



# monroe union county economic development

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commercial and industrial base  
throughout Union County.*



**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Union County's Joint EDC Proves Its Success. . . . . 2	Union County's Economic Development Mascot: UNITAS. . . . . 5	Union County's Medical Sector Is Expanding . . 7	Aerospace Is Still King for Monroe. . . . . 12
Announced Capital Investments and Job Creation . . . . . 3	Social Media as a Tool in Economic Development . . . . . 5	Union County, NC map . . . . . 8	Monroe Moves Forward with 4th Spec Building. . . . . 13
Wingate University School of Pharmacy . . . . . 4	It Begins with Precision . . . . . 6	South Piedmont Community College — A Leader in Education and Workforce Training . . 10	Parks and Recreation Enhance Union County Living . . . . . 14
		Agriculture: Vital to Union County's Economy . . 11	





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# Union County's Joint EDC Proves Its Success

## One Office; One Voice; Development for All

In January of 2013, Union County and the City of Monroe joined together to form the county's first unified economic development organization in two decades. This merger of economic development offices was a result of Jerry Simpson, former Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners, working with the late Clark Goodwin, Chairman of the Monroe EDC, to create a structure that satisfied the needs of all parties. As a result, the County and City are saving a combined \$450,000 annually while creating a larger organization with a more robust budget than the two previous entities had individually.

"When we are working with a company, they know that we are speaking with the support of this community's leadership," stated Chris Platé, Executive Director of Economic Development. "Companies can be confident that Union County is working as one to provide them the best opportunity for long-term business success. This solidarity has already generated some amazing results."

Since the merger, the EDC has announced over a quarter of a billion

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in new capital investment and the creation of nearly 1,000 jobs. These results are conclusive that the unification of the organization, which has allowed a dedicated focus on economic development, is a formidable decision for growth. While the county has had some wonderful new companies invest in the community, the primary focus of the program is still to maintain a strong base of existing industries.

The existing firms represent a significant portion of the county's capital investment and job creation.

Workforce development, growth and expansion services, seeking new grant opportunities and intra-county business connections are just a few of the ways the existing industry team helps sustain local businesses.

Additionally, there is a renewed focus on new product development, something that had been under-emphasized for years outside of Monroe's successful industrial parks and speculative building projects. In fact, over 250 acres of land have been identified and are now available for industrial development.

From the Village of Marvin to the Town of Marshville, there is incredible diversity throughout Union County, from cultural to economic, each community is unique. Together the team is working as one; the organization has become a single point of contact for businesses looking to relocate or expand in Union County. The success so far validates the community leaders' decision to create a single economic development organization to support the economic development desires of the County's unique communities. ■



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# Announced Capital Investments and Job Creation

## Emerging from the Great Recession

In the past year and a half, as the economy has emerged from the Great Recession, so too have Union County manufacturers. Several companies have announced expansions at their facilities and two new major entities have announced locating their projects here. Since July of last year, Union County has generated over \$220 million of new investment and 535 new job opportunities. The following is a listing of some of the better-known projects:



### AEP Inc.

AEP Inc announced in December 2013 that the Matthews facility would be the site of new equipment to be installed at one of the company's facilities. AEP would be investing approximately \$6 million in a new line as well as creating 15 jobs. AEP, located in Stallings, NC since 1975, produces industrial films and stretch films such as industrial bags and film used for wrapping pallets. AEP Industries also produces SunFilm, which is used to wrap bales of hay.



### Glenmark Generics

In July 2014, Glenmark Pharmaceuticals, based out of Mumbai, India, announced that their first North American facility and headquarters would locate in Monroe at the site of the City of Monroe's third speculative building. This site is dedicated exclusively for the US market and is Glenmark's first manufacturing facility in North America adding to its list of 14 plants in 4 countries — India, Brazil, Argentina and Czech Republic. The \$30 million investment is in the form of equipment and a facility that will be spread over 100,000 sq. feet (on a 15 acre plot). Hiring upwards of 50 employees, the company will first begin work on an oral solid unit and thereafter set up manufacturing units for injectables and topicals.



### SCOTT Safety

Scott Safety, a TYCO business, (TYCO International is headquartered in Ireland) announced in February that they will invest approximately \$28.7 million in building renovations and new equipment at their facility in Monroe, North Carolina. This investment helps retain the current 600 jobs and is expected to create 67 additional over the next five years. Scott Safety, located in Union County within the City of Monroe since the 1950s, currently manufactures life safety equipment for use by firefighters, industrial and military first responders. Their best known product is the Scott Safety Air-Pak SCBA which is the dominant industry-leader in self-contained breathing apparatus among firefighters across the Americas.



### O'Neil Digital Solutions

Monroe and Union County's most recent announcement came from O'Neil Digital Solutions in April 2015. The company, which is a national provider of publishing and marketing communication services for major US organizations, announced that they will invest approximately \$140 million in building improvements and new equipment at the former SAFRAN Turbomeca facility. "O'Neil is very excited to expand our operations to North Carolina," stated Jim Lucanish, President of O'Neil Digital Solutions. "We can feel the positive energy and vibrancy of the Charlotte Region. Union County has clearly demonstrated it has the best workforce to ensure our company's success."



### Poly Plastics Products

Poly Plastics Products, manufacturer of industrial plastic film, expanded in 2014 with a \$500,000 investment in a new warehouse at their facility in Marshville. This expansion enabled the company to add a recycling line to their existing capabilities and hire an additional 4-6 employees.



