger Ford of Hickory, Concentrix, Corporate Armor, a Temprano Techvestors Company, C.R. Laine Furniture Company, Dalco Nonwovens, LLC, David E. Looper & Company, Inc., Everett Auto Team, First Community Bank, First Security Company, Inc., Food Factory craft Diner, Foothills Distillery, LLC, General Dynamics Mission Systems, GKN Driveline, Granny's Country Kitchen, Hickory Crawdads Baseball, Inc., Hickory Falls Health & Rehabilitation, Hickory Mechanical, Inc., Interstate Foam & Supply, LEE Industries, Lenoir-Rhyne University, Mellow Mushroom-Hickory, Mike Johnson's Hickory Toyota, Momentum Tire & Car Care, Moretz Mills, LLC, Neill Grading & Construction Inc., Newton Family Physicians, P.A., Oakwood Dental Arts, OrthoCarolina-Hickory, Paramount Automotive Group, Patricia C. Fleming, CPA, Patrick, Harper & Dixon, LLP, PDQ-Hickory, Poppelmann Plastics USA, LLC, Punker, LLC., Realty Executives of Hickory, Regenbogen Studios, LLC, Renwood Mills, Sarstedt, Inc., Sheetz, Inc., Southside Power & Fitness, LLC, Standard Oyster Company, Steele Rubber Products, Inc., Sunrise Appliance Center, Sunrise Camping Center, Target Distribution Center, Technibilt, Ltd., Temple Furniture & Parker Southern, Transportation Insight, LLC, Tridentcare Rx, Trinity Ridge, Trinity Village, TSG Finishing, LLC, United Church Homes and Services, Wal-Mart, Conover Store #4224, Wal-Mart, Hickory Store #948, Warehouse 18, WestRock, WOOD Restaurant, YMCA of Catawba Valley, Young, Morphis, Bach & Taylor, LLP