



STEADY IN THE STORM

2024-25 ANNUAL REPORT – HENDERSON COUNTY PARTNERSHIP FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

To Our Partners, Investors, and Community,

As I reflect on the past fiscal year, I'm struck by a simple truth: Henderson County remains strong not because we're untouched by challenges, but because of how we respond to them. This year, under the theme "Steady in the Storm," we highlight the resilience, collaboration, and determination that define our community.

From the lasting impacts of Hurricane Helene to economic uncertainties facing industries across the country, this year tested our systems, our infrastructure, and our spirit. But Henderson County stood firm. The Henderson County Partnership for Economic Development (HCPED) was at the forefront—coordinating recovery efforts, offering direct support to businesses, and deepening our commitment to the people and companies that call this region home.

This year we celebrated major wins, like the grand opening of Lassonde's \$53 million investment,

Selee's continued growth, and the designation of Ferncliff Park as the only North Carolina Select Site in western North Carolina. We also stood shoulder-to-shoulder with our community during recovery and rebuilding, with efforts like the Love Hendo grant supporting storm-impacted businesses.

We convened experts like Dr. Melissa Furman to share insights during our Annual Forum, continued fostering talent through MFG Day with Henderson County Public Schools, and celebrated long-standing industry partners like Elkamet on their 20-year milestone. These moments remind us that our work is not just about growth—it's about relationships, trust, and shared purpose.

As we look ahead, the groundwork laid this year—through strategic planning, public-private collaboration, and engagement with Vision First Advisors—positions us for even stronger years to come. Thank you for your continued trust and investment in Henderson County. Together, we weather the storms—and together, we rise.

Sincerely,

William R. Buie

Will Buie
CHAIR, HENDERSON COUNTY
PARTNERSHIP FOR ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT



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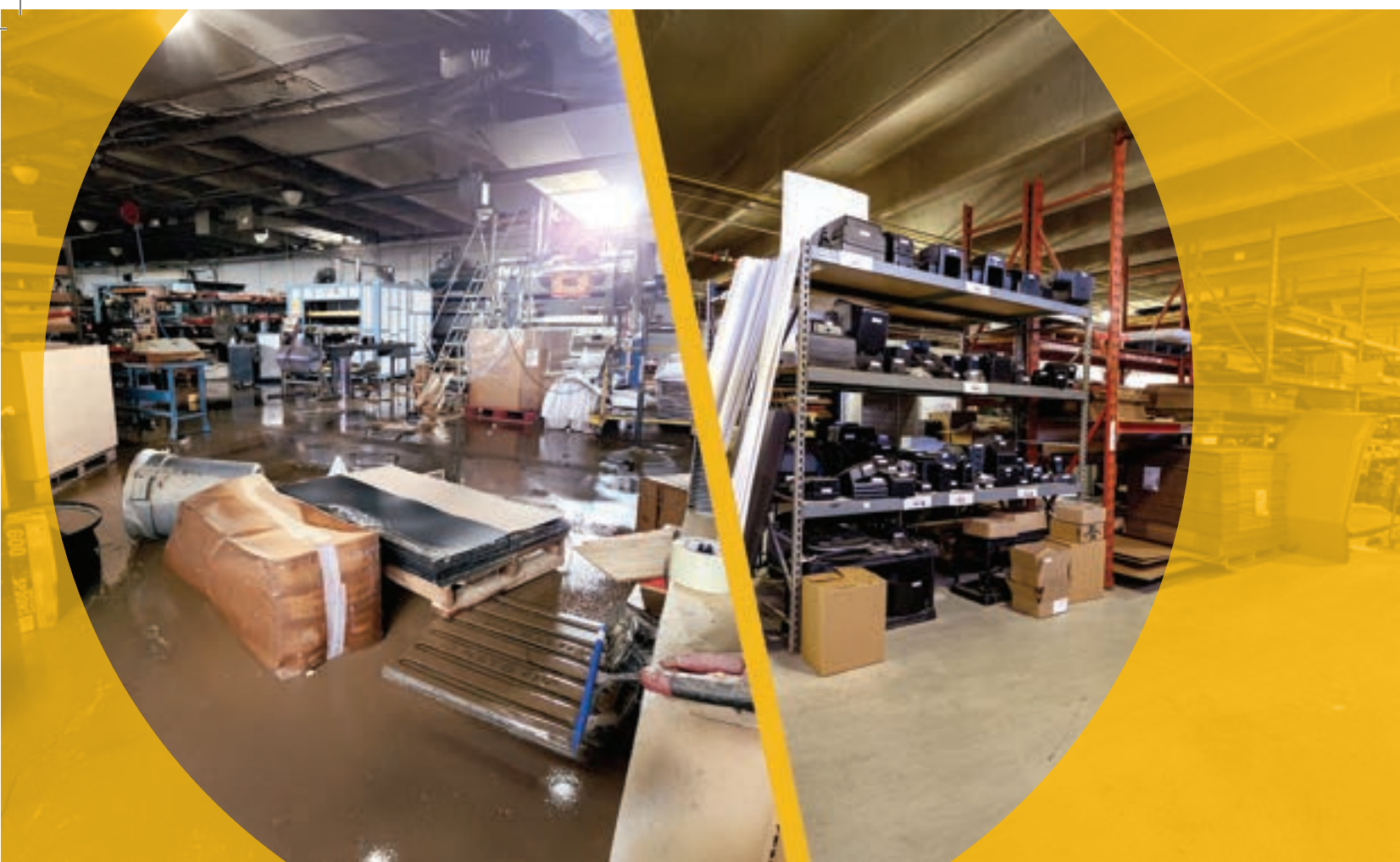
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The Henderson County Partnership for Economic Development, Inc. is the professional economic development entity for Henderson County. It works to: attract and retain quality jobs; solicit new business compatible with the assets and values of Henderson County; promote Henderson County's business image; assist expansion of existing companies; and enhance Henderson County's overall quality of life.