### Harris Teeter

In mid-2014, Harris Teeter, a fully owned subsidiary of Kroger, announced a \$4 million expansion of their Indian Trail facility. The expansion brought an additional 50,000 sf of perishable food space to the already existing 600,000 sf. Beyond the physical expansion, Harris Teeter anticipates creating 50 jobs.

# Wingate University School of Pharmacy

## Prescriptions for Life

Located in a charming setting in eastern Union County, the city of Wingate provides a small town feel within reach of Charlotte's large, urban center and is the home to Wingate University. Wingate, Union County's only University, has approximately 2,500 students undertaking professional, graduate and undergraduate studies.

The pharmacy industry has been an important part of Union County for more than a decade. Since 2003, Union has been one of only three counties in North Carolina with a pharmacy school to train future doctors of pharmacy. Today the school of pharmacy is part of the Levine College of Health Sciences at Wingate University.

Monroe-Union County Economic Development has sought to grow the "BIO" segments of its industrial base since 2000 with the location of Greiner Bio-One, but it was just this past year that the benefits of the pharmacy school at Wingate were parlayed into an economic development success. The economic development team secured India-based Glenmark Pharmaceuticals last summer. The

company is in the midst of building a large pharmaceutical production facility in Union County and Wingate played a big role in demonstrating the workforce capabilities.

The school is an economic driver on its own. Each year, the University attracts students from all over the world. Wingate emphasizes small class sizes, a student-centered environment, service to the community, and real-life experiences in problem solving and application of skills.

The Wingate School of Pharmacy's focus is on the student pharmacist. While the school places the patient at the center of its healthcare equation, it places the student at the center of its academic mission.

All classes are taught by faculty possessing terminal doctoral degrees. Courses are delivered by professors who have earned either their Doctor of Pharmacy degree (Pharm.D.) or Ph.D. No courses, discussions, case studies or laboratories are taught by graduate students or teaching assistants. Small group discussions — six students with one faculty member — significantly enhance the learning environment.

Students begin their experiential training in the first semester of the first year. Experiential learning is woven into each professional year, including two separate learning opportunities in the third year that are led entirely by School of Pharmacy faculty.

Wingate pharmacy students consistently score above the state and national average on licensing exams. One-hundred percent of the graduates passed the national licensing exam (NAPLEX) in 2008 and 2012.

Since opening its doors in 2003, Wingate University's School of Pharmacy has distinguished itself nationally by the quality of its graduates, an innovative, student-centered curriculum and creative faculty dedicated to teaching excellence.

In addition to Pharm.D., Wingate offers these healthcare-related degrees: Physical Therapy (D.P.T.), Physician Assistant (M.P.A.), Nursing (B.S.N.), Respiratory Therapy (B.S. to begin in 2016) and seven pre-professional undergraduate programs including pre-dentistry, pre-pharmacy, pre-physical therapy and pre-veterinary medicine.

### WINGATE UNIVERSITY QUICK FACTS

- Wingate University is consistently ranked as a top ten "best value" in the South by *U.S. News & World Report*
- More than 3,000 students on three campuses
- 35 undergraduate majors
- 37 minors and numerous pre-professional programs
- **Master's degrees:** Business, Education, Sport Management, Physician Assistant Studies, Accounting
- **Doctorates:** Pharmacy, Education and Physical Therapy
- Offers international study opportunities
- Wingate students typically perform about 10,000 hours of community service each year
- **Student to faculty ratio:** 14:1
- 22 NCAA Division II sports
- South Atlantic Conference Echols Athletic Excellent Award nine years in a row
- **Notable alumni:** Anthony Dean Griffey, four-time Grammy Award winning singer; Allen Thomas, director of conditioning Chicago White Sox; Lorinza "Junior" Harrington, NBA player; Patrik Bass, senior books editor, *Essence Magazine*; Eric Powell, Mississippi state senator; Leon Levine, founder of Family Dollar Stores.

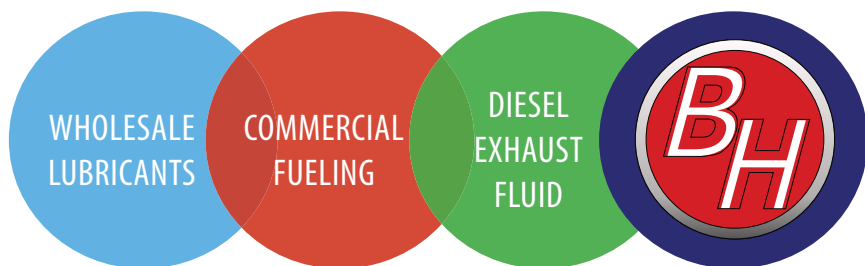


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# Union County's Economic Development Mascot: UNITAS

## An Unorthodox Approach at Social Media

In the Summer of 2014, the staff of Monroe-Union County Economic Development realized that some aspects of the social media campaign were strong and others had stagnated. After some discussions with staff and other stakeholders, "Unitas" was born.

"Unitas" was inspired by the 1964 children's book Flat Stanley, a story about Stanley who was given a big bulletin board by his father to display pictures and posters. The board was hung above Stanley's bed and during the night it falls, flattening Stanley.

In 1995, The Flat Stanley Project was started by Dale Hubert, a third grade schoolteacher in London, Ontario, Canada. The project's goal was to facilitate letter-writing by schoolchildren to each other as they document where Flat Stanley accompanied them.

In this vein, "Unitas," a small, flat economic developer is canvassing Union County seeking out important economic development landmarks and industries to draw awareness to

economic development achievements, the diversity of the industries and to the great opportunities in manufacturing as a career.

