

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



@work



The Chamber
OF CATAWBA COUNTY

Working for business



www.catawbachamber.org

828-328-6111



facebook.com/CatawbaChamber



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[@CatawbaChamber](https://www.youtube.com/CatawbaChamber)

Valued Partner,

What a privilege and honor it is to serve you. Thank you for your commitment to YOUR Chamber. On behalf of our team, we humbly thank you for allowing us to work alongside of you and for you every day. Contained within the pages of this document is a summary of the impact you made through this organization in 2020. We wholly acknowledge nothing has been, is or will be accomplished without our many partners, public & private, and volunteer leaders -- Thank you.

Organizations like ours work in an interesting space. We have every expectation in the community to cultivate an environment ripe for continued investment and business success. However, we have zero formal authority. We are unable to pass laws or approve land ordinances. We have zero dedicated funding streams. In other words, financially contributing to our organization is completely voluntarily and never guaranteed. We have no taxing authority. So literally, what we are given, we have to earn.

We do this by pursuing value and relevance every day. By fostering relationships and growing our influence. It's our priority to ask the right questions to uncover your needs and pain points, to listen and then to act. But sometimes, like in the past year, leadership means pushing forward without having all the answers. We aim to be clarity amidst confusion, strength amidst uncertainty and a strong voice amidst clamor. We are a leader in economic recovery, a critical problem-solver, a partner and consultant, a sounding board, and an advocate for your business needs.

As a result of the COVID-19 economic disruption, your Chamber is permanently changed and is more relevant and essential for business than ever before.

Working for Business,



Lindsay M. Keisler, IOM, CCEC
President/CEO

Watch our "Resilience@Work" Video, recognizing and celebrating the resilience of our partners in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Meet The Chamber of Catawba County Team

For assistance utilizing your partnership privileges, contact your personal staff liaison.



Lindsay Keisler, IOM, CCEC
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828-431-7223
10 Years Working for Business



Kim Dahlsten, IOM
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828-431-7230
3 Years Working for Business



Connie Saunders, MA
Shareholder Relations & Events Manager
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828-431-7227
3 Years Working for Business



Lisa Killian
Accounts Payable Manager and Receptionist
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828-328-6111
7 Years Working for Business



Pam Manfredi
Director of Office Administration
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828-431-7228
37 Years Working for Business



Jean Pitts
Visitor Information Center Manager and Receptionist
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828-328-6111
13 Years Working for Business



Emily Kiziah
Project Assistant
ekiziah@catawbachamber.org
828-431-7225
1 Year Working for Business

Did You Know?

- Jean Pitts retired in October 2020 after serving as Visitor's Center Manager & Receptionist for 13 years.
- Lindsay Keisler serves as Board President for the Carolinas (NC & SC) Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives.
- Kim Dahlsten serves on the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation Institute for Organization Management National Board of Trustees.

TALENT@WORK

- **HKY4Vets Talent Connect** (Chamber/EDC) a real-time careers website for transitioning military & spouse talent --- (www.HKY4vets.com)

- Partnering with the US Chamber Foundation to encourage our partners to participate in the Hiring Our Heroes Corporate Fellowship Program.

- Contracted with a social media marketing agency to handle all of our digital marketing for HKY4Vets

- Hosted a Heroes Connect call in partnership with Heroes Make America where we hosted transitioning veterans from 5 different Army bases from across the US and introduced them to three of our local manufacturing employer partners.

- Keisler serves on the Board of Directors for **K-64** (ex-officio); Sheree Watson, CEO of Graystone Eye is our voting Chamber Delegate.

- Dahlsten serving on the **CVCC Manufacturing Academy Advisory Board**

- Keisler serving on the Executive Committee for **Apprenticeship Catawba**

- Keisler graduated from the **Fellowship for Education & Talent Development by the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives**. Selected along with 19 colleagues from across the country for this cohort focused on cutting-edge theories and best practices in talent development across the US

- Chamber Vice Chair, Dedra Flournoy graduated from the **NC Chamber's Talent Pipeline Academy**, along with representatives from other local chambers, business associations, economic development agency leaders, and employers across NC.