Asheville Thermoform Plastics right after the storm and in May of 2025

STEADY IN THE STORM

On September 27, 2024, Hurricane Helene delivered a powerful reminder of nature’s unpredictability. The storm left widespread damage across Henderson County—affecting homes, businesses, and infrastructure. In response, the Henderson County Partnership for Economic Development stepped in to support industry and connect partners and resources throughout recovery.



During the weeks following Helene, HCPED played a central role in disaster response by:

- Acting as a liaison between local industries and emergency management services
- Assisting companies with damage assessments and state and federal aid navigation
- Hosting virtual and in-person check-ins with impacted businesses
- Coordinating with NCDOT, utility partners and public partners to accelerate recovery timelines

This was economic development at its most human-centered: staying in constant contact, providing answers when possible, and listening intently when not.

Recognizing the immediate financial strain on small and medium-sized businesses, HCPED worked with local government and community partners to launch the Love Hendo Grant Program. This emergency relief initiative delivered over \$250,000 in targeted grants to help businesses repair damages, restore operations, and retain employees during uncertain weeks following the storm.

One of Henderson County’s legacy manufacturing business’, Asheville Thermoform Plastics, was one of the recipients of a LoveHendo Grant in the spring of 2025. **Asheville Thermoform Plastics** has been in business and employing our community for almost 30 years.

At the time of the award, President Bill Trometer of Asheville Thermoform Plastics said, *“We have received a LoveHendo grant, and it has been extremely helpful toward our recovery; we are 80% back to manufacturing and about 75% complete on our facility repairs. Our recovery is a tribute to our dedicated employees who have and continue to work tirelessly to make it happen. We have also been blessed with the LoveHendo Grant and a recovery loan from Mountain BizWorks. I applaud your efforts to get the word out that we (WNC) got knocked down but not out, and we are coming back and will be better and stronger than ever.”* Trometer and his team attribute their return to work to their community – friends, family, neighbors – who showed up and did the hard work of getting back online. Support



from LoveHendo and Mountain Biz Works, two local entities, were key to keeping their doors open. HCPED was proud to partner with the Henderson County Chamber of Commerce, the Henderson County Tourism Development Authority, the Small Business Center at Blue Ridge Community College, and the Friends of Downtown Hendersonville to create the LoveHendo Fund and disperse funding to our community.

SWIFT RECOVERY ERA



In addition to assisting on the ground while recovery was at its peak, the Henderson County Partnership played a key role in letting the rest of the world know that we were open for business when the time came.

Playing on the Taylor Swift phenomenon of 2024, HCPED released its Swift Era Recovery campaign by mailing out the catchy information to all our partners in the site selection industry. Reminding our neighbors and friends that our community depends on both industry and tourism for success and that Hurricane Helene didn’t keep us down for too long.

CHARTING A PATH FORWARD

Following the impact of Hurricane Helene in 2024, HCPED applied for a grant from the North Carolina Railroad Company to fill the need for a comprehensive strategy to strengthen our community’s ability to recover from future economic and environmental challenges. HCPED worked with VisionFirst Advisors, who specialize in strategic planning, to create new Recovery Action Plan. The plan is a proactive, community-driven framework designed to enhance resilience, speed recovery, and protect the county’s economic future.