The Monroe-Union County Economic Development office introduced "Unitas" in January 2015 on the office's Facebook page. His impact was immediate. Interest in "Unitas's" locations increased each month as people began to look for his posts. In just the first 4 months, traffic increased on Facebook by thousands and the likes increased 84%. There has also been an after effect with increases in other areas of social media following the monthly visit by "Unitas."

The idea seemed to have taken hold as the comments were all positive and the general public was now engaging with economic development outside of announcements for new industries and jobs. "The next step is to see where 'Unitas' will take us in other areas of social media," stated Chris Platé, Executive Director of Economic Development. "Does he

Interest in Unitas' locations increased each month as people began to look for his posts.



expand his footprint to include Twitter or LinkedIn? Time will tell if we can find a professional way to enter these other social media realms."

Social media and generating awareness of your brand can take

many forms. It appears that Monroe-Union County Economic Development has found an interesting, engaging and unorthodox tool that could open doors for communication to the citizens of Union County and beyond.

# Social Media as a Tool in Economic Development

Because of the confidential nature of economic development projects, it is not uncommon for those outside of the field to have a hard time describing economic development. During the past two years, Monroe-Union County Economic Development has been employing several social media initiatives to help bring about a better understanding of economic develop-

ment and to share information about the manufacturers in the county. In addition to the Unitas campaign, these include:

**Friday Fact:** Each Friday a different fact about a Union County manufacturer or about the County itself is shared on the social media pages. This initiative is an easy way to learn about companies located in Union County –

what is manufactured here and what jobs and workforce skills are needed.

**Tuesday Topics:** Each Tuesday, an article related to various topics of importance in manufacturing is discussed – workforce, innovations and technology, trends, highlights on specific sectors, etc. These articles are intended to generate thought-provoking conversation about manufacturing

and engagement with our followers.

In addition to these regular features, Monroe-Union County Economic Development uses these social media platforms as an outlet for information on project announcements, recognition of companies that have participated in lighting rebates and other cost-saving programs, and news about Union County manufacturers.

## FRIDAY FACTS

- Charlotte Pipe and Foundry's Monroe facility is the company's largest plastics pipe and fittings manufacturing operation with 500 associates and more than 1,000,000 sq. ft. They have been manufacturing plastic pipe and fittings in Monroe, NC since 1967.

- Monroe based Cyril Bath uses proprietary intellectual property to manufacture machines that are used to form Titanium airframe structures for the new Boeing 787 Dreamliner. A significant portion of the Titanium raw material for the Boeing 787 airframe components produced by Cyril Bath comes from ATI Specialty



Materials also in Monroe.

- Fisher Textiles, Inc., the leading supplier of fabrics for digital printing has been providing fabric solutions since 1988. They can be found in trade show exhibit environments, retail advertising, hospitality, sports marketing, eventing, outdoor adver-

tising and art reproduction markets.

- Did you know that Union County has over 1100 farms averaging 161 acres? We are the 2nd highest producer by county in the state for soybean and wheat and the 3rd highest producer by county of broiler chickens!

- H&H Farm Machine Company manufactures spraying equipment for agriculture, homeowner, pest control, landscaping, construction, nursery, poultry, livestock and recreational use. Not only do they provide a variety of products, but they are also committed to providing their customers quality parts & service.

## SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS



**FACEBOOK**

[www.facebook.com/MonroeUnionCountyEDC](http://www.facebook.com/MonroeUnionCountyEDC)



**TWITTER**

[twitter.com/MonroeUnionEDC](https://twitter.com/MonroeUnionEDC)



**LINKEDIN**

[www.linkedin.com/company/monroe-union-county-edc](http://www.linkedin.com/company/monroe-union-county-edc)

# It Begins with Precision

## Perfection Is the Standard

The skills necessary to perform precision manufacturing are in the DNA of Union County residents. Manufacturing in Union County took root in the Sutton Park neighborhood of Monroe after World War II. The US Army vacated their military base, Camp Sutton, shortly after the war ended leaving behind heavy utility infrastructure that was ideally suited to support manufacturing. The companies that located there found a readily available workforce who came to the job with innate skills developed in an agrarian lifestyle. Farmers' sons and daughters naturally took to manufacturing work because they had grown up needing to know how to fix tractors and other farm equipment.

Throughout the 1950s, '60s and continuing through the '70s and '80s, Monroe steadily added to the list of manufacturing companies choosing to locate in the community. Anchor firms like Allvac and ORO Manufacturing were some of the first to call Monroe's historic Sutton Park neighborhood home. Allvac in 1957 and ORO Manufacturing in 1961, respectively. Allvac (now ATI Specialty Materials) has grown to employ 1400 people in the production of specialty metals and super alloys found in aircraft engines and airframes in virtually every plane in the sky. Customers include Boeing and Airbus, Rolls Royce and GE. ORO Manufacturing is the nation's sole producer of troop transport seats and cargo tie-down equipment used in military aircraft for both fixed wing and rotary aircraft. ORO's products keep our warfighters safe in aircraft such as the C-130 transport plane and the Blackhawk helicopter.

In the late 1990s, community leaders in Monroe took a bold step in their efforts to attract more manufacturing investment. Over 500 acres of land was assembled close to the Charlotte-Monroe Executive Airport to cre-

ate the Monroe Corporate Center, the county's only Class A industrial park. Today, the park is home to ten (10) manufacturing companies employing over 1,300 people. Five (5) of these companies are the North American headquarters of foreign-based firms.

