



TALENT



CONNECTIONS



EMPOWERMENT



ADVOCACY

2022 ANNUAL REPORT

@WORK

Thank you for your commitment and valued partnership with The Chamber of Catawba County. On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff, please accept our gratitude for your investment in the work of this organization. Because of your support, we continue to fund important community initiatives and lead the way for business, as well as economic progress for Catawba County.

Your continued commitment to The Chamber of Catawba County enables us to:

- Connect employers with area workforce programs to help you reach the right talent for your needs, as well as work with our higher education partners to offer programs to meet the demands of our growing industries.
- Be the lead advocate for business by promoting a pro-business climate and adopting positions to influence public policy by communicating with our elected officials.
- Provide thought leadership, platforms for best practice sharing and professional development training opportunities for you to remain competitive and resilient.

- Provide superior and recognized value through events, programs, and services to enhance your visibility, grow your network and save you money.

I encourage you to read more about your Chamber ROI – Return on Impact--- that is contained within this document. Our vow to you is to be good stewards of your investment through pursuing value and relevance every day, and by fostering relationships, forging partnerships and leading with influence. It's our priority to uncover your needs and pain points and then to act by addressing these barriers to your business success. We deeply value your investment in your Chamber and look forward to continuing to work closely with you and your team.

Working for Business,



Lindsay M. Keisler, IOM, CCEC
President/CEO
The Chamber of Catawba County

Meet The Chamber of Catawba County Team



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- Co-Hosted **Virtual Hickory Metro Career & Internship Hiring Event** on March 2, in partnership with the Catawba County Economic Development Corporation, for the class of 2022 and those seeking summer internship opportunities from colleges and universities within a 60 mile radius. Candidates represented Catawba Valley Community College, Lenoir-Rhyne, UNC-Charlotte, Elizabeth City State University, Western Piedmont Community College, and UNC-Chapel Hill. 17 employer partners participated.
- **HKY4Vets** - Since 2016, HKY4Vets, co-led by The Chamber of Catawba County & the Catawba County Economic Development Corporation, has worked with employer partners in Catawba County to connect their talent needs with transitioning military and military spouse talent from NC's military installations.
- **February** - Hosted virtual HKY4Vets Hiring featuring 1-on-1 text and video interviews with military/military spouse talent seeking their next career opportunity. Registration for this event was open to all Catawba County employers and not just exclusive to HKY4Vets Employer Partners
- **May** - Hosted regional virtual information session to the US Chamber Foundation's Hiring Our Heroes Corporate Fellowship Program, which is a Department of Defense-approved program provider of the Skillbridge program. This provides active-duty military (and spouses) the opportunity to participate in a work-based learning experience (i.e., internship) with an employer during the last six months of their active duty service at no cost to the employer. The invitation was extended to our colleagues at the Chambers & Economic Development organizations within our surrounding counties as well.
- **June** - Hosted **Virtual Hiring Event** for transitioning veterans, recent college graduates and alumni and area job seekers, in collaboration with the Catawba County Economic Development Corporation,
- **July** - Secured 16 HKY4Vets Employer Partners for the 2022/2023 program year.
- **September** - Hosted the first **HKY4Vets Professional Connections Meet-Up** (September 27)
- **October** - **HKY4Vets Virtual Hiring Event** (October 13)
- Released the **2022 Wage & Benefits Survey** for local employers across most industry clusters in partnership with the Catawba County EDC. 112 companies completed the survey, which represents 20,290 employees or 22.9% of our total workforce. The 81-page comprehensive report was released on June 13 to the companies who submitted responses.
- Keisler serves on the Board of Directors for **K-64** (ex-officio)
- Keisler serves on the **Workforce Portal Subcommittee** to create a comprehensive portal website to serve as the connection point between employers, students/parents, schools & displaced workers. Beta testing site launched in December 2022.
- Keisler serves on the **Broadband Subcommittee** to advocate & create solutions for increased access to high-speed internet for education & commerce.
- Keisler serves on the taskforce to create a **Supply Chain Management Academy** for Catawba Valley Community College.
- Dahlsten serves on the **CVCC Manufacturing Academy Advisory Board**.
- Keisler serves on the **Executive Committee** for **Apprenticeship Catawba**, which is transitioning to the **Catawba Apprenticeship Network** (CAN), that will include all pre-apprenticeship, registered apprenticeship, and work-based learning programs.
- Hosted two **Listening Sessions** with 30 business leaders across multiple sectors to assist Appalachian State University as they seek to align their educational offerings in the Hickory campus to best meet current and future business needs for talent in this region.