Key Objectives of the Recovery Action Plan

- Develop a disaster preparedness & recovery plan: HCPED will create and disperse a manufacturer-specific disaster response plan and update it regularly.
- Increase staff capacity: HCPED will restructure the current staff of the organization and add an additional position to increase overall capacity of the organization
- Form a stakeholder task force: HCPED will advocate for the creation of a task force in our
- Create a manufacturers collective: HCPED will create a networking group specifically for manufacturers to connect and problem solve together.
- Improve availability and readiness of development sites with utilities: HCPED will work with partners to continue to grow the County’s available sites for industrial development

county that will play a pivotal role in coordination of recovery efforts, funding, and more.

ADVOCACY IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

One of the key components of economic development is establishing key relationships with elected leaders. The Partnership continued hosting its annual Elected Official Lunch in January to share with local, state, and federal leaders the evolving landscape of economic development in Henderson County. This year, Vision First Advisors used the lunch as a launching point for the Recovery Action Plan, noting economic trends, but also gleaning key insights from public partners on their vision for economic recovery.



STRONG ROOTS, NEW GROUND:

Lassonde Expands Again

Over \$65 Million Invested: A Milestone for Henderson County

After announcing significant investment in December 2022, Lassonde Pappas & Co. showcased their new state-of-the-art machinery on January 29, 2025. This \$53 million investment underscores Henderson County’s growing reputation as a hub for manufacturing excellence and innovation and the stability aLassonde has found here.

The \$53 million investment will enhance their production capabilities and create 30 new jobs, reinforcing their commitment to manufacturing in Henderson County.

In addition to the \$53 million expansion, Lassonde also announced an additional \$20 million investment in their facility. These investments—marking the first of their kind in decades—will introduce innovation and efficiency to the plant, further strengthening its long-term viability and competitiveness.



Lassonde, a leader in the food and beverage manufacturing sector, chose Henderson County as the location for its expansion due to the region’s strong infrastructure, skilled workforce, and commitment to fostering business growth. The new facility is not only a testament to the company’s success but also a significant addition to the county’s manufacturing base.

Vince Timpano, President and Chief Operating Officer of Lassonde Industries, shared his excitement:

“The expansion and improvements at our Hendersonville facility reflect Lassonde’s dedication to a growth strategy that creates long-term value. We are continually seeking innovative ways to meet customer needs, especially in the U.S. market.”

These groundbreaking investments highlight the company’s confidence in Henderson County as a prime location for business growth.

ELKAMET CELEBRATES 20 YEARS IN HENDERSON COUNTY

Elkamet celebrated its 20th anniversary in Henderson County with the grand opening of a new \$6.5 million office building in March of 2025. Located in East Flat Rock, this state-of-the-art facility supports Elkamet's growth in producing precision plastic products for industries like automotive, building construction and agricultural machinery. While the company didn't officially begin production until 2007, the leadership team visited Henderson County in 2005 and decided to make it home.

Most of that leadership team is still with the company today, both here and in Germany. Elkamet's success story in Henderson County has been one of innovations and continuous improvement. The company has expanded five times in our community, employing more than 170 people in high-skill manufacturing and engineering roles throughout that time. ***"Henderson County continues to show us it's commitment to manufacturing and these communities provide our people with the best home we could ask for"***, said General Manager Carsten Erkel, ***"we are excited to continue to grow here"***.

The company's site is located on the old fair grounds in the small community of East Flat Rock, where their location sparked new industrial growth with neighbors like Demmel, Inc. The new office reflects Elkamet's commitment to both sustainability and community. Designed with energy-efficient systems and eco-friendly features, the building reinforces the company's dedication to environmental responsibility. Elkamet also remains an active community partner, supporting local education and charitable initiatives. As Elkamet celebrates this milestone, they're poised for continued growth and innovation, strengthening Henderson County's manufacturing sector for years to come.



RESILIENCE THROUGH REINVENTION: SELEE'S \$4 MILLION COMMITMENT

In the summer of 2024, SELEE Corporation, a division of Porvair plc, announced a \$4 million investment to expand their production and facilities in Henderson County. This expansion retained over 110 jobs with an average wage of \$70,350, more than 30% above the county-wide average wage.

SELEE pioneered the use of ceramic foam technology in metal filtration. As a result of this commitment to innovation, SELEE remains consistently at the forefront of the latest developments in filtration, melt treatment and transfer processes for molten metals of all types. The company provides critical products supporting the food & beverage, aerospace, and automotive industries.

