



work

plan

2013-2015

*an aggressive, balanced approach to growing commerce*

**EDC Mission Statement and Community Accomplishments**

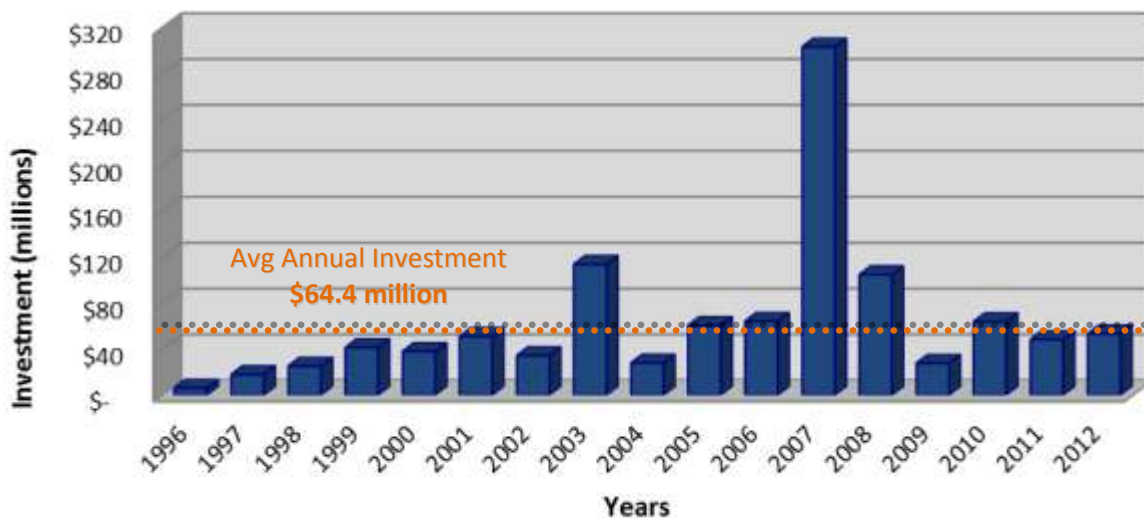
**Mission Statement – Monroe-Union County Economic Development**

*Monroe-Union County Economic Development seeks to improve the overall quality of life of every citizen in Union County, through the recruitment and retention of industry that will increase the per capita income, provide new opportunities, and reduce the overall tax burden; while strengthening the local economy through the diversification and broadening of the tax base.*

**Community Accomplishments & Recognitions**

- \$1.11 Billion Invested (1996-2012)
- 6,000 Jobs Created (1996-2012)
- Monroe was named one of the Top 10 “No Brainers for Manufacturing in the South” (2013) – *Southern Business & Development Magazine*
- City of Monroe and Union County formed the first unified, county-wide economic development organization in nearly 20 years (2012)
- Monroe was named one of the Top 10 “Aerospace Clusters in the South” (2011) – *Southern Business & Development Magazine*
- Union County was Top 10 in Job Creation (2000-2008) – *CNN/Money.com*
- Lowest Unemployment in Charlotte Region for 10+ years – *State of North Carolina*
- Indian Trail was named a Top 10 Town (2009) – *Family Circle Magazine*
- Monroe was Top 5 Nationally in Aerospace Recruitment (2008) – *Expansion Solutions Magazine*
- Highest Geographic Concentration of Aerospace Companies in NC (2007-present) – *NC Dept of Commerce*
- Golden Leaf Foundation Award Winner for Aerospace “Invitation Only” Training Grant (2009)
- 14th Best Community College in the United States (SPCC) – *Washington Monthly*
- Indian Trail named #4 Community in NC for Young Families (2013) – *NerdWallet.com*

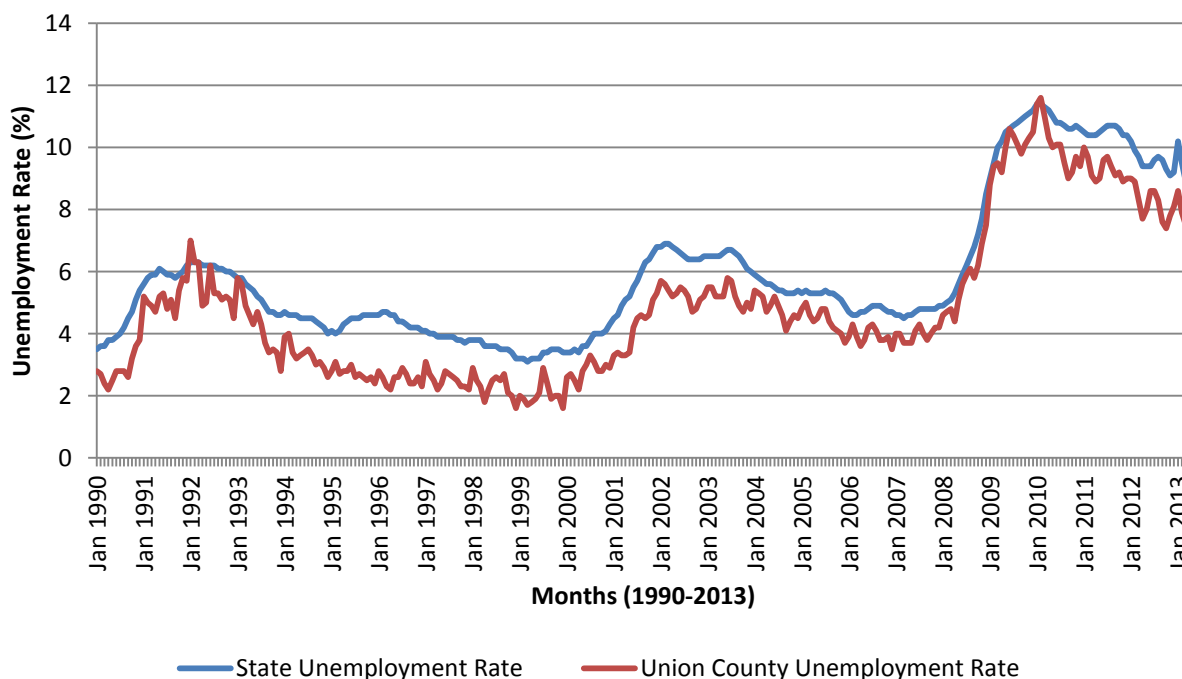
**Announced Capital Investment by Year  
(Monroe EDC)**



**Significant Community Actions for Economic Future**

- Sewer line extension planned for Mineral Springs
- Water tank / pressure resolution in the Stallings and Weddington areas
- Long-term (50+ years) water contract with Town of Norwood (Stanly County) to ensure water availability
- County-wide US Highway 74 revitalization planning
- Customs service at the Charlotte-Monroe Executive Airport
- On-going Infrastructure Improvements at the Charlotte-Monroe Executive Airport (7,000 ft)
- Product development in the Monroe Corporate Center
- Establishment of more pro-active incentive guidelines for Union County
- Manufacturing Awareness Campaign to increase interest in manufacturing as a career
- Development of an Apprenticeship program at South Piedmont Community College with the local industries
- Development of Chestnut Square and Crooked Creek Parks in Indian Trail
- Development of Stallings Park
- Overall County Master Plan (including Water/Sewer Infrastructure and Transportation)
- Downtown Monroe Master Plan
- Waxhaw Equine Park and Sports Park
- Aerospace and Manufacturing Training Center relocation
- South Piedmont Community College and Union County Public Schools strategic partnering

**Civilian Labor Force Unemployment Rates for North Carolina and Union County 1990-2013 (ytd)**



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**Dr. Mary Ellis**, Superintendent of the Union County Public Schools  
**Vacant**, Representative of the Union County Chamber of Commerce

*(M) – designates a City of Monroe Representative*

*(UC) – designates a Union County Representative*

## Executive Summary

With the formation of the first county-wide economic development organization in nearly two decades, it was necessary to evaluate Union County's economic situation and prepare a guiding document that outlines the methodology of the organization's recruitment and retention of businesses and its associated marketing efforts. The Monroe-Union County Economic Development Board of Advisors has received input from a wide selection of Union County via municipal government meetings where staff collected information for the development of this work plan. Discussion topics ranged from community identity and desired business sectors to infrastructure issues and our competitive advantages/disadvantages. These findings helped formulate this Work Plan.

