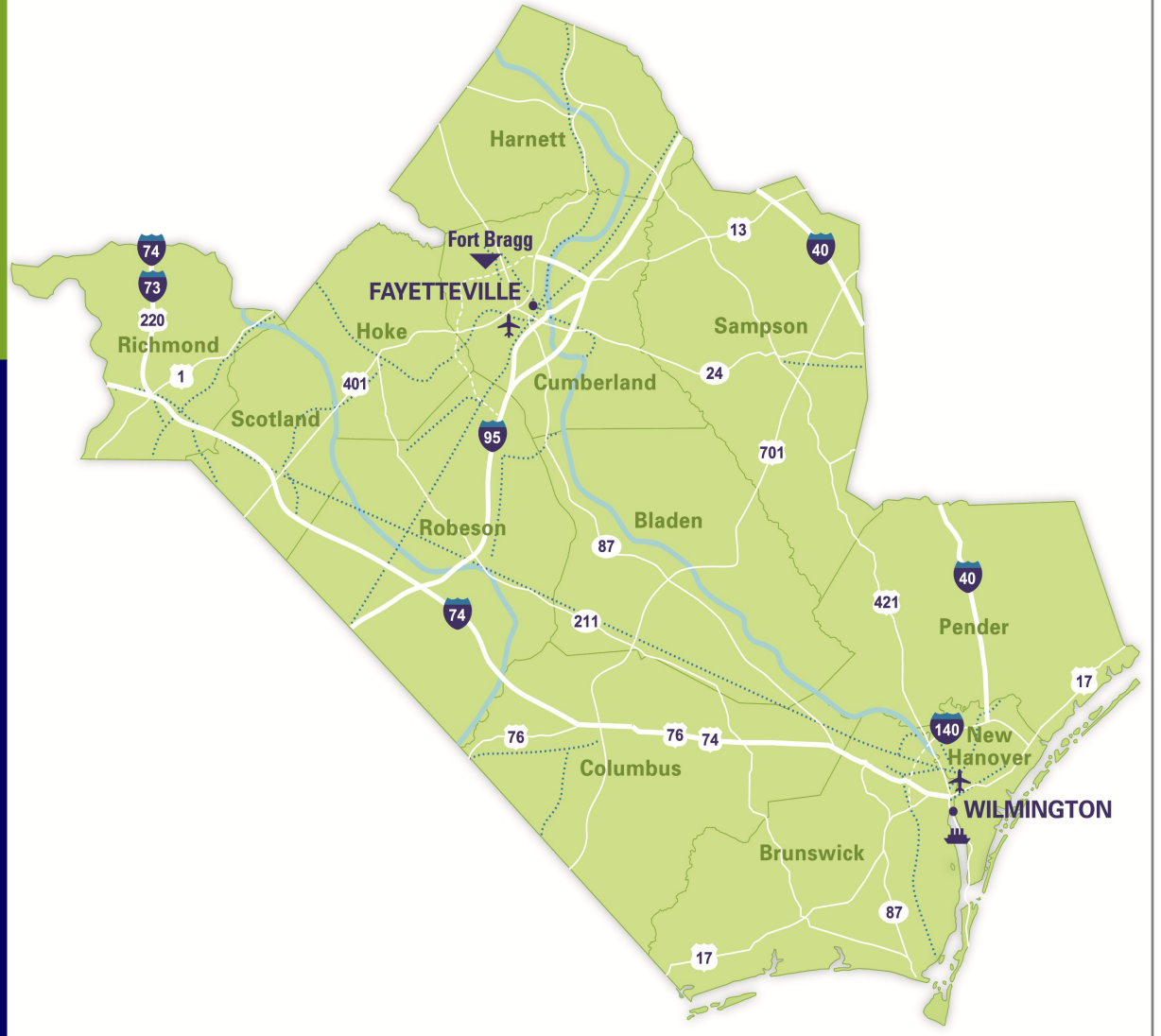




# 2017-2022 CEDS Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

September 30, 2017

Sponsored in part by the  
U.S. Economic Development  
Administration.



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## CEDS STRATEGY COMMITTEE

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Paul Barnes	Aberdeen & Rockfish Railroad Company
Jim Bradshaw	Cape Fear Council of Governments—Workforce Development Business Services
Martie Butler*	Richmond County Economic Development Commission
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Amy Cannon*	Cumberland County
James Freeman	UNC-Pembroke—Thomas Family Center for Entrepreneurship/Incubator
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Chuck Heustess	Bladen County Economic Development—Bladen's Bloomin' Agri-Industrial, Inc.
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Gary Lanier*	Columbus County Economic Development & Planning
Mark Lanier	University of North Carolina at Wilmington
Chris May	Cape Fear Council of Governments
Gwen McGougan*	Hoke County
Jackie Newton*	Pender County
Cliff Pyron	North Carolina State Ports Authority
David Richardson	Lumber River Council of Governments
Carnell Robinson*	Harnett County
Jimmy Smith	Four County Electric Membership Corporation—Economic & Community Development
Jill Smith	Campbell Oil Company
Jerry Stephens*	Robeson County
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John Swope*	Sampson County Economic Development Commission
Greg Taylor	Carolina Small Business Development Fund
Mark Ward*	Scotland County Economic Development Corporation
Beth Wilkerson	Small Business and Technology Development Center
Steve Yost	The Southeastern Partnership, Inc.
Mark Zeigler	North Carolina Department of Commerce—Community Development

The **Southeastern Economic Development Commission (SEDC)** was designated as an Economic Development District (EDD) through the US Economic Development Administration (EDA) in 1968. As the region's EDD, the SEDC is responsible for developing and maintaining a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) designed to support integrated planning and facilitate greater engagement to promote economic prosperity.

The SEDC region consists of the twelve counties in the extreme southeastern corner of North Carolina. These counties include Bladen, Brunswick, Columbus, Cumberland, Harnett, Hoke, New Hanover, Pender, Richmond, Robeson, Sampson and Scotland.

This region is one of the largest Economic Development Districts in North Carolina. Its size and geographic location make it a hugely diverse region extending from the coastal plain to the piedmont. The local economies range from the two metropolitan areas—

Fayetteville which includes Fort Bragg—and Wilmington on the coast. The counties in between these two designated metro areas are more rural in nature.

In February 2015, the EDA released new guidelines for creating an impactful CEDS. This five-year plan follows the new guidelines imposed by the EDA. The CEDS is a strategy-driven plan for regional economic development that provides the capacity building foundation by which the public sector, working in conjunction with the private and nonprofit sectors, create an environment for regional economic prosperity. This plan is comprised of four main elements as required by the EDA:

1. Summary Background of economic conditions of the region;
2. SWOT Analysis to identify the regional strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats;
3. Strategic Direction or Action Plan to build on findings from the SWOT analysis and

- incorporate elements from other regional plans;
4. Evaluation Framework to include performance measurements to evaluate the implementation of the CEDS and impact on the regional economy.

The SEDC CEDS aligns with the NC Tomorrow Plan published in 2014 that identifies regional and State priorities for resilient economic and community development.

A key element in the process is the CEDS Strategy Committee that broadly represents the main economic interests of the region. The CEDS Strategy Committee was formed in February 2017 and met from March through September to complete the plan. Throughout the region, four public meetings were facilitated to conduct the SWOT analysis to help shape the vision, goals, objectives and strategies for the plan. The 30-day public comment period was held from August 25, 2017 to September 24, 2017 to seek stakeholder input and public comments.

## VISION

To achieve regional prosperity in healthy, connected, and globally competitive communities, through improving education and infrastructure, targeting existing strengths and strategic growth sectors, and enhancing the business climate and quality of life.

# SUMMARY BACKGROUND

## Demographic and Socioeconomic Data

Over 1.2 million people live in the region, and its growing population includes newly arriving residents from around the world at all stages of life and career. The population of the twelve-county region grew by an estimated 4 percent from 2010-2015, from 1,228,074 to 1,280,229. By the year 2036, the population of the region is expected to grow by 246,966 people expanding to 1,475,040 people. The majority of this increase is attributable to five counties: Brunswick, Harnett, Hoke, New Hanover and Pender.<sup>1</sup>

Growth has not been consistent across the region. Brunswick, a coastal county, experienced the largest estimated rate of growth at 14 percent since 2010. The counties of Harnett, Hoke, New Hanover, Pender followed with rates of increase estimated over 8 percent. These are the same counties that experienced a 20 percent growth rate from 2000-2010. Most of these counties are located within either the Fayetteville or Wilmington MSA where growth has been the strongest. As a result of the 2010 Census, Brunswick County was

shifted from the Wilmington MSA to the Myrtle Beach (SC) MSA. Historically, Brunswick has been in the Wilmington MSA, and since Horry County, SC is not in the SEDC planning area, the Myrtle Beach MSA is not reference in this plan.

Rates of growth in most of the rural interior counties have been negligible. The counties of Bladen, Columbus, Richmond, Robeson and Scotland experienced an estimated population loss. Richmond County has the most significant loss at -2.7 percent in population growth. Projected population growth estimates continue this trend.

The racial makeup of the region is fairly consistent by county with majority white population (60 percent), followed by African Americans (26 percent), Other Races (8 percent) and American Indians (6 percent). Robeson County is the exception among the twelve counties with a majority of American Indian population (38 percent) followed by whites (29 percent) and African Americans (24 percent) making it the only truly tri-racial county in the region and in the State.<sup>2</sup> American Indians, primarily members of the

Lumbee Tribe, grew to be the majority population during the 1980s.

The most remarkable demographic change in the population is found in the distribution of age. In 2010, exactly 154,672 persons were counted as age 65 or over in the SEDC region. This represents a 32.5 percent increase in the region since the 2000 Census.<sup>2</sup>

From 2008 to 2012, the poverty rate within the state has grown from 14.6% to 18%, according to the Pew Charitable Trusts. About 252,000 persons—21.8 percent of the population in the region—had incomes below the poverty level 2010.<sup>2</sup> Some communities remain disconnected from good jobs and growing industries and the networks and infrastructure that can connect residents to economic opportunity. When for generations communities cannot access the tools and systems that support mobility and prosperity, it becomes difficult for these areas to reduce the economic hardship of the residents. The results is that poverty persists. Bladen, Columbus and Robeson are among the State's ten counties that experience persistent poverty.



<sup>1</sup><https://www.osbm.nc.gov/demog/county-projections>  
<sup>2</sup><https://www.census.gov/2010census/>

# SUMMARY BACKGROUND

## **Environment, Culture and Natural Resources**

The region has a treasure chest full of historic sites, trails and museums dedicated to our cultural heritage. Larger cities and small towns alike offer opportunities for entertainment and enrichment in the realm of art, heritage, military, science, and many other areas. Festivals and events are held throughout the year in cities and communities all across the region. Many colleges and universities in the region have performing arts that feature performers and speakers of national and international renown. Several cities also have regional theaters, symphonies, and local arts councils.

The region includes state parks, lakes, rivers, fertile farms, and pine-covered woodlands. The condition of our natural environment in the region impacts our public health, economic and recreational opportunities, among many others. Our overall quality of life is, arguably, connected to the quality of environment in which we live and work. Protection for and wise use of our natural environment—air, land, and water resources—are essential to support the economic growth and development of the region now and for future generations. Within the region, there are approximately 1.2 million acres of forested land. As is true for the state, the majority of that—76 percent—is in private hands. Forest resources in the region support wildlife habitat and offer numerous opportunities for recreation. Forest resources also support jobs and incomes in the region.

Two major rivers traverse the region—the Cape Fear and the Lumber. The Lumber River is the only State and Federally-designated river in the region. It was established in 1989 as both a state park and designated as a Natural and Scenic River by the North Carolina General Assembly. In addition, it is the only blackwater river in North Carolina to be designated as a National Wild and Scenic River by the US Department of the Interior.

The Cape Fear River is also a blackwater river but does not have the Federal designation. The Cape Fear headwaters are located near Greensboro and Cape Fear flows into the Atlantic Ocean near Cape Fear, a prominent headland, from which it takes its name. A series of locks and dams, all located in Bladen County, make the river navigable from Wilmington to Fayetteville. Opportunities for boating, fishing, swimming, canoeing, and other recreational activities are available along its entire length.

The counties of Pender, New Hanover, and Brunswick include miles of Atlantic shoreline and numerous towns that have built upon the ocean amenities. In addition to the beachfront, this coastal region also includes wetland areas which are also major natural attractions for people and wildlife alike.

Temperate climate, abundant waterways, stimulating historical attractions, and outdoor recreational amenities produce an enviable quality of life for those who live and work in the region.

## **Workforce**

The region's workforce, which now numbers nearly 540,000, includes a diverse cross-section of workers in agriculture, manufacturing, wholesale trades, construction, healthcare, government, and the professions. The largest private employers include Wal-Mart Corp., Smithfield Foods, Lowes Home Centers, Goodyear Tire & Rubber, PPD Inc., Mountaire Farms of NC, Progress Energy, and Cape Fear Valley Health Systems.

Educational attainment has an integral link to the wage-earning capacity of individuals. Advancing the level of education in the population leads to better economic outcomes for individuals and the communities in which they live. Educational attainment is advancing in the region. The percentage of the population 25 years and older with less than a high school education and without a diploma decreased from 2000 to 2010. During the same period, the percentage of population with Associate's, Bachelor's, and Graduate degrees increased.

## **Transportation**

The region has a unique network of transportation assets that continues to spur economic advantages. The Port of Wilmington, the region's "gateway of the global economy", connects firms across the state to buyers and suppliers around the world. Interstate 95 and 40, along with US Highway 74 forms a triangle of major highway access across the region.

# SUMMARY BACKGROUND

Two of the Nation's premiere freight railway companies serve this region—CSX Transportation and Norfolk Southern. The region is home to several smaller short line rail companies—Aberdeen & Rockfish Railroad, Carolina Southern Railroad, and Laurinburg & Southern Railroad.

Just recently, intermodal rail service returned to the Port of Wilmington with the debut of a new freight rail service, dubbed the Queen City Express. The service will allow massive containers of goods to travel from the Port of Wilmington to Charlotte and vice versa—taking trucks off the highways and perhaps further incentivizing new business in the region and state.<sup>3</sup>

Air travel is highlighted in the region by a system of fourteen smaller airports and two major public airports offering commercial jet service, all of which are designed to accommodate private and commercial needs. Commercial jet service is provided to Wilmington International and Fayetteville Regional Airport. The Laurinburg-Maxton Airport, with its accompanying industrial development complex, is quickly evolving into a major facility and can accommodate most types of private and commercial usages.

## **Military**

Fort Bragg was built as the first modern military base in the state in 1918. It serves a population of 52,280 active duty Soldiers, 12,624 Reserve Components and Temporary

Duty students, 8,757 civilian employees, 3,516 Contractors, and 62,962 active duty family members. There are 98,507 Army retirees and family members in the area. The annual base payroll is approximately \$3 billion.<sup>4</sup>

The military in our region maintain two army air fields—Simmons and Pope. Both air fields are located in Cumberland County, as part of Fort Bragg, a military installation of the United States Army and is the largest military installation in the world (by population).

As part of the Base Closure and Reassignment (BRAC) process, Fort Bragg took command of Pope Field, formerly known as Pope Air Force Base. The US Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) and U.S. Army Reserve Command (USARC) were relocated to Fort Bragg in 2011. This has created a variety of new opportunities for businesses located in the region. FORSCOM alone has a \$30 billion annual obligation authority for defense and other contracts.<sup>4</sup> This provides unmatched opportunities for enterprising businesses that want to compete for these dollars.

## **Economy**

The diverse economy of the region includes a mix of commercial, retail and industrial businesses augmented by tourism. North Carolina is the 6th most visited state in the country. The direct economic impact of tourist dollars spent in 2013 for New Hanover

County was \$477.68 million, and for Brunswick County was \$470.58 million ranking them 8th and 10th in the State for 2013.<sup>5</sup>

There has been a distinct difference in the economic growth of the urban and rural areas in the region. While larger cities have experienced rapid population and economic growth, many of the small towns have suffered from loss of jobs and population.

The economy of the region cover two metropolitan areas—Fayetteville and Wilmington. Biotechnology and life sciences are poised to experience significant growth in the region, including in the Wilmington MSA, supported by the knowledge based workers in the area. In the Fayetteville MSA, there is a larger concentration of distribution and logistics, and defense related businesses supported by the military installation and access to I-95.

Anchor industries such as agriculture and healthcare provide a solid foundation that continues to support the region. In the rural areas of the region there is a greater focus on the agriculture, food processing and advanced manufacturing industries.

The urban and rural areas offer complementary assets, and better integration between them is important for socio-economic performance of the region. A diversified economy creates a sustainable cycle of economic activity.

<sup>3</sup><https://www.bizjournals.com/triangle/news/2016/07/20/what-the-new-queen-city-express-raildoes-for-nc.html?s=print>

<sup>4</sup><https://www.ncommerce.com/Portals/47/Publications/Industry%20Reports/2015-Economic-Impact-of-the-Military-on-North-Carolina.pdf>

<sup>5</sup><https://www.ncommerce.com/tourism/research/economic-impact/teim>

# SEDC REGION



# SWOT ANALYSIS

## STRENGTHS:

### Competitive Advantages

- ◆ NC Port of Wilmington
- ◆ Regional Airports
- ◆ Quality of Life
- ◆ Right-to-work State
- ◆ Universities and Community Colleges
- ◆ Transportation Network
- ◆ Agricultural Expertise
- ◆ Available Certified Sites
- ◆ Military Presence
- ◆ Biotechnology and Marine Sciences
- ◆ Cost of Doing Business
- ◆ Public-Private Partnerships

## WEAKNESSES:

### Competitive Disadvantages

- ◆ Affordable and Quality Housing
- ◆ Mental Health System
- ◆ Industrial Building Shortage
- ◆ Aging Infrastructure
- ◆ Youth Exodus
- ◆ Aging Workforce
- ◆ Broadband and Telecommunications
- ◆ Aging School Facilities
- ◆ Youth Recreation and Lifestyle Opportunities
- ◆ Childcare
- ◆ Political Cohesiveness
- ◆ Capital for Businesses
- ◆ Regional Identity
- ◆ Regional Cooperation

## OPPORTUNITIES:

### Regional Improvement or Progress

- ◆ Military
- ◆ Tourism
- ◆ Agri-Tourism
- ◆ Workforce Development
- ◆ Agricultural Industries
- ◆ Wastewater Regionalization
- ◆ Climate
- ◆ Entrepreneurial and Small Business Support
- ◆ Capital for Businesses
- ◆ Higher Education Institutions
- ◆ Health Care
- ◆ North Carolina Coast
- ◆ Leveraging Urban Growth
- ◆ Life Sciences

## THREATS:

### Negative Impacts

- ◆ Failing Infrastructure
- ◆ Housing Options
- ◆ Water Quality and Availability
- ◆ Natural Disasters
- ◆ Environmental Issues
- ◆ BRAC 2018
- ◆ Drug Epidemic
- ◆ Unfunded Mandates
- ◆ Economic Gap—2 NCs
- ◆ Agriculture Labor Force
- ◆ Industrial Automation
- ◆ Youth Flight
- ◆ High School Drop-out Rate
- ◆ Incentives
- ◆ Small Business Regulations
- ◆ Healthcare Provider Shortages

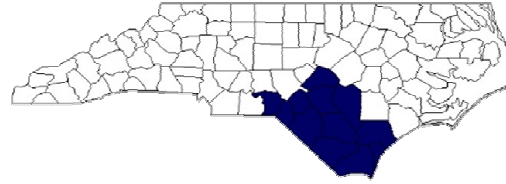
In compilation of the 2017-2022 CEDS, the SEDC conducted a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis to lay the foundation for CEDS strategies, goals, and objectives. The SWOT analysis was completed via secondary research and stakeholder feedback garnered through interviews and roundtable discussions.