- What began with a regular virtual convening of our Hospitality/Food/Beverage Partners as a result of the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, served as the catalyst to create the **Hospitality Careers Academy** in partnership with the Hickory Metro Convention & Visitor's Bureau and Catawba Valley Community College. This academy is scheduled to launch in Spring 2021.



ADVOCACY@WORK

- Using our **Legislative Agenda** as a guidepost, we served as the lead advocate for business regarding local, state and federal policy issues that have a short-term or long-term impact on economic generation for business in Catawba County.

- Dahlsten served on the **2020 Catawba County Census Count Committee**

- Saunders is serving on the Leadership Team for the Community Health Assessment and is serving on the **LiveWell Catawba Well Business Committee**.

- Issued multiple statements:

- April 30th: **Official Statement on ReOpening The Economy**

- March 25th: **Unified Business Community Statement**

- July 27th: **Official Statement on Equity**

- Dec 14: **Unified Letter Urging Congressional COVID-19 Stimulus**

- Keisler regularly communicating with Burr/Tillis/McHenry, and Gov. Roy Cooper Staff

- On April 27th, hosted an **Investor Exclusive Briefing** with Moore Hallmark, Vice President, Regional Affairs and Advocacy, Congressional and Public Affairs from U.S. Chamber of Commerce

- On June 10th, hosted an **Investor Exclusive Briefing** with U.S. Congressman Patrick McHenry

- Formed the **COVID-19 Recovery Taskforce** in May 2020, regularly convening leaders from local government education, healthcare and economic development to provide a platform for regular communication and to identify strategies to expedite local economic recovery.



CONNECTIONS@WORK



Annual Shareholders & Investors Luncheon
February 26, 2020
575 attendees
In-person



31st Annual Golf Classic
Presented by Cloninger Ford of Hickory
September 23, 2020
266 players and volunteers
In-person



First Friday Morning Brew
Presented by Sam's Club
In-person: February - March
Virtual: June - December



Women's Leadership Conference
Presented by Catawba Valley Health System
November 12 & 13, 2020
350 attendees
Virtual



Future of Catawba County Summit / Annual Shareholders & Investors Meeting
Presented by BB&T now Truist
December 8, 2020
594 attendees - Virtual



Leads Exchange Groups
3 Weekly Meetings
Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday at 8:00 AM
In-person: January - March
Virtual: April - December



Virtual Ribbon Cutting
Launched in August
3,600 average views per event



Connections@Work
April-July
Launched a regular connections opportunity to create a personal, small scale networking opportunity to connect with our Chamber team and their peers.

YOUR CHAMBER'S NEW BRAND

After a year-long organizational rebranding process, our brand positioning statement, logo, style guide and newly designed website were publically released at our 2020 Annual Shareholders & Investors Luncheon in February.

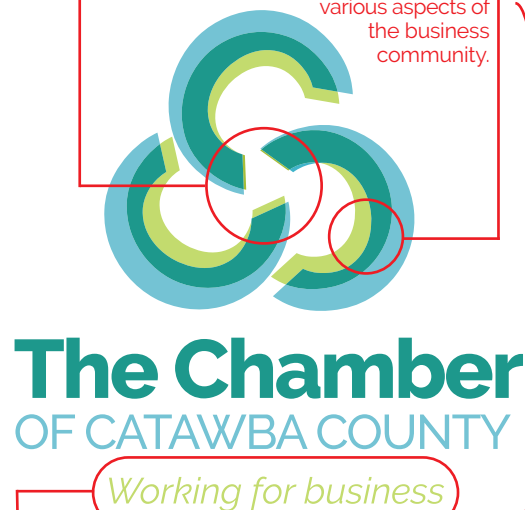
Based on 2 focus groups; 642 survey responses from Chamber Shareholders & Investors and 10 one-on-one interviews with "disengaged" business owners, here's what we learned:

- The Chamber is **VITAL** to business.
- The Chamber is **BEYOND** just growing sales
- The Chamber is **COUNTY-WIDE**
- The Chamber is **INCLUSIVE**
- The Chamber is **FOCUSED** on **LOCAL** needs and issues
- The Chamber is an **ADVOCATE** and will **FIGHT FOR BUSINESS**



Catalyst, Connector & Champion

Represents the role The Chamber plays as a **Convener** of the various aspects of the business community.