In order to compete and thrive in a world market place, the firms located within the Monroe Corporate Center as well as throughout Union County have to deliver precision-made products all the time. Customers demand it and lives literally depend on it.

For example, Scott Safety of Monroe makes various respiratory and personal protective equipment used in extreme environments by our nation's firefighters, military and law enforcement personnel. Their Air-Pak X3 is the latest and most advanced self-contained breathing apparatus available to firefighters. Creating such a product is only possible with a workforce that incorporates precision at every step of the manufacturing process. It is a direct result of this culture of precision that led to the February 2015 announcement of a \$28 Million expansion of Scott Safety's Monroe facility by their corporate parent, Tyco.

Not only do existing industries see the advantages of expanding in a community whose workforce lives and breathes precision, so does O'Neil Digital Solutions with their recent announcement of their new facility in Monroe. "One of the largest factors in our choice to come to North Carolina, along with its location, is the people. I know it's a cliché, but people make a business. And great people is what we found here." O'Neil Digital Solutions is a California based provider of data-driven publishing and marketing communications services who is expected to create 250 jobs and invest \$90 Million dollars at a 110,000 SF facility in Monroe. ■



### DID YOU KNOW? FACTS ABOUT UNION COUNTY'S MANUFACTURERS

- **Ludwig Drums** used by Ringo Starr, Maroon 5, Van Halen and the Roots – band of the Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon.
- **Devant Sports Towels**, official towels for the 2014 U.S. Open Men's and Women's Golf Championships in Pinehurst.
- 30% of the world's medical titanium is produced at **ATI Specialty Materials** in Monroe.
- Monroe-based **Bona** is the official floor care company for the NBA.
- Laboratory equipment by **CEM Corporation** in Stallings used to analyze the nutritional facts as reported on food labels.
- **Colfax's Fluid Handling's** pump is used for spraying the "M" on M&Ms.
- **SCOTT Safety** makes the breathing apparatus that are used by more firefighters. Fire departments in 15 of the 20 largest US cities use SCOTT, including the NYFD.
- The ribs in the fuselage of the Boeing 787 Dreamliner are produced at **Cyril Bath Company**.
- **Charlotte Pipe and Foundry** can produce over 100 miles of PVC pipe per day.
- **ATI Specialty Materials** is a worldwide leader in aerospace supplying Boeing, Rolls Royce, GE and many others.
- **Glenmark Generics** is the first India-based company to establish manufacturing in Union County.
- Every ship in the US Navy has a **Colfax** pump on it.



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# Union County's Medical Sector Is Expanding



In the fall of 2014, Monroe sold its Spec Building #3 to Glenmark Generics, an India-based pharmaceutical company. Glenmark chose the community for many reasons, including a skilled workforce that could migrate from aerospace to pharmaceutical. Glenmark's location represents the first pharma project in Union County in nearly a generation. A leading player in the discovery of new molecules in various stages of clinical development & pre-clinical development, Glenmark has a significant presence in branded generics markets across emerging economies, including India. The company plans on investing nearly \$28 million in new machinery and equipment and building improvements for the US market.

"We are extremely pleased that Glenmark has recognized the strength of our precision and technical based manufacturing hub here in Union County," said Chris Platé, Executive Director of Monroe-Union County Economic Development. "Glenmark is a significant company in our growing medical/laboratory sector, joining other internationally renowned companies like CEM and Greiner Bio-One."

Union County's medical-based cluster, similar to its aerospace cluster in 2005, is starting to form a critical mass. Greiner Bio-One, an Austria-based company, is a global player in the blood collection and testing arena. Since purchasing the first spec building built by the City of Monroe, Greiner has invested nearly \$60 million and created over 300 jobs. This company

is one of the anchors to the "Make It In Union County" initiative, an effort to grow awareness of the great career opportunities that exist within the manufacturing sector. They have also started a strong apprenticeship program to develop their workforce to an even higher standard.

CEM, founded in 1978 in Stallings, has been designing and developing laboratory instruments and scientific methods (both microwave-based and



non-microwave technologies) that are used by major companies, prestigious research institutes, and universities around the world. Today, the company has facilities in six countries across the globe and is the largest provider of microwave laboratory systems worldwide. The technologies developed by CEM have a wide array of applications including analysis of moisture, protein or fat content in foods — commonly depicted on every food label in the US.

Paceline, formerly known as Rx Textiles, has been manufacturing in Union County for nearly twenty years. Focused on producing quality lines

of tubular medical fabrics, Paceline's products are used in orthopedics, prosthetics, orthotic and surgical uses among many others. In 2010, Rx Textiles acquired SPT Technologies, further enhancing the company's ability

to serve the medical sector. As the cluster continues to develop, it will be exciting to see the next addition and diversification Union County's economic development team will bring.