# REGIONAL DATA SHEET

## Includes the Counties of:

Bladen, Brunswick, Columbus, Cumberland, Harnett,  
Hoke, New Hanover, Pender, Richmond, Robeson, Sampson & Scotland



### SOURCES

1. Stats America 2015-16
2. NC Office of Bud & Mgt
3. Suburban Stats 2016
4. Data USA 2015
5. nccomm.com 2015
6. livingwage.mit.edu
7. NC Dept of Rev 2016-17
8. Southeastern Univ Consortium
9. Census, ACS 2015
10. Bureau of Labor & Stats 2016
11. Center for Am. Progress 2015
12. Public Schools of NC Annual Dropout Report 2015-16

<b>P O P U L A T I O N</b>	<b>2010 Census</b>	<b>Female<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Median Age</b>
	<b>1,217,051</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>38</b>
	<b>2016 Estimate</b>	<b>Male<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Age 65+</b>
	<b>1,287,584</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>15%</b>
	<b>Growth in population since 2010 census</b>	<b>Minority</b>	<b>Under 18</b>
	<b>5.8%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>24%</b>
	<b>2020/2030 Proj.<sup>2</sup></b>		
	<b>1,324,264 / 1,418,069</b>		

<b>H O U S I N G</b>	<b>Median Property Value<sup>4</sup></b>
	<b>\$120,008</b>
	<b>Homeowner Vacancy Rate<sup>5</sup></b>
	<b>2.44%</b>
	<b>Rental Vacancy Rate<sup>5</sup></b>
<b>9.54%</b>	
<b>Occupied Housing Units<sup>1</sup></b>	
<b>40,070</b>	

<b>E C O N O M I C</b>	<b>Median Household Income</b>
	<b>Per Capita Personal Income</b>
	<b>Per Capita Living Wage<sup>6</sup></b>
	<b>County Property Tax<sup>7</sup></b>
	<b>Unemployment Rate</b>
	<b>Total Labor Force</b>
	<b>Poverty Rate</b>
	<b>Food Insecurity Rate<sup>8</sup></b>

Region	NC
<b>\$41,149</b>	<b>\$47,830<sup>9</sup></b>
<b>\$32,969</b>	<b>\$40,759</b>
<b>\$22,036</b>	<b>\$22,797</b>
<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>6.47%</b>	<b>4.90%</b>
<b>539,133</b>	<b>4,920,437<sup>10</sup></b>
<b>21.83%</b>	<b>17.2%<sup>11</sup></b>
<b>19.25%</b>	<b>16.5%</b>

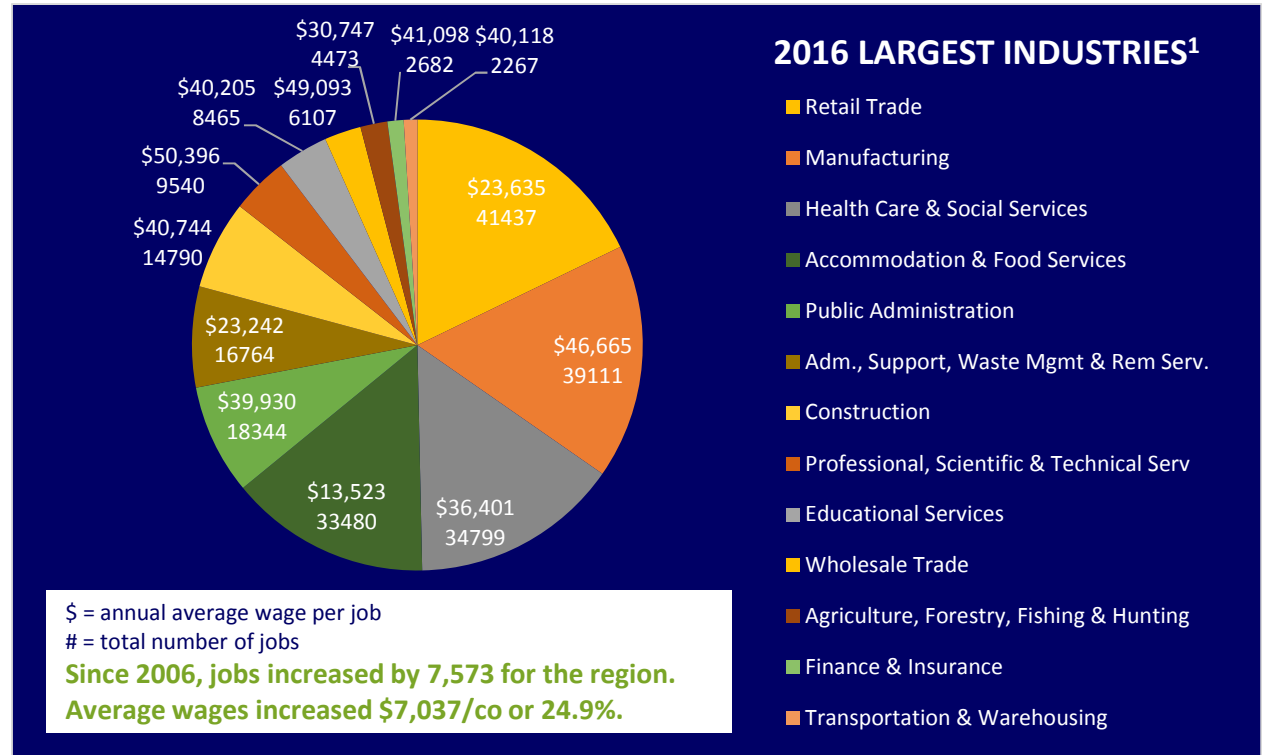
LARGEST PRIVATE SECTOR EMPLOYERS <sup>5</sup>	
<b>Wal-Mart Associates Inc</b>	<b>New Hanover Reg. Med</b>
<b>Food Lion</b>	<b>PPD, Inc</b>
<b>Smithfield Foods Inc.</b>	<b>Goodyear Tire &amp; Rubber</b>
<b>Cape Fear Valley Health Systems</b>	<b>Progress Energy Serv.</b>
<b>Lowes Home Centers Inc.</b>	<b>Mountaire Farms of NC</b>

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT <sup>1</sup>	
<b>High School or more</b>	<b>82.8%</b>
<b>Bachelor Degree or more</b>	<b>18.8%</b>
<b>High School Dropout rate</b>	<b>2.32%<sup>12</sup></b>

## HIGHER EDUCATION

Campbell University  
Fayetteville State University  
Methodist University  
St. Andrews University  
UNC Pembroke  
UNC Wilmington  
Miller Motte College  
Bladen Community College

Brunswick Community College  
Cape Fear Community College  
Central Carolina Community College  
Fayetteville Technical Community College  
Richmond Community College  
Robeson Community College  
Sampson Community College  
Sandhills Community College  
Southeastern Community College



# BLADEN COUNTY DATA SHEET

## BLADEN COUNTY, NC


County Seat: Elizabethtown (3,544)

Founded in 1739



### SOURCES

1. Stats America 2015-16
2. NC Office of Bud & Mgt
3. Suburban Stats 2016
4. Data USA 2015
5. nccomm.com 2015
6. livingwage.mit.edu
7. NC Dept of Rev 2016-17
8. Southeastern Univ Consortium
9. Census, ACS 2015
10. Bureau of Labor & Stats 2016
11. Center for Am. Progress 2015
12. Public Schools of NC Annual Dropout Report 2015-16

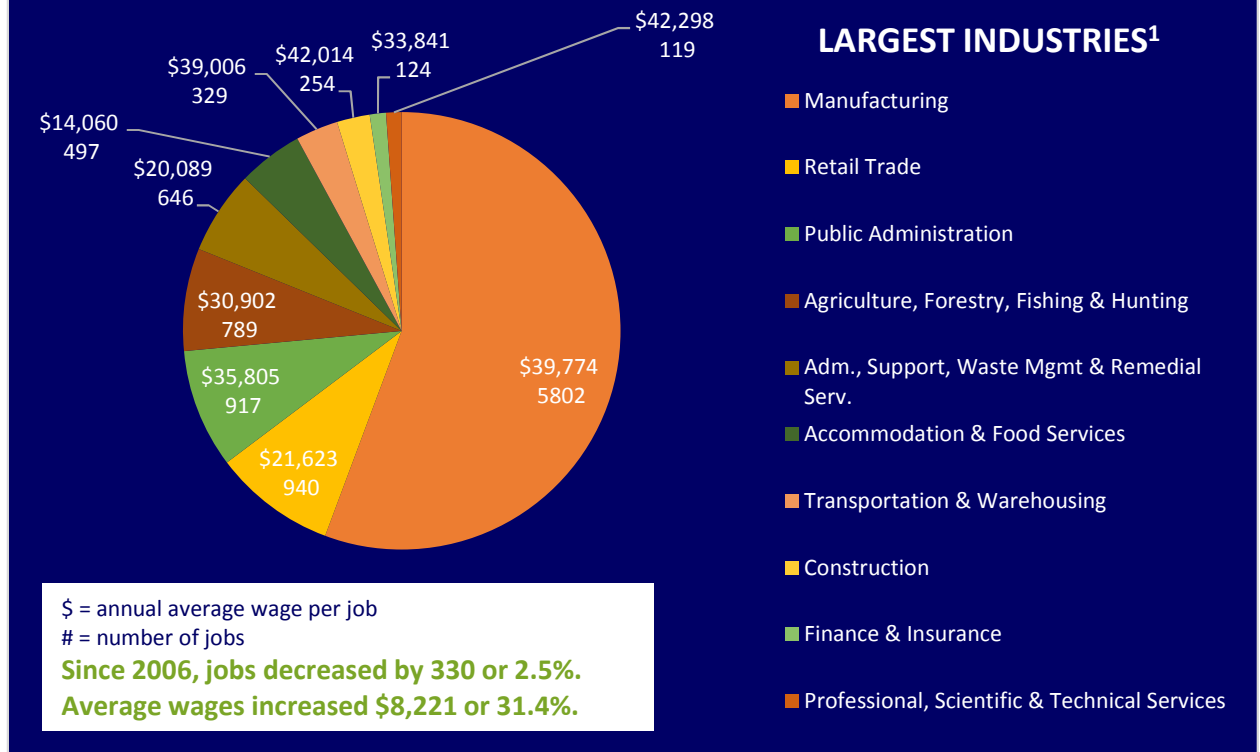
POPULATION	2010 Census	Female <sup>3</sup>	Median Age
	<b>35,190</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>42.6</b>
	2016 Estimate	Male <sup>3</sup>	Age 65+
	<b>33,741</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>17.7%</b>
	Growth in population since 2010 census	Minority	Under 18
	<b>-4%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>22%</b>
2020/2030 Proj. <sup>2</sup>			
	<b>35,009 / 35,010</b>		

HOUSING	Median Property Value <sup>4</sup>
	<b>\$85,000</b>
	Homeowner Vacancy Rate <sup>5</sup>
	<b>1.10%</b>
	Rental Vacancy Rate <sup>5</sup>
<b>9.40%</b>	
Occupied Housing Units <sup>1</sup>	
<b>14,401</b>	

ECONOMIC	Median Household Income
	Per Capita Personal Income
	Per Capita Living Wage <sup>6</sup>
	County Property Tax <sup>7</sup>
	Unemployment Rate
	Total Labor Force
	Poverty Rate
	Food Insecurity Rate <sup>8</sup>

	County	NC
Median Household Income	<b>\$33,882</b>	<b>\$47,830<sup>9</sup></b>
Per Capita Personal Income	<b>\$32,681</b>	<b>\$40,759</b>
Per Capita Living Wage <sup>6</sup>	<b>\$21,278</b>	<b>\$22,797</b>
County Property Tax <sup>7</sup>	<b>\$0.82/\$100</b>	N/A
Unemployment Rate	<b>6.90%</b>	<b>4.90%</b>
Total Labor Force	<b>14,723</b>	<b>4,920,437<sup>10</sup></b>
Poverty Rate	<b>25.40%</b>	<b>17.2%<sup>11</sup></b>
Food Insecurity Rate <sup>8</sup>	<b>21%</b>	<b>16.5%</b>

LARGEST PRIVATE SECTOR EMPLOYERS <sup>5</sup>	
Smithfield Foods, Inc.	First Source Staffing
Gildan Yarns LLC	Lineage Logistics LLC
Cape Fear Valley Health Systems	Wal-Mart Assoc. Inc.
Specialty Products Technology	Chemours
Packers Sanitation Serv. Inc. Ltd	Kuraray



EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT <sup>1</sup>	
High School or more	79%
Bachelor Degree or more	14%
High School Dropout rate	1.48% <sup>12</sup>

## HIGHER EDUCATION



# BRUNSWICK COUNTY DATA SHEET


## BRUNSWICK COUNTY, NC

County Seat: Bolivia (143)  
Founded in 1764



### SOURCES

1. Stats America 2015-16
2. NC Office of Bud & Mgt
3. Suburban Stats 2016
4. Data USA 2015
5. nccomm.com 2015
6. livingwage.mit.edu
7. NC Dept of Rev 2016-17
8. Southeastern Univ Consortium
9. Census, ACS 2015
10. Bureau of Labor & Stats 2016
11. Center for Am. Progress 2015
12. Public Schools of NC Annual Dropout Report 2015-16

POPULATION	2010 Census	Female <sup>3</sup>	Median Age
	<b>107,431</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>49</b>
	2016 Estimate	Male <sup>3</sup>	Age 65+
	<b>126,953</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>26.0%</b>
	Growth in population since 2010 census	Minority	Under 18
	<b>18%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>18%</b>
2020/2030 Proj. <sup>2</sup>			
<b>138,430 / 170,230</b>			

HOUSING	Median Property Value <sup>4</sup>
	<b>\$182,500</b>
	Homeowner Vacancy Rate <sup>5</sup>
	<b>3.70%</b>
	Rental Vacancy Rate <sup>5</sup>
<b>23.40%</b>	
Occupied Housing Units <sup>1</sup>	
<b>49,193</b>	

ECONOMIC	Median Household Income
	<b>\$48,831</b>
	Per Capita Personal Income
	<b>\$36,307</b>
	Per Capita Living Wage <sup>6</sup>
	<b>\$23,878</b>
	County Property Tax <sup>7</sup>
	<b>\$0.485/\$100</b>
Unemployment Rate	
<b>6.3%</b>	
Total Labor Force	
<b>49,758</b>	
Poverty Rate	
<b>14.30%</b>	
Food Insecurity Rate <sup>8</sup>	
<b>15%</b>	

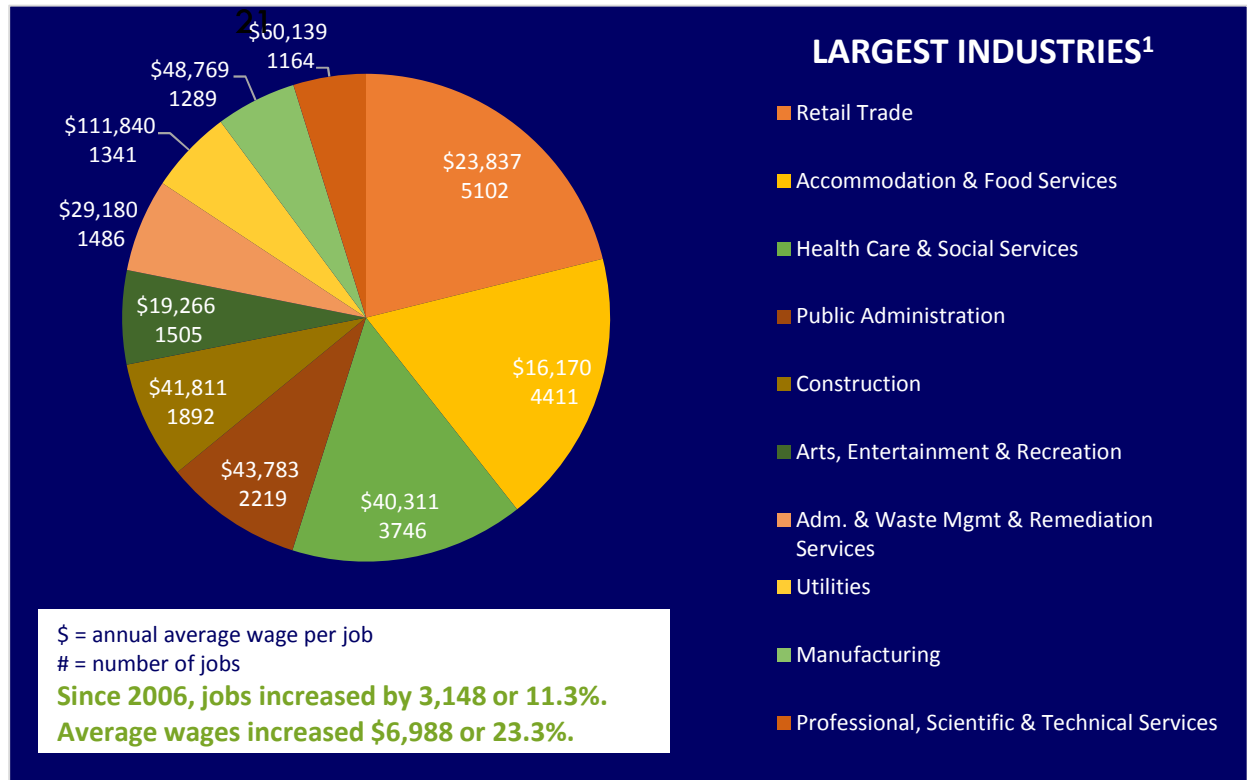
	County	NC
Median Household Income	<b>\$48,831</b>	<b>\$47,830<sup>9</sup></b>
Per Capita Personal Income	<b>\$36,307</b>	<b>\$40,759</b>
Per Capita Living Wage <sup>6</sup>	<b>\$23,878</b>	<b>\$22,797</b>
County Property Tax <sup>7</sup>	<b>\$0.485/\$100</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Unemployment Rate	<b>6.3%</b>	<b>4.9%</b>
Total Labor Force	<b>49,758</b>	<b>4,920,437<sup>10</sup></b>
Poverty Rate	<b>14.30%</b>	<b>17.2%<sup>11</sup></b>
Food Insecurity Rate <sup>8</sup>	<b>15%</b>	<b>16.5%</b>

LARGEST PRIVATE SECTOR EMPLOYERS <sup>5</sup>	
Progress Energy Service Co.	Liberty Healthcare Grp.
Wal-Mart Associates Inc.	McAndersons Inc.
Food Lion	Dosher Mem. Hospital
Brunswick Novant Med. Center	Troon Golf LLC
Lowes Foods LLC	SBH Wilmington LLC

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT <sup>1</sup>	
High School or more	<b>87%</b>
Bachelor Degree or more	<b>26%</b>
High School Dropout rate	<b>3.28%<sup>12</sup></b>

**HIGHER EDUCATION**

**BRUNSWICK COMMUNITY COLLEGE**



# COLUMBUS COUNTY DATA SHEET

## COLUMBUS COUNTY, NC

County Seat: Whiteville (5,168)