Emphasizes our **Purpose & Who We Serve**

The Chamber is **Growing** and **Ever-evolving** to meet the changing needs of the business community.

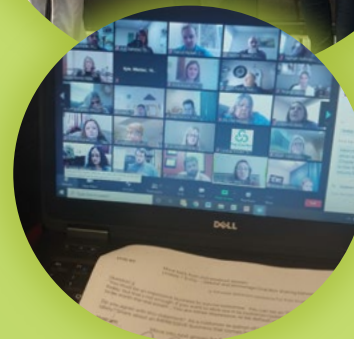
EMPOWERMENT@WORK

Thought Leadership

- **COVID-19 & Your Business Webinar Series**, in partnership with the CVCC Small Business Center, the Small Business Technology & Development Center & the Catawba EDC
 - Part 1: **About COVID-19, Infection Control; Business Continuity of Operations & Communications**
 - Part 2: **Employment & Labor Law (FLSA, FMLA, ADA, EEO and the FFCRA with COVID-19); SBTDC Business Assistance & SBA Disaster Relief Loan**
 - Part 3: **SBA EIDL**
 - Part 4: **Dissecting the CARES Act with Policy Experts & Remarks by Congressman Patrick McHenry & Congresswoman Virginia Foxx**
 - Part 5: **Paycheck Protection Program**
 - Part 6: **Open, Safe & Profitable**
- **Social Media Marketing Webinar Series:** Lisa Perry Social delivered this six-week course on social media marketing for business covering a variety of topics including social media guidelines, Facebook, Instagram, utilizing video and more.
- Co-host for the **LeaderTalks Webinar Series** in partnership with CVCC & K-64
- **Facebook Live Q&A Series: Small Business Innovators, The Exceptional Series & the Family Strong Series:** Lindsay Keisler interviewed 21 business leaders from across our region for interviews that were livestreamed to our Facebook page & YouTube channel. Each episode reached an average of 1,967 viewers.



- **Leading Through Challenging Times Virtual Luncheon Series**
- **Women, Wisdom and Wine - Navigating Uncertainty Virtual Discussion**
- **Grow with Google Digital Marketing Series:** Experts from Google designed the 3-part course to help businesses of all sizes create a digital marketing strategy to market and grow their business.
- **Idea Crowdsourcing Discussion Supporting Working Parents:** Convened a group of human resource and senior-level leaders to brainstorm how employers can support working parents as families navigate hybrid/virtual school options and childcare challenges due to the pandemic. This discussion was moderated by Robyn Mingle, HR thought-leader and SVP/CHRO at CommScope. As a result, the Catawba County Partnership for Children/Children's Resource Center created a centralized resource hub on their website to provide employers with resources to assist their employees navigate child care issues.



Developing Community Leaders

- **The 2019-2020 Leadership Catawba Class** graduated with 36 community leaders at a special luncheon held in their honor at Rock Barn Country Club & Spa. The class presented their group projects, all which aim to help solve a critical community issue discovered during this experience.
- **Leadership Catawba** has educated and equipped hundreds of Catawba County residents about the critical issues facing our community. This program challenges each participant to be an effective and influential leader, not only within their own organizations, but also within the greater community through personal commitment and involvement. In spite of

the challenges that the COVID-19 disruption brought our way, we decided that the need for community leaders is most paramount and Leadership Catawba commenced in August with 27 participants from business, non-profit, education and government.

- Launched a new program in September, in partnership with StrongLead, called **High Performance Leadership (HPL)** with 12 participants. This is a cohort-based model with added monthly one-on-one Executive Coaching sessions. HPL is solely focused on developing the leader themselves – transitioning them from key player to strong leader.