The Work Plan is a guide by which, the Monroe-Union County Economic Development organization executes its efforts to grow and enhance the overall economy of the community; therefore, the overriding goals of this Work Plan are to:

- **Create More Job Opportunities**
- **Generate Additional Industrial/Commercial Capital Investment**
- **Better Define Union County for the Various Target Audiences**

Monroe-Union County Economic Development will seek to accomplish these goals through broad and focused marketing methods; aggressive recruitment missions; continued, enhanced existing industry programs; and new product development. Our objective is to average \$60 million in new capital investment from both existing and new companies on an annual basis starting in 2014. These investments will be developed from a target of small to medium sized companies. For example, an ideal project would yield \$10 million in capital investment and 50 new jobs.

### Opportunities

Currently, there are micro-economies within Union County that are doing well, while other areas remain under economic strain. This fiscal disparity is inherent in the incredible diversity that exists within this community. Union County is made up of many "layers," from the Village of Marvin through the City of Monroe to the Town of Marshville; there is significant variation in wealth, tax base, and culture. It is within these differences we see our greatest strength and areas of opportunity to "cultivate" new economic niches.

Union County has a strategic advantage for companies within traditional industrial sectors requiring any of the following:

- Advanced/Precision manufacturing skill-sets and mindsets (e.g. Aerospace)
- Consolidation to a "lower cost" community for its business units
- High energy utility demand
- Labor force comfortable with extreme precision requirements and attention to detail
- Fiber connectivity
- Foreign trade zone (FTZ) capabilities
- Close proximity to the sixth busiest international airport in the world and its primary executive reliever airport

There is an abundance of manufacturers with these needs and skill-set requirements; therefore, the overlap of needs allows the organization to focus on a wide-array of industrial production types, while taking full advantage of the workforce development efforts already in place within Union County and the Charlotte Region.

Union County also has advantages favoring companies from the non-traditional business sectors that can have a great impact on the communities seeking this type of commercial growth. Only certain communities will have the potential of making an impact with these sectors because they provide a unique blend of the following:

- Access to Interstate
- Distinct quality of life features
- Available/developable land
- Available utilities
- Proper zoning

Therefore, we are concentrating our recruitment and retention of new capital investment and job creation from four (4) Areas of Focus:

- 1. Precision Manufacturing**
- 2. Agri-Business**
- 3. Logistics**
- 4. Commercial**

Each of these Areas of Focus can be further defined by the Broad Business Sectors that reside within them. It is among these sectors that the more wide-spectrum marketing efforts will be directed, while the more defined marketing will be derived from Specific Targeted Industries within these sectors.

- 1. Precision Manufacturing**
  - Aerospace
  - Automotive
  - Biomedical
- 2. Agri-Business**
  - Farming
  - Processing
  - Equine
- 3. Logistics**
  - Aggregation Services
  - Data & Call Centers
  - Distribution
- 4. Commercial**
  - Office
  - Entertainment
  - Retail



The following is a visual representation of these Areas of Focus, their Broad Business Sectors, and Specific Targeted Industries within each one.



### Specific Targeted Industries

The Specific Targeted Industries in this Work Plan were selected for many reasons. One significant factor is that Union County's labor pool is predisposed to advanced manufacturing processes, agriculture-related businesses and professional office occupations. Much of the workforce has been honed from generations of families having a history in metals/machining or a mechanical background found with an agrarian lifestyle. The more recent growth in the workforce moved in from more urban parts of the United States bringing skills better suited for the office environment. These traits translate into a workforce that is inherently "precision-minded" and "detail-oriented," enhancing our ability to recruit from our desired industries. The following is a list of those Specific Targeted Industries:

#### PRECISION MANUFACTURING

- Aerospace Manufacturing
- Metals / Metal Working
- Medical Devices
- Machine Building
- Laboratory
- Electronics / Avionics
- Defense-Related Industries
- Commercial Automotive
- Casting Operations
- Plastics
- Biomedical Supplies
- Construction Materials / Services
- Textiles

#### LOGISTICS

- Light Distribution
- Call Centers
- Back Office / Support
- Recycling
- Cold Storage
- Aggregators / Kitting Services
- Rail Essential Processes
- Data Centers

#### AGRI-BUSINESS

- Food Processing
- Specialty Foods Products
- Equine Support Industries
- Timber Processing
- Poultry Farming
- Nutritional Science Support
- Traditional Crop Farming
- Farm Support Services
- Agricultural Processing
- Farm Implements

#### COMMERCIAL

- Retail Centers
- Office Development
- Film Post-Production
- Hotel Development
- Sports-Related Venues
- Quality of Life Businesses
- Healthcare Facilities
- Tourism-Related Businesses
- Financial Services
- Engineering Services
- Information Technology Services

When examining the competitive advantages of the different areas of Union County, the Economic Development Board of Advisors recognizes that not all areas of the county will be submitted for all prospects. Only those locales that are best situated and give the county the greatest opportunity to successfully compete for each unique prospect will be submitted. To properly demonstrate the competitive analysis of the different municipal areas, a matrix was created to identify geographic sections and the Specific Targeted Industries in which they most accurately align.



Union County Competitive Analysis Matrix (Version 1 - July 22, 2013)

Specific Target Industries	Monroe	Fairview	Hemby Bridge	Indian Trail	Lake Park	Marshville	Marvin	Mineral Springs	Stallings	Unionville	Waxhaw	Weddington	Wesley Chapel	Wingate	TOTAL
Aerospace Manufacturing	X			X											2
Metals / Metal Working	X	X		X		X			X		X		X		5
Medical Device	X			X					X						8
Machine Building	X	X		X					X						6
Laboratory				X					X					X	4
Electronics / Avionics	X			X					X						3
Defense-related Industries	X			X					X						2
Commercial Automotive	X			X					X						4
Carding Operations	X			X					X						1
Biomedical Supplies	X			X					X						3
Plastics	X			X					X						7
Textiles				X					X						2
Food Processing	X			X					X						2
Specialty Food Products		X		X					X				X		2
Equine Support Industries		X		X					X						1
Timber Processing				X					X						3
Poultry Farming				X					X						2
Agricultural Processing				X					X						2
Nutritional Science Support				X					X						2
Farm Support Services				X					X						3
Traditional Crop Farming	X			X					X						2
Farm Implements	X			X					X						5
Light Distribution	X			X					X						5
Call Centers	X			X					X						4
Back Office / Support	X			X					X						3
Recycling				X					X						2
Cold Storage	X			X					X						3
Aggregators / Kitting Services	X			X					X						6
Ball Essential Processes	X			X					X						4
Construction Materials / Services	X			X					X						7
Data Centers	X			X					X						2
Retail Centers	X			X					X				X		9
Office Development	X			X					X						5
Film Post-Production	X			X					X						2
Hotel Development	X			X					X				X		4
Sports-related Venues	X			X					X						3
Quality of Life Businesses	X			X					X				X		11
Healthcare Facilities	X			X					X				X		9
Tourism-related Businesses	X			X					X				X		5
Financial Services				X					X						5
Engineering Services				X					X						5
Information Tech Services	27	14	3	25	4	19	7	14	22	5	16	5	5	10	3

This is a living matrix that will change based on continued municipal input and the implementation of initiatives to improve competitiveness. It must be recognized that not all areas of the county will be submitted for every prospect. Only those locales that are best situated and give the county the greatest opportunity for success will be submitted. This matrix will guide in that submission process.