CONNECTIONS@WORK

- Hosted **30 Ribbon Cutting Celebrations**.
- Hosted our **50th Annual Shareholders & Investors Celebration** on February 25.
- Hosted the **Future of Catawba County Summit, Presented by Truist**, on April 13 at the Hickory Metro Convention Center with 307 registered attendees.
- Hosted **Business at the Ballpark** in partnership with the Hickory Crawdads Baseball Club and many restaurant and caterer partners on May 12, distributed 500 tickets to Chamber partners.
- Proud to have **17 Chamber Ambassadors** who meet for monthly check-ins and serve as an extension of our team to assist us with retention efforts of our Chamber Shareholders.
- Hosted **First Friday Morning Brew**; averaging more than 120 attendees at each event
- **3 Leads Exchange Groups** meet weekly (Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Fridays at 8:00 am)
 - The Tuesday Leads Exchange Group continues to host "pop-up" meetings at locations in Newton, Maiden, Conover, Catawba, Claremont, Hickory & Longview, inviting both current and prospective Chamber partners to attend.

- Partnered with the **Hickory Young Professionals** to co-host a Coffee Chat Mixer in March and October.
- Hosted a **New Partner Connection Luncheon** in May for our newest Shareholders & Investors.
- Co-Hosted a **Business Networking Event** with the City of Hickory Business Development Commission on June 13 specifically aimed at connecting local businesses with area support resources.
- Hosted our **33rd Annual Golf Classic** (September 29) to a sold-out field of 248 golfers for a morning and an afternoon tee time.
- Curated **2022 Shop Local Holiday Gift Guide** with 20 participating organizations. Over 500 people accessed the Gift Guide in the first two weeks of launch.
- Hosted the **17th Annual Women's Leadership Conference** (October 25) –Sold out with a record number of reservations, hosting 685 attendees.
- Converted **Newcomers' Packet** into a digital relocation guide in collaboration with the Hickory Metro Convention Center & Visitors Bureau.

ADVOCACY@WORK

- **Advocacy Taskforce** meets monthly to hear presentations and engage in discussion around issues central to the business community including: Medicaid Expansion, transportation infrastructure, the NCDPI School Grading Scale, and early childhood education & childcare.
- Drafted and proposed the **2022 Guiding Principles**, which were adopted by our Board of Directors in February. These local business priorities are communicated with our local, state and federal elected officials.
- Brian Francis, Advocacy Director, provides **weekly Advocacy@Work video updates (each Friday when the NC General Assembly is in session)** featuring a brief video update with activity locally, in Raleigh & Washington D.C. which impacts business.
- Invited our state delegates to participate in a **Legislative Roundtable** to discuss the various priorities within our Legislative Agenda and hear updates from the General Assembly. Representative Adams and Senator Proctor were in attendance.
- Hosted **Coffee with Congressman Patrick McHenry** with business leaders from our Advocacy Taskforce and Chamber Investors on May 4.
- On June 7, Keisler and Francis led a small delegation from our Advocacy Taskforce, which included reps from Lenoir Rhyne University and Appalachian State University, for a **Day in Raleigh** where we met with Representative Adams, Representative Setzer and Senator Proctor. Concluded the day by attending the Charlotte Regional Business Alliance Legislative Reception.
- Launched the **2023 Legislative Agenda** setting process ahead of the long session of the NC Legislature that will begin in January --- each month specific individuals have been invited to present to our Advocacy Taskforce around issues which align with our Guiding Principles:
- In August, hosted DOT Board Member, Andy Wells and Mark Coggins with the North Carolina Chamber for a discussion around transportation infrastructure funding. This meeting kicked off our 2023 Legislative Agenda setting process.
- Formed a **Transportation Infrastructure Taskforce** which included business leaders on our Advocacy Taskforce and other key players who have vested interest and/or who are subject matter experts to form a recommendation for specific transportation infrastructure priorities and funding.
- In September, heard from the Superintendents from the three school systems and leadership from Catawba Valley Community College, Lenoir-Rhyne University and Appalachian State University about legislative priorities concerning education and workforce development.
- Representative Jay Adams and Speaker of the NC House of Representatives Tim Moore were in attendance at this meeting.
- In October, heard hear from local government leaders.
- Keisler is an active participant in the **NC Chamber Federation**, a coalition of the state chamber and local chambers across North Carolina, meeting weekly with the NC Chamber team to provide insight on the issues impacting our business community for their team advocate within the N.C. General Assembly during legislative session.
- Keisler is an active participant in the **Charlotte Regional Business Alliance Chamber Coalition**, which collectively adopts and advocates for regional legislative priorities.
- Actively utilizing the **EssCert** platform to issue & certify exporting documents for our Shareholders & Investors. Certificates of Origin to date: 300 + 180 attachments
- Keisler worked to renew the partnership of the Catawba Valley Realtors Association and the Hickory-Catawba Valley Homebuilders Association for the **Land Use Development Board**. This influential body created an open public/private dialogue, fostered relationships with the various development stakeholders and provided our local government partners with a needed pro-business perspective. Over the years, we've accomplished some impactful work together as it pertains to land planning and commercial and residential development across Catawba County. The relaunch meeting was held on November 8.