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# UNION COUNTY, NC

Population: 221,000+

## Industry Assets:

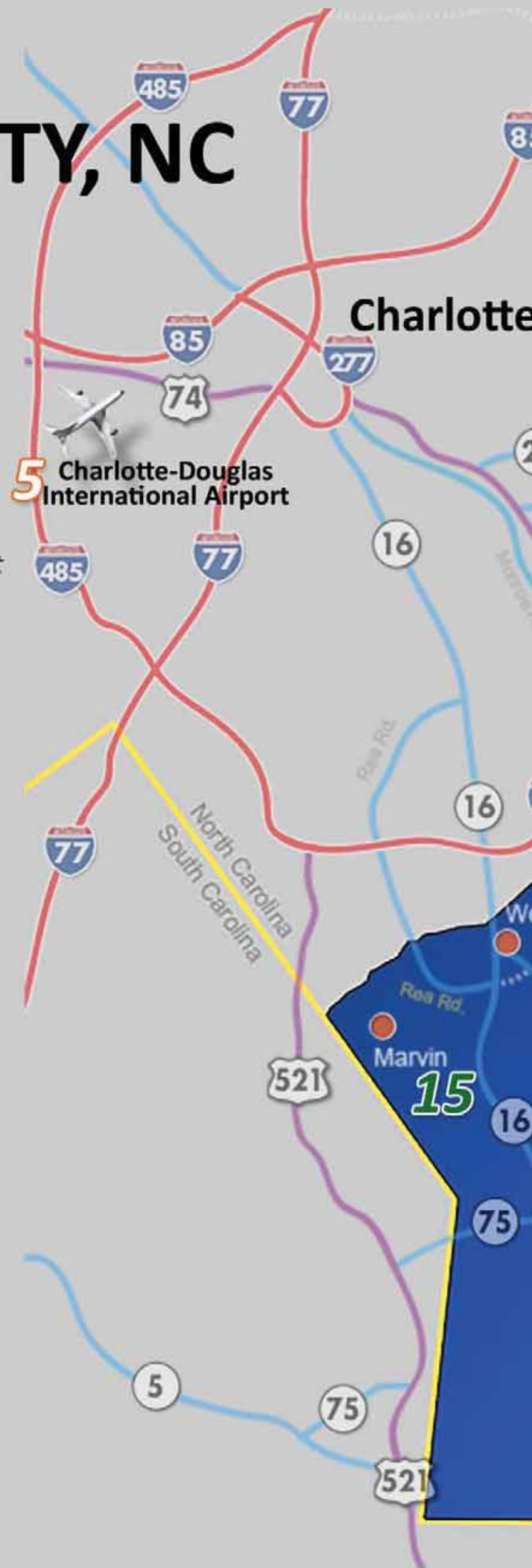
- 1) South Piedmont Community College
- 2) Charlotte-Monroe Executive Airport
- 3) Wingate University
- 4) Union County Ag Center
- 5) Charlotte-Douglas International Airport

## Industrial Parks / Areas:

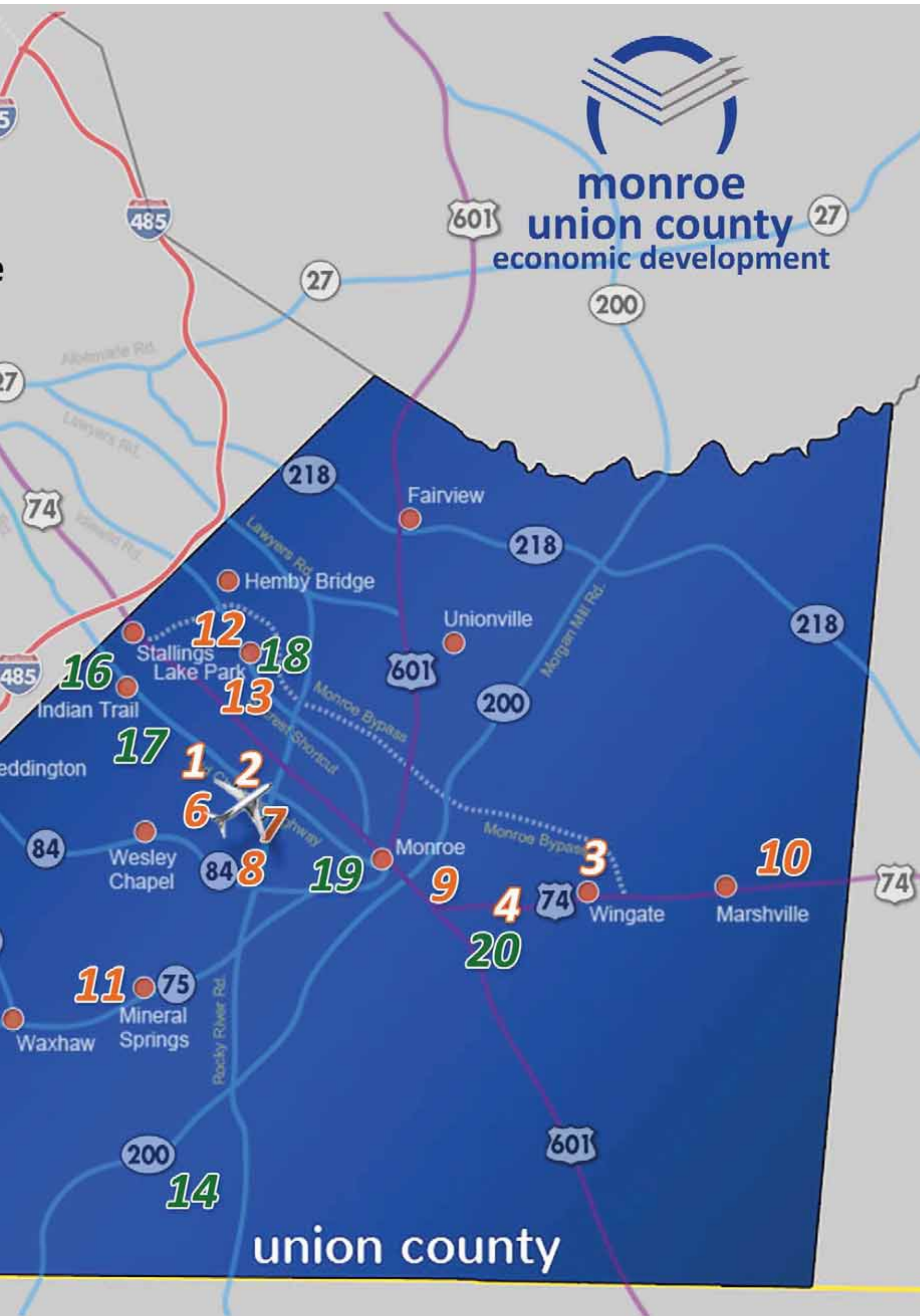
- 6) Monroe Corporate Center
- 7) AeroPointe Industrial Centre
- 8) Goldmine Generations
- 9) Sutton Park
- 10) Crossing Site
- 11) Shannon Farm Site
- 12) Old Hickory Park
- 13) Industrial Ventures I & II