**LEGEND**

Areas of focus

- Precision Manufacturing
- Agri-Business
- Logistics
- Commercial

X = Strong Competitive Advantage  
 X = Competitive  
 = Not Competitive at this time

Due to the wide array of possibilities created by the targets, the organization cannot attempt to recruit from all of the Specific Targeted Industries concurrently. We will conduct general marketing to the Broad Business Sectors while focusing on a choice few of the Specific Targeted Industries that have the highest potential for success. Regardless of the Work Plan, staff will respond accordingly to any opportunities that become available for Union County.

In an attempt to bring development to a wide portion of Union County, a majority of our effort will be concentrated on the following industries over the next 24 months:

- **Agricultural Implements/Processing** is a potentially strong sector in which Union County has a tremendous competitive advantage. There are three factors that provide for this advantage: 1) a central location along the Eastern United States, 2) close to active trade routes, and 3) one of the highest yields per acre communities in North Carolina and the United States. Bringing certain processing may reduce costs such as shipping for our local farmers and thus keep them nationally competitive. Recruiting more implement equipment producers will compliment two parts of our local economy – the strong local market of farmers and our traditional metal working workforce. Another subset of this area is the strength of the Equine industry within Union County. With the highest population of horses in North Carolina, we are poised to receive great developments and investment from the portion of the agriculture community.
- **Aerospace** is already a known commodity of Monroe and Union County. With our developed core of companies (18 within a 7-mile radius) and the strength of the current and developing workforce it is imperative that we continue recruiting this industry. Also, this industry typically has large capital investments and large utility requirements – our areas of strength. Finally, most future manufacturing will evolve from aerospace technologies and skill-sets; therefore, our aerospace companies will be able to continually diversify into emerging product sectors.
- **Office Development** is a logical course of action due to a) the county is adjacent to both Interstate 485 and the metropolitan hub of the Region and b) the population density is along this western edge of the county with a majority commuting into Mecklenburg County for work. Union County has a strong competitive advantage in securing the development of corporate office parks and professional office corridors along its “gateway” communities. These types of businesses have high wage rates, high real property investments and will create an increase in retail and other ancillary commercial growth.
- **Medical Products** will continue to grow in importance over the next few decades, based on the aging population and the introduction of National Healthcare. We will seek companies that develop both consumables and precision diagnostic devices. The existing workforce in Union County is compatible with these types of manufacturers and there already exists a small, but solid base to strengthen.
- **Film Post-Production** due to the fact that the Union County Public School System is now producing students with an emphasis on Post-Production gives our community a strong advantage on selling the area to companies that are filming in the Charlotte Region and seeking services after filming. This is very portable and can be performed in any environment. Areas like Waxhaw and Downtown Monroe could be ideal locations for this type of business. The employees of these types of companies are more creative and therefore seek locations that have a unique feel with the preservation of the past being a perfect amenity.

An overlying layer to the list above is an international component. International companies must take advantage of the current economic and monetary situation and “dollarize” their products. Union County already has demonstrated it is an open community with 17 companies from 10 different countries. The existence of the Foreign Trade Zone within the Monroe Corporate Center and addition of the Customs service at the Charlotte-Monroe Executive Airport in 2014 further strengthens our ability to differentiate ourselves from other communities. Therefore, there will be a strong focus on Western European firms. We anticipate several trips over the next 24 months to the United Kingdom, Germany and France.

The office will also engage in branding initiatives to develop and strengthen the economic base within the three distinct geographic regions of Union County. These initiatives are: “Gateway Union,” “Monroe Aero” and “Grow Union.” Each initiative is geared toward highlighting the specific assets of each area to achieve the highest potential growth. The “Gateway” is in reference to the western portion of the county, “Aero” is mostly geared at the industrialized center of the county and “Grow” is highlighting the agriculture areas that form a crescent on the eastern side of the county.

These areas will be branded as follows:



It is also the desire of the organization to help develop an economic base that continues to draw in strong employees, but also provides upward mobility for individuals that are seeking improvement through further skills training and educational attainment. The ultimate goal is to generate job opportunities for our citizens as we foster the local talent while continuing to work in partnership with the workforce development infrastructure.

### **Product Development**

Union County will have limited success compared to its neighbors without the availability of product, i.e. marketable buildings and sites. This is a significant key to our success. At different times in the county’s history, either the private sector or public sector led the way to make a difference. With the Monroe Corporate Center, Old Hickory and Industrial Ventures I & II, Union County has had many opportunities to lure in manufacturing. Unfortunately, outside of the current Monroe Shell Building #3, the county has had its supply of good quality buildings and some sites depleted over the last decade. It is now time to work hand-in-hand with the private sector and our municipal partners to create opportunities to demonstrate the great aspects of Union County. The economic development team will seek out these opportunities and advise both the private and public sectors on areas that have the highest probability to lure business investment.

**Conclusion**

The objective of this Work Plan is to create jobs and investment throughout Union County. To accomplish this task, Union County and the City of Monroe have collectively invested \$700,000 to form a strong, unified economic development organization. Monroe-Union County Economic Development will be prudent, ensuring there will be the resources to implement the Work Plan. While the funding is substantial, there is still a need for a mechanism to obtain certain specific support from the private sector, generate grant opportunities, develop product and find unique ways to recruit and retain companies for Union County. The revamping of the previous county 501c3 organization will be an integral part of the strategy to strengthen Union County. As the organization embarks on its journey, citizens will witness a more intense marketing strategy; an aggressive schedule of recruiting missions and a fiscal responsibility in the management of our tools to induce jobs to the county. These fundamentals are crucial to the success of this plan and vital for Union County's economic development success.

## Community Assessment

### Overview of Union County's Business and Industrial Community

Union County is blessed with a broad base of industrial companies. This diversity of industries has allowed the County to maintain the lowest unemployment rate in the Charlotte Region for nearly 15 consecutive years. The industrial base includes aerospace manufacturing, agriculture production, plastics-based manufacturing, machine building, medical-related manufacturing, architectural components manufacturing, life security product manufacturing, food processing and automotive and commercial vehicle component manufacturing. These companies now employ approximately 15,000 persons, making Union County the largest job center between Charlotte and I-95.

Union County's industrial base has not manifested throughout the county, but has developed in concentrated spheres within a few of the municipalities. Most of that industrial development resides in the City of Monroe, with Indian Trail, Stallings and Marshville housing the other significant concentrations. Monroe's concentration is very diverse, but its strongest cluster is aerospace-related. Since 2002, the City has lured over \$600 million in new capital investment from aerospace manufacturers. Today, nearly 26% of the City's labor force is associated with aerospace in some fashion. Known for having the highest geographic concentration of aerospace manufacturers in the Carolinas, Monroe seeks to grow and remain a leader in the Southeast for aerospace manufacturing. This organization will continue this effort through our "Monroe Aero" initiative.

Areas from Fairview to Marshville and south to the NC-SC Stateline have developed as one of the most productive agricultural areas in the country. With products including, wheat, corn, poultry and soybean, Union County farmers rank in production as one of the top three counties for each category within North Carolina. While this has been nurtured and grown, it has not achieved its true potential through vertical integration. There is a need for value-added agri-business to be developed. For example, a Union County grain processing facility would eliminate the need for a farmer to transport his harvest great distances for drying or further processing. Such a facility would reduce cost, increase profits and enable further investment. Also, siting a farm implement manufacturer in the county could reduce the dependence on finished equipment imports from other states or countries. Clearly, there is vast potential for growth in agri-business for the county and this organization will begin that process through our "Grow Union" initiative.