EMPOWERMENT@WORK

- 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, the Manufacturing Solutions Center, SCORE and Lenoir Rhyne University) who are helping entrepreneurs to start and scale businesses in this region.
 - Host monthly in-person **"Founders Meet-Ups."** Invitation is limited to local Founders, potential mentors for local start-ups and/or scalable ventures, or entrepreneurial support organizations.
- Keisler serves on the Funding Appropriations Committee for the **Everyday Entrepreneurship Venture Fund**, awarding grants to start-up businesses who are CVCC students and alumni.
- Partnered with the Catawba County Library System to recognize **Mom & Pop Business Owner Day** on March 29.
- Celebrated **National Small Business Week & National Volunteer Week** through campaigns on social media.
- Received an official proclamation from the Catawba County Board of Commissioners for **National Small Business Week** Monday, May 2.
- Continue to partner with the **Small Business Center at CVCC** to promote their workshops aimed specifically to address small business needs and issues. Additionally, we offer a 3-month trial Chamber partnership at no cost to all SBC clients.
- Maintain a partnership with the **SBTDC** and actively refer Chamber partners for no-cost confidential business counseling.
- The Nomination Process was launched by the Hickory Young Professionals for the **2022 Top 10 Under 40 recognition**. In addition to serving as a promotional partner, Keisler serves as an Advisor to the process.
 - Nominated over 20 young professionals to be considered for the honor.
- Hosted a **Cyber Security Webinar** in partnership with the SBTDC and the Small Business Center at CVCC on September 22.
- Nominated 30 businesses for the Business. Well Crafted. Awards given by the City of Hickory.

Leadership Catawba:

- **Class of 2022:** Graduated thirty-one (31) community leaders from the 2021-2022 Leadership Catawba program on March 10.
- **Class of 2023:** Enrollment for **2022-2023 Leadership Catawba** opened on May 16 and reached class capacity in the first week. The class roster was released on June 28.
- The 22-23 Leadership Catawba program began with Orientation on August 11th and a Retreat on August 12.
- The **2022-23 Leadership Catawba Advisory Board** was announced in April. These twenty-eight (28) individuals are graduates of Leadership Catawba and give of their time to assist The Chamber in development and implementation of the monthly sessions throughout the program year.
- The Leadership Catawba Advisory Board announced a 2022-23 alumni engagement pilot program calendar. Events have been created to educate, empower, and connect leaders for the future of Catawba County.
- **Leadership Catawba Alumni:** Launched a suite of programming for Leadership Catawba Alumni which has included:
 - **Leadership Catawba Alumni Lunch & Learn** was held on June 7. This session focused on personal leadership development, hosted by Enneagram Coach, Nicole Saunders.
 - **Alumni Night at the Crowdads** held on August 3
 - **Leaders are Readers Book Club** held on August 16, October 18 and December 13
 - **Leadership Catawba Alumni Lunch Mixer** held on September 15
 - **Leadership Catawba Alumni Social** held on November 3



ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

- 2022 marks the **50th Anniversary** of the merger between the Greater Hickory Chamber of Commerce and the Eastern Catawba County Chamber of Commerce. We hosted a celebratory event on July 14th to honor the legacy leaders who have come before us and the current leaders actively engaged in crafting the future of this organization and our greater community. There were 250+ individuals in attendance.
- The **1972 Legacy Forward Club** was created as a special one-time campaign to recognize and celebrate the Chamber's five decades of impact. Individuals and businesses were given the opportunity to contribute at one of the three levels, all representing the founding year of 1972. There were 117 total contributors to the campaign.
- Received a proclamation from the Catawba County Board of Commissioners in honor of our 50th Anniversary.
- **501(c)(3) Chamber Foundation:** In January 2022, a taskforce was formed to research the formation of a 501(c)(3) Chamber Foundation. This taskforce was led by Philip Moore, Past Board Chair. This taskforce met regularly and presented their formal recommendation to the Chamber Board in August which approved unanimously.
 - The proposed first project of the Foundation will be to initiate and lead a collaborative **Community Visioning Planning** process.
- In December, **The Chamber of Catawba County purchased the land** on which the building is located from the City of Hickory after leasing it for more than 20 years.
- **Plans for renovations to our Chamber building are underway.**
 - Upgrades to our lobby were completed in January.
 - All interior walls were painted in November.
- Keisler served as Immediate Past Board President for the **Carolinas (NC & SC) Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives**
- Dahlsten served on the **US Chamber of Commerce Foundation Institute for Organization Management** National Board of Trustees
- We added one new professional to our team in January - **Kathy Austin, Communications & Project Specialist.**
- Dahlsten, Jaynes, Austin and Keisler attended the **Staff Leadership Development Conference** in April hosted by the Carolinas Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives.
- Dahlsten & Keisler attended the **Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives Annual Convention** in July.
- Cooley attended the **US Chamber Foundation Institute of Organization Management** at the University of Georgia in June.
- Keisler serves as a board member for the **Newton Downtown Development Association** and Dahlsten serves as a board member of the **Hickory Downtown Development Association.**
- Keisler serves on the **Business Development Commission** and the **University City Commission** for the City of Hickory.
- Keisler and Dahlsten serve on the Advisory Board for the **Hickory Young Professionals.**
- Keisler serves on the **Hickory-Conover Tourism Development Board.**
- Keisler serves on **Appalachian State University Hickory Campus Taskforce.**



2022 BY THE NUMBERS

117

Total Contributors to the 1972 Legacy Forward Club



Welcomed

132

New Shareholders & Investors in 2022



Maintained a

88.46%

Retention Rate



Total Instagram reels views

147,202



650

Downloads of our 2022 Shop Local Holiday Gift Guide



Our Chamber Ambassadors made

750

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



140

The number of subject matter experts, community partners and leaders that the 21-22 Leadership Catawba participants engaged with during their cohort experience.



A record number of

685

Attendees at the 2022 Women's Leadership Conference



Marketing Update:



Increased views by 52% in 2022 than in previous year.



January- 3968 likes, 5008 follows. To date-4673 likes, 5690 follows



January - 1678; To date- 2048. In January, only 213 accounts were engaged in previous quarter, 711 accounts engaged during last 90 days



Grew LinkedIn presence from no activity to active page with 454 current followers



Grew open rate from average Q4 2021: 28.22% to 2022 yearly average: 32.9% (Industry average: 27%)



Gained 8,000 more site visitors in 2022 than in previous years. Increased average session duration from 1:04 min to 1:40 min per user this year

The Chamber of Catawba County Executive Committee

Chair: **Lori Alala**, *Broome Associates, a Legacy Insurance Partner*
Immediate Past Chair: **Dedra Flournoy**, *Thrive Forward Collective*
Vice Chair: **Zackary Cranford**, *Cranford Hospitality*
Treasurer: **JP Jones**, *Davidson, Holland, Whitesell & Co., PLLC, CPAs*
Nat Auten, *YMCA of Catawba Valley*
Pat Carver, *First Citizens Bank*

Molly Gross, *Patrick, Harper & Dixon, LLP*
Jeri Hartshorn, *Whitfield's Flowers & More*
Brandon Hucks, *Rock House Farm Family of Brands*
Lindsay Keisler, *The Chamber of Catawba County, Ex-Officio*
Kim Dahlsten, *The Chamber of Catawba County, Ex-Officio*