Founded in 1833



### SOURCES

1. Stats America 2015-16
2. NC Office of Bud & Mgt
3. Suburban Stats 2016
4. Data USA 2015
5. nccomm.com 2015
6. livingwage.mit.edu
7. NC Dept of Rev 2016-17
8. Southeastern Univ Consortium
9. Census, ACS 2015
10. Bureau of Labor & Stats 2016
11. Center for Am. Progress 2015
12. Public Schools of NC Annual Dropout Report 2015-16

POPULATION	2010 Census	Female <sup>3</sup>	Median Age
	<b>58,090</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>41</b>
	2016 Estimate	Male <sup>3</sup>	Age 65+
	<b>56,505</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>17.0%</b>
	Growth in population since 2010 census	Minority	Under 18
	<b>-2.7%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>23%</b>
2020/2030 Proj. <sup>2</sup>			
<b>57,089 / 57,088</b>			

HOUSING	Median Property Value <sup>4</sup>
	<b>\$83,900</b>
	Homeowner Vacancy Rate <sup>5</sup>
	<b>1.80%</b>
	Rental Vacancy Rate <sup>5</sup>
<b>10.50%</b>	
Occupied Housing Units <sup>1</sup>	
<b>22,006</b>	

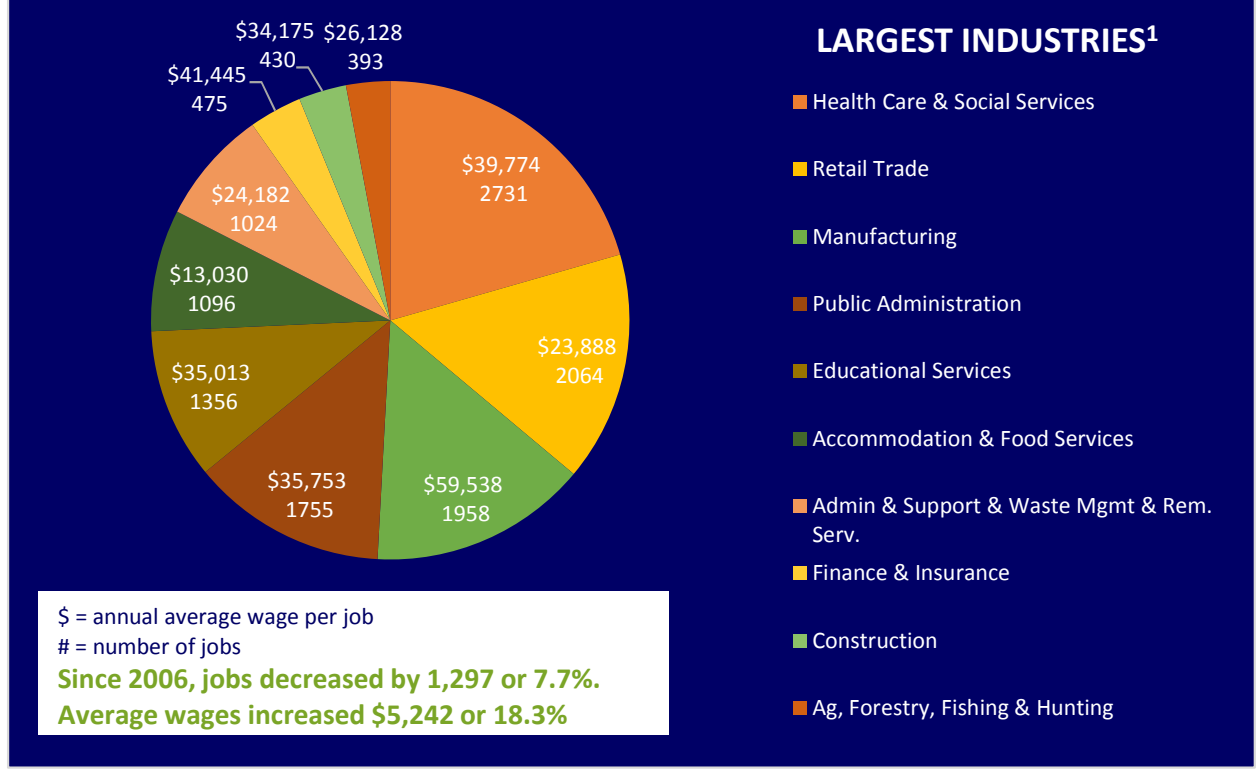
ECONOMIC	Median Household Income
	<b>\$34,478</b>
	Per Capita Personal Income
	<b>\$30,262</b>
	Per Capita Living Wage <sup>6</sup>
	<b>\$21,091</b>
	County Property Tax <sup>7</sup>
	<b>\$0.805/\$100</b>
Unemployment Rate	
<b>6.4%</b>	
Total Labor Force	
<b>22,778</b>	
Poverty Rate	
<b>24.00%</b>	
Food Insecurity Rate <sup>8</sup>	
<b>20%</b>	

	County	NC
Median Household Income	<b>\$34,478</b>	<b>\$47,830<sup>9</sup></b>
Per Capita Personal Income	<b>\$30,262</b>	<b>\$40,759</b>
Per Capita Living Wage <sup>6</sup>	<b>\$21,091</b>	<b>\$22,797</b>
County Property Tax <sup>7</sup>	<b>\$0.805/\$100</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Unemployment Rate	<b>6.4%</b>	<b>4.90%</b>
Total Labor Force	<b>22,778</b>	<b>4,920,437<sup>10</sup></b>
Poverty Rate	<b>24.00%</b>	<b>17.2%<sup>11</sup></b>
Food Insecurity Rate <sup>8</sup>	<b>20%</b>	<b>16.5%</b>

LARGEST PRIVATE SECTOR EMPLOYERS <sup>5</sup>	
International Paper Co. Inc.	Atlantic Corporation
Century Employer Org. LLC	Community Innovations
Columbus Reg. Healthcare Sys.	National Spinning Co.
BB&T	Food Lion
Wal-Mart Associates	Liberty Healthcare Grp

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT <sup>1</sup>	
High School or more	79.6%
Bachelor Degree or more	12%
High School Dropout rate	1.81% <sup>12</sup>

## HIGHER EDUCATION



# CUMBERLAND COUNTY DATA SHEET


## CUMBERLAND COUNTY, NC

County Seat: Fayetteville (204,759)  
 Founded in 1754



### SOURCES

1. Stats America 2015-16
2. NC Office of Bud & Mgt
3. Suburban Stats 2016
4. Data USA 2015
5. nccomm.com 2015
6. livingwage.mit.edu
7. NC Dept of Rev 2016-17
8. Southeastern Univ Consortium
9. Census, ACS 2015
10. Bureau of Labor & Stats 2016
11. Center for Am. Progress 2015
12. Public Schools of NC Annual Dropout Report 2015-16

<b>P O P U L A T I O N</b>	<b>2010 Census</b>	<b>Female<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Median Age</b>
	<b>319,431</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>31.1</b>
	<b>2016 Estimate</b>	<b>Male<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Age 65+</b>
	<b>327,127</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>11.0%</b>
	<b>Growth in population since 2010 census</b>	<b>Minority</b>	<b>Under 18</b>
	<b>2.4%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>26%</b>
	<b>2020/2030 Proj.<sup>2</sup></b>		
	<b>325,775 / 325,117</b>		

<b>H O U S I N G</b>	<b>Median Property Value<sup>4</sup></b>
	<b>\$128,600</b>
	<b>Homeowner Vacancy Rate<sup>5</sup></b>
	<b>3.40%</b>
	<b>Rental Vacancy Rate<sup>5</sup></b>
<b>8.80%</b>	
<b>Occupied Housing Units<sup>1</sup></b>	
<b>122,643</b>	

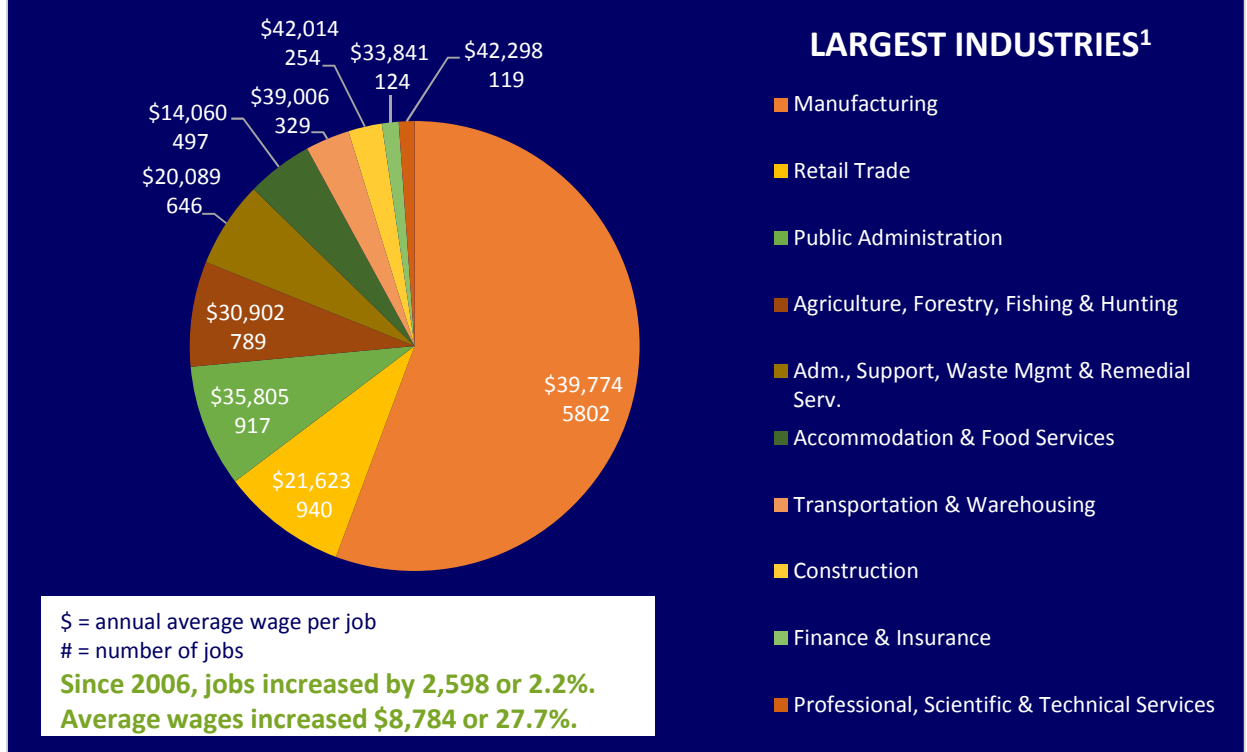
<b>E C O N O M I C</b>	<b>Median Household Income</b>
	<b>Per Capita Personal Income</b>
	<b>Per Capita Living Wage<sup>6</sup></b>
	<b>County Property Tax<sup>7</sup></b>
	<b>Unemployment Rate</b>
	<b>Total Labor Force</b>
	<b>Poverty Rate</b>
	<b>Food Insecurity Rate<sup>8</sup></b>

	County	NC
Median Household Income	\$42,380	\$47,830 <sup>9</sup>
Per Capita Personal Income	\$37,611	\$40,759
Per Capita Living Wage <sup>6</sup>	\$23,733	\$22,797
County Property Tax <sup>7</sup>	\$0.74/\$100	N/A
Unemployment Rate	6.3%	4.90%
Total Labor Force	127,861	4,920,437 <sup>10</sup>
Poverty Rate	18.80%	17.2% <sup>11</sup>
Food Insecurity Rate <sup>8</sup>	20%	16.5%

LARGEST PRIVATE SECTOR EMPLOYERS <sup>5</sup>	
Cape Fear Valley Health Systems	Pruitthealth Vet. Serv.
Wal-Mart Associates	Eaton Corporation
Goodyear Tire and Rubber Inc.	Sykes Enterprises Inc.
Food Lion	Methodist University
Purolator Filters Na LLC	Lowes Home Centers

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT <sup>1</sup>	
High School or more	90%
Bachelor Degree or more	23.3%
High School Dropout rate	2.55% <sup>12</sup>

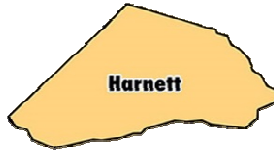
## HIGHER EDUCATION



# HARNETT COUNTY DATA SHEET

## HARNETT COUNTY, NC

County Seat: Lillington (3,581)  
 Founded in 1855



### SOURCES

1. Stats America 2015-16
2. NC Office of Bud & Mgt
3. Suburban Stats 2016
4. Data USA 2015
5. nccomm.com 2015
6. livingwage.mit.edu
7. NC Dept of Rev 2016-17
8. Southeastern Univ Consortium
9. Census, ACS 2015
10. Bureau of Labor & Stats 2016
11. Center for Am. Progress 2015
12. Public Schools of NC Annual Dropout Report 2015-16

POPULATION	2010 Census	Female <sup>3</sup>	Median Age
	<b>114,678</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>33.6</b>
	2016 Estimate	Male <sup>3</sup>	Age 65+
	<b>130,881</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>11.0%</b>
	Growth in population since 2010 census	Minority	Under 18
	<b>14.1%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>27%</b>
2020/2030 Proj. <sup>2</sup>			
	<b>134,189 / 148,167</b>		

HOUSING	Median Property Value <sup>4</sup>
	<b>\$135,400</b>
	Homeowner Vacancy Rate <sup>5</sup>
	<b>2.40%</b>
	Rental Vacancy Rate <sup>5</sup>
<b>8.20%</b>	
Occupied Housing Units <sup>1</sup>	
<b>42,672</b>	

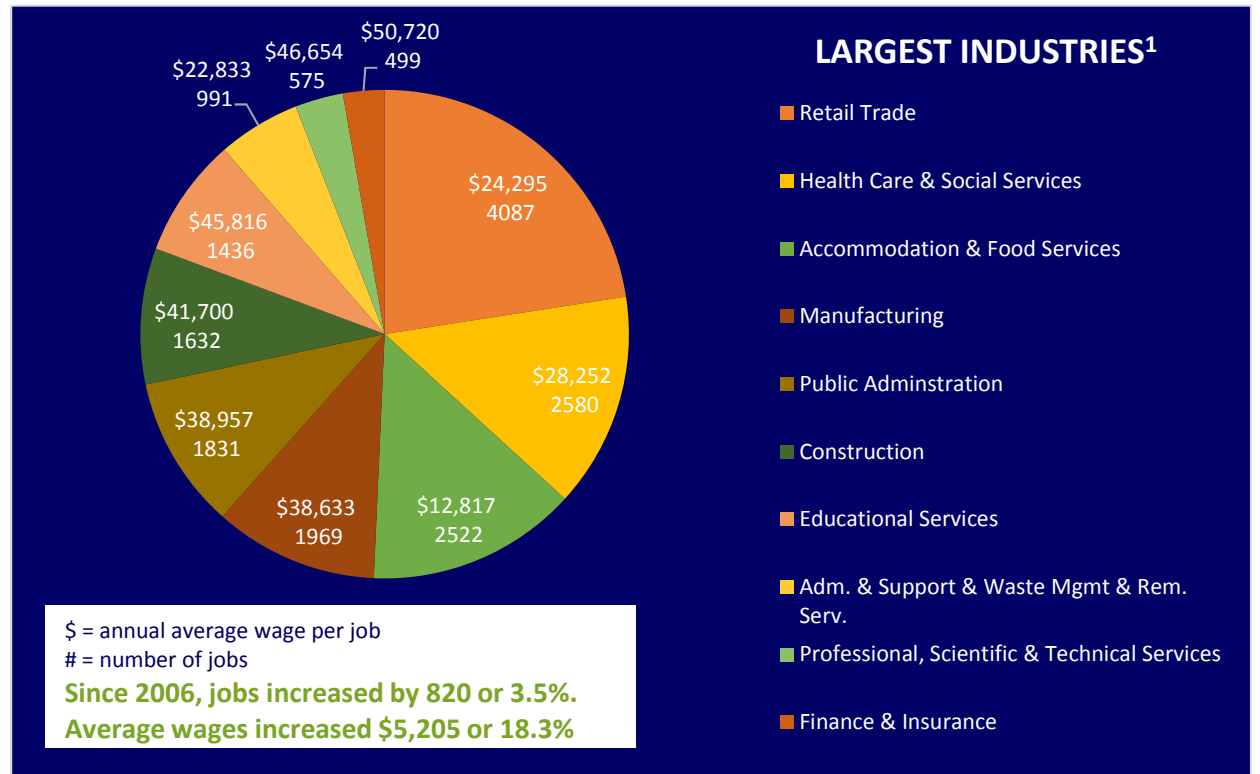
ECONOMIC	Median Household Income
	<b>\$48,301</b>
	Per Capita Personal Income
	<b>\$31,129</b>
	Per Capita Living Wage <sup>6</sup>
	<b>\$21,611</b>
	County Property Tax <sup>7</sup>
	<b>\$0.75/\$100</b>
Unemployment Rate	
<b>5.7%</b>	
Total Labor Force	
<b>51,533</b>	
Poverty Rate	
<b>17.70%</b>	
Food Insecurity Rate <sup>8</sup>	
<b>18%</b>	

	County	NC
Median Household Income	<b>\$48,301</b>	<b>\$47,830<sup>9</sup></b>
Per Capita Personal Income	<b>\$31,129</b>	<b>\$40,759</b>
Per Capita Living Wage <sup>6</sup>	<b>\$21,611</b>	<b>\$22,797</b>
County Property Tax <sup>7</sup>	<b>\$0.75/\$100</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Unemployment Rate	<b>5.7%</b>	<b>4.90%</b>
Total Labor Force	<b>51,533</b>	<b>4,920,437<sup>10</sup></b>
Poverty Rate	<b>17.70%</b>	<b>17.2%<sup>11</sup></b>
Food Insecurity Rate <sup>8</sup>	<b>18%</b>	<b>16.5%</b>

LARGEST PRIVATE SECTOR EMPLOYERS <sup>5</sup>	
Food Lion	Champion Home Builders
Campbell University, Inc.	Multitech Mech. Support
Betsy Johnson Memorial Hospital	Edwards Bro. Malloy
Wal-Mart Associates, Inc.	Principle Long Term Care
Carlie C's Operation Center, Inc.	Godwin Mfg. Co. Inc

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT <sup>1</sup>	
High School or more	85.6%
Bachelor Degree or more	19.6%
High School Dropout rate	4% <sup>12</sup>

## HIGHER EDUCATION



# HOKE COUNTY DATA SHEET

## HOKE COUNTY, NC


County Seat: Raeford (4,998)

Founded in 1911



### SOURCES

1. Stats America 2015-16
2. NC Office of Bud & Mgt
3. Suburban Stats 2016
4. Data USA 2015
5. nccomm.com 2015
6. livingwage.mit.edu
7. NC Dept of Rev 2016-17
8. Southeastern Univ Consortium
9. Census, ACS 2015
10. Bureau of Labor & Stats 2016
11. Center for Am. Progress 2015
12. Public Schools of NC Annual Dropout Report 2015-16

<b>P O P U L A T I O N</b>	<b>2010 Census</b>	<b>Female<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Median Age</b>
	<b>46,952</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>31.4</b>
	<b>2016 Estimate</b>	<b>Male<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Age 65+</b>
	<b>53,262</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>8.0%</b>
	<b>Growth in population since 2010 census</b>	<b>Minority</b>	<b>Under 18</b>
	<b>13.4%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>29%</b>
<b>2020/2030 Proj.<sup>2</sup></b>			
<b>58,774 / 70,888</b>			