Union County has tremendous capabilities for access with Interstate 485, US Highways 74 and 601, NC Highways 218 and 75 and future US Highway 74 By-Pass. Of those roadways, I-485 has the most immediate impact for the future development of Union County's professional offices, large retail centers, sports facilities, hotel development and healthcare facilities. With 4 interchanges on I-485, the Town of Stallings has the highest potential for this development. NC 218 in the Town of Fairview has the potential of developing into a strong transportation route. Initial development in this area should include some fast-food restaurant to service the traffic passing through on the way to the coast. Finally, NC 75 through Mineral Springs is both an excellent truck route serving the future industry in this municipality, but also the highly anticipated town center development that will occur with sewer extensions planned by Union County Public Works. This organization will foster the development of the commercial office market through our "Gateway Union" initiative.

Union County, while known for some larger industrial players and agriculture, has developed a support system of smaller businesses to compliment and subcontract for the larger industries. This will continue



to be a key strategy going forward in our recruitment efforts. We believe the growth and availability of these smaller support companies will dictate the ability to recruit and retain the larger employers. This is especially true in Union County’s case, with the heavy dependence on aerospace, agriculture, industrial machining, and critical component manufacturing.

**Advantages / Opportunities Analysis**

Based on the many work sessions with the local municipalities, aggregated data revealed many advantages and opportunities within the community for existing and new industries. These findings will aid in the direction of our marketing to the Broad Business Sectors within each Area of Focus.

*Community*

Advantages

- EDC Staff’s Relationship with support Allies
- University of North Carolina at Charlotte
- First Class Medical Centers
- Numerous Pro and Semi-Pro Sports, Recreational & Entertainment Options

Opportunities

- Need for Connectivity between and among Municipalities
- Need for Business Hotels / Restaurants
- Need for additional Buildings and Sites

*Logistics / Transportation*

Advantage

- Presence of Industrial Park Sites
- Airports
  - Charlotte-Douglas International
  - Charlotte-Monroe Executive
- Existence of a Foreign Trade Zone
- International Customs Capabilities at Charlotte-Monroe Executive
- Interstate Access (I-77, I-85, & I-485)
- Proximity to Charlotte
- Centralized Location along Eastern US
  - Equidistant between New York City and Miami
  - 2 hours to the Mountains
  - 3 hours to the Beach
- Access to business suppliers and support / complimentary businesses

Opportunities

- Congestion / Inadequate Road System
- Monroe By-Pass/Connector

*Workforce Development*

Advantage

- Union County Public School System
- Talented, Large Labor Force
- Institutions of Higher Learning & Training Capability
  - Wingate University
  - South Piedmont Community College
- Average Age of Workforce is mid-30's

Opportunities

- Fastest growing community over the last decade in NC

*Leadership*

Advantage

- Competitive Costs of Doing Business:
  - Taxes
  - Utilities
  - Labor
- Business-Friendly Community
- Progressive, Effective Government

Opportunities

- State Incentive Policy / Tier System
- Change in Leadership in State Government
- Relatively Young Municipal Leaders
- Sense of Independence among Towns

*Natural Resources*

Advantage

- Multiple Sources of Water

Opportunities

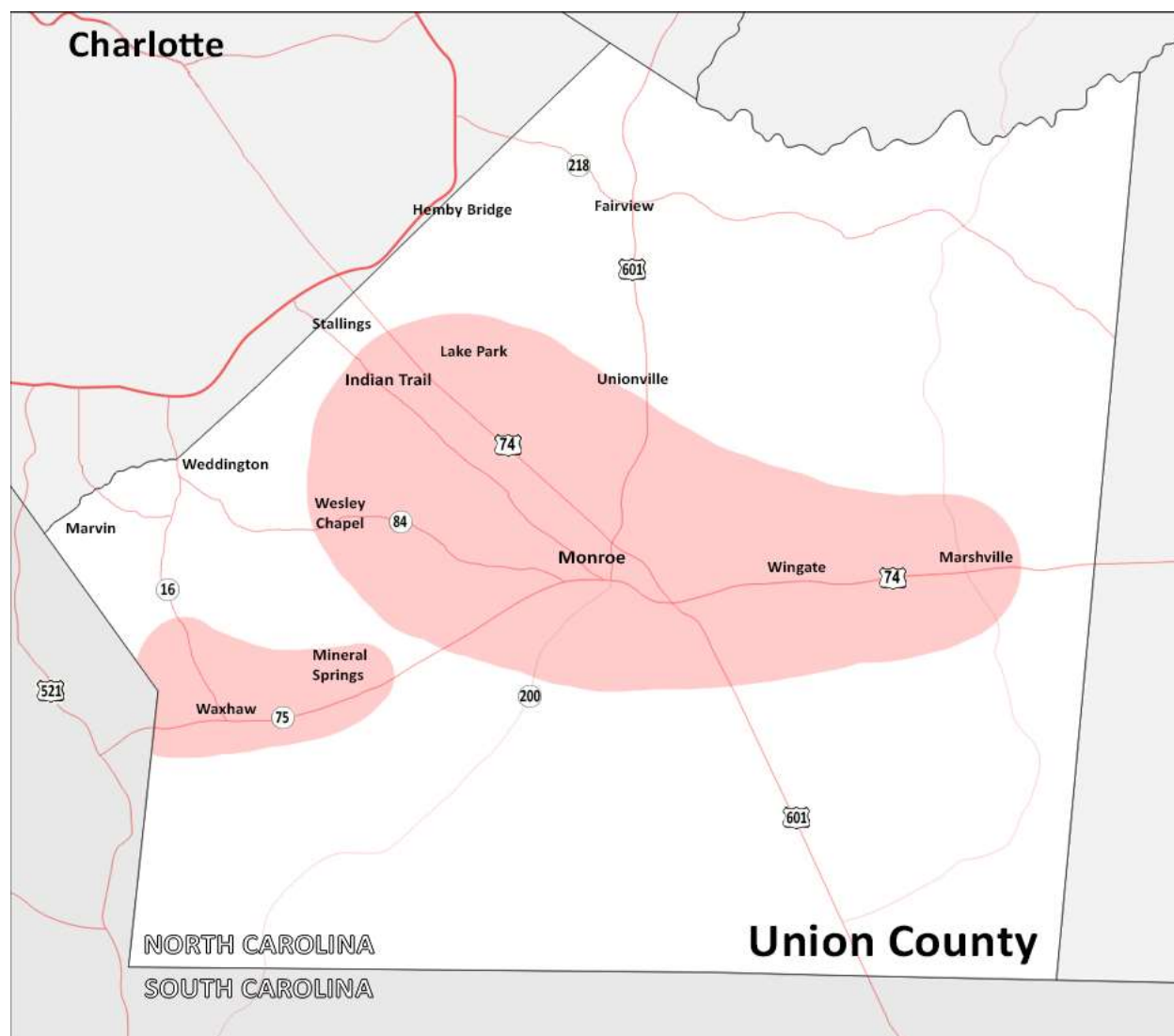
- Limitations in Sewer Infrastructure
- Growth of Population
- Environmental Factors
  - "Heel Splitter" Mussel

**Areas of Focus**

The staff is concentrating its recruitment and retention efforts for new capital investment and job creation from four (4) Areas of Focus:

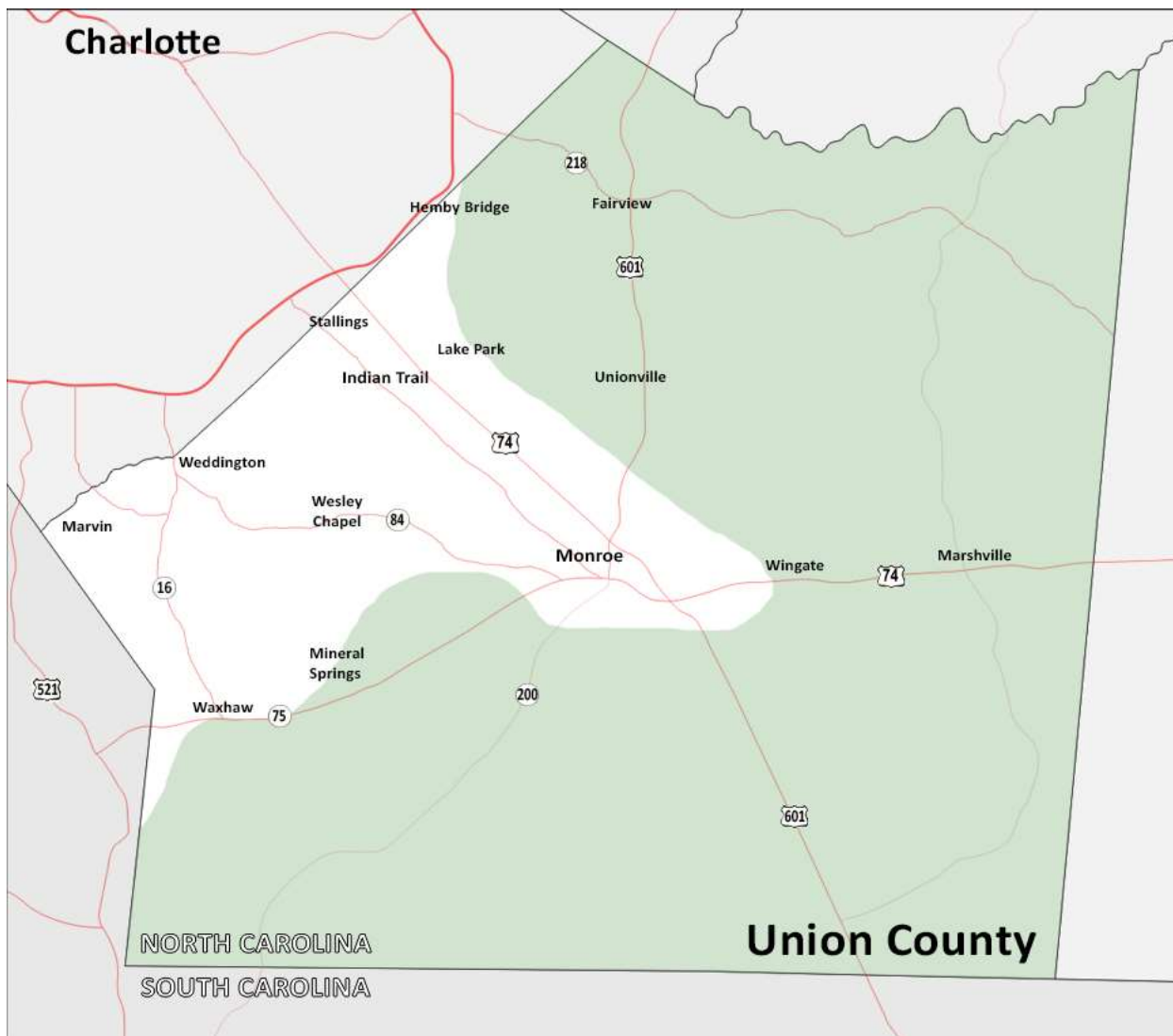
**Precision Manufacturing**

This Area of Focus is based on the long history of precision manufacturing in Union County. Already home to the highest geographic concentration of aerospace companies in the Carolinas, the community has established itself as a manufacturing hub with existing training in place. Precision manufacturing involves the combined use of a trained workforce and newer technologies to create highly defined products with strict tolerances that comprise high inputs of intellectual property. This advanced manner of manufacturing centers upon improving the industrial performance through the “innovative” application of technologies, processes and methods starting at product design through production. Because of the increased productivity and need for patent protection, this area of focus is more likely to take advantage of the new re-shoring of manufacturing from China and the need for European companies to “dollarize” production.



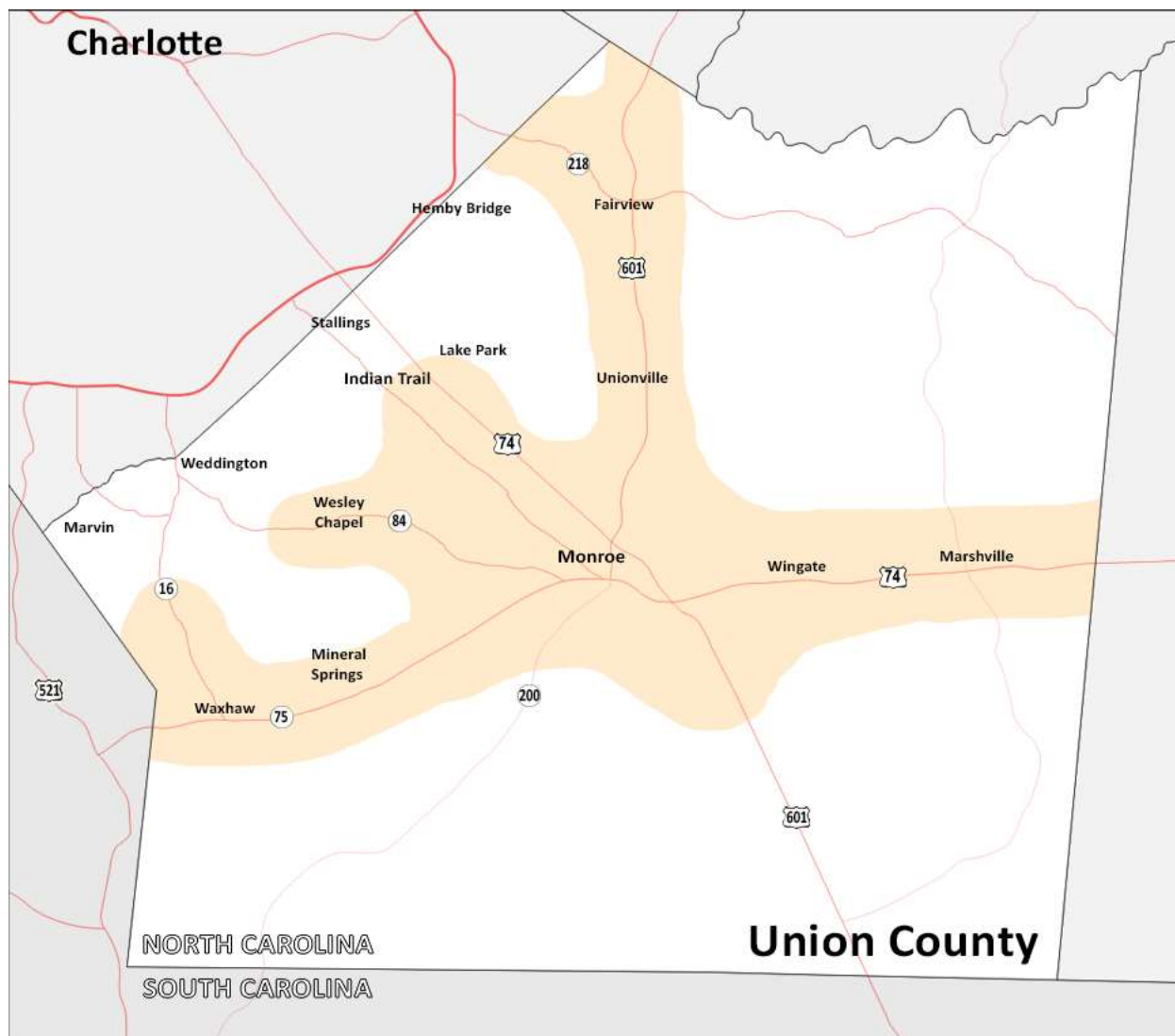
**Agri-Business**

This Area of Focus is a critical component of Union County's economic fabric. It literally spans over every corner of the county, establishing it as one of the top agriculture areas, not only in North Carolina, but the entire United States. Union County also possesses a plentiful basket of timber for processing and the largest equine population in the State. In agriculture, agri-business is a generic term applied to the businesses of agriculturally-related production. It encompasses everything from crop production, timber, seed, agri-chemicals, farm machinery and implements, agri-processing, wholesale and distribution of crops, to their marketing and retail sale. Union County has the established base of agricultural producers, but currently has not leveraged this asset to their full potential. The opportunities that exist within this Area of Focus are vast.