The Catalyst: Entrepreneurs Supporting Entrepreneurs

- Continue to lead **The Catalyst: Entrepreneurs Supporting Entrepreneurs**, a collaborative of local founders, mentors and entrepreneurial support representatives (Chamber, SBTDC, the CVCC Small Business Center, SCORE, LRU Center for Social & Commercial Entrepreneurship) who are growing Catawba County's start-up community and providing support to high-growth ventures and lifestyle businesses through mentors and unique programming.
- The Catalyst Organizers are actively crafting a suite of programming that will provide support to Lifestyle/Main Street businesses and high-growth ventures to steepen and lengthen their business growth curves.
- Hosted 2 focus groups in February with main street businesses in Newton and Hickory to understand their needs and what type of programming would be most valuable to them.
- Collaborated with CVCC and Supportedly to launch **StartUpCatawba.com** at a Launch Party in February.

This is a digital portal which will help connect entrepreneurs to the resources to help them succeed in our community, while filling a gap for our entrepreneurial support partners to create one centralized digital hub for all programming/support for Hickory Metro entrepreneurs.

- In March, hosted a **Founders Meet-Up**. Invitation is limited to local Founders, potential mentors for local start-ups and/or scalable ventures, or entrepreneurial support organizations. (April-December were cancelled due to COVID)
- Keisler serving on the Funding Appropriations Committee for the Everyday Entrepreneurship Venture Fund, awarding grants to start-up businesses who are CVCC students and alumni.
- Keisler attended the **NC IDEA Rural Place-Based Entrepreneurial Roundtable** in Burlington, NC on February 18th. The topics of conversation were best practices around accelerator, incubator and co-working spaces, specifically for rural communities.

COVID-19 BUSINESS TRIAGE CENTER

- Created the **COVID-19 Business Resource Guide** on our website with the latest announcements & resources pertaining to business.
- Produced a printed special section COVID-19 Business Resource Guide, sponsored by Catawba County & the City of Hickory, that ran in the *Hickory Daily Record/HickoryRecord.com*.
- Our staff made 1,378 direct check-in calls with Chamber partners & fielded many other calls from business leaders from across the region with questions or specific needs for assistance with navigating regulation, loan and/or grant programs or needs for crisis counseling assistance.
- Utilized our media partnerships to produce radio Business PSAs for COVID-19 information and resources – WHKY and Foothills Radio Group
- Partnered with the Charlotte Regional Business Alliance to promote **CarolinasAlliance.org**, a portal to connect PPE suppliers and vendors with business, local government and non-profit organizations in need.

- Conducted market research through the following three surveys to understand the needs of the business community in order to tailor our response efforts:

- **Economic Impact Survey I**
- **Economic Impact Survey II**
- **Consumer Confidence Survey**

- Converted our Certificate of Origin Processing to a fully digital process which yielded cost savings and increased productivity for our exporter partners. We also made this service available to other partners in our region (Alexander, Caldwell, Burke, Gaston, and Iredell).





- Launched the **Take-Out Blitz Catawba** initiative in partnership with the Hickory Downtown Dev. Assoc., Downtown Newton Dev. Assoc. & the Maiden Business Assoc. as a direct response to Executive Order #118, which shut-down dine-in service for area restaurants. We reached well over 40,000 people on social media alone. To incentivize participation, we committed \$500 in gift cards to local businesses as a reward.
- Launched the **Great American Gift Card Purchase** to raise awareness for purchasing gift cards to local businesses as another way to support them during government shutdowns even if they aren't physically open right now. Spectrum News picked up the story and aired on the evening news.
- Created & launched the **Open & Safe Campaign** in May 2020. The **Open & Safe Playbook**, which we produced in-house, provided safe reopening guidance to 16 of the most represented industries across our region, while helping business reinforce to their customers & employees the measures they are taking to prioritize their health & well-being. Nearly 150 businesses of all sectors have made the **Open & Safe Commitment** and are proudly displaying their posters, window decals and yard signs to reinforce their efforts to their customers & employees
- To shorten test result turnaround times and to increase our community's capacity for testing, we launched a strategic partnership with Frye Regional Medical Center, Catawba Valley Medical Center & Catawba County Public Health to provide **Fast-Turnaround COVID-19 PCR Testing** for Chamber Shareholders & Investors that produced test results within 48 hours of collection. There are 18 businesses in Catawba County who are actively utilizing this service.
- Launched a **#supportlocaleverything** social media campaign on to encourage the public to support local retailers, arts/culture attractions, gyms/recreation & non-profits. We've reached over 20,000 with these posts.