<b>H O U S I N G</b>	<b>Median Property Value<sup>4</sup></b>
	<b>\$141,500</b>
	<b>Homeowner Vacancy Rate<sup>5</sup></b>
	<b>3.50%</b>
	<b>Rental Vacancy Rate<sup>5</sup></b>
<b>9.80%</b>	
<b>Occupied Housing Units<sup>1</sup></b>	
<b>16,990</b>	

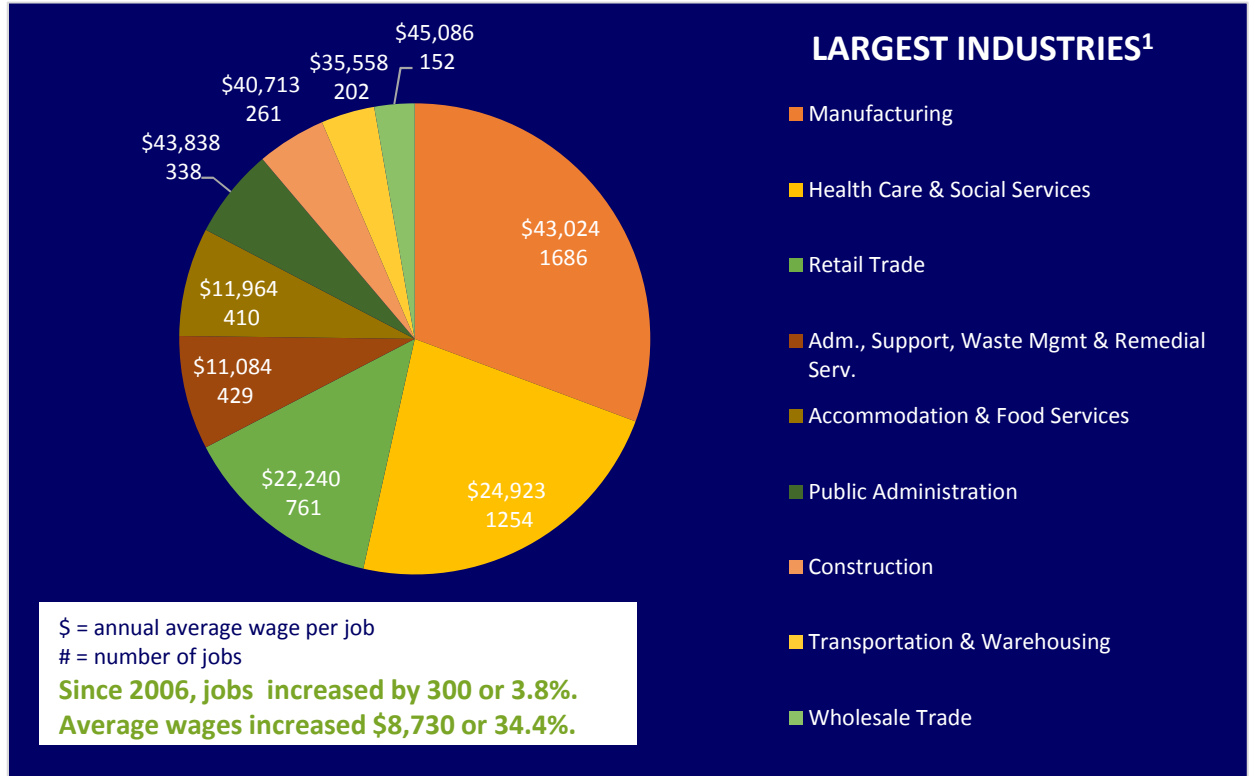
<b>E C O N O M I C</b>	<b>Median Household Income</b>
	<b>Per Capita Personal Income</b>
	<b>Per Capita Living Wage<sup>6</sup></b>
	<b>County Property Tax<sup>7</sup></b>
	<b>Unemployment Rate</b>
	<b>Total Labor Force</b>
	<b>Poverty Rate</b>
	<b>Food Insecurity Rate<sup>8</sup></b>

	County	NC
Median Household Income	\$42,819	\$47,830 <sup>9</sup>
Per Capita Personal Income	\$29,382	\$40,759
Per Capita Living Wage <sup>6</sup>	\$21,507	\$22,797
County Property Tax <sup>7</sup>	\$0.75/\$100	N/A
Unemployment Rate	6.5%	4.90%
Total Labor Force	19,973	4,920,437 <sup>10</sup>
Poverty Rate	19.90%	17.2% <sup>11</sup>
Food Insecurity Rate <sup>8</sup>	19%	16.5%

LARGEST PRIVATE SECTOR EMPLOYERS <sup>5</sup>	
Butterball LLC	Wal-Mart Assoc. Inc
The Staffing Alliance LLC	First Health Carolinas
Cape Fear Valley Health Systems	Autumn Corporation
Conopco Inc.	House of Raeford Inc.
Burlington Industries	Food Lion

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT <sup>1</sup>	
High School or more	85%
Bachelor Degree or more	19.3%
High School Dropout rate	1.77% <sup>12</sup>

## HIGHER EDUCATION



# NEW HANOVER COUNTY DATA SHEET

## NEW HANOVER COUNTY, NC


County Seat: Wilmington (112,067)

Founded in 1729



### SOURCES

1. Stats America 2015-16
2. NC Office of Bud & Mgt
3. Suburban Stats 2016
4. Data USA 2015
5. nccomm.com 2015
6. livingwage.mit.edu
7. NC Dept of Rev 2016-17
8. Southeastern Univ Consortium
9. Census, ACS 2015
10. Bureau of Labor & Stats 2016
11. Center for Am. Progress 2015
12. Public Schools of NC Annual Dropout Report 2015-16

<b>P<sup>1</sup> O P U L A T I O N</b>	<b>2010 Census</b>	<b>Female<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Median Age</b>
	<b>202,667</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>37.8</b>
	<b>2016 Estimate</b>	<b>Male<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Age 65+</b>
	<b>223,483</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>15.0%</b>
	<b>Growth in population since 2010 census</b>	<b>Minority</b>	<b>Under 18</b>
	<b>10.3%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>2020/2030 Proj.<sup>2</sup></b>			
<b>234,826 / 264,016</b>			

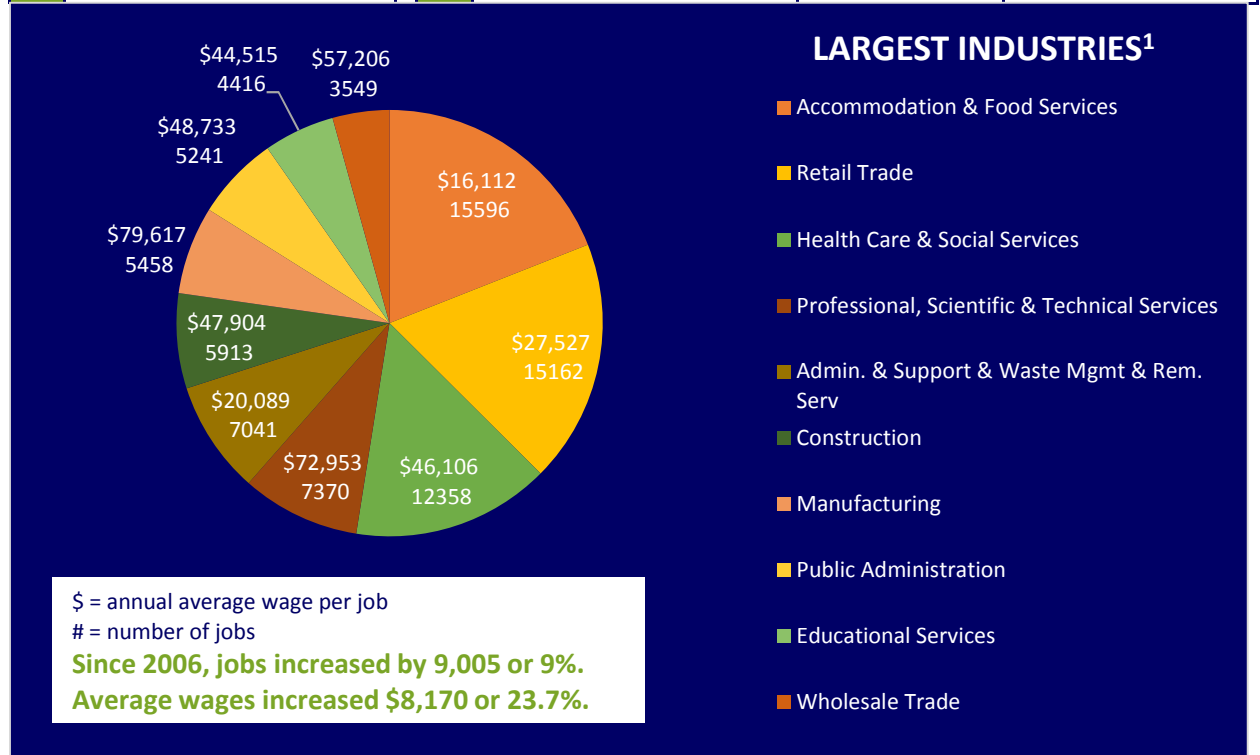
<b>H O U S I N G</b>	<b>Median Property Value<sup>4</sup></b>
	<b>\$214,300</b>
	<b>Homeowner Vacancy Rate<sup>5</sup></b>
	<b>2.50%</b>
	<b>Rental Vacancy Rate<sup>5</sup></b>
	<b>6.70%</b>
<b>Occupied Housing Units<sup>1</sup></b>	
<b>88,403</b>	

<b>E C O N O M I C</b>	<b>Median Household Income</b>
	<b>Per Capita Personal Income</b>
	<b>Per Capita Living Wage<sup>6</sup></b>
	<b>County Property Tax<sup>7</sup></b>
	<b>Unemployment Rate</b>
	<b>Total Labor Force</b>
	<b>Poverty Rate</b>
	<b>Food Insecurity Rate<sup>8</sup></b>

	County	NC
Median Household Income	\$52,456	\$47,830 <sup>9</sup>
Per Capita Personal Income	\$40,487	\$40,759
Per Capita Living Wage <sup>6</sup>	\$24,066	\$22,797
County Property Tax <sup>7</sup>	\$0.623/\$100	N/A
Unemployment Rate	4.7%	4.90%
Total Labor Force	116,676	4,920,437 <sup>10</sup>
Poverty Rate	17.30%	17.2% <sup>11</sup>
Food Insecurity Rate <sup>8</sup>	16%	16.5%

LARGEST PRIVATE SECTOR EMPLOYERS <sup>5</sup>	
New Hanover Regional Med. Ctr	Harris Teeter
PPD, Inc.	Food Lion
Cellco Partnership	GE Hitachi Nuclear Amer.
Wal-Mart Associates	WHA Medical Clinic
Corning Inc.	Carolina Healthcare

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT <sup>1</sup>	
High School or more	91.7%
Bachelor Degree or more	36.9%
High School Dropout rate	1.65% <sup>12</sup>



## HIGHER EDUCATION





# PENDER COUNTY DATA SHEET

## PENDER COUNTY, NC

County Seat: Burgaw (4,096)

Founded in 1875



### SOURCES

1. Stats America 2015-16
2. NC Office of Bud & Mgt
3. Suburban Stats 2016
4. Data USA 2015
5. nccomm.com 2015
6. livingwage.mit.edu
7. NC Dept of Rev 2016-17
8. Southeastern Univ Consortium
9. Census, ACS 2015
10. Bureau of Labor & Stats 2016
11. Center for Am. Progress 2015
12. Public Schools of NC Annual Dropout Report 2015-16

<b>P O P U L A T I O N</b>	<b>2010 Census</b>	<b>Female<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Median Age</b>
	<b>52,217</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>42.1</b>
	<b>2016 Estimate</b>	<b>Male<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Age 65+</b>
	<b>59,090</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>16.7%</b>
	<b>Growth in population since 2010 census</b>	<b>Minority</b>	<b>Under 18</b>
	<b>13.2%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>22%</b>
	<b>2020/2030 Proj.<sup>2</sup></b>		
	<b>64,102 / 76,410</b>		

<b>H O U S I N G</b>	<b>Median Property Value<sup>4</sup></b>
	<b>\$153,400</b>
	<b>Homeowner Vacancy Rate<sup>5</sup></b>
	<b>3.40%</b>
	<b>Rental Vacancy Rate<sup>5</sup></b>
<b>13.60%</b>	
<b>Occupied Housing Units<sup>1</sup></b>	
<b>20,130</b>	

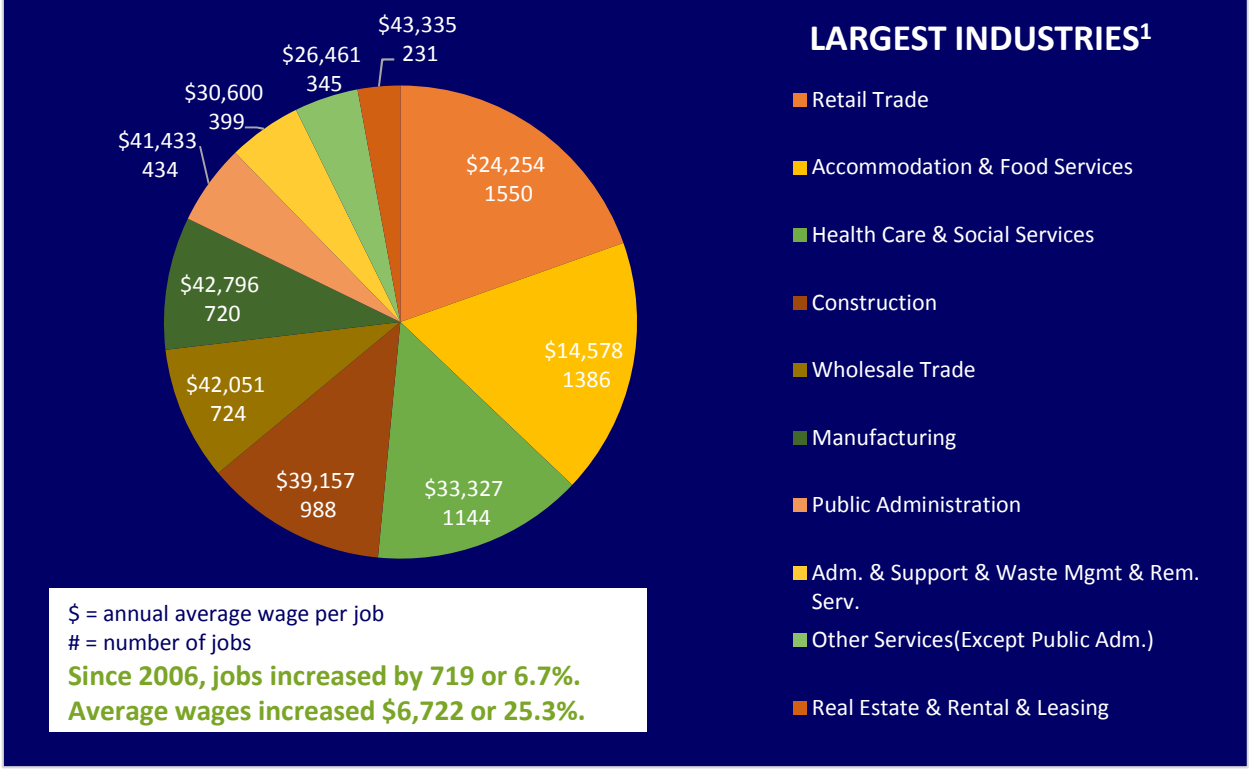
<b>E C O N O M I C</b>	<b>Median Household Income</b>
	<b>Per Capita Personal Income</b>
	<b>Per Capita Living Wage<sup>6</sup></b>
	<b>County Property Tax<sup>7</sup></b>
	<b>Unemployment Rate</b>
	<b>Total Labor Force</b>
	<b>Poverty Rate</b>
	<b>Food Insecurity Rate<sup>8</sup></b>

	County	NC
Median Household Income	\$49,390	\$47,830 <sup>9</sup>
Per Capita Personal Income	\$32,937	\$40,759
Per Capita Living Wage <sup>6</sup>	\$22,422	\$22,797
County Property Tax <sup>7</sup>	\$0.685/\$100	N/A
Unemployment Rate	5.3%	4.90%
Total Labor Force	26,687	4,920,437 <sup>10</sup>
Poverty Rate	14.80%	17.2% <sup>11</sup>
Food Insecurity Rate <sup>8</sup>	15%	16.5%

LARGEST PRIVATE SECTOR EMPLOYERS <sup>5</sup>	
Pender Memorial Hospital	RC Creations LLC
L L Building Products (A Corp)	Woodbury Wellness Ctr.
Food Lion	Lowes Home Centers Inc
Wal-Mart Associates Inc.	Daybreak Rocky Mount
C W Wright Construction Co LLC	Huntington Health Care

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT <sup>1</sup>	
High School or more	85.7%
Bachelor Degree or more	21.2%
High School Dropout rate	1.5% <sup>12</sup>

## HIGHER EDUCATION



# RICHMOND COUNTY DATA SHEET

## RICHMOND COUNTY, NC

County Seat: Rockingham (9,080)

Founded in 1779



### SOURCES

1. Stats America 2015-16
2. NC Office of Bud & Mgt
3. Suburban Stats 2016
4. Data USA 2015
5. nccomm.com 2015
6. livingwage.mit.edu
7. NC Dept of Rev 2016-17
8. Southeastern Univ Consortium
9. Census, ACS 2015
10. Bureau of Labor & Stats 2016
11. Center for Am. Progress 2015
12. Public Schools of NC Annual Dropout Report 2015-16

<b>P O P U L A T I O N</b>	<b>2010 Census</b>	<b>Female<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Median Age</b>
	<b>46,639</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>40</b>
	<b>2016 Estimate</b>	<b>Male<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Age 65+</b>
	<b>44,939</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>15.5%</b>
	<b>Growth in population since 2010 census</b>	<b>Minority</b>	<b>Under 18</b>
	<b>-3.6%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>24%</b>
<b>2020/2030 Proj.<sup>2</sup></b>			
<b>45,058 / 44,450</b>			

<b>H O U S I N G</b>	<b>Median Property Value<sup>4</sup></b>
	<b>\$78,600</b>
	<b>Homeowner Vacancy Rate<sup>5</sup></b>
	<b>2.10%</b>
	<b>Rental Vacancy Rate<sup>5</sup></b>
	<b>5.00%</b>
<b>Occupied Housing Units<sup>1</sup></b>	
<b>18,461</b>	