**Logistics**

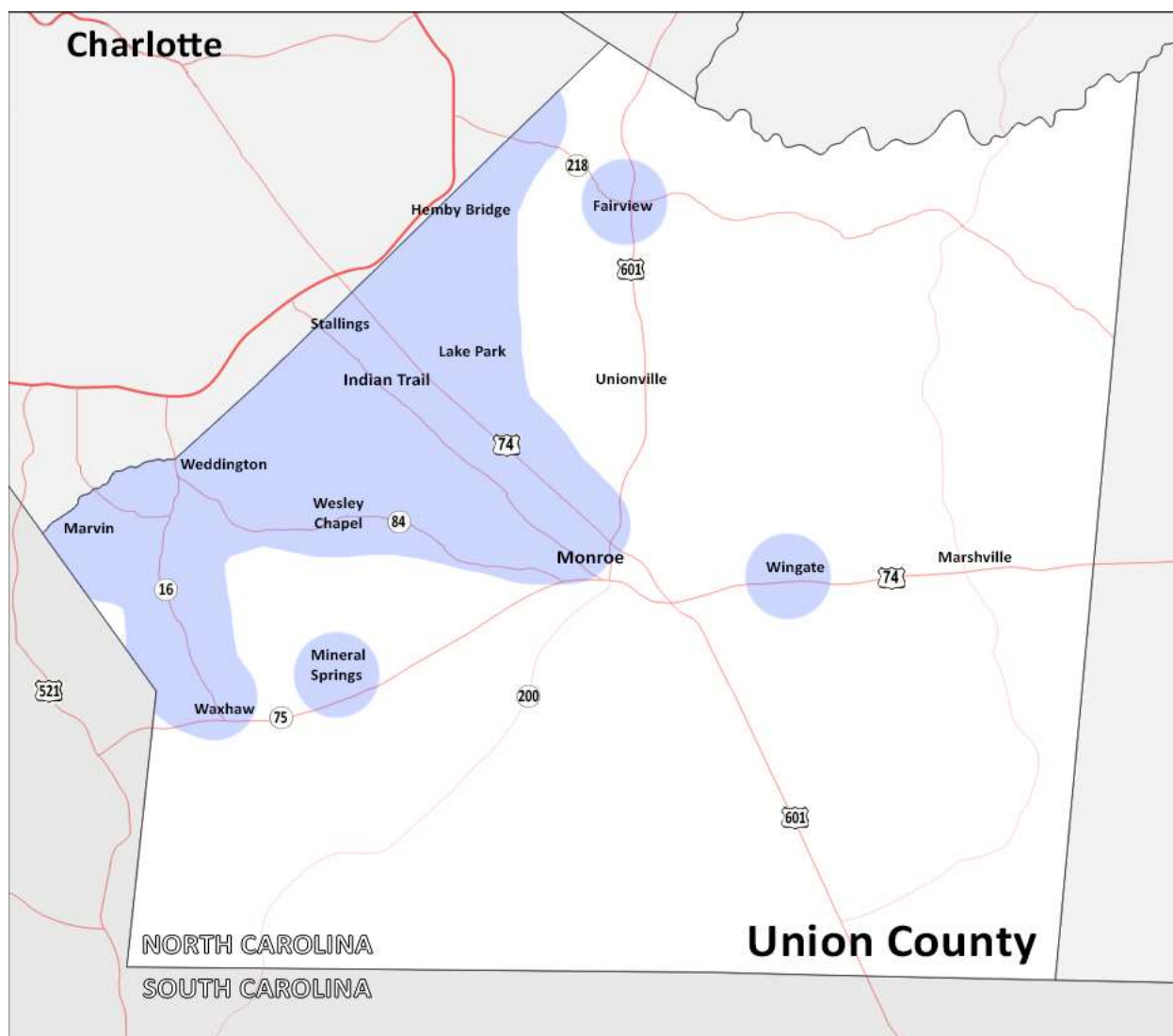
This Area of Focus capitalizes on Union County's location and abilities in the movement of materials, information, and processed goods. Capacities in all utilities, a future by-pass connector to I-485 and an international executive airport provide strong advantages over the Regional competition. Logistics is simply the management of the flow of resources between two points. But it is the resources managed in logistics that define this Area of Focus for Union County. Physical items, such as food, materials, equipment, liquids and people, as well as the more abstract items, such as time, data, information and energy can find a home in this community. This Area of Focus will develop over time. While Union County is addressing improvements in transportation and other infrastructure needs, the production base and road, rail and port systems already exist. Two major centers of attention will be the development of rail served sites along the major transportation corridors and the continued encouragement of the Monroe By-Pass/Connector project. While the county does not currently have a high degree of competitiveness within this Area of Focus, there are significant opportunities on which to capitalize.





**Commercial**

This Area of Focus is based on the demand for non-traditional economic development targets. Union County can capitalize on its location adjacent to I-485, providing numerous opportunities to develop sports/entertainment areas, office parks, and a stronger retail presence in the Region. While retail is simply the sale of goods and services from a business to an individual, it remains a vital part of the overall economy. This Area of Focus is more aligned with the increasing of the commercial tax base within Union County and enhancing the overall quality of life for the citizens and businesses. Union County remains one of the fastest growing communities in the United States and has a relatively young population with high levels of disposable income. This income is leaving the community and being spent in Mecklenburg County. Although not a traditional industrial segment, there is a significant impact this Area of Focus has for Union County. Office development along the Interstate 485 communities, or “gateway” corridor, will be the first target the economic development office will pursue. Further understanding of this Area of Focus will require time to develop as the staff learns more about these different targets.



## Business Development Strategies

Business Development is the main function of any economic development organization. It is in this effort that the local professionals foster investment from both the incumbent industry and those that seek to make their first commitment in the community. Previously, the Monroe Economic Development had 17 years of great success based on investment per capita and per square mile.

Business Development is not one action, but a consolidated effort to generate leads that may be converted into new jobs and tax base. The effort is not limited to one organization, but a team effort among local, regional, and state entities. Within this Work Plan, this effort is broadly captured in the following categories: *a) Existing Industry Retention and Expansion, b) Product Development and c) Marketing, Awareness and Recruitment Activities*. Below are the actions linked to these categories that make up the business development plan for Monroe-Union County Economic Development's program over the next 24 months.

### Existing Industry Retention & Expansion (R&E) Program

Nationally, existing industry accounts for 75% of new investment and job creation. The county's existing industry efforts are a combination of hard and soft benefits to the companies that generate a variety of results that ultimately sustain and grow the existing industry base. Given current economic trends, it is imperative that we work with our existing industries to identify consolidation opportunities early in their planning process. When learning of a company's plan to consolidate or expand, we can facilitate that investment in Union County with our available tools.

Based on the feedback our staff has received, the following methods are the best ways to touch and provide benefit to the existing industries:

- *Professional Visitation Program*  
The Professional Visitation Program is intended to establish and nurture a free flow exchange of information between the economic development office and company decision makers, regarding long-term business growth plans, workforce development, incentive grants, and municipal service facilitation. Companies are encouraged to use us as the primary point of contact with a need for information.
- *Industry Appreciation Events*  
Industry Appreciation Week is a series of events in the course of one week intended to recognize existing industries in Union County for their investment, job creation and community partnerships. Culminating with Industry Appreciation Day, the week features Union County's premier manufacturing event. Typically held at one of Union County's golf venues, the day includes a barbeque lunch, 18-holes of golf, and a banquet meal with a regionally known speaker. We use this networking opportunity to foster intra-county commerce by connecting the owners and managers of manufacturing firms with other firms who may offer a needed product or service. On average 130 people attend the event.
- *Assistance with Operational Efficiencies*  
Through the assistance of our allies at Duke Energy, ElectriCities and Union Power Cooperative, staff acts as the liaison with the utility providers to assist manufacturers in accessing and capitalizing on available grants, rebates and energy audits. The office is very proficient at

working with other government agencies and non-profits to secure grants. We accomplish this by providing assistance in researching applicable grant funding, applying for grants and filing of subsequent documentation attached to awarded grants. We work regularly with organizations like the NC Rural Center for Economic Development, the NC Rail Office, USDA and EDA.