"The Porvair Board of Directors recognizes SELEE's Hendersonville location for its continued success and potential growth. Investing in an expansion

of this facility will allow us to improve production and retain the over 110 employees here and we are excited to continue giving back to the community that gives so much to us," said Watt Jackson, President of SELEE. SELEE has been operating in Henderson County for more than 40 years, serving as one of the staples of the manufacturing community.

"Henderson County's strong economy and thriving manufacturing community can stay prosperous when existing industry like SELEE invest in their growth here. Henderson County supports industry, their employees, and their impact on our economy. We are excited to watch the growth of this impactful company," said Henderson County Board of Commissioners Chairwoman Rebecca McCall.

MFG DAY 2024: ENGAGING THE NEXT GENERATION

The Henderson County Partnership for Economic Development hosted its Manufacturing Day (MFG Day) event in February of 2025, designed to connect local students with the manufacturing industry and highlight career opportunities in this growing sector.

The event brought together HCPS students, local manufacturers, and top investors for a day of hands-on learning. Students and investors toured several local manufacturing facilities: Cane Creek Cycling Components, Cummins, Elkamet, Inc., Jabil Healthcare, Kimberly-Clark, Linamar Light Metals, Norafin, and UPM Raflatac, where they had the opportunity to see firsthand the technology and innovation driving modern production.

Following the tours, students participated in a panel discussion at The Oriole Mill, where local industry leaders shared their insights on the future of manufacturing, the skills needed for success, and the many career paths available in this field. The Oriole Mill holds a special place in the history of manufacturing in Henderson County, having been over 70,000 square feet of textile manufacturing in the past and an exciting growth opportunity for the sector in the near future.

MFG Day not only allowed students to explore potential career pathways but also strengthened the connection between our schools and the manufacturing sector. By fostering these relationships, we ensure the next generation is prepared to step into the workforce and drive our local economy forward.



Throughout the year, HCPED hosted and supported a variety of industry events designed to foster collaboration, support local businesses, and address key issues facing Henderson County's economy.

Neighborhood Meetings

HCPED continued to host neighborhood meetings, providing a platform for leaders to discuss community challenges, opportunities, and concerns. Mountain Home Industrial Park hosted in the fall to discuss ownership changes of property and in the spring, industries in Flat Rock gathered to talk about AI in manufacturing with students from Henderson County high schools.



Meet the Maker Event

The Meet the Maker events allowed manufacturers to meet and network with each other in a laid back but structured setting. Over 20 manufacturers attended two Meet the Maker events at Trailside Brewing and Bold Rock Hard Cider this year: strengthening relationships and making new connections. This event is held twice a year by HCPED.



Industry Meetings

As part of our ongoing commitment to addressing workforce needs, HCPED two topic-driven meetings for industry to learn more about relevant issues. HCPED hosted a childcare exploration meeting and a small business lunch and learn in the 2024-2025 year. These forums brought together employers, resource providers, and community leaders to discuss the challenges families face in accessing childcare and in unique challenges facing small manufacturers.





PEOPLE OF THE PARTNERSHIP

After Hurricane Helene disrupted the planned Annual Event in October of 2024, the Partnership pivoted to combine the Annual Event & Forum. On April 2, 2025, more than 230 business leaders, public partners, and community members gathered at Blue Ridge Community College to celebrate “People of the Partnership.”

The evening kicked off with a networking hour, including interactive Bingo, encouraging participants to meet other attendees. Following the networking time, the event was ushered into a transformed Blue Ridge Community College Conference Hall. The evening started by recognizing the Partner of the Year, Clark Capital, and their instrumental role in revitalizing the former Continental building into a state of the art

industrial complex, now known as Quality Point.

Following remarks, Dr. Melissa Furman, a nationally respected speaker and thought leader specializing in workforce development and organizational change, took the stage. Her presentation, “Maximizing the Multigenerational Workforce,” provided timely insights into one of the most pressing challenges and opportunities facing modern employers: managing and motivating employees across multiple age groups.

With humor and colorful analogies, Dr. Furman resonated with the audience and helped attendees understand how a workplace can thrive when multiple generations can see their similarities.

“In a dynamic and ever-changing workforce, being aware of who you are working with and why they work the way they do is paramount to your success.”

– Dr. Furman during her presentation to the crowd.



FERNCLIFF PARK NAMED NC SELECTSITE

Inaugural Top 15 Sites in the State

Ferncliff Park in Henderson County achieved a significant milestone—being designated as a North Carolina SelectSite, the only such designation in Western North Carolina. The site will be awarded over \$310,000 to support due diligence planning.