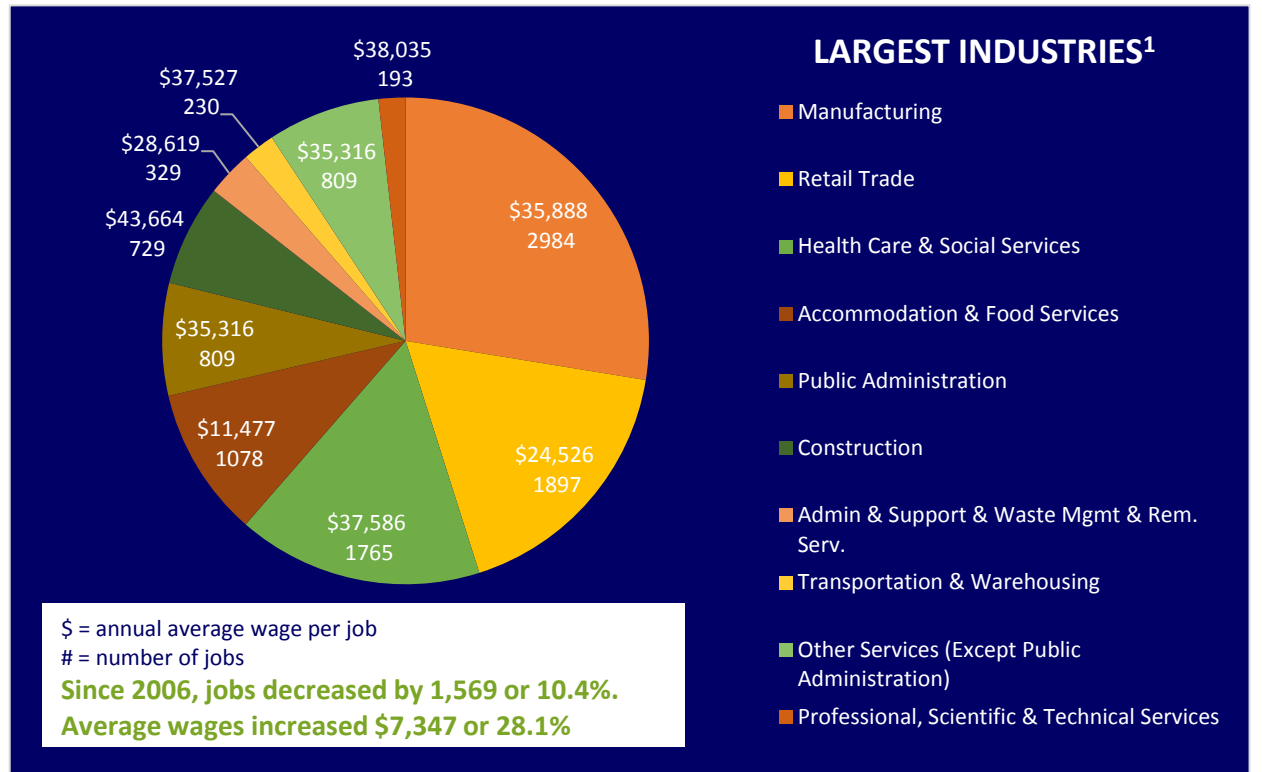
<b>E C O N O M I C</b>	<b>Median Household Income</b>
	<b>Per Capita Personal Income</b>
	<b>Per Capita Living Wage<sup>6</sup></b>
	<b>County Property Tax<sup>7</sup></b>
	<b>Unemployment Rate</b>
	<b>Total Labor Force</b>
	<b>Poverty Rate</b>
	<b>Food Insecurity Rate<sup>8</sup></b>

	County	NC
Median Household Income	<b>\$33,017</b>	<b>\$47,830<sup>9</sup></b>
Per Capita Personal Income	<b>\$31,361</b>	<b>\$40,759</b>
Per Capita Living Wage <sup>6</sup>	<b>\$22,006</b>	<b>\$22,797</b>
County Property Tax <sup>7</sup>	<b>\$.79/\$100</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Unemployment Rate	<b>7%</b>	<b>4.90%</b>
Total Labor Force	<b>16,883</b>	<b>4,920,437<sup>10</sup></b>
Poverty Rate	<b>28.70%</b>	<b>17.2%<sup>11</sup></b>
Food Insecurity Rate <sup>8</sup>	<b>21%</b>	<b>16.5%</b>

LARGEST PRIVATE SECTOR EMPLOYERS <sup>5</sup>	
Perdue Products Inc	CHSPSC LLC
First Health of The Carolinas Inc	Cascades Holding Us
Burlington Industries V LLC	Superior Cranes Inc
Wal-Mart Associates Inc	Food Lion
Plastek Industries Inc	Hood Packaging Corp

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT <sup>1</sup>	
High School or more	80.6%
Bachelor Degree or more	12.8%
High School Dropout rate	3.27% <sup>12</sup>

## HIGHER EDUCATION



# ROBESON COUNTY DATA SHEET

## ROBESON COUNTY, NC

County Seat: Lumberton (21,499)

Founded in 1787



### SOURCES

1. Stats America 2015-16
2. NC Office of Bud & Mgt
3. Suburban Stats 2016
4. Data USA 2015
5. nccomm.com 2015
6. livingwage.mit.edu
7. NC Dept of Rev 2016-17
8. Southeastern Univ Consortium
9. Census, ACS 2015
10. Bureau of Labor & Stats 2016
11. Center for Am. Progress 2015
12. Public Schools of NC Annual Dropout Report 2015-16

POPULATION	2010 Census	Female <sup>3</sup>	Median Age
	<b>134,168</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>35</b>
	2016 Estimate	Male <sup>3</sup>	Age 65+
	<b>133,235</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>13.0%</b>
	Growth in population since 2010 census	Minority	Under 18
	<b>-0.7%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>26%</b>
2020/2030 Proj. <sup>2</sup>			
	<b>132,087 / 129,510</b>		

HOUSING	Median Property Value <sup>4</sup>
	<b>\$70,200</b>
	Homeowner Vacancy Rate <sup>5</sup>
	<b>1.50%</b>
	Rental Vacancy Rate <sup>5</sup>
<b>6.40%</b>	
Occupied Housing Units <sup>1</sup>	
<b>45,773</b>	

ECONOMIC	Median Household Income
	<b>\$32,128</b>
	Per Capita Personal Income
	<b>\$27,487</b>
	Per Capita Living Wage <sup>6</sup>
	<b>\$21,278</b>
	County Property Tax <sup>7</sup>
	<b>\$0.77/\$100</b>
Unemployment Rate	
<b>7.9%</b>	
Total Labor Force	
<b>50,767</b>	
Poverty Rate	
<b>30.60%</b>	
Food Insecurity Rate <sup>8</sup>	
<b>23%</b>	

	County	NC
Median Household Income	<b>\$32,128</b>	<b>\$47,830<sup>9</sup></b>
Per Capita Personal Income	<b>\$27,487</b>	<b>\$40,759</b>
Per Capita Living Wage <sup>6</sup>	<b>\$21,278</b>	<b>\$22,797</b>
County Property Tax <sup>7</sup>	<b>\$0.77/\$100</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Unemployment Rate	<b>7.9%</b>	<b>4.90%</b>
Total Labor Force	<b>50,767</b>	<b>4,920,437<sup>10</sup></b>
Poverty Rate	<b>30.60%</b>	<b>17.2%<sup>11</sup></b>
Food Insecurity Rate <sup>8</sup>	<b>23%</b>	<b>16.5%</b>

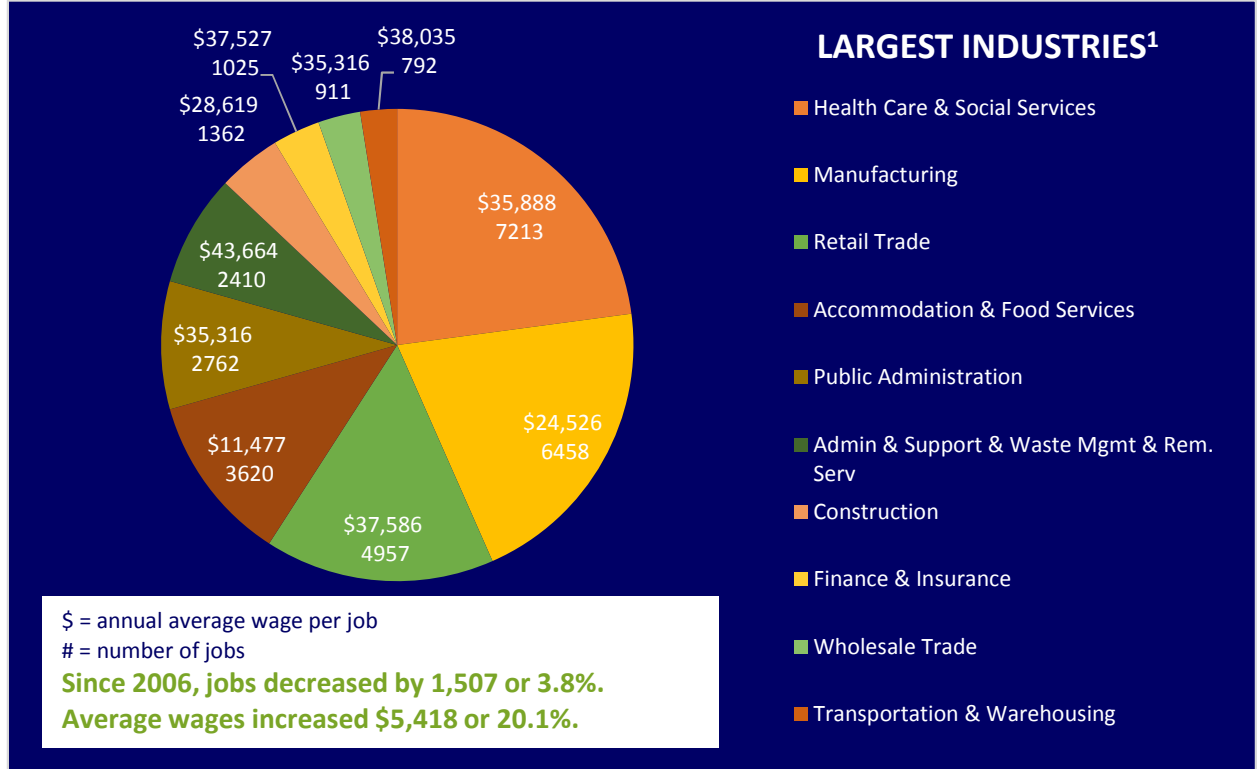
LARGEST PRIVATE SECTOR EMPLOYERS <sup>5</sup>	
Mountaire Farms of NC Inc	The Staffing Alliance LLC
Southeastern Reg. Medical Ctr.	BB&T
Wal-Mart Associates Inc.	Kayser-Roth Corporation
Campbell Soup Supply Co. LLC	Primary Health Choice
Two Hawk Employment Services	Prestage Foods

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT <sup>1</sup>	
High School or more	75.1%
Bachelor Degree or more	12.8%
High School Dropout rate	1.71% <sup>12</sup>

## HIGHER EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY of NORTH CAROLINA  
PEMBROKE

ROBESON  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE



# SAMPSON COUNTY DATA SHEET

## SAMPSON COUNTY, NC


County Seat: Clinton (8,674)

Founded in 1784



### SOURCES

1. Stats America 2015-16
2. NC Office of Bud & Mgt
3. Suburban Stats 2016
4. Data USA 2015
5. nccomm.com 2015
6. livingwage.mit.edu
7. NC Dept of Rev 2016-17
8. Southeastern Univ Consortium
9. Census, ACS 2015
10. Bureau of Labor & Stats 2016
11. Center for Am. Progress 2015
12. Public Schools of NC Annual Dropout Report 2015-16

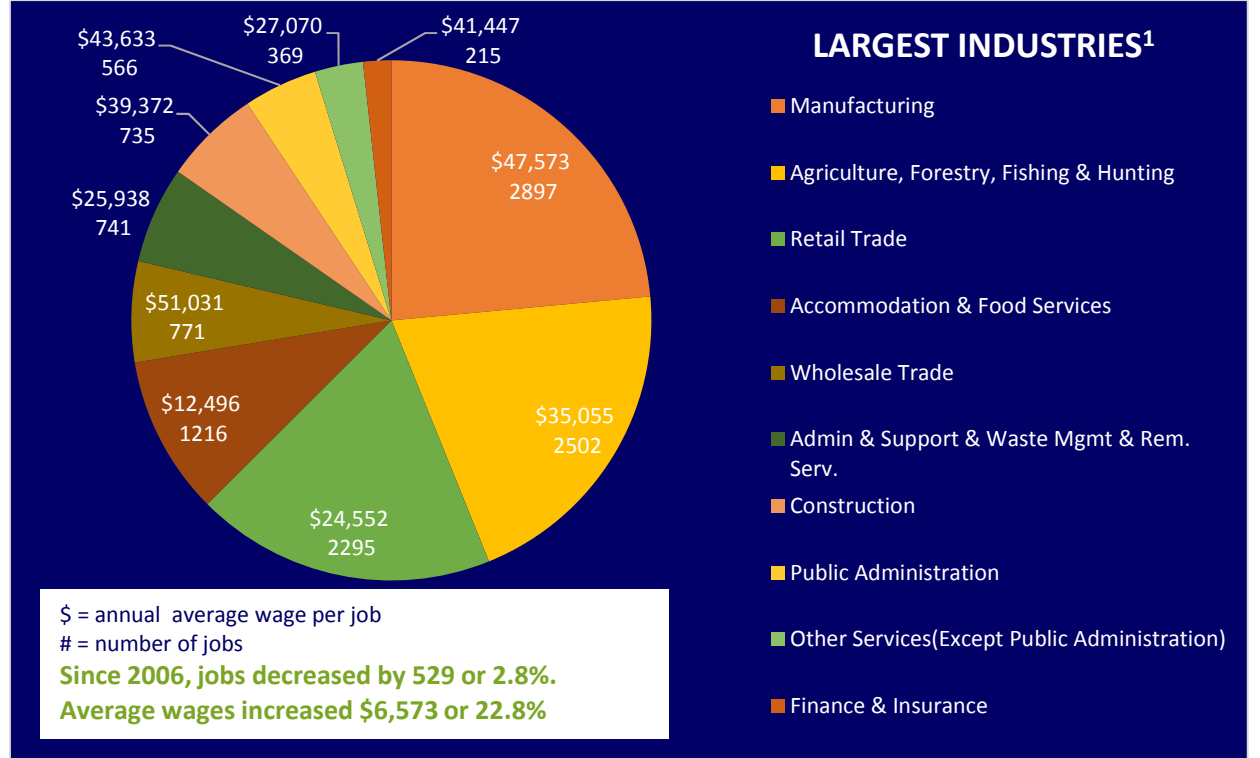
POPULATION	2010 Census	Female <sup>3</sup>	Median Age
	<b>63,431</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>39</b>
	2016 Estimate	Male <sup>3</sup>	Age 65+
	<b>63,124</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>16.0%</b>
	Growth in population since 2010 census	Minority	Under 18
	<b>-0.5%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>25%</b>
2020/2030 Proj. <sup>2</sup>			
	<b>63,992 / 63,994</b>		

HOUSING	Median Property Value <sup>4</sup>
	<b>\$87,600</b>
	Homeowner Vacancy Rate <sup>5</sup>
	<b>1.70%</b>
	Rental Vacancy Rate <sup>5</sup>
<b>6.70%</b>	
Occupied Housing Units <sup>1</sup>	
<b>27,166</b>	

ECONOMIC	Median Household Income
	<b>\$40,660</b>
	Per Capita Personal Income
	<b>\$35,357</b>
	Per Capita Living Wage <sup>6</sup>
	<b>\$20,176</b>
	County Property Tax <sup>7</sup>
	<b>\$0.825/\$100</b>
Unemployment Rate	
<b>5.4%</b>	
Total Labor Force	
<b>29,801</b>	
Poverty Rate	
<b>21.40%</b>	
Food Insecurity Rate <sup>8</sup>	
<b>17%</b>	

	County	NC
Median Household Income	<b>\$40,660</b>	<b>\$47,830<sup>9</sup></b>
Per Capita Personal Income	<b>\$35,357</b>	<b>\$40,759</b>
Per Capita Living Wage <sup>6</sup>	<b>\$20,176</b>	<b>\$22,797</b>
County Property Tax <sup>7</sup>	<b>\$0.825/\$100</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Unemployment Rate	<b>5.4%</b>	<b>4.90%</b>
Total Labor Force	<b>29,801</b>	<b>4,920,437<sup>10</sup></b>
Poverty Rate	<b>21.40%</b>	<b>17.2%<sup>11</sup></b>
Food Insecurity Rate <sup>8</sup>	<b>17%</b>	<b>16.5%</b>

LARGEST PRIVATE SECTOR EMPLOYERS <sup>5</sup>	
Smithfield Foods, Inc.	Liberty Healthcare Grp
Prestage Farms Inc	Piggly Wiggly
Hog Slat Co. Inc	McDonalds
Sampson Reg. Medical Center	Golden Fleece Mfg
Wal-Mart Associates Inc.	Temporary Connections



### EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT<sup>1</sup>

High School or more	75.2%
Bachelor Degree or more	12.4%
High School Dropout rate	2.26% <sup>12</sup>

## HIGHER EDUCATION



# SCOTLAND COUNTY DATA SHEET

## SCOTLAND COUNTY, NC

County Seat: Laurinburg (15,473)

Founded in 1812



### SOURCES

1. Stats America 2015-16
2. NC Office of Bud & Mgt
3. Suburban Stats 2016
4. Data USA 2015
5. nccomm.com 2015
6. livingwage.mit.edu
7. NC Dept of Rev 2016-17
8. Southeastern Univ Consortium
9. Census, ACS 2015
10. Bureau of Labor & Stats 2016
11. Center for Am. Progress 2015
12. Public Schools of NC Annual Dropout Report 2015-16

POPULATION	2010 Census	Female <sup>3</sup>	Median Age
	<b>36,157</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>39</b>
	2016 Estimate	Male <sup>3</sup>	Age 65+
	<b>35,244</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>15.0%</b>
	Growth in population since 2010 census	Minority	Under 18
	<b>-2.5%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>24%</b>
2020/2030 Proj. <sup>2</sup>			
	<b>34,933 / 33,189</b>		

HOUSING	Median Property Value <sup>4</sup>
	<b>\$79,100</b>
	Homeowner Vacancy Rate <sup>5</sup>
	<b>2.20%</b>
	Rental Vacancy Rate <sup>5</sup>
<b>6.00%</b>	
Occupied Housing Units <sup>1</sup>	
<b>12,996</b>	