2020 BY THE NUMBERS

Processed

671 export documents for area manufacturers



Welcomed

58 New Shareholders & Investors in 2020

HELLO

Maintained a

87% Retention Rate

THANK YOU

Made

1378

direct check-in calls to Chamber Shareholders & Investors



Our Chamber Ambassadors made

947

touches in the form of calls, emails, virtual visits, and mailed cards to Chamber partners on our behalf.

Hosted

75 virtual events in 2020.



Catawba County Chamber Executive Board

Chairman: **Philip Moore**, *Pinnacle Financial Partners*
Vice Chair: **Dedra Flournoy**, *Dedra Flournoy Consulting*
Treasurer: **JP Jones**, *Davidson, Holland, Whitesell & Co., PLLC, CPAs*
Lori Alala, *Broome Associates*
Eddie Beard, *Catawba Valley Health System*
Laurie Hoover, *Vanguard Furniture, Inc.*

Mike Kelly, *Hickory Real Estate Group, Inc.*
Stephen Patton, *Hickory Printing Solutions*
Karen Tonks, *Time Genies*
Lindsay Keisler, *The Chamber of Catawba County*
Kim Dahlsten, *The Chamber of Catawba County*

Catawba County Chamber Board of Directors

Zackary Cranford, *Foothills Distillery, LLC / Standard Oyster Company / The Charlois Steakhouse / Granny's Country Kitchen*
Twyla Deese, *Catawba Farms / Carolina Vines*
Brad Edwards, *CommScope, Inc.*
Clay Gentry, *Transportation Insight, LLC*
Matthew Gordon, *Corning Optical Communications LLC*
Jeri Hartshorn, *Whitfield's Flowers & More*
James Hawes, *Young, Morphis, Bach & Taylor, LLP*
Leslie Knapp, *Mellow Mushroom*
Andrew Matthews, *Matthews Construction Co., Inc.*
Deborah Miller, *ProStaffing*
Peter Rumswinkel, *Sarstedt, Inc.*
Jennifer Stiver, *2 Pink Magnolias*

Darryl Webster
Les Williams, *Twin City Insurance Agency, Inc.*
Dr. Virginia Wright, *Frye Regional Medical Center / Carolinas Healthcare System Blue Ridge*

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.*
Dr. 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 02/10/2021)

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 / 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 now Truist, 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, PNC Bank, Sherrill Furniture Company, Shurtape Technologies, LLC, Tyson Foods, Vanguard Furniture, Inc., ZF Chassis Components, LLC

Bronze Level: 74 South, Abernethy Laurels, Adams Commercial Real Estate Services (ACRES), Alex Lee, Inc., Avendi Rx, Barnhill Contracting Company, Belk, Black's Tire & Auto Service, Inc., 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, CPI Satcom & Antenna Technologies, C.R. Laine Furniture Company, Dalco Nonwovens, LLC, David E. Looper & Company, Inc., Everett Auto Team, First Community Bank, First Security Company, Inc., Foothills Distillery, LLC, GKN ePowertrain, 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., OrthoCarolina-Hickory, Paramount Automotive Group, Patrick, Harper & Dixon, LLP, PDQ-Hickory, Poppelmann Plastics USA, LLC, Punker, LLC., Realty Executives of Hickory, Regenbogen Studios, LLC, Renwood Mills, Sarstedt, Inc., Southside Power & Fitness, LLC, Standard Oyster Company, Steele Rubber Products, Inc., Sunrise Appliance Center, Sunrise Camping Center, Transportation Insight, LLC, Trinity Ridge, Trinity Village, TSG Finishing, LLC, United Church Homes and Services, Wal-Mart, Conover Store #4224, Wal-Mart, Hickory Store #948, Wanzl North America, WestRock, YMCA of Catawba Valley, Young, Morphis, Bach & Taylor, LLP

Working for business