## Parks:

- 14) Cane Creek Park
- 15) Efird Park
- 16) Stallings Park
- 17) Chestnut Square Park
- 18) Crooked Creek Park
- 19) Monroe Aquatics & Fitness Center
- 20) Jesse Helms Park











## South Piedmont Community College - A Leader in Education and Workforce Training

South Piedmont Community College, which serves Union and Anson counties, has prepared thousands of men and women for great careers, right here at home — conveniently and affordably. SPCC, North Carolina's newest community college, created in 1999, offers more than 90 credit programs as well as many short-term continuing education opportunities offered year-round. South Piedmont is also a leader in Basic Skills instruction for adults who want to complete high school or improve their reading, writing, math, and communication skills.

South Piedmont is growing — serving 15,000 credit and continuing education students annually. But even as the college grows, extensive hands-on experience and one-on-one instruction remain hallmarks of South Piedmont's approach to learning.

Classes are offered at campuses in Monroe (Old Charlotte Highway Campus), Polkton (L.L. Polk Campus) as well as locations in Wadesboro, Waxhaw, and online. The college's Center for Technology and Health Education in Monroe features state-of-the-art advanced manufacturing and welding labs.

South Piedmont's status as an

“up-and-comer” among the state's 58 community colleges is good news for everyone who lives and works in the communities it serves, and it bodes well for the future of the counties it serves.

Business and industry across the region recognize South Piedmont as an important ally. The college's on-site customized training programs equip men and women for the high-demand, high-paying careers of today and of the future. The availability of a skilled workforce is crucial to any industry looking to expand or locate in the area. By providing trained workers, the region ensures its companies maintain their competitive edge in the global marketplace, while ensuring the best employment opportunities for its citizens. South Piedmont's Customized Training Program provides training assistance in support of full-time production and direct customer service positions created in the area, enhancing the growth potential of the companies while simultaneously preparing the workforce with the skills essential to successful employment in emerging industries.

The college's apprenticeship program combines paid on-the-job



training with classroom instruction. At the end of two years, a student earns an Associate of Applied Science degree and Journeyman Certification by the N.C. Department of Labor. This comprehensive skill and knowledge development program at South Piedmont gives students a competitive advantage. Upon graduation, the apprentice will be “work ready” and earning a lucrative starting salary with company benefits. Students completing the program can look forward to great careers such as CNC machinist, electrician, maintenance technician, mold/plastic technician, tool & die maker, welding fabricator, and more.

Of course, SPCC offers dozens of credit programs, many of them two-year associate degree programs, in areas as diverse as healthcare, automotive, mechatronics, agribusiness, basic law enforcement, and more. For

students with the goal of a bachelor's degree, South Piedmont's College Transfer Program parallels the freshman and sophomore years of a four-year college or university degree.

Hundreds of short-term courses, seminars, conferences, and on-site customized training programs are offered year-round by the division of Career Development and Continuing Education. This includes the Small Business Center at South Piedmont Community College, which offers free seminars and counseling for those looking to learn more about finances, marketing, or the other day-to-day skills needed to start or run a business.

Union County is fortunate to have South Piedmont Community College well-positioned to provide men and women — as well as area businesses — with the critical training needed for success. South Piedmont has been consistently ranked among the top community colleges in the nation because of its success in developing the potential of its students by providing high-quality instruction with personal attention. To learn more about how South Piedmont does it, visit [spcc.edu](http://spcc.edu).



# Agriculture: Vital to Union County's Economy

Union County is an agriculturally significant county to the state and nation. Driving through Monroe and along highway 74, it can be difficult to recognize the significance of our "little county" to the nation and state. Shopping malls, gas stations, fast food, and dealerships line both sides of the road but drive just a little off the highway and you will find an abundance of agricultural land and family farms. Union county ranks third in the state in overall agricultural farm receipts at a little over \$360 million dollars annually. Agriculture is our largest industry here in the county, as well as in the state. However, there is much more to agriculture and its economic impact than the farmer. We need young and new individuals to support this vital industry.

Most citizens are not fully aware of the importance of our agricultural system, let alone the supporting services and workforce needed to keep it afloat. Less than 15% of the work force in agriculture is under the age of 45 and the average age of our farmers is 58. There is a need to focus on building our food production and agricultural industry in order to sustain this important economic segment of the county and the state.