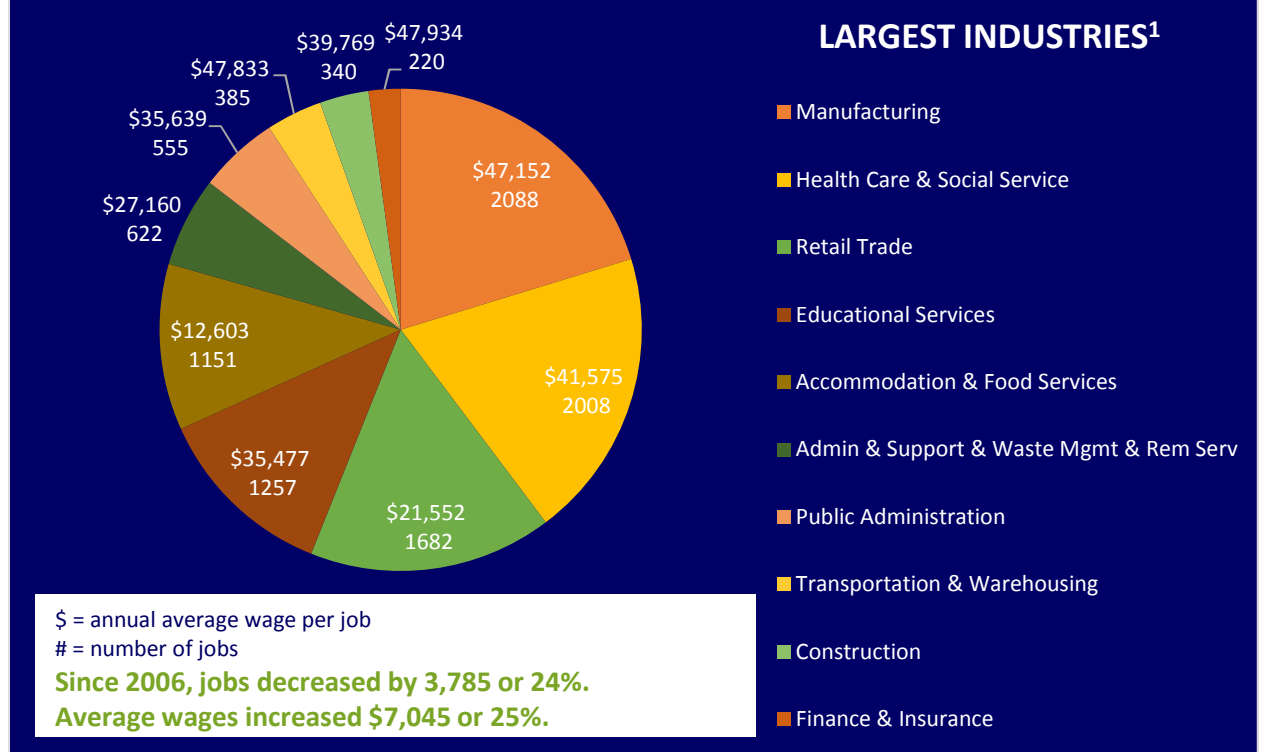
ECONOMIC	Median Household Income
	<b>\$35,447</b>
	Per Capita Personal Income
	<b>\$30,625</b>
	Per Capita Living Wage <sup>6</sup>
	<b>\$21,382</b>
	County Property Tax <sup>7</sup>
	<b>\$1.02/\$100</b>
Unemployment Rate	
<b>9.2%</b>	
Total Labor Force	
<b>11,693</b>	
Poverty Rate	
<b>29.00%</b>	
Food Insecurity Rate <sup>8</sup>	
<b>26%</b>	

	County	NC
Median Household Income	<b>\$35,447</b>	<b>\$47,830<sup>9</sup></b>
Per Capita Personal Income	<b>\$30,625</b>	<b>\$40,759</b>
Per Capita Living Wage <sup>6</sup>	<b>\$21,382</b>	<b>\$22,797</b>
County Property Tax <sup>7</sup>	<b>\$1.02/\$100</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Unemployment Rate	<b>9.2%</b>	<b>4.90%</b>
Total Labor Force	<b>11,693</b>	<b>4,920,437<sup>10</sup></b>
Poverty Rate	<b>29.00%</b>	<b>17.2%<sup>11</sup></b>
Food Insecurity Rate <sup>8</sup>	<b>26%</b>	<b>16.5%</b>

LARGEST PRIVATE SECTOR EMPLOYERS <sup>5</sup>	
Scotland Memorial Hospital	Farmers Furniture Co.
Fcc(North Carolina) LLC	St. Andrews Pres. College
Wal-Mart Associates Inc	Hanesbrands, Inc.
Pilkington North America Inc	Meritor Heavy Veh. Sys.
Maverick Transportation LLC	The Presbyterian Home

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT <sup>1</sup>	
High School or more	78.7%
Bachelor Degree or more	15.8%
High School Dropout rate	2.5% <sup>12</sup>

## HIGHER EDUCATION



# ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

According to the US Economic Development Administration (EDA), Economic Resilience is the ability to recover quickly from a shock, the ability to withstand a shock, and the ability to avoid a shock altogether. In this section, we have prepared a framework for Economic Resilience that provides an approach for becoming better prepared for future disasters, including economic, manmade and natural, recovering from disasters, and then transitioning back to steady state. The framework is depicted in the following diagram, and each of the three phases are further described in the following narrative.



## Purpose

The purpose of this section is to define Economic Resilience and provide a guide to increase economic resilience in the region.

## Prepare

Various economic shock factors have varying levels of severity and devastation, including natural disaster; major stock market fluctuations; economic downturns and recessions; government shutdowns; availability

of funds for grants; terrorist attacks; and substantial fluctuations in supplies, as examples. Each of these types of shocks should be considered when the following actions are considered and planned for.

## Strategies to Develop a More Resilient Economy

The following pre- and post-shock actions will help to develop a more resilient economy:

- Prepare plans that allow the community to absorb, respond, adapt, and recover to pre-shock conditions.
- Develop a long-term strategy to diversify and expand the regional industrial base.
- Develop personal relationships and reliable communication avenues with top employers in the region (See Appendix A for list of top 10 employers in each County).
- Develop personal relationships and a communication strategy for small businesses in the region.
- Focus efforts on strengthening existing businesses, especially high-growth businesses.
- Increase availability of “baseline” business information. Develop inventory with contact information for businesses within jurisdiction.
- Increase communications between local government, emergency management, utilities, and the business community.
- Partner with community colleges and the university system to establish nimble workforce development programs that

can prepare residents for the future economy, but also quickly react to shocks and help to retrain residents for the new normal.

- Develop a procurement strategy and team who are authorized to procure goods and services from local providers in the event of an emergency. There should be a database of local suppliers and services. The procurement team should have a working knowledge and understanding of FEMA procurement and reimbursement rules.
- Develop responsive initiatives that define key stakeholders, roles, responsibilities, and actions. In addition, establish a system for regular communication, monitoring, and updating of business community needs and issues.
- Steady-state initiatives diversify the economic base of the region, making the entire region more adaptable and better able to withstand or avoid a shock.

## Recovery

While the recovery plans will be uniquely defined based on the type of shock that occurs, the information in this section centers on the devastation that resulted from our most recent shock, Hurricane Matthew. In the wake of Hurricane Matthew, the affected communities, in collaboration with the NC Department of Public Safety, have developed a resilient rebuilding plan tailored to each County. These plans go into detailed information for each County and delineate

# ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

the major areas of impact and devastation that need to be addressed and specific projects that have been identified to address the impacted areas. For detailed information, please visit the redevelopment plan website below:

<https://rebuild.nc.gov/HurricaneMatthew/Programs/RedevelopmentPlans>

The following chart outlines the number of rebuilding projects identified in the four priority areas (Housing, Economic Development, Infrastructure, and Environment) in each County:

Bladen	Brunswick	Columbus	Cumberland
Housing 2 Econ. Dev. 4 Infrastructure 6 Environment 3	Housing 1 Econ. Dev. 0 Infrastructure 19 Environment 2	Housing 2 Econ. Dev. 3 Infrastructure 9 Environment 3	Housing 3 Econ. Dev. 3 Infrastructure 8 Environment 4
Harnett	Hoke	New Hanover	Pender
Housing 2 Econ. Dev. 3 Infrastructure 3 Environment 2	Housing 3 Econ. Dev. 4 Infrastructure 4 Environment 5	Housing 1 Econ. Dev. 1 Infrastructure 10 Environment 4	Housing 6 Econ. Dev. 3 Infrastructure 5 Environment 3
Richmond	Robeson	Sampson	Scotland
Housing 3 Econ. Dev. 2 Infrastructure 5 Environment 6	Housing 7 Econ. Dev. 4 Infrastructure 30 Environment 6	Housing 5 Econ. Dev. 9 Infrastructure 4 Environment 4	Housing 3 Econ. Dev. 4 Infrastructure 4 Environment 3

Projects that were identified include both short-term immediate needs, as well as long-term resiliency efforts that address the four areas. Some examples of identified needs include:

- Relatively All Counties
  - ⇒ Environment—Stream restoration
  - ⇒ Infrastructure—Stream gauges, early warning systems and communication network for operators, backup power generators for critical infrastructure,

and storm water planning and infrastructure improvements.

- ⇒ Housing—Adequate and affordable housing
- ⇒ Economic Development—Overall infrastructure improvements to make communities more desirable to current and future residents
- Bladen County
  - ⇒ Economic Development—Revitalize downtown Bladenboro
  - ⇒ Infrastructure—Improve grid system and backup power
  - ⇒ Environment—Stream restoration improvements
- Brunswick County
  - ⇒ Infrastructure—Various water, sewer, storm water, bridge and road improvements for communities in the County, i.e. water system and sewer extension to industrial mega sites in partnership with Columbus County
- Columbus County
  - ⇒ Infrastructure—Back-up generators for public facilities and various storm water improvements
  - ⇒ Housing—Provide affordable housing
  - ⇒ Economic Development—Downtown Rehabilitation/Revitalization Projects for Fair Bluff, Whiteville and Chadbourn
- Cumberland County
  - ⇒ Economic Development—Cumberland County Qualified Local Contractor Program for Reconstruction
  - ⇒ Infrastructure—Flood protection and backup power
- Harnett County
  - ⇒ Infrastructure—Storm water management/culvert upgrades, backup power, and critical response equipment
- ⇒ Economic Development—Transportation improvements
- Hoke County
  - ⇒ Economic Development—Increase eco-tourism
  - ⇒ Economic Development—Agriculture alternative power supply
  - ⇒ Economic Development—Downtown Raeford revitalization
- New Hanover County
  - ⇒ Infrastructure—New Hanover County logistics/emergency management center
  - ⇒ Environment—Expansion of recreation land/preservation of floodplain
  - ⇒ Economic Development—Create resilient employment center
- Pender County
  - ⇒ Housing—Increase available housing assistance and availability
  - ⇒ Infrastructure—Address flooding and draining and flood warning
- Richmond County
  - ⇒ Infrastructure—Planning for power generation capabilities, resources, and identifying projects, as well as existing building stock and jail facility capacity.
  - ⇒ Environment—Expand community gardening to improve public health and quality of life as well as providing fresh produce for impoverished households
- Robeson County
  - ⇒ Infrastructure—Improve water

# ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

supply assets including water treatment facility, system, and storage improvements, and water supply planning; upgrade roads and bridges; restore school facilities; and watershed planning.

- Sampson County
  - ⇒ Infrastructure—Relocate County Emergency Services office
  - ⇒ Housing—Acquire land through public/private partnership to create a land bank for relocation and redevelopment
  - ⇒ Economic Development—Establish Small Farm Development Fund
  - ⇒ Economic Development—Develop a local Small Business Grant/Revolving Loan Program for low-income business owners
- Scotland County
  - ⇒ Economic Development—Identify leading causes and development of outreach campaign to address “brain drain” in Scotland County
  - ⇒ Infrastructure—Fund an additional power substation and study for the implementation of a micro-grid
  - ⇒ Infrastructure—Assess the County’s overall infrastructure

The actions contained within the redevelopment plans for each county are prioritized based on community input. Tactics will change with each shock, so there should be in place a system for assessing and prioritizing recovery efforts in order to ensure that the most pressing issues are addressed first.

There should be a detailed procurement plan in place that sources local suppliers and providers in the immediate aftermath of a shock, but especially a natural/manmade disaster. Supply routes, highways, and airports could be shut down, so there should be local supplier identified prior to a disaster occurring. In addition, procurement of goods and services should be conducted in accordance with standards that allow for FEMA reimbursement; therefore, the procurement team should have a working knowledge and understanding of FEMA procurement standards. There should also be a list of resources prepared and made generally available to the public that outlines who to call for support during times of disaster.

industry leaders, county and local leaders, and state emergency management personnel participate in these table-top exercises to assess the strength and weaknesses of the resiliency plan. Following the exercise, officials should correct the plan where possible and acknowledge any potential shortcomings.

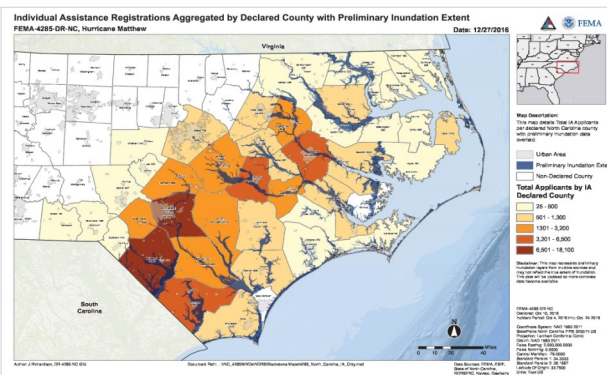
Assessments should occur during and after a shock. What parts of the plan were helpful for this shock? What parts of the plan were not helpful? How can the plan be improved based upon the region’s ability to withstand or avoid the shock? With a constructive critical analysis of lessons learned, the plan can be improved after every table-top exercise and every shock.

## New Normal

Following the immediate recovery period, the regional partners should return to steady-state initiatives in order to resume the long-term efforts to diversify, strengthen, and develop a more adaptable economy. Efforts should be prioritized based on the shock, but should include local business outreach to update the local business inventory. More than 50% of businesses do not reopen after a disaster. Regional, national and global economic shifts can have devastating effects on local economies. The region’s ability to work toward an agile steady-state will be measured by the economy and amount of businesses that survive a shock, as well as the ability to adapt to the new normal following a shock with a rebuilt economy. The more effort put into the steady-state, the more resilient the regional economy is likely to be.

## Assess

A vital component to any action plan is to assess the effectiveness of a plan. Economic Resiliency is an ongoing effort. While shocks occur infrequently and are almost always unexpected, there are ways to assess resiliency plans in the absence of an actual shock. One way to assess the plan absent an actual shock is to conduct table-top exercises. The goal would be to have business and





# STRATEGIC DIRECTION

## Action Plan

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) document was created by the Southeastern Economic Development Commission as part of a region-wide effort to assess, define, and accomplish the economic development goals of the region. In turn, the CEDS helps to serve as a guide for regional economic development efforts by outlining the overarching goals, objectives, and strategies that were formulated through the regional visioning meetings, SWOT analyses, previous CEDS plans, one-on-one discussions with stakeholders, and review of other local and regional strategic plans. The Action Plan aligns with the NC Tomorrow statewide plan that identifies regional and statewide strategies for resilient economic and community development. NC Tomorrow metrics are marked with an asterisk (\*).

The plan of action will implement the goals, objectives and strategies of the CEDS in a manner that:

- a. promotes economic development and opportunity,
- b. fosters effective transportation access,
- c. enhances and protects the environment,
- d. maximizes effective development and use of the workforce consistent with any applicable state or local workforce investment strategies,
- e. promotes the use of technology in economic development, including access to high-speed telecommunications; balances resources through sound management of physical development, and
- f. obtains and utilizes adequate funds and other resources.

On the following pages, the goals, strategies, and objectives are listed—including performance measures to be used to ensure progress is made on a consistent basis.

**GOAL 1:** Build on the region's competitive advantages and leverage the marketplace.

**GOAL 2:** Establish and maintain a robust regional infrastructure, including affordable, adequate housing.

**GOAL 3:** Create revitalized and vibrant communities.

**GOAL 4:** Develop a healthy, skilled and vibrant workforce.

**GOAL 5:** Encourage entrepreneurs and small business growth, support existing businesses, and attract new employers in the region.

# COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

## GOAL 1

### Build on the region's competitive advantages and leverage the marketplace

Cultivating sustainable economic opportunities in the region requires strategies for promoting and enhancing the region's assets and products.

The development process for the CEDS plan included regional visioning and SWOT analysis meetings that helped identify the region's competitive economic clusters. Other regional plans were reviewed to help identify the economic clusters for the Region, such as the three-year Strategic Marketing Plan (2017-2020) prepared by The Southeastern Partnership. The Partnership provides strong economic development leadership in southeastern North Carolina through innovative marketing and collaborative regional initiatives that support the creation of new jobs, generate capital investment, and secure new business locations. The SEDC is an active member of The Southeastern Partnership which provides opportunities to develop relationships with public and private allies and partners that work together at the local, regional, and state levels. The SEDC believes that a fully collaborative effort yields the best results.

This plan supports the continued evolution of existing and emerging industry clusters within the region. Industry clusters that have been the focus for growth and development in the

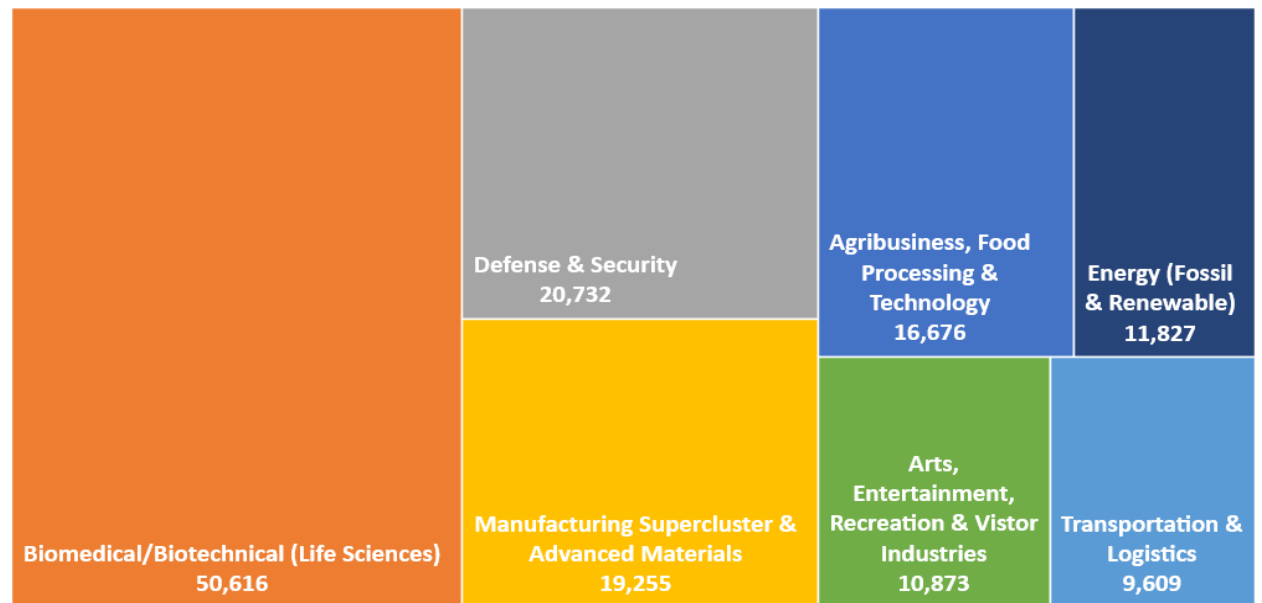
region are listed below.

#### *Eight Key Economic Clusters for SEDC Region*

1. Advanced Manufacturing
2. Food Processing and value-added Agribusiness
3. Biotechnology & Life Sciences
4. Healthcare
5. Defense
6. Tourism
7. Transportation and Logistics
8. Energy

The advanced manufacturing cluster encompasses all high-tech manufacturing business, including those such as Building Products, Advanced Textiles, Aviation and Aerospace, and Metalworking. The region was once known for its highly-skilled metalworkers. The loss of manufacturing jobs in the region has reduced its workforce numbers. With the changes brought about by globalization and the potential for manufacturing reshoring, rebuilding this sector is vital to create jobs in the region.<sup>6</sup>

#### INNOVATION DATA: INDUSTRY CLUSTERS 2012



<sup>6</sup><http://www.statsamerica.org/innovation/index.html>

# COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

## GOAL 1

### Build on the region's competitive advantages and leverage the marketplace

Agriculture—both in farming and food processing—remains a dominant industry not only in terms of acres under production, but also in employment and value of product to the regional economy. The counties of Sampson (#1), Robeson (#5) and Bladen (#6) all ranked within the top ten counties state-wide in farm cash receipts in 2015.<sup>7</sup>

Assistance with diversification strategies are needed to ensure future employment and income in the region.