What is a SelectSite?

The NC SelectSite program, managed by the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina (EDPNC) and the NC General Assembly, recognizes sites that are ready for immediate development and can support large-scale, high-impact projects. These sites have undergone extensive due diligence, including environmental assessments, infrastructure planning, and zoning clearances, making them ideal for potential investors.

Why Ferncliff Park?

Ferncliff Park’s designation as an NC SelectSite positions it as a prime location for future economic development projects, particularly in advanced manufacturing, logistics, and technology sectors. The park’s proximity to major transportation corridors, availability

of utilities, and strategic location within Henderson County make it an attractive option for businesses looking to expand or relocate to Western NC.

This designation is a major step forward in HCPED’s ongoing efforts to enhance Henderson County’s business infrastructure and attract high-quality investment to the region.

With Ferncliff Park’s SelectSite designation, the county is well-positioned to capitalize on new opportunities, bringing jobs, economic growth, and further development to the area. This achievement further solidifies Henderson County as a top choice for businesses looking to expand or relocate to a thriving and strategically located community.

2024-2025 MEMBERS

PUBLIC



Henderson County



City of Hendersonville



Town of Fletcher



Town of Laurel Park



Town of Mills River



Village of Flat Rock

PREMIER



PATRON



PRESIDENTIAL

A-American Electric Inc.
Asheville Regional Airport
AT&T
Bank of America / Merrill Lynch
Benton Roofing
BGW CPA, PLLC
Cason Companies, Inc.
DMJPS CPAs + Advisors
Elkamet, Inc.
Forvis Mazars LLP
Friday Services
Growth Share Foundation
Hedrick Industries
Horizon Heating & Air Conditioning
IMOCO, Inc.
Industrial Chemical Company
KDS-Windsor
McGuire Wood & Bissett
McMillan Pazdan Smith Architecture
Mountain Credit Union
Omega Construction
Park National Bank
Rinehart Racing
SDW & JHW, LLC
Skyline Plastic Systems, Inc.
Southern Alarm & Security
TD Bank
The Dominion Group
Truist
United Community Bank
Vaughn Fitzpatrick
Warren Restoration
Western Carolina University
WGLA Engineering, PLLC

PARTNER

828:Design
Advanced Business Equipment
Allegra
Applied Solutions Group, Inc.
Atlas Bolt & Screw Co.
Barringer Construction
B&G Enterprises, LLC (Eagle Self Storage)
Beverly-Hanks & Associates
Blue Ridge Metals Corp.
Boyd Automotive
Bunnell-Lammons Engineering, Inc.
Byers Precision Fabricators
Carl E. Shaw, CPA, PLLC
Carleton Collins Architecture
Champion Credit Union
ClearWater Environmental, Inc.
Constangy, Brooks, Smith & Prophete
Cummins-Meritor, Inc.
Dampp-Chaser Corp.
Dave Steel Co., Inc.
Demmel Inc.
Echo Mountain Inn
ECS Carolinas
Egolf Motors
Epsilon
FEI Consulting
First Restoration Services of Asheville, LLC
Fletcher Business Park
Formation PR + Brand
Gilreath Shealy Law
Global Brand Concepts
Harper Corporation General Contractors
Haynes Wire Company
Henderson County Public Schools
Henderson County Tourism Development Authority
Henderson Oil Company
Hendersonville Lightning
HiViz LED Lighting Inc.
Kenmure Enterprises, Inc.
Kenneth R. Youngblood

Looking Glass Realty
Manual Woodworkers & Weavers, Inc.
Marlboro Development Team, Inc.
McCrary Construction Company
McDonald's – Edwards Group
MDT Bromley
Miller Brothers
Morosani & Associates
Mountain Showcase Group, Inc.
Movement Bank
Norafin (Americas) Inc.
Norm's Minit Marts
Premier Sotheby's International Realty
Pryor Insurance
RealtyOneGroup
Riddle Development, LLC
Rock Creek Containers
S&ME
Sierra Nevada Brewing Company
Southern Concrete Materials
Spherion Staffing
Standard Tytape Company, Inc.
Summey Plumbing and Heating
Tecnikabel USA
Terracon
The Tamara Peacock Company Architects
The Waverly Inn
Turf Mountain Sod, Inc.
Vista Strategies
Warm Company, Inc.
Weather Shield Roofing Systems
WeaverCooke-Kirkland
Well Adjusted, Inc.
WestRock
Whitney Commercial Real Estate
Wilsonart International
Wirtz Wire EDM, Inc.
Young Office



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