Union County is competitive in the production of broiler chickens, eggs, corn, soybeans, wheat, and ornamental crops (shrubs, annual flowers, trees, turf, etc.). We rank in the top 10 in NC in 7 out of 14 specified commodities. We are 2nd in the production of eggs; 3rd in broilers; 2nd in soybeans; and 4th in turkeys. Each of these requires an extensive supply chain and work force to remain competitive. For example, each poultry processing plant requires no less than 750 employees plus 100 contract growers — Union County has two processing facilities, Tyson Foods and Pilgrims. Crop farms rely on multiple equipment dealers, mechanics, seed suppliers, and chemical dealers to sustain themselves. Millions of dollars circulate through the local economy each year in seed, supplies, and equipment purchases to keep the farms operating.

Another level of workforce can be found behind the scenes in insurance, land and equipment financing, agriculture consulting, brokering, public service, education, research, and engineering. Agriculture supplies food for everyone, but also supplies jobs at all levels of skill and education. According to Purdue University, "Food scientists and engineers will be highest in demand in the agricultural job market [to come]. Annual job openings for America's food and agricultural science industries are projected to be 58,000 while the number of graduates for those jobs will be slightly more than



## AG CAREERS

- Farm production
- Agribusiness management and marketing
- Agricultural research
- Engineering
- Food science
- Processing and retailing
- Banking and insurance
- Education
- Government and public service
- Landscape architecture
- Urban planning
- Energy
- ... and other fields

57,000." This means that agricultural jobs are going unfilled at an average rate of 1,000 openings per year.

As with the national trend, Union County cannot meet the demand. Most of our farms face challenges finding labor, specifically skilled labor. As a whole, our society does not recognize that agriculture alongside many other industries, offer skilled and educated job opportunities. This is a major concern in maintaining this vital sector of our economy.

One strategy the local community uses to address this need is exposing students to methods and technologies integral to operating a modern farm. Union County Public Schools has a very active Agriculture program which includes courses covering animal science, horticulture (landscaping & turf grass) and ag mechanics (welding). Many of the schools are equipped with greenhouses where students grow and sell produce that they raise. In fact, one greenhouse incorporates environmentally friendly features such as solar panels, wind turbines, and a cistern that captures and reclaims rainwater subsequently used for irrigation.

Our land in Union county is precious and our agricultural community is vibrant. By building a strong pipeline for a potential workforce, Union County is striving to maintain an already thriving agricultural segment of the economy and secure its future growth.




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# Aerospace Is Still King for Monroe

Continuing to Diversify, Monroe's Main Industry Segment Is Still Growing



Since 2002, Monroe has had a focus to recruit aerospace companies; this initiative has developed into the largest geographic cluster of aerospace companies in the Carolinas. In fact, there are 19 aerospace firms in Union County of which 18 are within a mere 7-mile radius. This cluster represents over \$600 Million in tax base and nearly 3,000 employees or 26% of Monroe's manufacturing workforce. Now, we are seeing companies that were in traditional industries seeking to diversify a portion of their business portfolio into aerospace.

Monroe's aerospace cluster continues to be recognized annually as a national leader in aerospace recruitment. Top 5 in Aerospace Recruitment; Top 10 Aerospace Cluster in the Southeast; and #1 Aerospace Cluster in NC are just a few of the accolades that have come as a result of the community's recruitment efforts. This is due to Union County's strategic location on the east coast and the fact that the companies located in Monroe already provide products and service to airframers and engine builders like Boeing, Airbus, Embraer, Bombardier, Rolls Royce, GE and others across the globe.

The cornerstone of the cluster is ATI Specialty Materials. This company started in Monroe in 1957 and has had a continual stream of investments and innovation to become an international giant in the aerospace world. ATI super alloys containing titanium and nickel and other exotics can be found in virtually every aircraft flying in the world.

Union County's aerospace firms are among the world's most competitive and successful in the sector. They accomplish this by continually exploring

and adopting innovative technologies and embracing partnerships in order to capitalize on new market opportunities. One example is Cyril Bath Corporation's recent work with ATI Specialty Materials to perfect a metal stretch forming process using ATI titanium alloys to make fuselage ribs for the Boeing 787 Dreamliner. Cyril Bath is the sole provider of fuselage ribs for the 787 platform.

The Charlotte-Monroe Executive Airport and its International Customs service has added additional capabilities within the community to lure the eye of international suppliers and help keep the local firms accessible to their customers. When considering their expansion location options within the Carolinas, Cyril Bath Corporation, producer of the rib sections of the Boeing 787 mentioned above, stayed in Monroe because of the community's assets. "We deal with countries like China, Japan, Russia, India, Brazil, Canada... and all those customers have a need to come visit us," said Mike Zimmer of Cyril Bath Company. "We export globally. 75 percent of our business is export," said Zimmer. He also says a new customs office in his backyard is exactly what his company needed.

The aerospace sector in Union County is truly diverse and dynamic. Our companies thrive as they serve their customers and they are always looking to identify the next profitable technologies. Whether it be additive manufacturing, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV), or commercial space exploration, you can rest assured Union County's aerospace cluster will be at the forefront of these business opportunities, ensuring this key segment of the economy has a strong tailwind. ■

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# Monroe Moves Forward with 4th Spec Building

## Providing Product to Support a Strong Pipeline of Projects

Union County has depended on the City of Monroe and other private developers over the years to ensure that there has been an ample supply of quality building inventory for companies to consider as they evaluate the community. Fortunately, with the increase in business activity throughout the Southeast, the building inventory has dropped dramatically. The economic development effort in Union County has resulted in virtually every marketable building being sold or leased, leaving no option but to pitch greenfield sites to potential businesses considering the county as a potential location.