Catawba County Chamber Board of Directors

Ericka Bartlett, *Graystone Eye*
Doug Cottrell, *Clarity Web Solutions*
Twyla Deese, *Catawba Farms Enterprises, LLC*
Brad Edwards, *CommScope, Inc.*
Hank Eimer, *Coldwell Banker Boyd & Hassell, Inc.*
Jason Gscheidmeier, *von Drehle Corporation*
Dana Killian, *Carolina Caring*
Brandon Lee, *Player's Ridge Golf*
Cameron Mauney, *David E. Looper & Company, Inc.*
Steven Pennell, *US Conec, Ltd.*
Joanna Shere, *Steele Rubber Products, Inc.*
Regina Stiltner, *Splentique*

Dorran Swearngan, *K. Dorran Swearngan CPA, PA*
Lesla Williams, *Twin City Insurance Agency, Inc.*

Ex-Officio

Cameron Bixby, *Hickory Young Professionals*
Mandy Pitts Hildebrand, *Hickory Metro Convention Center & Visitors Bureau*
Matthew Dockham, *Appalachian State University*
Scott Millar, *Catawba County Economic Development Corp.*
Dr. Gary Muller, *Catawba Valley Community College*
Jeremy Shreve, *Lenoir-Rhyne University*

Thank You to Our Chamber Investors! (Annual Investment Greater than \$1,500) (As of 12/31/2022)

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: Appalachian State University, Catawba Valley Health System, Frye Regional Medical Center

Platinum Level: CommScope, Inc., Corning Optical Communications, LLC, Davidson, Holland, Whitesell & Co., PLLC, CPAs, HSM Solutions, Martin Starnes & Associates, CPAs, PA, Peoples Bank, Pepsi-Cola Bottling Company, Inc., Sutter Street Manufacturing-a division of Williams-Sonoma

Gold Level: Catawba Valley Community College, Curtis Media Group, Duke Energy, First Citizens Bank, First Horizon Bank, Gusmer Enterprises, Inc., Hickory Daily Record, HK Research Corporation, Pat Appleson Studios, Inc., Piedmont Natural Gas Company, Inc., Republic Services of NC, Truist, von Drehle Corporation, Wells Fargo Bank, NA, WHKY-Radio & WHKY-TV

Silver Level: Alex Lee, Inc., Benco Steel, Inc., Cargo Integrated Logistics, Cargo Transporters, Inc., Carolina West Wireless, Catawba County, Graystone Eye, Lincotek Surface Solutions, Sherrill Furniture Company, Shurtape Technologies, LLC, Two Trees Sports Bar & Grill, Tyson Foods, Vanguard Furniture, Inc., ZF Chassis Components, LLC

Bronze Level: 74 South, Abernethy Laurels, Avendi Rx, AVEX, Barnhill Contracting Company, Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Landmark Properties, Black's Tire & Auto Service, Inc., Broome Associates, a Legacy Insurance Partner, Canteen Vending Service, Capital Concepts Financial Group, Carolina Caring, Carolina Container Company Inc., Carpenter Co. Inc., Charolais Steakhouse, City of Hickory, Concentrix, ConWareCo Logistics, Inc., 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, EveryAge, First Security Company, Inc., Foothills Distillery, LLC, Gabriella White Furniture, GKN ePowertrain, Granny's Country Kitchen, Haworth Inc., Hickory Crawdads Baseball, Inc., Hickory Falls Health & Rehabilitation, Hickory Mechanical, Inc., Imagine One Hospitality, Interstate Foam & Supply, LEE Industries, Lenoir-Rhyne University, McKinney-Graham Dental Arts, Mellow Mushroom-Hickory, Mennel Milling & Bakery Mix, Mike Johnson's Hickory Toyota, Momentum Tire & Car Care, Moretz Mills, LLC, Mountain Mitsubishi, Neill Grading & Construction, Inc., Newton Family Physicians, PA, NextEra Energy Resources, OrthoCarolina-Hickory, Osborne Real Estate Group, Paramount Automotive Group, Patrick, Harper & Dixon, LLP, PNC Bank, Poppelmann Plastics USA, LLC, PSI Polymer Systems, Inc., Realty Executives of Hickory, Regenbogen Studios, LLC, Sarstedt, Inc., Southside Power & Fitness, LLC, Standard Oyster Company, Steele Rubber Products, Inc., Steve White Motors, Inc., The Terra Team, Transportation Insight, LLC, Trinity Ridge, Trinity Village, TSG Finishing, LLC, 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