The region is home to the largest food processing facility for swine in the world. Smithfield Foods, located in Bladen County, is one of the region's largest employer supporting over 5,000 employees. Four other food processing facilities are located in the region—Butterball (Hoke), Perdue Farms (Richmond), Mountaire Farms (Robeson) and a second Smithfield Foods in Sampson County—with employment over 1,000 at each location.

Biotechnology is a science which is grounded in the study and principals of the biological sciences – cells, proteins and genes. Biotechnology research and manufacturing aids in growing our food, developing medicines and energy-efficient alternative fuels. Investments in biotechnology enterprises and research are growing in the region

accounting for more than 50,000 jobs in the region. The total economic impact of the sector is \$2.2 billion—the largest leading sector in the region.<sup>8</sup> Wilmington, the county seat of New Hanover County, has one of the largest clusters of contract research organizations (CRO) in the state and nation.

Additionally, the University of North Carolina at Wilmington's CREST Research Park, is home to the 69,000-square foot interdisciplinary MARBIONC research facility that advances



new marine biotechnology discoveries and ensures the timely transfer of technology from the laboratory to the marketplace. Agricultural biotech is growing due to the region's strong agricultural base and network of universities and community colleges engaged in biotech research and business assistance through bio-accelerators. The North Carolina Biotechnology Center has a regional office in Wilmington to lead development in this sector.

Within the SEDC region, healthcare is the major employment sector. The sector generated over \$805 million in total wages during the fourth quarter of 2016—more than any other sector of employment.<sup>8</sup>

Manufacturing (\$495 million) and public administration (\$422 million) place second and third, respectively.<sup>8</sup> Job growth is expected to continue in this cluster to meet the growing demand for service. Support for this economic driver of our economy is vital to strengthen the industry cluster.

The Defense cluster encompasses the defense-related companies and contractors in the region that compete for annual obligation authority for defense contracts from the US Army Forces Command (FORSCOM). The

<sup>7</sup>[https://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics\\_by\\_State/North\\_Carolina/Publications/Annual\\_Statistical\\_Bulletin/AgStat/Section03.pdf](https://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/North_Carolina/Publications/Annual_Statistical_Bulletin/AgStat/Section03.pdf)  
<sup>8</sup><http://d4.nccommerce.com/QCEWSelection.aspx>

# COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

## GOAL 1

### Build on the Region's competitive advantages and leverage the marketplace

benefits of military spending are evident through the defense contracts valued at more than \$1.4 billion that were awarded in the region in FY2015—impacting every single county in the region. Businesses in the region have received over \$4.6 billion in military contracts since 2000.<sup>9</sup>

Companies based in Cumberland County, which is home to Fort Bragg, a military installation of the United States Army and the largest military installation in the world (by population) with more than 50,000 active duty personnel, won 66 percent of the contracts in FY2015. New Hanover County received 12 percent of the region's total awards, while defense contractors in Hoke



T. Lengner, Venus Fly Traps in micropropagation lab at Southeastern Community College.

County captured 11 percent. In FY2015, more than 7,055 military contracts were awarded in the region.<sup>9</sup>

The tourism industry is a vital component of the regional economy. Tourism benefits each of the region's twelve counties. The region's natural scenic beauty, rich history, arts and culture, outdoor adventure, major military presence, vibrant cities and quaint small towns, and central east coast location make it an ideal travel destination. Direct air access into the state from national and international markets has helped to position it as a preferred international travel destination. In 2015, domestic travelers spent a record \$21.9 billion across the state, a 3 percent increase over 2014, supporting more than 211,490 jobs for North Carolina residents. State and local tax revenues generated as a result of visitor spending totals more than \$1.78 billion annually.<sup>10</sup> Nationally, North Carolina ranks as the 6th most visited state. Enhanced promotion of the heritage, natural resources and destination will encourage growth in tourism.

Efficient and effective transportation of raw materials and end products is crucial to the economic success of the region. The presence of major four-lane highways, rail, airports

and water transport through ports located on the coast make this group of twelve counties a prime location for transportation and logistics businesses. Our region ranks behind the state's major metropolitan areas of Charlotte, the Research Triangle region, and the Piedmont Triad region for employment in this sector. However, transportation advantages coupled with the supply of vacant buildings makes the region highly marketable to transportation and logistic companies. Today, the ability to integrate the means of shipping and to have strategically available warehousing is essential to managing costs and remaining competitive in the global marketplace. The presence of the Port of Wilmington enhances the location advantage for export and import of products.

The region is becoming a rich area for emerging and diversified energy companies. Examples of energy development include natural gas, bio-fuels, bio-mass and animal waste regeneration; solar panel and wind turbine component manufacturing; and solar panel fields. Bio-energy companies such as Chemtex, and Enviva have located facilities in the region. GE's nuclear energy research and development and component manufacturing division is headquartered in Wilmington.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup><http://www.ncmbc.us/wp-content/uploads/FY-2015-Federal-DoD-County-Totals.pdf>  
<sup>10</sup><http://media.visitnc.com/news/tourism-statistics-for-north-carolina>

<sup>11</sup><http://www.ncse.org/regional-profile/regional-profile>

### Build on the region's competitive advantages and leverage the marketplace

With limited funding available for economic development investment, the region must focus on helping industries grow faster to attract and retain additional investment in the region by developing regionally significant initiatives for each of its eight key economic clusters.

**Objective 1: Promote the regional clusters of economic development to enhance competitive advantages.**

- 1.1 Strengthen partnerships between the community colleges, universities and strategic target industries to develop regionally based programs
- 1.2 Facilitate partnerships with business leaders in target sectors to address industry needs for retention and expansion.

**Objective 2: Leverage the regional competitive advantages.**

- 2.1 Promote tourism & economic activities through increased social media, website interaction, travel writers and media outlets.
- 2.2 Develop an alternative energy and agricultural biotechnology complex.
- 2.3 Promote the region's natural heritages and resources.
- 2.4 Provide technical assistance to inventory vacant buildings and analyze feasibility for renovation and reuse.
- 2.5 Advance logistics and distribution sector to leverage the region's assets, including Port of Wilmington, regional airports, industrial sites for distribution and logistics and the highway network connection.

**Objective 3: Encourage collaboration in marketing regional assets.**

- 3.1 Analyze the existing and potential improved place brand for the region.
- 3.2 Develop a regional comprehensive marketing plan for the region.
- 3.3 Support international business recruitment and development.

**Objective 4: Identify new adaptive capabilities of the regional economy**

- 4.1 Support the development of a food processing initiative to add value to local foods.
- 4.2 Support the development of a regional biogas aggregator to support conversion of waste to energy.
- 4.3 Develop an existing industry taskforce to help companies consider ways to convert waste/by-products to useful products.
- 4.4 Promote the region's forest resources and wood waste (slash) as renewable energy sources.
- 4.5 Provide technical assistance for development of a business and industry campus at key interstate connections, i.e. I-95 and I-74 in Lumberton.
- 4.6 Support the development of businesses focused on environmental sustainability and the environmental

sustainability of existing businesses, i.e. energy efficiency, clean tech, recycling.

### PERFORMANCE MEASURES

#### MILESTONES

- Complete regional brand analysis.
- Complete regional comprehensive marketing plan.
- Complete inventory of vacant buildings and potential for reuse.

#### METRICS

- Revenue growth for key sectors.\*
- Increase of efforts across the region to strengthen regional identity.
- Number of jobs generated by target sectors.\*
- Increase volume of wood pellet exports.
- Number of international businesses recruited and/or developed in the region.
- Increase of cultural and natural heritage tourism opportunities.
- Increase in environmental sustainable businesses and practices.

# REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

## GOAL 2

### Establish and maintain a robust regional infrastructure

Highly functional and integrated infrastructure is required to support economic growth and development in the 21st century. To compete successfully in the global economy, the region must have infrastructure systems that are both highly functional and available for strategic use, but also meet the basic needs of the residents in the region. Infrastructure services are essential to economic production and the activities of households. This reality becomes painfully evident when natural disasters destroy infrastructure systems. Infrastructure represents, if not the engine, then the wheels of economic activity in the region.

Transportation infrastructure—highways, railways, airports, maritime facilities—and water and waste water systems provide vital services to residents of the region. They also form a network essential to attract new business and industry and support our existing business community. The current condition of much of the infrastructure in the region is like that across most of North Carolina and the nation—it is in need of investment and repair. Infrastructure investments have been made in the region, through private and public sources, but there is much remaining to be accomplished.

Interstates 95 and 40, together with US

Highway 74, form a triangle of major highway access across the region. They stretch from Fayetteville to Wilmington and from Wilmington west toward Charlotte. Interstate 95 is a major north-south transportation corridor for the east coast. US Highway 74—our major east-west highway—has been designated by the NC Department of Transportation as a Strategic Transportation Corridor (STC). The designation recognizes the significance of this corridor to the future economic growth of the region and the State. Interstate 74 exists in a disconnected segment in the region. Future Interstate 74 is not scheduled for completion until after 2027.<sup>12</sup>

Many opportunities for coordination exist between the Rural Transportation Planning Organizations and the Metropolitan Planning Organizations that serve the region.

Within the region, challenges with both high speed internet service and broadband width—the amount of data that can be carried over fiber—exist and stymie economic development. The ability of our citizens, businesses and industries to communicate effectively and quickly via internet underpins the economic success of the region. Broadband is essential to attract, retain, and

expand job creation and private investment by businesses and industries in the region. According to North Carolina's Broadband Plan, counties struggling with economic development, high unemployment and aging populations correlate strongly with those with insufficient broadband infrastructure.<sup>13</sup>

As reported during the regional visioning and strategy meetings, housing availability is a significant problem in certain communities across the region. For the rural, inland counties where poverty rates are high, mobile homes represent a more affordable housing option than stick-built homes. In Bladen, Columbus, Robeson and Sampson counties, mobile homes make up a third of the occupied housing, according to the 2010 Census.

Affordability is also a reported problem in the region. The challenge of housing affordability in the region is present when examining the number of households paying more than 30 percent of their income for housing. This is a widely accepted measure of affordability in the house industry. According to the 2010 Census, 43 percent of households, in owner-occupied housing were cost burdened in the region. The figure is a staggering 51 percent of rental-occupied housing in the region.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup>[https://connect.ncdot.gov/projects/planning/TPB%20Documents/Strategic\\_Corridors\\_Fact\\_Sheet.pdf](https://connect.ncdot.gov/projects/planning/TPB%20Documents/Strategic_Corridors_Fact_Sheet.pdf)

<sup>13</sup>[https://ncbroadband.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/NC-Broadband-Plan\\_2017\\_Online\\_FINAL\\_PNGs3www.pdf](https://ncbroadband.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/NC-Broadband-Plan_2017_Online_FINAL_PNGs3www.pdf)

<sup>14</sup><https://www.indexmundi.com/facts/united-states/quick-facts/north-carolina/housing-units#table>

### Establish and maintain a robust regional infrastructure

Providing infrastructure services to meet the demands of businesses, households, and other users is one of the major challenges of economic development. The region has insufficient broadband service in the rural areas of the region. Water and waste water facilities are aging or at capacity in the region. Housing availability and affordability continues to be a significant deficiency across the region.

**Objective 1: Facilitate multi-modal transportation planning to address existing and future capacity deficiencies in the region.**

- 1.1 Develop multi-modal and/or public transportation comprehensive plans for all twelve counties.
- 1.2 Facilitate planning for priority multi-modal infrastructure across the region.

**Objective 2: Identify and upgrade the infrastructure systems in the region—including water, waste water, power, transportation, rail, natural gas and housing.**

- 2.1 Complete regionally and locally significant high priority infrastructure projects, i.e. I-74
- 2.2 Address the needs of utility systems facing moratoria and Standard orders of consent limits on new users.
- 2.3 Support development of digital mapping capacity for water and waste water systems and utilities.
- 2.4 Support the development of regional water and waste water systems.
- 2.5 Support the development of a regional air freight terminal.
- 2.6 Support the development of more robust natural gas distribution

**Objective 3: Strategically expand the broadband infrastructure to support sustainable growth.**

- 3.1 Establish a regional public/private broadband task force.
- 3.2 Develop a comprehensive assessment, or lack of, current broadband access, bandwidth and challenges across the region.

**Objective 4: Increase equitable and affordable housing choices across the region.**

- 4.1 Conduct an inventory of housing related programs and organizations within the region.
- 4.2 Inventory available, affordable and quality housing choices based upon the demographic profile of each county within the region.

**Objective 5: Enhance capacity of the NC Ports to meet the needs of the region and state in the changing, global economy.**

- 5.1 Improve rail connectivity and competitive service to expand market for businesses throughout the region and state.
- 5.2 Improve distribution capabilities to attract new shippers to the NC Ports.
- 5.3 Improve and maintain the channel

depth at the Port of Wilmington to increase opportunities for the region and state.

#### PERFORMANCE MEASURES

##### MILESTONES

- Inventory of available and affordable housing.
- Inventory of housing related programs and organizations.
- Establish of broadband task force.
- Comprehensive assessment of broadband access, bandwidth and challenges.
- Multi-modal comprehensive transportation plans.
- Develop digital mapping capacity of water and waste water.
- Complete high priority infrastructure projects.

##### METRICS

- Volume of freight movement in the region.\*
- State and federal dollars invested in the region for infrastructure projects.
- Miles of interstate or 4-lane roads.\*
- Number of infrastructure investments.

# REVITALIZED AND VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

## GOAL 3

### Create revitalized and vibrant communities

Our communities are where we work, live, raise our families and join with one another to create a better future for those that will follow us. How our communities develop, how we move around within them, enjoy recreational opportunities, and become engaged in the civic process that governs them are critical supports to the economic development of the region.

Many rural communities are engaged in revitalization efforts to renew downtown areas and restore them to their former prominence as a center of community and economic activity. Downtown revitalization has been credited with creating jobs, strengthening the local economy, encouraging and supporting local entrepreneurship, increasing housing options, and attracting tourism.<sup>15</sup>

The southeast region is known for its moderate climate, inexpensive cost of living, lower taxes, and outstanding medical care. Quality of life is a highly subjective measure of happiness, and a critical element to be included in economic development planning. Factors that play a role in quality of life vary according to personal preferences, but they often include financial security, job satisfaction, family life, health and safety.

The region has a lot to offer when it comes to discovering cultural heritage and exploring the great outdoors. In 2010, the Lumber River was voted one of North Carolina's Ten Natural Wonders by the Land of Tomorrow.

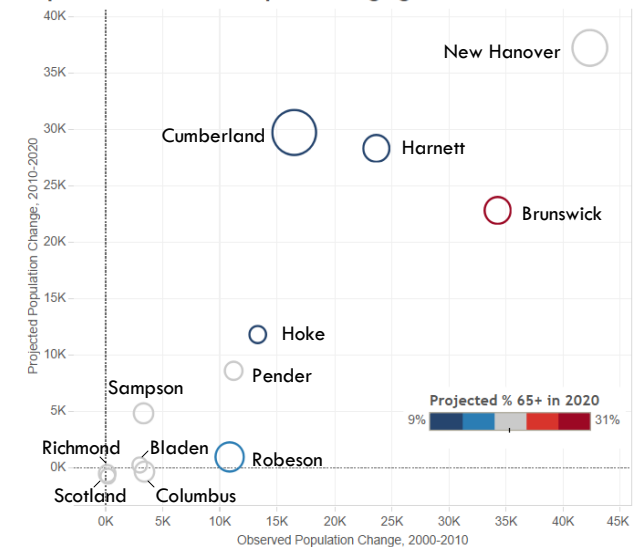
Statewide, 17% of the population is projected to be 65 and older in 2020. Among North Carolina counties, the percentage 65 and older will range from 9% to 31%. In eight of the twelve counties in the region, the percentage 65 and older is projected to be higher than the statewide average. In Brunswick County on the coast, 3 of every 10 residents will be 65 or older in 2020.<sup>16</sup> There are two Certified Retirement Communities in the region—Laurinburg/Scotland County and Lumberton. Health care facilities, housing and other services pertinent to residents who are 55 and older are available in the region.

In 2000, exactly 116,731 persons were counted as age 65 and over in the region. By 2010 that figure had reached 154,672—an increase of 32.5 percent. An estimated 38,000 persons either moved to the area to retire or naturally aged into this bracket during the last decade. Brunswick County experienced an 86 percent increase in the number of persons 65 and older—a reflection of the attraction of the county to retirement-

aged individuals. Hoke, New Hanover, and Pender counties experienced at least a 30 percent increase in population of this group.<sup>16</sup>

From 2000 to 2010 the counties of Bladen, Cumberland, Richmond, Sampson and Scotland experienced a loss of population in the 20-24 age group resulting from “Brain-Drain” or the loss of college-aged young adults who leave the region and do not return. Columbus, Richmond and Scotland counties also experienced a drop in the population of 19 and under.

Population Growth & Population Aging in NC Counties



Data sources: US Census Bureau, NC Office of State Budget and Management.

<sup>15</sup><https://www.sog.unc.edu/resources/microsites/building-assets-rural-future/revitalize-rural-downtowns>

<sup>16</sup><http://demography.cpc.unc.edu/2013/10/14/population-growth-population-aging-in-north-carolina-counties/>



### Create revitalized and vibrant communities

Our region is not only growing but also changing. To achieve greater equity and opportunity, we need to bolster a vital, diverse, and growing economy that advances individual and community prosperity. Preserving the region’s assets is critical to create revitalized, resilient and vibrant communities.

**Objective 1: Promote environmentally sustainable and resilient patterns of development.**

- 1.1 Identify development corridors and connect cross-jurisdictional planning to support development within the region.
- 1.2 Support an educational forum on sustainable development and management practices for the region.
- 1.3 Provide technical assistance for planning and mapping of the region’s “green infrastructure” and natural heritage gems.
- 1.4 Support energy efficient construction in public buildings.
- 1.5 Support disaster risk reduction and long-term resiliency efforts related to infrastructure and services.

**Objective 2: Revitalize downtowns across the region.**

- 2.1 Provide technical assistance to help jurisdictions become Main Street Communities.
- 2.2 Encourage adaptive reuse and historic preservation of priority buildings.
- 2.3 Promote vibrancy and prosperity in the downtowns across the region through business development that respects the character and needs of the community.

**Objective 3: Strengthen the local food network throughout the region.**

- 3.1 Support the creation of a Southeastern NC Regional Sustainable Local Food Advisory Council.
- 3.2 Provide technical assistance to assist the NCDA&CS Southeastern N.C. Agricultural Events Center implement a strategic plan for improved market access for the region’s farmers.
- 3.3 Identify and pursue more distribution points for local foods throughout the region.
- 3.4 Support the work of Feast Down East and other organizations that support farm businesses, market and distribute local products, increase access to local foods, and educate the public on the importance of buying local foods.

**Objective 4: Invest in healthy, safe, and walkable communities.**

- 4.1 Ensure that each county in the region has a comprehensive transportation plan that addresses healthy, safe, and walkable communities.
- 4.2 Provide technical assistance to local governments in developing sidewalk ordinances and incorporation of greenways.
- 4.3 Encourage multi-modal transportation

- alternatives to create healthy opportunities.
- 4.4 Support initiatives to give greater access to clinical trials for rural citizens.
- 4.5 Support implementation of the bicycle and pedestrian elements of the aforementioned transportation plans.