The City of Monroe has developed three shell buildings on a speculative basis. Each one of these buildings has been filled with international compa-

The City of Monroe has developed three shell buildings on a speculative basis. Each **one of these buildings has been filled with international companies seeking a U.S. headquarters location or manufacturing base.**

nies seeking a US headquarters location or manufacturing base. Greiner Bio-One, an Austrian-based company, purchased the first "spec" building for its medical products business and has expanded the structure at least three times and will soon be adding a distribution warehouse on their campus. Record USA, a Swiss-based firm,

purchased the second "spec" building to house production of their automated entry systems. As a result of their relocation, the company has reached a market share of top 5 in the US. Both of these companies started with buildings that were approximately 50,000 square feet.

The latest company to purchase

a City "spec" building was Glenmark Generics, an India-based pharmaceutical firm. This company purchased the 102,000 square foot building from Monroe in the 3rd Quarter of 2014. Since the acquisition and the announcement, the company has also secured additional land for their future growth. These examples show that the City of Monroe's formula has been successful in bringing in substantial companies with high investment and job creation.

Today, the community is also seeking private developers to build throughout the county. There is incredible demand for buildings varying from 25,000-40,000 square feet from Wingate and Fairview to Mineral Springs and Waxhaw.

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## Parks and Recreation Enhance Union County Living

### Union County is Consistently Named as a Best Place to Raise a Family

As Union County looks to strike a healthy balance between industry and quality of life amenities, the municipalities dotting the county have invested significant dollars in developing parks. Many of these parks, which are innovative and modern in design, are intended to appeal to a wide variety of residents, from families to individuals with special needs to athletic teams, all seeking a variety of recreational activities.

#### Cane Creek Park

Cane Creek Park, Union County's largest park spread out over 1,050 acres, is focused on outdoor recreation with a miniature golf course and campsites that are in close proximity to the swimming, fishing and paddleboats at the 350-acre lake. A centerpiece to the park, the lake is home to some of the best largemouth bass fishing in the state as well as bluegill, crappie and catfish. Camping aficionados will appreciate the flexibility of being able to choose from the Family Camping Areas, which provide amenities on site, and the more rugged Wilderness Campsites, which is tent only and requires a short hike to the sites.

#### Chestnut Square and Crooked Creek Parks in Indian Trail

Chestnut Square and Crooked Creek Parks in Indian Trail offer athletic fields for disc golf, sand volleyball, tennis, soccer, baseball and basketball. Located within Chestnut Square

Park is Carolina Courts, the region's premier training facility for basketball and volleyball. Crooked Creek Park has been slated as a location for one of the Miracle League fields, which is intended to provide a space for children with mental and physical disabilities to experience the joy of America's national pastime, baseball. Both parks have opened within the past year and a half and are state of the art in their designs and activities for athletic events and family gatherings.

#### Stallings Park and Interactive Fountain

Stallings Park, which is ideal for children of all ages, was recently awarded a certificate of recognition by the American Society of Landscape Architects and was voted 2013's "Best of the Best" park and playground by Charlotte Magazine. Activities at the park include a mix of nostalgic features like a merry-go-round and new features such as the interactive water fountain, as well as amenities like covered shelters. The park is home to a variety of events during the year – movie nights on Saturdays in May, StallingsFest on the 3rd weekend of September and a barbecue music night in October.

#### Monroe Aquatics and Fitness Center

The Monroe Aquatics and Fitness Center is a complete complex for adults and families alike with a fitness center, indoor pool and outdoor aquatics park. With a 14,000sf fitness



center, the facility offers personal training, cardio machines, strength training and the FIT Kids (Families Involved Together) program. As part of the aquatics platform, members have the opportunity for group or private swim lessons, infant swim lessons, lifeguard certification and scuba certification among other programs. The Center provides a full set of amenities including childcare for children ages 3 months to 9 years, massage therapy, a Proshop and a smoothie/juice bar. As a community partner, the Monroe Aquatics and Fitness Center offers corporate memberships to companies located throughout Union County.

#### Jesse Helms Park and Soccer Complex

Located on the east side of Monroe with 230 acres of land, Jesse Helms Park is home to a collection of amenities including covered picnic shelters with tables and grills, a playground and a soccer complex complete with six

full sized game fields. Future potential plans for the park complex include a set of four softball fields and a "Homestead" area with a nature center and a carriage trail.

#### Marvin Efird Park

Efird Park offers a variety of activities and amenities, including a community garden with 38 raised beds, hiking trails, a pasture and horse corral and an open pavilion barn for gatherings and private events. The barn is a 30 by 60 foot pavilion with an attached shed roof over a patio area that faces the park's playground. The park's natural trail system is spread out over 28 acres with approximately 1 mile of trails.

These parks, along with the other outdoor attractions such as greenway, are a critical component in seeking the ideal balance of a competitive environment for businesses and a wonderful place to raise a family. ■



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*Located to the southeast of Charlotte and adjacent to I-485, Union County is home to as much diversity in one County as there is in the state of North Carolina. The Gateway region of the County, nearest to Charlotte, is a well-developed area, optimally suited for corporate offices and distribution locations. The central portion of the county has developed a strong base in precision manufacturing, most notably in aerospace, and has the state's highest concentration of aerospace companies - 18 companies in a seven mile radius. Agriculture reigns supreme on the eastern side of the County, where production of soybeans, corn and broiler chickens ranks among the highest in North Carolina. These attributes, along with the County's strong workforce development pipeline from the public schools, South Piedmont Community College and Wingate University, combine to make Union County the ideal location for many businesses to call home.*

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