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Located in the western part of North Carolina in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, Catawba County possesses a diverse economy with a strong manufacturing climate coupled with extensive retail and residential developments. Catawba county's largest city, Hickory is the commercial and retail center of the Hickory-Morganton-Lenoir MSA, the only MSA contiguous to the Charlotte MSA.

Catawba County, has always been a thriving manufacturing center, and despite the struggles faced by the textile and furniture industries, 50 percent of the nation's furniture is still produced within a 200 mile radius of Hickory. Catawba's present manufacturing sectors include machining and metal working, plastics, cable, fiber and furniture. Outlook Americas has ranked three Catawba County municipalities in the top five Best Manufacturing Small Towns in the Country. Southern Business and Development ranked the Hickory Metro 3rd in its Small Market category for Top Deals and Hot Markets.



NASCAR had its beginnings in Catawba County, which is the birthplace of racing stars Junior Johnson, Ned Jarrett and Dale Earnhardt among others. The Hickory Motor Speedway has been in continuous operation for 42 years and generates \$2.5 million each year for the local economy.

Catawba County's manufacturing strength is supported by a rich geography and diverse lifestyle that has brought the area national recognition. Reader's Digest named the Hickory Metro area the 10th Best Place to Live and Raise a Family in the United States. Business North Carolina designated Hickory the 8th best city in the state for its quality of life. Forbes magazine rated the Hickory Metro area 3rd in the nation for lowest business costs. And most recently, MSNBC has recognized Hickory as the 14th Hottest Housing Market in the Nation.

Education and technical training continues to be a high priority for Catawba County. The Appalachian State University Center at Hickory is a joint education venture developed to provide a unique, collaborative learning experience to the Hickory, N.C., MSA. Appalachian State University, Lenoir-Rhyne University and Catawba Valley Community College partner to offer graduate, undergraduate and non-credit certificate courses, as well as research opportunities and specialized workforce training.



Apple, Inc. has selected Catawba County for its newest data center. The 500,000 square foot facility will provide 300 on-site jobs and is will begin operations in late 2010. In July, 2009, Target opened a 1.6 million square foot distribution center in Newton, employing over 500 workers.

Total Population, 2010	159,731
Total Households, 2010	62,614
Median Age, 2010	39.1
Projected Population, 2015	167,370

Educational Attainment, 2010

Population 25 and Older	109,609
High School Diploma	32.0%
Some College	20.0%
Associate's Degree	9.4%
Bachelor's Degree	14.3%
Graduate or Professional Degree	6.2%
2010 SAT score, county average	1,474
2010 SAT score, state average	1,485

Income, 2010

Median Household Income	\$50,324
Per Capita Income	\$23,708

Employment by Industry, 2010

Agriculture, Mining	0.5%
Construction	6.0%
FIRE	4.0%
Manufacturing	26.9%
Public Administration	2.7%
Retail Trade	12.0%
Wholesale Trade	4.4%
Services	37.7%
Transportation, Utilities	4.6%
Total Employment, 16+	64,581

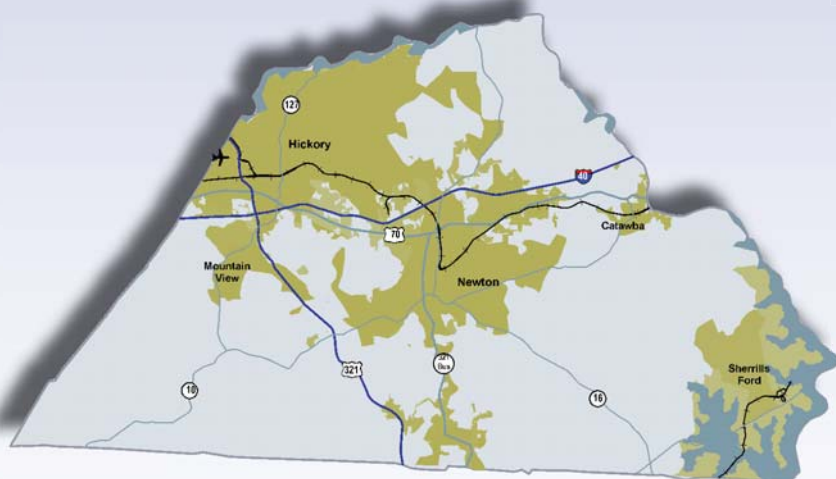
Labor Force, 2009

Labor Force	74,665
Unemployment Rate	14.4%

Source: ESRI 2010, NC Dept of Public Education, NC ESC

MAJOR EMPLOYERS (non government/retail)

Company	Major Product	Employees
CommScope Inc.	Nonferrous Wire Drawing	1,000+
Corning Cable Systems	Optical Instruments	1,000+
Hickory Springs Manufacturing	Diversified Manufacturing	500-999
Convergys Customer Mgmt Group	Business Services	500-999
Pierre Foods Inc	Food Processing	500-999



Average Weekly Wage 2009

Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing	\$482
Utilities	\$1,322
Construction	\$674
Manufacturing	\$690
Wholesale Trade	\$882
Retail Trade	\$431
Transportation & Warehousing	\$745
Information	\$799
Finance & Insurance	\$934
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	\$573
Professional & Technical Services	\$840
Management of Companies & Enterprises	\$1,278
Administrative & Waste Services	\$469
Educational Services	\$652
Health Care & Social Assistance	\$822
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	\$358
Accommodation & Food Services	\$246
Public Administration	\$732
Average Weekly Wage	\$657

Unemployment Insurance

New Employers (per \$100)	1.2%
Deficit Employers (max rate)	6.84%
Minimum Tax Rate	0.0%
Taxable Base	\$19,700

Inventory Tax

Finished Goods	none
Raw Materials	none
Goods in Process	none
Mat'l consumed in Mfg.	none

Sales Tax, General

State	5.75%
Local	2.25%

Sales Tax, Special Provisions

Electricity (farms and manufacturing exempt)	3.0%
Natural Gas	% of receipts
Manufacturing Fuels	none
Manufacturing Equipment	none
Telecomm Service: Intrastate (state + county)	8%

Education

Public Schools	44
Private Schools	10
School Districts	3
Colleges & Universities	2

Announced Jobs & Investments

Jobs announced, 2008	2,581
Total investment announced, 2008	\$49,520,486

Accessibility

Nearest Major City	Charlotte
Distance to Nearest Major City	50 miles
Nearest Commercial Airport	Hickory Reg'l
Runway Length	6,400 ft.
Distance to Nearest Airport	0 miles
Nearest Interstate	I-40
Distance to Nearest Interstate	0 miles
Nearest Deepwater Port	Port of Charleston
Distance to Nearest Deepwater Port	255 miles
Foreign Trade Zone Accessibility	Yes
Population within 50 mile radius, 2009	2,624,460

Development Capacity

Wastewater Treatment Capacity Available	Yes
Natural Gas Available	Yes

Taxes, Sales & Service

Property Taxes/\$100 value (10-11)	\$ 0.5350
Taxable Retail Sales (Mil\$, 2008)	\$1,791
Number of Physicians, 2007	358
Physicians per 10,000 population, 2007	23
RN per 10,000 population, 2007	113
Dentists per 10,000 population, 2007	5

Sources: County Data and NC Department of Revenue