- *Existing Industry Handbook*

The Existing Industry Handbook is the publication designed to be the encyclopedia for Union County businesses. It contains information to aid companies on day-to-day issues. This unique tool is produced both in hard copy and digital formats in order to be a readily accessible resource for our existing companies. In addition to a cross referenced directory listing of businesses, the Existing Industry Handbook supplies general community information, contacts and proper procedures to achieve governmental tasks (i.e. building permits). It also contains information on demographics, descriptions of various local, state, and federal incentive programs, methods of obtaining a VISA and contacts for the various elected officials.

- *Existing Industry Seminar Program*

The office offers a Seminar Program series targeted to industry managers and executives and focused on key topics and trends relevant to issues which arise among manufacturers. These programs are presented by subject-matter experts and themes are typically selected from a survey of our existing businesses.

### **Product Development**

Monroe has benefited greatly from the development of high value industrial parks. The *Monroe Corporate Center* is the jewel of industrial developments within Union County. Focused on corporate headquarters, it has become one of the premier parks in the entire Charlotte Region. Highly recognized companies like *UTC Aerospace Systems* and *SCOTT Safety* are joined by international corporations like *Bona US* and *SAFRAN Turbomeca Manufacturing*. Along with the park, the City developed industrial buildings for companies that need to move on a more aggressive schedule. As a result, *Greiner Bio-One* and *Record USA* both located their North American Headquarters facilities in shell buildings within the Monroe Corporate Center. The City worked hard to achieve a sub-zone designation within Foreign Trade Zone 57 for much of the Monroe Corporate Center.

*AeroPointe Industrial Centre* is Monroe's second industrial complex. It is currently the home to *ATI Allvac's SAF Facility* and is designed for smaller buildings that have greater flexibility than the larger Monroe Corporate Center. The park is approximately 80-acres and will also serve as the entrance to the development of the east side of the Charlotte-Monroe Executive Airport.

*Goldmine Generations Park* is contiguous to AeroPointe Industrial Centre and the Charlotte-Monroe Executive Airport. Goldmine Generations is comprised of 300 acres of which 125 acres are pre-graded. This park has extreme flexibility for many types of manufacturers as well as provides the unique attribute of being attached to a reliever airport.

*Metro Medical Park* and *Cross Creek Medical Park* are both examples of a municipality's innovative partnering with the private sector to establish high-end covenants and development standards in exchange for some financial participation. As a result, we have two strong medical office complexes located adjacent to the *Carolinas Medical Center – Union*.

*Sutton Park Redevelopment* is a current effort by the City of Monroe to identify and map the parcels that have the highest potential for redevelopment that will increase the marketability and values in the Sutton Park area (3,000 acres). Develop a strategy around these “high potential” sites to work with the property owners to achieve the goal of improving the overall neighborhood.

Based on our experience and current requirements witnessed in prospect inquiries, the following activities should be pursued to leverage product development throughout Union County:

- Speculative Shell Buildings
  - Public-Private Partnerships
  - City of Monroe *(in progress – 102,000 SF)*
- City of Monroe’s Industrial Park #3 Development
  - Public-Private Partnership with land owners
- Charlotte-Monroe Executive Airport - Industrial Area Development
  - 35-acre area for industrial purposes that require runway access
- Office Park Development in Stallings
  - Seek a sufficient quantity of available land that has marketable access to US 74, I-485 and the future Monroe By-Pass/Connector
- Industrial Park Development in Marshville
  - Assemble a small number of land owners to create a large rail-served industrial site that could function as a catalyst for economic revitalization of eastern Union County
- Rail Site Readiness in Mineral Springs and Indian Trail
  - Work with existing land owners of identified sites that have high potential for rail essential processes
- Equine Center in Waxhaw
  - Work with town leaders and private sector to further develop the “tourism” industry around the large equine population in Union County *(in progress)*
- Small Sewer Package Plant in Fairview
  - Work with town leaders and private developers to provide sewer solution capable of servicing restaurants and mercantile retail

## Marketing, Awareness and Recruitment Activities

Marketing is a set of actions that allow our staff to define Union County to all audiences. The organization will structure its marketing resources so that it can focus in the following areas:

- Advertising
- Website / Social Media
- Collateral Material Development
- Awareness in Trade Organizations
- Recruitment Missions

### Advertising

Advertising is a necessity, but it is more of a broad approach at attracting companies to Union County versus targeted recruitment missions and other “rifle shot” methods. Based on the information gathered and the experience of staff, advertising Union County must be focused on: *a) image development/awareness and b) differentiating Union County from other communities.* The best ways to advertise to the target audiences are through trade association events / publications and business newspapers in addition to magazines read by site selection professionals.

Based on initial data gathering, the following media outlets would be the best venues for our advertising dollars:

- Charlotte Business Journal – *due to its strength of readership among the corporate leaders of the Charlotte Region. Also, the newspaper is a weekly publication, so the “shelf life” is longer, giving the ad the maximum opportunity to be seen by decision makers.*
- Business NC Magazine – *due to its recognition within the state as the premier business magazine for NC. It is read by those individuals who have extensive business contacts both intra- and interstate.*
- Site Selection Magazine – *due to its premier status as “the” source for site evaluation, incentive analysis and business climate assessment.*
- Southern Business & Development – *due to its flexibility, multiple areas of publication, reach into the international market, and circulation among C-Level executives.*
- Area Development Magazine – *due to its strong readership among the corporate real estate community.*

### Website / Social Media

An economic development organization’s website is the most important tool in presenting a community to the external marketplace. The current website is under redevelopment and will change its domain to **www.developunion.com** on June 14, 2013. It will also have three (3) sub-sites to address competitive areas: a) agri-business, b) aerospace and c) the “gateway” communities along I-485

The main components of the website will contain the following:

- Sites & Building Database including “Featured” Components
- Community Information & Demographics
- Relevant News Items
- Publications and Resources for Site Selectors
- Special Event Registration
- Shopping Cart feature
- Connection to the Social Media Platforms and Blogs



Collateral Material Development

When looking to market to a Broad Business Sector or one of its Specific Targeted Industries, it is valuable to have materials created that highlight the community’s aligned attributes. The *Community Prospectus* has served as the general marketing package along with specific materials created on a project-by-project basis. While successful, it is very tedious and time consuming for staff members to produce. Therefore, it is prudent that we focus a portion of the marketing resources toward the creation of “permanent” materials. These will be developed in a digital format and printed-on-demand as necessary. Virtually all costs are incurred with the design of these materials.

Specific Targeted Industries:

- Aerospace
- Office
- Agri-Business
- Medical Device
- Metals / Metal Working

Community Attributes / Assets:

- Labor Force Skills / Training Capabilities
- Industrial Parks

Awareness among the Trade Organizations

Trade Organizations are the place manufacturing executives and corporate real estate professionals receive a majority of their information. These organizations have web-based newsletters, special events, and other forms of correspondence with their membership. These communications have sponsorship opportunities that can place Union County directly in front of the decision makers and future site selection team members of our target companies.