### PERFORMANCE MEASURES

#### MILESTONES

- Establish a regional program to link local producers to markets.
- Identify development corridors within the region.
- Restoration or preservation of downtowns.

#### METRICS

- Number of Main Street Communities
- Number of miles of bike and pedestrian transportation options\*
- Linear miles of sidewalks established.\*
- Number of buildings reused, funds invested and jobs created.
- Percentage increase in local food produced and sold to regional markets.\*
- Jobs recreated in local food networks.\*

# HEALTHY AND INNOVATIVE PEOPLE

## GOAL 4

### Develop healthy, skilled and vibrant workforce

Years ago, the “economy” that concerned us consisted of what was local. Advances in communications and technology have changed that to a global frame of reference. How we prepare ourselves to live in that global environment determines our success within it. Our workforce must be skilled, healthy, agile and adaptable in order to succeed. The education, training and guidance we provide our region’s youth, in particular, will greatly influence our economic future. Developing a healthy and vibrant workforce within the region so that they many enjoy success in a global economy is our priority.

Education has been identified as an important determinant of economic growth. Higher levels of educational attainment can lead to a skilled and productive workforce. There is a gap between skills and knowledge of the current labor force and what industries need to succeed and grow. To address the region’s growing gaps in the workforce, we must better coordinate and expand our existing vocational training programs, grow on-the-job training opportunities like internships and apprenticeships and focus on long-term education challenges to attract more students to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics field. Training programs across the region—from non-profit organizations to

high school to community colleges to universities—all have a role to play.

The diverse demographic nature of the region makes a “one-size-fits-all” approach to educational attainment inadequate to meet today’s challenges. For many of the counties with low-incomes and high poverty which influence educational attainment, the challenge to integrate a STEM education curriculum will likely be significant due to budget constraints. In addition, concern continues to grow in the region for the students with a desire and talent for skilled trades that are not met in a system which encourages its students toward a four-year college education. A parallel track of educating students to the opportunities found in skilled trade jobs must be pursued also. Elevating the trade career tracks by involving industries, economic developers and educators in marketing to these students is essential for the region’s economic future.

Work ethic and soft skills are increasingly becoming the hard skills of today’s workforce. It’s just not enough to have highly trained workforce in technical skills, without developing the softer, interpersonal and relationship-building skills that help people to communicate and collaborate effectively.

The work ethic of this generation continues to be noted as one of the biggest challenges for employers. One employer was quoted as saying, “Getting people to work on time and drug-free and alcohol-free is my biggest challenge”.

Childcare plays a very important role for the region’s current economy because it enables parents to work and/or update their skills. Sufficient childcare enables employers to attract and retain employees and increase their productivity. Similar to transportation and housing, without accessible and affordable childcare, employees may experience barriers to working, which negatively impacts their employers and the economy as a whole. Therefore, the region needs accessible, affordable and high quality childcare options in the region to support the workforce and job training and education for the labor force.<sup>17</sup>

The region continues to focus on attracting and retaining high-skill industries. The ability for industries to grow and thrive in the future will depend on the region’s continued ability to cultivate a healthy, skilled and vibrant workforce.

<sup>17</sup><http://www.buildingchildcare.net/uploads/pdfs/bcc-strategies-2007fullreport.pdf>

## GOAL 4

### Develop healthy, skilled and vibrant workforce

Talent development is needed to support key sectors that drive economic growth and promote high wage, high skill, high demand jobs. There needs to be a focus on efforts that provide education, job training, and support services to people working hard to improve their economic circumstances.

#### **Objective 1: Cultivate a skilled workforce to support key industry sectors that drive economic growth.**

1.1 Enhance educational opportunities and resources in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) disciplines.

1.2 Expand leadership training opportunities for young adults—including summer programs.

1.3 Expand innovative career pathway programs to prepare workers for high-skill jobs.

1.4 Develop strategies to strengthen the connection between educational providers and industry/businesses with sector focused continuing education.

1.5 Facilitate the incorporation of soft skills, work ethics, and healthy lifestyles in K-12 education to prepare students for employment.

1.6 Promote the creation of apprenticeship programs by companies in the region, similar to NC Works.

1.7 Expand promotion of the Career Readiness Certificate (CRC) program among students, low-skill workers, and employers.

1.8 Expand participation in degree programs for veterans and service personnel exiting the military.

1.9 Support the creation of and preparation of the workforce for jobs offering “family-sustaining wages”.

#### **Objective 2: Increase accessible, affordable and high quality childcare options across the region.**

2.1 Coordinate planning to assess child care needs, share data, conduct an asset map, and identify barriers.

2.2 Promote the state’s professional development options for the early childhood workforce.

#### **Objective 3: Improve the digital literacy and technical skills of the workforce in the region.**

3.1 Assess and enhance the regions existing resources that support the tech-ready workforce.

#### **Objective 4: Strengthen education across the continuum from pre-school through lifelong learning.**

4.1 Monitor and improve educational outcomes at all levels of education.

4.2 Increase educational attainment to meet the needs of the current and future economy, resulting in approximately one-third of the region’s population having a four-year degree or more and an additional one-third having a two-year

degree or some post-secondary training.

4.3 Support existing and new community college and university degree programs that are needed for regional prosperity.

### PERFORMANCE MEASURES

#### MILESTONES

- Strategies developed for enhancement of skilled trade and STEM education.
- Complete inventory of technology training programs.

#### METRICS

- Number of new leadership training opportunities .
- Increase in number of skilled trade students.
- Number of apprenticeship programs created.
- Number of CRCs issued in the region.\*
- Lower unemployment rate.
- Change in educational attainment.\*
- Number of new entrepreneurs/businesses.\*
- Increase per capita income.

# ENTREPRENEURS AND SMALL BUSINESS GROWTH

## **GOAL 5** Encourage entrepreneurs and small business growth, support existing businesses and attract new employers in the region.

Economic development focused on the recruitment of large industries to the region once generated the jobs and wages to sustain the region's economy. When these plants abandoned the region for cheaper labor overseas, the region experienced a tremendous loss of jobs leaving a record number of people unemployed. While some of these manufacturing facilities still exist in the region and are a vital part of the economy, diversifying the job base to include small business and entrepreneurs is an essential strategy to secure the economic future of the region. A priority for this region is to develop a supportive ecosystem that proactively supports the development of new and existing small businesses.

Small businesses are an essential component of a strong local economy. They not only create well-paying jobs in the region, but also deliver vital goods and services, generate sales tax revenue, and contribute to the unique character and livability of neighborhoods. Startups and small businesses tend to be more agile, enabling them to innovate more.

Entrepreneurs and small businesses should have easy access to the tools that will help them succeed. The region has many resources available to support entrepreneurs and small business growth. The Small Business Centers at

the eight community colleges in the region, and the Small Business and Technology Development Centers associated with the three four-year state universities provide expertise and guidance. Area non-profit lenders such as Self-Help, Advancement, Inc., the Carolina Small Business Development Fund and other local entities provide capital as well as business support services.

The Regional Workforce Development Boards are the designated entities for planning and implementing strategies to advance the needs of workers and employers through education and training for emerging high-growth industries across the region.

The Thomas Family Center for Entrepreneurship at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke recognizes the correlation between economic development and entrepreneurship. Its ambition is to stimulate entrepreneurial thinking amongst the UNCP student body as well as assist and support entrepreneurs and new ventures in the Southeastern North Carolina region.

At the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CIE) nurtures emerging companies and works to grow the entrepreneurial ecosystem of the region, through events, education and training

programs, and mentoring. The CIE is vibrant and creative hub where the private sector joins with its faculty and students to create and accelerate high-growth, high-impact companies. Regional strengths and university expertise combine to develop innovative solutions to global challenges, especially in the areas of human health, education, coastal and marine environments, and media production.

The Southeastern Economic Development Commission works collaboratively with The Southeastern Partnership, Inc. to promote and enhance the region's assets to cultivate sustainable economic opportunities. The Southeastern Partnership, Inc. provides strong economic development leadership in southeastern North Carolina, including eleven of the twelve counties in the SEDC region, through innovative marketing and collaborative regional initiatives that support the creation of new jobs, generates capital investment, expands existing industries, and attracts new employers in the region.

Supporting existing industry in the region is vital to healthy economic growth and is an important component of any economic development strategy. It is essential that the region grows existing industries and builds on their foundations, skills and capabilities.

## GOAL 5 Encourage entrepreneurs and small business growth, support existing businesses and attract new employers in the region

Economic and workforce development organizations have three ways of facilitating the creation of jobs and private in the region—growth and expansion of existing businesses, creation of new businesses, and attraction of new employers in the region. A holistic economic development strategy should, ideally, include a combination of these three elements. It is essential to foster economic development in the region by improving access to capital and business services to support entrepreneurs, small and existing business and new employers.

### Objective 1: Foster entrepreneurs and small businesses to create job opportunities for the region's workforce and strengthen the regional economy.

1.1 Conduct an inventory of entrepreneurial education resources, mentorship, and internship opportunities.

1.2 Provide technical assistance to expand and strengthen existing entrepreneurial and small business support key economic cluster networks in rural areas.

1.3 Provide technical assistance to expand the network of business incubators and growth pipeline in the region.

1.4 Partner with the Carolina Small Business Fund to promote the EDA Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) throughout the region.

1.5 Promote educational programs and one-on-one business counseling to entrepreneurs through the SBTDCs, small business centers at the community colleges and other service providers.

### Objective 2: Grow and retain existing industry and small businesses

2.1 Promote international growth opportunities for companies.

2.2 Collaborate with state and regional

resources to help companies with government procurement and contracting process.

2.3 Encourage each jurisdiction to prioritize existing industries as an important part of their economic development efforts to include existing industry visits annually by a team comprised of a representative from the local community college workforce training, NC Works, Veterans Affairs training, and others that can assist the industry with training opportunities, expansion assistance and local/state issues.

### Objective 3: Foster a creative, innovative environment across the region.

3.1 Improve access to capital for businesses.

3.2 Support innovative action plans developed in local communities through collaborative processes—for example, Innovate NC.

3.3 Encourage participation in federal grant programs that foster innovation and commercialization of technology, such as the SBIR/STTR grant programs.

## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

### MILESTONES

- Complete inventory of entrepreneurial education resources.
- Partner with the Carolina Small Business Fund.

### METRICS

- Amount of incubator space available and occupied.\*
- Number of new businesses created.\*
- Volume of EDA RLFs and other equity/risk capital available and invested.
- Increase in government contracts awarded to companies in the region.
- Increase in exports.
- Number of jobs created and/or retained.
- Number of existing industry visits by each jurisdiction.
- Amount of private investment in the region.
- Lower unemployment rate.

# EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

The Evaluation Framework is the implementation schedule of the CEDS. The performance measures for each goal are referenced with strategic partners and within an estimated timeframe for completion.

GOAL	PERFORMANCE MEASURES	STRATEGIC PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME
			Short (1-3 years) Mid (3-5 years) Long (5+ years)
<b>Goal 1: Competitive Advantage</b>			
	Complete regional brand analysis.	SEDC, EDCs, NCSE, COGs, Universities	Mid
	Complete regional comprehensive marketing plan.	SEDC, EDCs, NCSE, Local Governments, COGs, NCDC	Mid
	Complete inventory of vacant buildings and potential for reuse.	EDCs, NCSE	Short
<b>Goal 2: Regional Infrastructure</b>			
	Inventory of available and affordable housing.	COGs, Local Governments, Housing Authorities	Short
	Inventory of housing related programs and organizations.	COGs, Local Governments, Housing Authorities	Short
	Establish a regional public/private broadband task force.	SEDC, COGs, Local Governments, NCDC	Mid
	Comprehensive assessment of broadband access, bandwidth and challenges.	Service Providers, COGs, Local Governments	Mid
	Update or develop multi-modal comprehensive transportations plans.	COGs, Local Governments, NCDOT	Mid
	Develop digital mapping capacity of water and waste water.	COGs, Local Governments	Long
	Complete high priority infrastructure projects.	SEDC, MPOs, RPOs, Local Governments	Long
<b>Goal 3: Revitalized and Vibrant Communities</b>			
	Establish a regional program to link local producers to markets.	Feast Down East, NCDA, Local Farmers	Mid
	Identify development corridors within the region.	SEDC, COGs, NCSE, EDCs, Local Governments	Mid
	Restoration or preservation of downtowns.	SEDC, Local Governments, NCDC	Long
<b>Goal 4: Healthy and Innovative People</b>			
	Strategies for enhancement of skilled trade and STEM education.	SEDC, COGs, RWDBs, K-12, Community colleges, Universities, Private Sector Partners	Long
	Complete inventory of technology training programs.	SEDC, COGS, RWDBs, Community Colleges, Universities, SBTDCs.	Short
<b>Goal 5: Entrepreneurs and Small Business Growth</b>			
	Complete inventory of entrepreneurial education resources.	SEDC, COGs, SBTDC, SBCs, Community Colleges, Universities, EDCs	Short
	Partner with the Carolina Small Business Development Fund.	SEDC, CSBDF	Short

CSBDF—Carolina Small Business Development Fund  
 EDCs—County Economic Development Commissions  
 NCSE—The Southeastern Partnership, Inc.  
 SEDC—Southeastern Economic Development Commission  
 COGs—Council of Governments  
 NCDC—North Carolina Department of Commerce

RWDBs—Regional Workforce Development Boards  
 SBCs—Small Business Centers  
 SBTDCs—Small Business and Technology Development Centers  
 MPOs—Metropolitan Planning Organizations  
 RPOs—Rural Transportation Planning Organizations  
 NCDA—North Carolina Department of Agriculture

# EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

## **The Importance of Performance Measures**

It is of utmost importance that the SEDC Economic Development District (EDD) be able to measure its performance in order to evaluate the successful implementation and development of the CEDS. The quantitative and qualitative measures have been established to provide an objective way to measure the progress toward achieving the goals identified for the region. These measures will be reviewed on an annual basis within a CEDS progress report submitted to EDA by the SEDC.

The performance measures have been identified, as required by the Economic Development Administration, to evaluate the progress of the activities outlined in the CEDS. In addition to the performance measures identified under each goal, the SEDC EDD will continue to track the number of jobs created in the region; number and types of investments undertaken in the region; number of jobs retained in the region; amount of private sector investment in the region; and changes in the economic environment of the region.

## **Specific Measureable Targets**

The measurable outcomes shown below will be both direct and indirect results of the implementation of the CEDS. The process will be ongoing and accumulative. The SEDC EDD will focus on all goals and strategies identified by the Strategy Committee and other local economic development strategies aimed at sustainable job creation and private

investment. The District will work closely with public and private allies and strategic partners in the region to bring sustainable economic advancement to southeastern North Carolina.

The SEDC Economic Development District has established the following quantifiable performance measures to specifically address the regulatory requirements of the Economic Development Administration:

### **1) New Jobs**

◆ *2,500 New jobs created in the region by September 2022.*

### **2) Number and types of investments undertaken in the region by September 2022**

◆ *30 Infrastructure investments*

◆ *10 Facility investments*

◆ *6 Technical Assistance investments*

### **3) Retained Jobs**

◆ *2,000 Jobs retained in the region by September 2022.*

### **4) Private Sector Investment**

◆ *\$250,000,000 in private sector investment in the region by September 2022.*

### **5) Changes in the economic environment of the region:**

*The economic environment for the region will show significant improvement over the next five years. Changes in the economic environment relate to changes in the wider economy. Indicators such as the current and projected economic growth, inflation and interest rates; unemployment and labor supply; labor costs; levels of disposable income and income distribution; impact of globalization; and likely impact of technological or other change on the wider economy will be evaluated to determine significant changes of the economic environment of the region by September 2022.*

## **Less Tangible but Equally Valuable Targets**

As highlighted in the CEDS, the region covers a large geographic area with unique cultural and racial diversity, and very significant diversity in financial well-being. The region contains some of the poorest and some of the wealthiest counties in the State. Education attainment levels vary, and the region has historically relied on large manufacturing investments to provide jobs and income. Today, the challenge is to overcome the barriers—economic, racial, cultural, political, financial—respect the differences and find the common good. To do this, the region must face the challenges, and see the strength in its diversity.

# APPENDIX A: Largest Employers by Sub-Region and County

Mid-Carolina Council of Governments		
Cumberland County	Harnett County	Sampson County
Department of Defense Cumberland County Board of Education Cape Fear Valley Health System Walmart Associates Inc. County of Cumberland Goodyear Tire and Rubber City of Fayetteville Veterans' Administration Fayetteville Tech Food Lion	Harnett County Schools Food Lion Campbell University County of Harnett Betsy Johnson Memorial Hospital Carlie C's Operation Center NC Department of Public Safety Walmart Associates Inc. Champion Home Builders Edwards Brothers Malloy	Smithfield Foods Inc. Sampson County Schools Prestage Farms Inc. Hog Slat Co. Inc. County of Sampson Sampson Regional Medical Center Clinton City Schools Walmart Associates, Inc. NC Dept. of Public Safety DI & B Enterprises Inc.
Cape Fear Council of Governments		
Brunswick County	Columbus County	New Hanover County
Brunswick County Board of Education County of Brunswick Progress Energy Services Co. Walmart Associates Inc. Food Lion Lowes Food Stores Inc. Brunswick Novant Medical Center Brunswick Community College Liberty Healthcare Group LLC Troon Golf LLC	Columbus County Board of Education NC Department of Public Safety International Paper Co. Inc. Century Employer Organization LLC Columbus County Columbus Regional Healthcare System BB&T Whiteville City Schools Wayne E Bailey Produce Co. Community Innovations Inc.	New Hanover Regional Medical Center New Hanover County School System UNC Wilmington PPD Development LLC County of New Hanover Cellco Partnership Cape Fear Community College City of Wilmington NC Walmart Associates Inc. Harris Teeter
Pender County		
Pender County Schools Pender County NC Dept. of Public Safety Pender Memorial Hospital Gomez Harvesting LLC Pender EMS and Fire Inc. LL Building Products (A Corp) Caroline's Blueberries LLC Food Lion Walmart Associates Inc.		



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<b>Lumber River Council of Governments</b>		
<b>Bladen County</b>	<b>Hoke County</b>	<b>Richmond County</b>
Smithfield Foods Inc. Gilten Yarns LLC Bladen County Schools Bladen County Cape Fear Valley Health System Danaher Controls Packers Sanitation Services Inc. LTD First Source Staffing Services LLC Bladen Community College NCDOT	Hoke County Board of Education Butterball Inc. Hoke County Conopco Inc. Burlington Industries V LLC Cape Fear Valley Health Systems The Staffing Alliance LLC NC Department of Public Safety Walmart Associates Inc. First Health of the Carolinas Inc.	Richmond County Schools Perdue Products Inc. First Health of the Carolinas Inc. County of Richmond Richmond Technical College Burlington Industries V LLC NC Dept. of Public Safety Walmart Associates Inc. Plastek Industries Inc. CHSPSC LLC
<b>Robeson County</b>	<b>Scotland County</b>	
Public Schools of Robeson County Southeastern Regional Medical Center Mountaire Farms of NC LLC Robeson County UNC at Pembroke Walmart Associates Inc. Campbell Coup Supply Company LLC Two Hawk Employment Services LLC The Staffing Alliance LLC BB&T	Scotland County Schools Scotland Memorial Hospital (A Corp) NC Department of Public Safety FCC (NC) LLC Scotland County Walmart Associates Inc. Pilkington North America Inc. Maverick Transportation LLC Farmers Furniture Co. Hanes Brands Inc.	



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