Based on our current research, the following organizations and their events / communications are of keen interest:

- NAM – National Association of Manufacturers
- SPI – Society of the Plastics Industry
- SAE – Society of Automotive Engineers
- AEM – Association of Equipment Manufacturers
- NBAA – National Business Aviation Association
- MDMA – Medical Device Manufacturers Association
- FEMA – Farm Equipment Manufacturers’ Association
- ibiliti – NC non-profit organization to support medical technology
- NC Aerospace Alliance
- CRCBR – Charlotte Area Commercial Board of Realtors

Recruitment Missions

Recruitment missions are crucial to our goal of securing new industrial jobs and tax base. The community cannot be marketed from behind a desk in the current economic climate. During the 1990’s and 2000’s, the Charlotte Region was able to conduct a significant portion of its business “catching” projects rather than “pitching” to them. The entire economic development community is in a pitching mode and Union County must begin a very aggressive travel schedule to track and lure the types of companies from the Specific Targeted Industries.

Based on the information we have gathered, it is prudent to have a presence in the following locations over the next 24 months as described below:

Locations

- Europe – *due to its high concentration of manufacturing companies, many of which fall within the Specific Targeted Industries (metals, machine building, plastics, medical device & aerospace); its companies need to “dollarize” production; its defense contractors who need a presence in North America to supply the US Military; and its companies that need a US foreign trade zone.*
- Western United States – *due to its concentration of aerospace, energy, defense, and construction materials firms that might be seeking a better business climate and corporate tax structure. Also, the defense contractors need to find other markets with the presence of Sequestration by the current federal administration.*
- Canada / Midwest – *due to the high number of manufacturers seeking a more competitive wage structure, lower utility costs and pro-business environment.*
- Northeast United States – *due to the high number of manufacturers seeking a more competitive wage structure, lower utility costs and pro-business environment.*

Potential Trade Shows

- Sunbelt Ag Expo – Moultrie, GA (October 15-17, 2013)
- Medical Design and Manufacturing Show – Minneapolis, MN (October 28-30, 2013)
- Southern Farm Show – Charlotte (February 5-7, 2014)
- NFMS – National Farm Machine Show – Louisville, KY (February 12-15, 2014)
- SpeedNews – Los Angeles, CA (March 3-5, 2014)
- CONEXPO-CON/AGG – Las Vegas, NV (March 4-8, 2014)
- Civil Aviation Manufacturing Conference – Charlotte, NC (May 2014)

## Budget Allocations

The Monroe-Union County Economic Development Board of Advisors has given direction to spend the funding to meet the goals spelled out in this document. Below is the operational allocation for FY2014 budget that will allow for the execution of the activities included within this Work Plan:

### FY2014 Budget Allocation

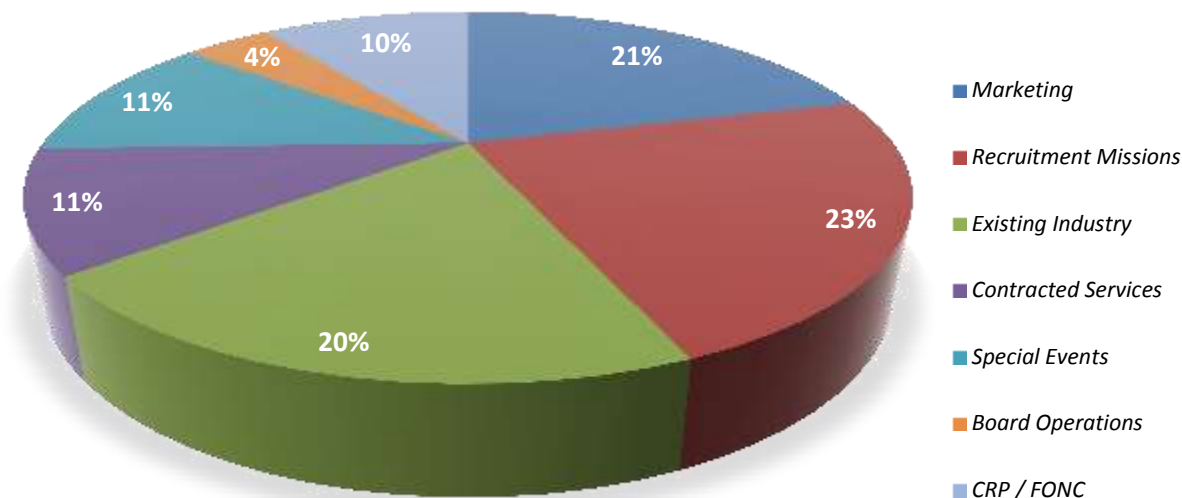
The budget allocations are depicted below to address the program of work as established in this Work Plan:

The budget allocation for FY2014 is as follows:

• Marketing	\$146,830	21%
• Recruitment Missions	\$159,520	23%
• Existing Industry R&E	\$141,335	20%
• Contracted Services	\$ 73,743	11%
• Special Events	\$ 79,240	11%
• Board Operations	\$ 29,082	4%
• Charlotte Regional Partnership / Friends of NC	<u>\$ 70,250</u>	10%
	<b>\$700,000</b>	

The proposed business development budget allocation for FY2014 is approximately a **205%** increase over the previous Monroe Economic Development budget. It contains more aggressive strategies in recruitment trips and advertising. This will allow us to increase our visibility in the marketplace, our ability to gain access to potential clients, and improve the “readiness” of the community. We are able to achieve this while saving the Union County taxpayers a combined \$400,000.

## Budget Allocation



## Anticipated Outcomes / Other Allies

### Summary of Goals

#### January 2013-June 2013

- Development of Work Plan
- Transition of Organization to County-Wide Entity
- Create New Marketing Materials and Website

#### July 2013-June 2014

- Job Creation: 300
- Capital Investment: \$60 million
- Product: +200 acres ready for development

#### July 2014-June 2015

- Job Creation: 300
- Capital Investment: \$60 million
- Product: +300 acres ready for development

### Anticipated Outcomes of the Work Plan

This document is a living set of guidelines that will not only direct our efforts for the next 24 months, but be the underpinning of our strategic planning for the next 5 to 10 years. This work plan will be revised annually as we seek to develop the most aggressive and successful plan to recruit and retain industry in Union County. It is very important that when moving forward in any economic environment, that our expenditure of funds should be deep-seated in a solid business development strategy that generates a good return on the investment of public dollars. While no result is guaranteed, we feel this plan maximizes our opportunities for success.

The Economic Development Board of Advisors anticipates the following outcomes by the end of 2015:

- Recruiting or retaining capital investment exceeding \$120 million
- Creation of 600 jobs

### Opportunities with Other Allies

Finally, this Work Plan is further augmented by the ability to partner with other counties, support entities (banks, real estate, construction, etc.), the Charlotte Regional Partnership, and agencies of the State of North Carolina. These groups can provide additional opportunities to achieve our goals for the citizens of Union County.

#### North Carolina Department of Commerce

The NC Department of Commerce (DOC) and its Regional office is a key ally to our economic development effort. We will continue to make them aware of the assets Union County has and utilize DOC as needed.

### Charlotte Regional Partnership

Union County and the City of Monroe are proud members of the Charlotte Regional Partnership (CRP). The CRP is a marketing and lead generation organization for the 15-counties surrounding Mecklenburg County. Their goal is to enhance awareness of the Region and bring clients to look at sites and buildings in order to facilitate the location of these companies to the area. Our community has been a member of the CRP since 1991 and currently has a board seat and is part of the leadership of the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC).

### Other Allies

We will also work actively with other allies, such as accounting and law firms; real estate professionals, bank and financial institutions; architectural and construction companies; engineering and design firms; utilities; railroad; etc. We are continuing to strengthen relationships with the international chambers. Charlotte has healthy chapters of the German and French American Chamber of Commerce (GACC & FACC), along with the European American Business Forum (EABF). Through these connections, Union County will have exposure to the top international leaders in the Charlotte Region.

To summarize, the goal of this work plan is to accomplish: *a) new job creation, b) additional capital investment, and c) better define Union County to the industrial community* through a variety of activities and cooperation with all the communities in Union County. We are excited about the partnership and guidance that went into the development of this document and feel strongly about the success it will bring Union County and its citizens.





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